

FAITH AND PRACTICE
of
New England Yearly Meeting
of Friends

1985

FAITH AND PRACTICE
of
New England Yearly Meeting
of Friends
(BOOK OF DISCIPLINE)

Part I
THE QUAKER EXPERIENCE

Part II
FAITH INTO PRACTICE

Part III
ADVICES AND QUERIES

Part IV
PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

ADOPTED 1985
NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

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The 1985 book of Faith and Practice replaced earlier editions, which are now out of print. For eleven years, a Faith and Practice Review Committee had considered suggestions from monthly meetings for amendment of the 1966 edition and had recommended a number to the Yearly Meeting for approval. In 1979, the Yearly Meeting expanded that committee into a larger Faith and Practice Revision Committee, more fully representative of the views of the various monthly meetings. This committee prepared the 1985 edition.

Faith and Practice attempts to communicate to members and inquirers the historic and continuing faith of Friends and to outline procedures to be followed by meetings regarding membership, organization, the conduct of their affairs, and the concerns of the society.

Quotations are identified in the text by author, title, and date of publication. Acknowledgements to publishers will be found on page 190.

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

Letter from the Meeting of Elders at Balby, 1656

It is not opinion, or speculation, or notions of what is true, or assent to or the subscription of articles or propositions, though never so sound worded, that ... makes a man a true believe or true Christian. But it is a conformity of mind and practice to the eill of God, in all holiness of conversation, according to the dictats of this Divine principle of Light of Life in the soul which denotes a person truly a child of God.

William Penn, *A key*, Section II

THE QUAKER EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

Illustrative Experiences of Friends

In this chapter the attempt has been made to state truth, not by formulating it, but by expressing it through the living personal and corporate experience of Friends. Life itself, with its variety of outlook and condition, seems to us the way by which God has spoken to men and women through the prophets, and supremely through Jesus Christ, and by which God's living Spirit continues to speak today.

The passages in this chapter have been selected as illustrations of deeply spiritual experiences sufficient to illustrate the varied ways in which the heavenly vision has come with living power to human souls. While modes of thought and utterance change, the central truths remain. The statements of these truths, if written by the society today, would no doubt vary in some respects from earlier modes of expression. Brief biographical and explanatory notes have been added.

Declaring our faith in the words of those who went before us, we are mindful also of the many New England Friends whose testimonies have come down, not through their writings but their deeds: Nicholas Upsall, who eased the imprisonment of the first Publishers of Truth in America; Mary Dyer, who "hung there as a flag"; George Rofe, who, concerned to call a General Meeting in New England, paddled his canoe, "but fourteen foot by the keel," from the Chesapeake to Narragansett; Mary Starbuck, who, having become convinced, gathered a great company of Friends on Nantucket; Paul Cuffee, the slave who became a Quaker sea captain; those who befriended the Indians; the "conductors" on the Underground Railroad, whose acts of mercy often had to be carried out in such secrecy that we do not know their names; and Moses Brown, the generous industrialist with a vision of education; Prudence Crandall, who was forced to close her school because she admitted a black pupil; those Friends who suffered in the tragedy of separation, and those who, a hundred years later, achieved the felicitous union of Friends in New England.

But let us not forget the thousands whose names have slipped from sight, the men and women who lived out their Quaker testimonies in their fields and their kitchens, on

roadsides and vessels, in town meetings and country schoolhouses, in federal penitentiaries and Civilian Public Service camps, wherever it was that the Inner Light impelled them to state their belief. It is in roles such as theirs that most of us are called out to bear witness to "that of God in every one."

GEORGE FOX (1624–1691)

George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, was the son of a Leicestershire weaver and was apprenticed to a shoemaker and wool-dealer. His "Journal," first published in 1694 after his death, ranks among the great religious biographies of the world. The early extracts that follow show how he reached his own firsthand experience of Christ, after wide acquaintance with Puritanism in all its forms.

As I had forsaken all the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition," and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus, when God doth work who shall let [prevent] it? And this I knew experimentally.

My desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not but by revelation, as he who hath the key did open, and as the Father of life drew me to his Son by his spirit. And then the Lord did gently lead me along, and did let see his love, which was endless and eternal, and surpasseth all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can get by history or books; and that love let me see myself as I was without him. And I was afraid of all company, for I saw them perfectly where they were, through the love of God which let me see myself. I had not fellowship with any people, priests, or professors, nor any sort of separated people, but with Christ, who hath the key, and opened the door of light and life unto me. And I was afraid of all carnal talk and talkers, for I could see nothing but corruptions, and the life lay under the burden of corruptions. And when I myself was in the deep, under all shut up, I could not believe that I should ever overcome; my troubles, my sorrows, and my temptations were so great, that I thought many times I should have despaired, I was so tempted. But when Christ opened to me how he was tempted by the same Devil, and had overcome him and bruised his head, and that through him and his power, light, grace and spirit, I should overcome also, I had confidence in him. So he it was that opened to me when I was shut up and had not hope nor faith. Christ it was who had enlightened me, that gave me his light to believe in, and gave me hope, which is himself, revealed himself in me, and gave me his spirit and gave me his grace, which I found sufficient in the deeps and in weakness. Thus, in the deepest miseries, and in

greatest sorrows and temptations, that many times beset me, the Lord in his mercy did keep me.

And I found that there were two thirsts in me, the one after the creatures, to have gotten help and strength there, and the other after the Lord the creator and his Son Jesus Christ. And I saw all the world could do me no good. If I had a king's diet, palace, and attendance, all would have been as nothing, for nothing gave me comfort but the Lord by his power.

*George Fox, Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, pp. 11-12
(entry for 1647).*

I was under great temptations sometimes, and my inward sufferings were heavy; but I could find none to open my condition to but the Lord alone, unto whom I cried night and day. And I went back into Nottinghamshire, and there the Lord shewed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without were within, in the hearts and minds of wicked men. The natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc. The natures of these I saw within, though people had been looking without. And I cried to the Lord, saying, "Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?" And the Lord answered that it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions; and in this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings.

And as I was walking by the steeplehouse side, in the town of Mansfield, the Lord said unto me, "That which the people do trample upon must be thy food." And as the Lord spoke he opened it to me how that people and professors did trample upon the life, even the life of Christ was trampled upon; and they fed upon words, and fed one another with words, but trampled upon the life, and trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, which blood was my life, and they lived in their airy notions, talking of him. It seemed strange to me at the first that I should feed on that which the high professors trampled upon, but the Lord opened it clearly to me by his eternal spirit and power.

Ibid., pp. 19-20 (entry for 1647)

MARGARET FELL (1614-1702)

Margaret Fell, afterward wife of George Fox, was the wife of Judge Thomas Fell, of Swarthmore Hall, near Ulverston, when Fox came there in June 1652, after his wonderful weeks among the Westmoreland Seekers. Swarthmore Hall became the center for the Quaker "Publishers of Truth" and Margaret Fell the nursing mother of the new movement. In 1669, eleven years after her first husband's death, she married Fox, though his service for the Church prevented them from living much together at Swarthmore. The six Fell daughters who were living at the time of the second marriage all became prominent Friends.

In the year 1652 it pleased the Lord to draw him [George Fox] towards us... My then husband Thomas Fell was not at home at that time but gone the Welsh circuit, being one of the Judges of Assize, and our house [Swarthmore Hall] being a place open to entertain ministers and religious people at, one of George Fox his friends brought him hither, where

he stayed all night. And the next day, being a lecture or a fast day, he went to Ulverston steeplehouse, but came not in till people were gathered; I and my children had been a long time there before. And when they were singing before the sermon, he came in; and when they had done singing, he stood up upon a seat or form and desired that he might have liberty to speak. And he that was in the pulpit said he might. And the first words that he spoke were as followeth: "He is not a Jew that is one outward, neither is that circumcision which is outward; but he is a Jew that is one inward, and that is circumcision which is of the heart." And so he went on and said, How that Christ was the Light of the world and Lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that by this Light they might be gathered to God, &c. And I stood up in my pew, and I wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on, and opened the Scriptures, and said, "The Scriptures were the prophets' words and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what as they spoke they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord." And said, "Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is inwardly from God? &c." This opened me so that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat me down in my pew again, and cried bitterly. And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, "We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves." So that served me, that I cannot well tell what he spake afterwards; but he went on in declaring against the false prophets and priests and deceivers of the people.

And there was one John Sawrey, a Justice of Peace and professor, that bid the churchwarden "Take him away," and he laid his hands on him several times, and took them off again and let him alone; and then after awhile he gave over and came to our house again that night. And he spoke in the family amongst the servants; and they were all generally convinced, as William Caton, Thomas Salthouse, Mary Askew, Anne Clayton and several other servants. And I was stricken into such a sadness I knew not what to do, my husband being from home. I saw it was the truth, and I could not deny it; and I did as the apostle saith, I "received the truth in the love of it." And it was opened to me so clear that I had never a tittle in my heart against it; but I desired the Lord that I might be kept in it, and then I desired no greater portion.

Margaret Fox's testimony to George Fox, in Fox's Journal, bicent. ed., 1891, vol. 2, pp. 512, 513.

JAMES NAYLER (1616–1660)

This experience of James Nayler was spoken about two hours before his death, near the end of October, 1660. These last words are perhaps the most beautiful expression in the language of the spirit that has passed beyond martyrdom into peace.

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself,

so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It's conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.

James Nayler: Works, 1716, p. 696.

Thou wast with me when I fled from the face of mine enemies: then didst Thou warn me in the night: Thou carriedst me in Thy power into the hiding-place Thou hadst prepared for me: There Thou coveredst me with Thy Hand that in time Thou mightst bring me forth a rock before all the world. When I was weak Thou stayedst me with Thy Hand, that in Thy time Thou mightst present me to the world in Thy strength in which I stand, and cannot be moved. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Let this be written for those that come after. Praise the Lord. J.N.

Robert Rich: Hidden Things Brought To Light, 1675, pp. 21-2.

THE VOYAGE OF THE WOODHOUSE (1657)

This account of the voyage of the Woodhouse, in the summer of 1657, bearing the second party of Quaker "Publishers of Truth" to come to Massachusetts, shows the spirit in which the Quaker message was brought to America. Six of the party, with two other Friends, had made up the earlier mission, but the Massachusetts authorities, determined to protect the purity of their Calvinism, had imprisoned them under sentence of banishment for eleven weeks, and then shipped them back to England.

A true relation of the voyage undertaken by me, Robert Fowler [of Bridlington Quay, Yorkshire], with my small vessel called the "Woodhouse," but performed by the Lord, like as He did Noah's Ark, wherein He shut up a few righteous persons and landed them safe, even at the hill Ararat.

The true discourse taken as followeth. This vessel was appointed for this service from the beginning, as I have often had it manifested unto me, that it was said within me several times:— "Thou hast her not for nothing"; and also New England presented before me. And also, when she was finished and freighted and made to sea, contrary to my will [she] was brought to London, where, speaking touching this matter to Gerrard Roberts and others, they confirmed the matter in behalf of the Lord, that it must be so. Yet, entering into reasoning and letting in temptations and hardships, and the loss of my life, wife and children with the enjoyment of all earthly things, it brought me as low as the grave and laid me as one dead as to the things of God. But by His instrument George Fox was I refreshed and raised up again...[and] by the strength of God I was made willing to do His will...Still was I assaulted with the enemy, who pressed from me my servants, so that for this long voyage we were but two men and three boys besides myself...Certain days we lay there wherein the ministers of Christ were not idle, but went forth and gathered sticks and

kindled a fire and left it burning; also several Friends came on board and visited us, in which we were refreshed...Also we met with three pretty large ships, which were for the Newfoundland who did accompany us about fifty leagues, but might have done three hundred if they had not feared the [Dutch] men-of-war, but for escaping them they took to the northward and left us without hope of help as to the outward; though, before our parting, it was showed to Humphrey Norton early in the morning that they were nigh unto us that sought our lives; and he called unto me and told me, but said:—"Thus saith the Lord; ye shall be carried away as in a mist." And presently we espied a great ship making up towards us, and the three great ships were much afraid, and tacked about with what speed they could; in the very interim the Lord God fulfilled His promise, and struck our enemies in the face with a contrary wind, wonderfully to our refreshment. Then, upon our parting from these three ships, we were brought to ask counsel of the Lord and the word was from Him:—"Cut through and steer your straightest course and mind nothing but Me," unto which thing He much provoked us and caused us to meet together every day, and He Himself met with us, and manifested Himself largely unto us, so that by storms we were not prevented [from meeting] above three times in all our voyage.

Thus it was all the voyage with the faithful, who were carried far above storms and tempests, that when the ship went either to the right hand or to the left, their hands joined all as one and did direct her way; so that we have seen and said, we see the Lord leading our vessel even as it were a man leading a horse by the head, we regarding neither latitude nor longitude, but kept to our Line, which was and is our Leader, Guide and Rule; but they that did failed.

Upon the last day of the Fifth Month [July] 1657, we made land. It was part of Long Island, far contrary to the expectations of the pilot. Furthermore, our drawing had been all the passage to keep to the southwards, until the evening before we made land, and then the word was—"There is a lion in the way," unto which we gave obedience, and said—"Let them steer northwards until the day following." And soon after the middle of the day there was a drawing to meet together before our usual time; and it was said that we may look abroad in the evening; and as we sat waiting upon the Lord they discovered the land...Now to lay before you, in short, the largeness of the wisdom, will and power of God, thus, this creek led us in between the Dutch plantation and Long Island, where the movings of some Friends were unto, which otherwise had been very difficult for them to have gotten to.

James Bowden: History of the Society of Friends in America, 1850, vol. 1, pp. 63-6.

MARMADUKE STEVENSON (DIED 1659)

Marmaduke Stevenson, one of the Boston martyrs, who was hanged 27th October, 1659, wrote the following in Boston prison eight days before his death.

In the beginning of the year 1655, I was at the plough in the east parts of Yorkshire in Old England, near the place where my outward being was; and, as I walked after the plough, I was filled with the love and presence of the living God, which did ravish my heart when I felt it, for it did increase and abound in me like a living stream, so did the life and

love of God run through me like, precious ointment giving a pleasant smell, which made me to stand still. And, as I stood a little still, with my heart and mind stayed upon the Lord, the word of the Lord came to me in a still, small voice, which I did hear perfectly, saying to me in the secret of my heart and conscience, "I have ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," and, at the hearing of the word of the Lord, I was put to a stand, seeing that I was but a child for such a weighty matter. So, at the time appointed, Barbados was set before me, unto, which I was required of the Lord to go and leave my dear and loving wife and tender children; for the Lord said unto me, immediately by His Spirit, that He would be as an husband to my wife and as a father to my children, and they should not want in my absence, for He would provide for them when I was gone. And I believed the Lord would perform what He had spoken, because I was made willing to give up myself to His work and service, to leave all and follow Him, whose presence and life is with me, where I rest in peace and quietness of spirit, with my dear brother (William Robinson) under the shadow of His wings, who hath made us willing to lay down our lives for His name's sake, if unmerciful men be suffered to take them from us. And, if they do, we know we shall have peace and rest with the Lord for ever in his holy habitation, when they shall have torment night and day.

So, in obedience to the living God, I made preparation to pass to Barbados in the Fourth Month [June] 1658. So, after some time that I had been on the said island in the service of God, I heard that New England had made a law to put the servants of the living God to death if they returned after they were sentenced away, which did come near me at that time; and, as I considered the thing and pondered it in my heart, immediately came the word of the Lord unto me, saying, "Thou knowest not but that thou mayst go thither."

But I kept this word in my heart and did not declare it to any until the time appointed. So, after that, a vessel was made ready for Rhode Island, which I passed in. So, after a little time that I had been there, visiting the seed which the Lord had blessed, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Go to Boston with thy brother William Robinson," and at His command I was obedient and gave up to His will, that so His work and service may be accomplished. For He had said unto me that He had a great work for me to do, which is now come to pass. And, for yielding obedience to and for obeying the voice and command of the everlasting God, which created heaven and earth and the fountain of waters, do I, with my dear brother, suffer outward bonds near unto death.

And this is given forth to be upon record, that all people may know who hear it, that we came not in our own wills but in the will of God.

Given forth by me, who am known to men by the name of Marmaduke Stevenson, but have a new name given me, which the world knows not of, written in the book of life.

Joseph Besse: A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, 1753, vol. 2, pp. 201-2.

MARY DYER (CONVINCED 1654, DIED 1660)

Mary Dyer, of Rhode Island, prior to her execution at Boston, June 1660, had been banished from Massachusetts, but returned and was sentenced to death with William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson. She was reprieved at the last moment, but in May

1660, her dauntless spirit led her again into the "lions' den" of Boston, and this time there was no reprieve.

Then Mary Dyer was brought forth, and with a band of soldiers led through the town, the drums being beaten before and behind her, and so continued that none might hear her speak all the way to the place of execution, which was about a mile. Thus guarded, she came to the gallows, and being gone up the ladder, some said to her, that, if she would return [home] she might come down and save her life. To which she replied, "Nay, I cannot, for in obedience to the will of the Lord I came, and in His will I abide faithful to death."...Then one mentioned that she should have said, she had been in Paradise. To which she answered, "Yea, I have been in Paradise these several days."...Thus Mary Dyer departed this life, a constant and faithful martyr of Christ, having been twice led to death, which the first time she expected with an entire resignation of mind to the will of God, and now suffered with Christian fortitude, being raised above the fear of death through a blessed hope and glorious assurance of eternal life and immortality.

Joseph Besse: A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, 1753, vol. 2, pp. 206-7.

JOHN WOOLMAN (1720–1772)

In the spirit of universal love and of the pure wisdom given him by God, John Woolman, the New Jersey tailor, set himself against slavery and social wrong; and the simplicity and purity of his "Journal" have carried the message of his life to the generations since. The extract, which follows, shows his sensitiveness to Divine leadings and his responsiveness to Divine love.

The increase of business became my burden, for though my natural inclination was toward merchandise, yet I believed Truth required me to live more free from outward cumbers, and there was now a strife in my mind between the two; and in this exercise my prayers were put up to the Lord, who graciously heard me and gave me a heart resigned to his holy will. Then I lessened my outward business, and as I had opportunity told my customers of my intentions that they might consider what shop to turn to, and so in a while wholly laid down merchandise, following my trade as a tailor, myself only, having no apprentice. I also had a nursery of apple trees, in which I employed some of my time — hoeing, grafting, trimming, and inoculating.

John Woolman: The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P. Moulton, 1971, pp. 53-4 (entry for 1756).

ELIZABETH FRY (1780–1845)

Elizabeth Fry, formerly Gurney, is well known for her great work in prison reform and other causes. She was one of the seven motherless daughters of John Gurney of Earham, near Norwich, and was known to her sisters as Betsy. The change in her life came when she was eighteen, through a visit to Norwich meeting by William Savery (1750-1804), of Philadelphia. Savery, in his own Journal, says, "I thought it the gayest meeting of Friends I ever sat in, and was grieved to see it. I expected to pass the meeting in silent suffering but at length believed it most for my peace to express a little, and, through gracious condescension, was favoured to relieve my mind, and many were tendered." Betsy herself writes, "I wish the state of enthusiasm I am now in may last, for today I have felt that

there is a God; I have been devotional, and my mind has been led away from the follies that it is most wrapped up in."

In 1843, when suffering acutely from her last illness, Elizabeth Fry remarked to one of her daughters: "I can say one thing—since my heart was touched at seventeen years old, I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my Lord."

Susanna Corder: Life of Elizabeth Fry, 1853, p. 601.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892)

They fail to read clearly the signs of the times who do not see that the hour is coming when, under the searching eye of philosophy and the terrible analysis of science, the letter and the outward evidence will not altogether avail us; when the surest dependence must be upon the Light of Christ within, disclosing the law and the prophets in our own souls, and confirming the truth of outward Scripture by inward experience; when smooth stones from the brook of present revelation shall prove mightier than the weapons of Saul; when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by George Fox and lived by John Woolman, shall be recognized as the only efficient solvent of doubts by an age of restless inquiry.

*John Greenleaf Whittier: The writings, 1888–9, vol. 7, p. 313.
Letter to "The Friends Review," 1870.*

In calm and cool and silence, once again
I find my old accustomed place among
My brethren, where, perchance, no human tongue
Shall utter words; where never hymn is sung,
Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer swung;
Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane!
There, syllabled by silence, let me hear
The still small voice which reached the prophet's ear;
Read in my heart a still diviner law
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw!

There let me strive with each besetting sin,
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain
The sore disquiet of a restless brain;
And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread,
But, cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in His strength alone!

John Greenleaf Whittier: Complete poetical works, 1894, p. 433. "First-day thoughts," written 1852.

* * *

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

* * *

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

Ibid., p. 442. "The eternal goodness," written 1865.

CAROLINE EMELIA STEPHEN (1835–1909)

Caroline E. Stephen, of Cambridge, England, had been passing through a long period of inward questioning as to the fundamental truths of religion, her difficulties made greater by the dogmatic statements and assumptions which she found in the Church of England service. She came to know the power that sprang from "a deep quietness of heart and

mind, a laying aside of all preoccupation with passing things...a resolute fixing of the heart upon that which is unchangeable and eternal."

On one never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, I found myself one of a small company of silent worshippers, who were content to sit down together without words, that each one might feel after and draw near to the Divine Presence, unhindered at least, if not helped, by any human utterance. Utterance I knew was free, should the words be given; and before the meeting was over, a sentence or two were uttered in great simplicity by an old and apparently untaught man, rising in his place amongst the rest of us. I did not pay much attention to the words he spoke, and I have no recollection of their purport. My whole soul was filled by the unutterable peace of the undisturbed opportunity for communion with God & with the sense that at last I had found a place where I might, without the faintest suspicion of insincerity, join with others in simply seeking His presence. To sit down in silence could at least pledge me to nothing; it might open to me (as it did that morning) the very gate of heaven. And since that day...Friends' meetings have indeed been to me the greatest of outward helps to a fuller and fuller entrance into the spirit from which they have sprung; the place of the most soul-subduing, faith-restoring, strengthening and peaceful communion, in feeding upon the bread of life, that I have ever known.

Caroline E. Stephen: Quaker strongholds, 1891, pp. 12-13.

THOMAS KELLY (1893–1941)

"Thomas Kelly's life is the story of a passionate and determined quest for adequacy." In the last three years of his life "this search culminated in a rare degree of adequacy." He died suddenly having taught at Haverford College only four and a half years, but these years were the happiest of his life, bringing him to a deep realization of the life of the spirit.

It is an overwhelming experience to fall into the hands of the living God, to be invaded to the depths of one's being by His Presence, to be, without warning, wholly uprooted from all earth-born securities and assurances, and to be blown by a tempest of unbelievable power which leaves one's old proud self utterly, utterly defenseless, until one cries, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me" (Ps. 42:7). Then is the soul swept into a Loving Center of ineffable sweetness, where calm and unspeakable peace and ravishing joy steal over one. And one knows now why Pascal wrote, in the center of his greatest moment, the single word, "Fire." There stands the world of struggling, sinful, earth-blinded men and nations, of plants and animals and wheeling stars of heaven, all new, all lapped in the tender persuading Love at the Center. There stand the saints of the ages, their hearts open to view, and lo, their hearts are our heart and their hearts are the heart of the Eternal One. In awful solemnity the Holy One is over all and in all, exquisitely loving, infinitely patient, tenderly smiling. Marks of glory are upon all things, and the marks are cruciform, and blood-stained. And one sighs, like the convinced Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Dare one lift one's eyes and look? Nay, whither can one look and not see Him? For field and stream and teeming streets are full of Him. Yet as Moses knew, no man can look on God and live as his old self. Death comes, blessed death, death of one's

alienating will. And one knows what Paul meant when he wrote, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20).

Thomas R. Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, pp. 56-7.

RUFUS MATTHEW JONES (1863–1948)

"No individual in the Society of Friends in recent times has had such a great influence on the thinking of religious leaders throughout the world. None has offered to the layman such a simple and yet such a profound philosophy of life. He preached and practiced a life of service to his fellowmen." Minutes, New England Yearly Meeting, 1948.

I had no ecstatic experiences, I was subject to no miraculous-seeming revelations, no sharp break occurred in the unfolding steps of a normal and ordinary life. ...I have few epoch-dates to record and no single Damascus vision. What I do feel sure of, however, is a frequent influx of divine life and power—the warm intimate touch of a guiding Hand. I somehow felt all through those college years that I was being prepared for something.

The certainty of God as the stupendous fact of the Universe was steadily rising in my soul. My invincible optimism was born out of that conviction. ...I do not believe that I was born an optimist. It is the slowly fructifying product of a deep-lying faith in a loving and victorious God. I finished college not on "the shining tablelands to which our God Himself is moon and sun," but with my feet on the road toward the Tableland. I could at least say "Abba, Father," and I could live henceforth confident that Love works, and works triumphantly, at the Heart of Things.

Rufus M. Jones: The trail of life in college, 1929, pp. 135-136.

Another experience came ... when I was spending a year abroad after graduation from college. It was at Dieu-le-fit in France near the foothills of the Alps. I was walking alone in a forest, trying to map out my plan of life ... Suddenly I felt the walls between the visible and the invisible grow thin and the eternal seemed to break through into the world where I was. I saw no flood of light, I heard no voice, but I felt as though I were face to face with a higher order of reality than that of the trees or mountains ... A sense of mission broke in on me and I felt I was being called to a well-defined task of life to which I then and there dedicated myself ... I was brought to a new level of life and have never quite lost the transforming effect of the experience.

Rufus M. Jones, "Why I enroll with the mystics," a chapter in Contemporary American Theology, vol. 1 (1932), edited by Vergilius Ferm, pp. 206-7

KENNETH BOULDING (1910–1993)

My Lord, Thou art in every breath I take,
And every bite and sup taste firm of Thee.
With buoyant mercy Thou enfolded me,
And holdest up my foot each step I make.
Thy touch is all around me when I wake,
Thy sound I hear, and by Thy light I see
The world is fresh with Thy divinity
And all Thy creatures flourish for Thy sake.

For I have looked upon a little child
And seen Forgiveness, and have seen the day
With eastern fire cleanse the foul night away;
So cleansest Thou this House I have defiled.
And if I should be merciful, I know
It is Thy mercy, Lord, in overflow.

*Kenneth Boulding, "For its ground and spring is the mercies
and forgiveness of God," There is a Spirit, 1975, p. 13.*

CHAPTER 2:
A Brief History of Friends in New England

THE PROPHETIC MOVEMENT (1652-1690)

Character of Early Quakerism in England

The great outburst of prophetic passion that swept through the northern counties of Puritan England in the mid-seventeenth century carried with it, as on the forward wall of a tidal flood, the utter conviction that the world could know directly and immediately the power of Christ's love and the light of his truth. This conviction invariably sprang from a direct, personal experience. George Fox, probably the most charismatic and certainly the most influential of the founding members of the Quaker movement, discovered in 1647, after a prolonged and intensive search, that no priest or preacher could speak to his condition: "Then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy."

This direct experience and others like it became the living center of the Quaker movement that grew up around the teachings and dynamic personality of George Fox in the early 1650s. In their thirst after righteousness and in their eagerness to engage the world with God's truth, the early Quakers believed they were called on to be prophets to their age. Like the Hebrew and Christian prophets by whose example they consciously molded their lives, they experienced God as a living, energizing power, spurring them to confront the corruption of existing social and ecclesiastical institutions and to form communities of believers committed to doing God's will in the world.

The prophetic character of the Quaker movement was evident from its beginnings. For many years it had no membership requirements at all, but instead let the experience of God's intervention in the lives of its participants be their common bond. Like other such movements it expected a life of moral perfection to be a sign of true conversion. It applied the principles of equality in its affairs, recognizing from the outset the equal responsibilities of men and women. It encouraged mutual aid as a sign of true discipleship in Christ. It rejected all outward sacraments and priestly orders, depending instead upon the inward power of Christ's example to guide the lives of its followers. In general, the Quaker movement looked to the early Christian Church for examples of dynamic organization and loving community and saw itself not as a new sect but as "primitive Christianity revived."

This prophetic vision was soon carried abroad in every direction. Borne by the "Publishers of Truth," as many early Friends called themselves, the Quaker movement spread south to London and into the southern counties of England, west into Ireland, and almost immediately thereafter across the seas into Holland, Germany, France, and the American colonies. The Quakers who arrived in Puritan New England in 1656, only four years after George Fox began his public ministry, were thus participants in one of those remarkable outpourings of spiritual energy that from time to time have revitalized the Christian faith.

Missions to New England: Persecutions and Toleration

It was this vision of a primitive, prophetic Christianity that Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, the first Quakers to arrive in New England, brought to Puritan Boston in July 1656. They had taken up, as would dozens and then hundreds of others in the next several decades, Fox's exhortation to "plough up the fallow ground" and to be examples everywhere. "Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you."

The first Quaker penetration of the Puritan colonies was carried out by a handful of courageous Publishers undismayed by the cruel persecutions to which they were often subjected. Ann Austin and Mary Fisher had been seized by the Puritan authorities on arrival, stripped and searched for marks of witchcraft, and kept sealed in a windowless prison for five weeks until they could be shipped back to Barbados. Had it not been for the intervention of Nicholas Upsall, a Boston innkeeper who later became a convert to the Quaker movement, they might well have starved to death.

The persecutions encountered by the Quakers varied in degree from colony to colony and from time to time, but they were the most ferocious and unrelenting in Massachusetts, particularly in Boston. The Puritan leaders of the Massachusetts colony saw the Quakers as subverters of a holy experiment and as disrupters of civic peace. From their very first appearance, therefore, the Puritans burned their books, locked them up in prison, whipped them, cut off the ears of several who defied them, and in desperation hanged four of them William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson, Mary Dyer, and William Leddra on Boston Common for returning after being banished. This treatment only increased the resolve of the growing Quaker community to show the Puritans that God's will could not be denied. Wenlock Christison, the last Quaker to be sentenced to death in Boston, told his Puritan persecutors in 1661: "Do not think to weary out the living God by taking away the lives of his servants." (J. Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, II, 223.)

By contrast, the experience of the Quaker ministry in Rhode Island was peaceful and unusually fruitful. Within months after the arrival of the first Quakers on the Woodhouse in August 1657, there were numerous conversions in Newport and Portsmouth. Very soon the whole of Rhode Island became a base for Quaker missions to other parts of New England, a fact that so troubled the neighboring colonies that they tried to persuade Rhode Island to rid itself of its "notorious heretics." The colony refused to comply, affirming once more that "freedom of conscience we still prize as the greatest happiness that man can possess in this world." (*Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, I, 378-380.)

Although nowhere else in New England did the Quaker movement prosper as it did in Rhode Island, it continued to grow throughout the late 1650s and 1660s, especially in those places where the soil had been prepared by other groups searching for a more inward spiritual life than that offered by established Puritanism. At Sandwich and Falmouth on Cape Cod and to the north of Boston in Salem were gathered some of the earliest groups of Quaker converts. Within a few years southeastern Massachusetts was dotted with Quaker meetings, important Quaker settlements were established on Long Island, and

Quaker Publishers were pushing north to Dover and Portsmouth in New Hampshire and across the Piscataqua River into Maine. Even in Boston itself there were some forty or fifty Friends when the persecutions came to a temporary halt in 1665. Thus by 1671, scarcely fifteen years after the arrival of the first Quakers in New England, the movement had grown so rapidly that George Fox decided to visit this flowering in the New World.

The Visit of George Fox (1672-1673)

The visit of George Fox to Newport, Rhode Island, in May 1672, was a major event, not only for New England Friends but for other people of spiritual sensibility as well. They came from all corners of the New England colonies and from all conditions and persuasions to witness for themselves the power of his celebrated ministry. Some, like Roger Williams, the aged founder of the Providence Plantation, sought to debate with Fox directly; others, called Ranters by their opponents, persisted in disturbing the spirit of worship with their disputations.

How to deal with these disruptive voices was a perplexing problem. Opponents of the Quakers did not want to share in the silent waiting for Truth but sought instead to impose their "high notions" on the apparently captive audiences before them. Fox's response to their disruptions was to demonstrate how the power of the Lord could be brought over all. In meeting after meeting he showed how the spiritual integrity of silent worship could be secured through the gathered awareness of God's presence. Out of this awareness could come a spiritual unity and coherence strong enough, he demonstrated, to deal with the most compelling distractions.

This demonstration of spiritual unity was George Fox's greatest legacy to New England Friends, and it was perhaps most powerfully experienced during Yearly Meeting at Newport in June 1672. "When it was ended," Fox wrote in his Journal, "it was hard for Friends to part, for the glorious power of the Lord which was over all his blessed Truth and Life flowing amongst them had so knit and united them together that they spent two days of taking leave of one another and Friends went away being mightily filled with the presence and power of the Lord."

Organizing for the Future

George Fox was equally concerned with the practical arrangements of Friends' affairs in the New World. Ever since he arrived in Barbados, he had urged Friends to take greater care with the details of organization, because he saw that such arrangements contributed to the integrity and stability of the community that was growing larger and more complex all the time.

Undoubtedly the most important of these practical arrangements was the monthly meeting for business. Because some members of the early Quaker movement, many of them followers of John Perrot, had begun asserting that the spontaneous development of the individual's spiritual life took priority over all else, Fox recognized that the community of believers would disintegrate into individualistic fragments if it did not find a spiritual basis for the conduct of its own affairs. Thus he urged New England Friends to establish

men's and women's monthly meetings so that Friends could seek together under divine guidance the "well-ordering and managing" of their practical affairs.

The establishment of these monthly meetings proved to be a major development in the history of Quakerism, because it was through them that the prophetic movement of the seventeenth century evolved into the religious society of the eighteenth century. Whereas many similar movements disappeared with the passing, of their founding inspiration, the Quaker movement survived the quieting of its prophetic passion. In large part this was due to the care its founding spirits took to build a practical as well as a spiritual foundation.

A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY (1690–1770)

Toleration and Expansion

There was a brief, astonishing moment at the beginning of the eighteenth century when it looked to Friends as though the Quaker movement would become the largest and most influential religious experiment in the American colonies. With the development of Quaker-organized colonies in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and with the rapid expansion of Quaker settlements in New York, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Barbados, the leaders of the Quaker movement had every reason to believe that the coming decades would see an even greater expansion of the community in the New World, especially since the Act of Toleration of 1689 had removed all legal barriers to Quaker forms of worship.

Certainly in New England it must have appeared that way. By the beginning of the century the Quakers had become the most prominent political and social group as well as the largest religious society in Rhode Island, while in the neighboring regions of Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod they exercised major influence in the southern half of the Plymouth Plantation. In the newer Settlements of Maine and New Hampshire they were a significant minority, and many of the inland rural districts of Rhode Island a number in Massachusetts had become predominantly Quaker, as had the island of Nantucket. Connecticut was the only New England colony where the Quaker movement, despite repeated efforts, had failed to take root. This dramatic growth in the first decades of the eighteenth century was reflected in the spiritual liveliness and great attendance at New England Yearly Meeting. In 1722 some 2,000 Friends were said to have attended the meeting at Newport, and by 1743 the number had grown to not less than 5,000.

The sense of cohesion and growth so evident in these decades could not have been achieved without the contributions of travelling Friends who made their way through the wilderness forests and along the settled coasts of New England in order too Witness; to the workings of the Spirit among visitors and visited alike. From the very beginning of the Quaker movement, visitations had played an important role in developing a sense of community among Friends scattered in distant places, and they have continued to serve this purpose ever since. These visitors, especially those from England and Ireland, kept Friends in New England informed of spiritual and institutional developments elsewhere, gave them a sense of belonging to a larger movement, and often helped them to sustain and revive the spiritual condition of their meetings.

Accommodation and Discipline

The rapid growth in the eighteenth century brought with it, however, a number of vexing problems whose resolution led to a profound alteration in the objectives and character of the Quaker movement. The original prophetic expectation of a direct spiritual encounter was never entirely lost, for it would break forth in each succeeding generation through the remarkable testimonies of individual Quaker lives, but the Quaker society as a whole now sought to make its way through the world less by confrontation and exaltation than by accommodation and discipline.

The tolerance that Quakers had gained through their suffering was a benefit they now wished to preserve. "Walk wisely and circumspectly toward all men, in the peaceable spirit of Christ Jesus, advised an Epistle of 1689 from London Yearly Meeting, "giving no offense nor occasion to them in outward government." This prudent attitude toward political authority was but one form of the accommodating spirit that prevailed among eighteenth century Friends. The hard-working, frugal, and trustworthy Quakers had also gained prosperity and even social respectability. By the first decades of the eighteenth century many of them had become comfortable with the ways of the world that surrounded them.

New England Friends responded to this transformation by seeking to build a more coherent organization for the Quaker movement and a more consistent discipline for its participant members. Increasingly during the first decade of the eighteenth century, Yearly Meeting sought to guide the practices and focus the spiritual concerns of local monthly meetings. In 1701 it introduced a set of questions on conduct, known as Queries, that were to be answered by monthly meetings. The following year it established "select meetings" of elders and ministers to oversee the affairs of local meetings. Three years later the quarterly meetings, which until then had primarily been occasions for worshipping together, were asked to take up business matters that the Yearly Meeting wished to transmit to monthly meetings.

Underlying this effort to create a more structured organization for the movement lay a concern for the individual conduct of its members. In 1708, the Yearly Meeting drew up a set of articles called A Testimony Against Superfluity. It was the first book of discipline in New England, and to ensure that Friends lived up to its injunctions "to walk in the self-denying way of truth," the Yearly Meeting recommended that monthly meetings appoint Friends to visit all families in their meetings every several months to advise them of Quaker standards and to report back to the monthly meetings "how they find things amongst them."

Whether the effort to develop a corporate discipline through the pressure of external guidelines and visitations succeeded or not is uncertain. One can appreciate, however, the dilemma in which sensitive Friends found themselves. On the one hand, they ran the risk that by emphasizing external behavior, plain speech, plain dress, and simple living they would lose sight of the inner spirit of the Quaker faith (as Margaret Fell Fox a few years earlier had warned that they would). On the other hand, to ignore the backsliding and indifference to "Truth's testimony" that the new social conditions were provoking would

have reflected, many were convinced, a lack of concern for the spiritual well-being of fellow Quakers.

These innovations in internal organization and discipline brought about a subtle but persistent shift in spiritual focus that gradually transformed the prophetic movement of the seventeenth century into a formally organized religious society. As a result, the Quaker movement became less concerned to challenge the world with its vision than to maintain the purity of its founding principles and the integrity of its own ways in the world.

The Visit of John Woolman (1760)

Few Quakers in the eighteenth century were more sensitive to the difficulties of achieving moral and spiritual integrity than John Woolman of New Jersey. As a young man, Woolman had gone through an intense struggle to achieve humility and self-denial. Through this experience he recognized that he had himself been redeemed from the "taint and corruption" of the world as a direct consequence of God's love for him. He therefore sought to approach others with the same tenderness that God had shown to him. Seldom has a person so at odds with the prevailing outlook and practices of his day treated those he opposed with such careful regard for their own sensibilities and with such loving compassion for the difficulties they would encounter in changing their ways. This tenderness became a sign of his own spiritual condition, a living demonstration to others that the search for true discipline must lead from an inward transformation.

Early in his life the testing ground for Woolman had become the issue of slavery at first trading in slaves and then holding them. It was to become the testing ground of the Society as well. Although Yearly Meeting had censured the importing of slaves in 1727, twenty years later it had to advise Friends not to buy slaves once they had been imported, as many, including some of the most prominent members of the Society in New England, still kept slaves, and some were even engaged in the slave trade.

One of the most trying moments of Woolman's life came during his visit to New England Yearly Meeting at Newport in 1760. During one of its sessions he found out that a large number of slaves had just been imported from Africa into Newport itself and were then being sold by a member of the Society. He was so distressed that he could neither eat nor sleep, yet he did not censure New England Friends as a whole nor even the individuals directly involved. Instead, he persuaded the Yearly Meeting to petition the Rhode Island Assembly to abolish the slave trade. He pointed out that this trade had had a corrupting influence on the Society because it fostered arrogance, "a spirit opposite to that meekness and humility which is a sure resting place for the soul."

The Yearly Meeting united with Woolman's concern by working conscientiously from then on to abolish both the slave trade and the holding of slaves by members of the Society. Over the next two decades, monthly meetings had frequent "dealings" with Quaker slaveholders who refused to give their slaves freedom. Even a man as prominent as Stephen Hopkins, former governor of Rhode Island, one of the architects of the colony's Indian policy and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was disowned by his meeting for continuing to hold one slave.

Woolman's awareness of the need for reform in a Society that had once "walked in uprightness before God" touched off a reforming campaign that spread well beyond the effort to eradicate the awful contradiction of slavery. Before it ended, the reform movement would affect every aspect of the Quaker Society in New England.

PURIFICATION AND ISOLATION (1770–1870)

Discipline and Disownment—a Time of Winnowing

The reform movement that seized New England Friends in The 1770s and 1780s engaged the most committed and energetic members of the Society, including Moses Brown in Providence, and at one time represented its greatest hope for survival. Undoubtedly there had been a need for reform. The Society's rapid growth during the eighteenth century had drawn in many whose understanding of the founding principles of the movement was often shallow at best. Even among those who had grown up in the Society, there were many that had gradually grown accustomed to the privileges of wealth and power. When John Pemberton and Mary Leaver traveled throughout New England in 1774, they were distressed to find backwardness and neglect and "the prevalency of the Spirit of the World" everywhere. Their report was echoed by many other itinerant ministers from England and the other American colonies.

Out of a desire to winnow out those who were lax in their conduct or negligent of their spiritual responsibilities, New England Yearly Meeting began in 1770 to encourage monthly meetings to disown offending members who had not responded to previous "dealings" Tolerance for unorthodox behavior diminished as the decade progressed, and the grounds for disownment grew increasingly numerous. By 1785, New England's first published discipline listed many pages of disownable offenses, including neglect of plain speech and dress, marrying out of meeting, drunkenness, gambling, sexual immorality, rendering military service, dancing, and even being inoculated for smallpox.

The reform movement, although it often dealt with offending individuals with tenderness and with a genuine hope they would return to the meeting, pursued its goal of purification and renewal with such severity and single-mindedness that membership in the Society declined precipitously in the following decades and scores of monthly meetings throughout New England were laid down or abandoned. Instead of remaining a major religious movement responsive to the changing times in which it lived, the Society of Friends became a remnant of its former self, a closed society whose "peculiar people," as they now thought of themselves, were set apart from "the world's people."

Quietism, the Inner Search

By focusing so intensely on its own internal discipline, the Society would for a time lower its evangelical voice and weaken its prophetic mission. In their stead would come a more mystical understanding of the spiritual encounter that still lay at the heart of the Quaker experience.

Introspective and acutely conscious of the moral corruption of human nature and of its fundamental unworthiness, the Quietist movement believed that only in the "silence of all flesh" could God make himself heard and the Divine prevail over the "creaturely

activities" of reason, forethought, and imagination. "We must retire from all outward objects," said the influential manual of Quietist devotion prepared by William Backhouse and James Janson in 1813, "and silence all the desires and wandering imaginations of the mind; that in this profound silence of the whole soul, we may hearken to the ineffable voice of the Divine Teacher. We must listen with an attentive ear; for it is a still small voice."

Quaker Education in New England

The reforming zeal of this period also sought to ensure the future of the Society's purity by providing its children with a guarded education; insulated from the ways and values of the world. At a time when the fervor of a revolutionary war against the British Crown was straining the pacifist convictions of Friends' testimony against all wars, the Yearly Meeting of 1779 encouraged each monthly meeting to establish its own school. Several did so, and in 1784 a Yearly Meeting school was started at Portsmouth, Rhode Island. In four years, however, it failed for lack of funds, as did most of the monthly meeting schools for the same reason.

Thus the reform that had purified the Society had also made it, in the judgment of Quaker historian Elbert Russell, "unsuited for great spiritual building, adventure, or conquest." Nowhere was this contradiction more evident than in the failure of the Quaker movement to nurture its future by establishing schools dedicated to its own principles. Not until 1819, more than thirty years after the collapse of the first effort, was the Yearly Meeting school reestablished in Providence as Friends Boarding School. It was renamed in 1904 the Moses Brown School and continues to this day under the joint care of the Yearly Meeting and an independent board.

The Visit of Joseph John Gurney (1838–1840)

After more than fifty years of decline in membership and of withdrawal from the affairs of the world, the Society of Friends in New England must have regarded with a mixture of interest and apprehension the vigorous currents of evangelical enthusiasm then affecting Protestant religious groups in England and the United States. Indeed, many Friends saw in the new evangelical movements an opportunity to refresh the spiritual vitality of the Society and to bring it more in line with what they felt were the growing spiritual forces of their own times.

One of the important catalysts for this change in outlook was the English Friend, Joseph John Gurney, the foremost Quaker thinker of his generation and a man who did more to shape modern Quakerism than any other single person. Gurney was a man of many parts, some said of contradictory tendencies. He was a biblical scholar and an advocate of Friends education, yet he believed all human learning to be valueless in the apprehension of religious truth. Although he did much to turn the attention of Friends to the need for a theological understanding of faith, he was himself guided by the leading of the Spirit in his own religious development. An inspiring speaker capable of arousing enthusiasm for his vision of a transformed Society, his love of silent worship nonetheless made him at one with the majority of Friends in New England. The Bible was his authority

in doctrine, but like the Quietists he believed that the conduct of life and worship could be governed only by the Spirit.

These crosscurrents of thought and feeling, which Gurney believed represented a middle course in the sectarian disputes that were dividing the American Quaker movement outside New England, found a receptive audience among many New England Friends who were looking for a new opening out of the limitations of Quietist piety and introspection. Under Gurney's influence the Bible was rediscovered as a source of inspiration, and its avid study led to the founding of Bible schools by almost all meetings. His active participation in movements on behalf of slaves, prisoners, and American Indians gave young Friends a new ideal of Quaker personality and character. Finally, his effort to restate Quaker truths in the language of contemporary theology radically altered the focus of Quakerism in New England and elsewhere. Its final authority no longer rested primarily upon the inward working of the Spirit, but on the confirmation of the Scriptures and on a body of theological doctrines regarded as essential for a saving faith.

The Division of 1845

Gurney had no intention of starting another movement in America or of causing further divisions among the already divided Society of Friends, but, in hindsight, it seems that this would have been the unavoidable result of his vigorous reinterpretation of Quaker principles during his visit to America in 1838-1840. Even before Gurney came to America, his views had been opposed by John Wilbur, a Friend from Hopkinton, Rhode Island, whose commitment to the doctrine of the Inner Life and to the Quietist ways had been spelled out in a pamphlet published in 1832. Against Gurney's emphasis on the Bible and the outward knowledge of the historic Jesus, Wilbur stressed the Light Within and the inward workings of Christ's example. He objected to the lectures and courses of instruction on religious subjects advocated by Gurney and saw the critical study of the Bible as an inadequate and misleading substitute for direct illumination.

Wilbur's views would have found ready acceptance among an earlier generation of New England Friends; now they were regarded by New England Yearly Meeting as contentious and obstinate. When at the request of Yearly Meeting his own monthly meeting at South Kingstown refused to disown Wilbur, Yearly Meeting laid it down and joined it to another meeting, which promptly disowned him and his followers. The bitterness provoked by this high-handed proceeding finally led some 600 supporters of Wilbur in 1845 to separate from "the larger body" of about 8000 members. The smaller body retained the name of "New England Yearly Meeting of Friends," while the larger body adopted the name of "Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England." The Gurneyite-Wilburite division, as it was called, was to last a full century, and the hostility between the two groups remained a continuing reproach to the failure of love to work its way among Friends in New England.

The Enduring Testimonies

Despite their preoccupation with these internal matters so critical to the evolving character of modern Quakerism, Friends in New England were also being caught up in the

great national issues of slavery and abolition and, by the late 1840s, in the growing danger of civil war.

The uncertain and reluctant stance of New England Friends on the issue of abolition reveals as well as any issue could just how much the removal of Friends from the world's affairs hindered their ability to keep faith with one of their most enduring testimonies the dignity of all people as children of God. Although Friends in New England had worked for the abolition of the slave trade in the 1760s and had succeeded in freeing all slaves held by members of the Society by 1780, most Friends in the 1830s regarded the abolitionist position as an extremist view likely to do more harm than good. Friends accepted the goal of abolishing slavery throughout the United States, but not the uncompromising means of the abolitionist movement in achieving it. In 1841, New England Yearly Meeting at Newport denied the use of the Friends meeting house for any antislavery discussions, and the following year it advised Friends to avoid association with antislavery societies where they would encounter such un-Quakerly practices as arriving at decisions "by majorities, frequently after excited discussions." Instead they sought to abolish slavery by moral persuasion, appealing directly to the slave-owners of the South. Many Friends, however, doubted the effectiveness of such an approach and chose instead to work with the abolitionist movement.

The dilemma of how best to secure the freedom of slaves intensified as the prospect of a violent war over the question of abolition increased, for the issue now challenged another of the enduring testimonies of the Society the abhorrence of war and violence of all kinds and for whatever cause, however just. If justice for black slaves could be secured only by force and violence, as many abolitionists concluded, would the refusal of Friends to participate in a war of emancipation mean that they must compromise their testimony on human equality and dignity? As Abraham Lincoln wrote to Eliza P. Gurney, "You people the Friends have had, and are having, a very great trial. On principle and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma, some have chosen one horn and some the other."

The Yearly Meeting bodies could not agree with the abolitionists that oppression could be opposed only by war and upheld the traditional testimony against all wars. Many individual Friends harbored runaway slaves passing through New England along the Underground Railroad on their way to freedom in Canada, but many others felt compelled to give up their pacifist views to fight for the freedom of black slaves.

To the Quaker women who had worked for abolition and for education and suffrage for blacks, their own restricted educational opportunities and lack of voting rights became painfully clear after the Civil War. As with the abolition movement, not all Friends in the 19th century supported suffrage and equal rights for women. However, New England-born Quakers were prominent from the first in the women's movement. Perhaps it was the sturdy self-reliance fostered by whaling villages and small farming towns, coupled with the enduring Quaker testimony of equality, that brought forth Lucretia Mott and Prudence Crandall. After the war, these and other Quaker women, shaped in their struggle to end

slavery and to move blacks toward full citizenship, turned their energies and experience to securing the rights of women. They became models for others who took up their cause.

The Civil War drew Friends of all persuasions back into the affairs of the world in a way that fundamentally altered the character of the Society, just as the reforms prior to the war had brought Friends into touch with religious currents outside the Society. The period of isolation for New England Friends had come to a divided and perplexing end, testing their most fundamental and cherished beliefs and leaving them divided and more exposed than ever to the new currents of spiritual revival coursing through other religious organizations in America.

THE EVANGELICAL MOVEMENT (1870–1945)

Impact of the Evangelical Movement

The most striking evidence that the period of isolation for New England Friends had come to an end in the years following the Civil War was the degree to which they responded to developments in the Quaker movement in other parts of the United States. Although traditional New England reserve slowed and often, tempered the adoption of the radical innovations of the great revival movement that first appeared in the Midwest in the 1860s, within a decade these innovations had begun to transform the character of Friends' worship in most New England Gurneyite meetings and had introduced a style of organization and activity that was virtually unknown a generation earlier. At the same time, American Quakers were everywhere directly affected by rapid changes in American society and by such causes as temperance, peace, and the rights of blacks, Indians, and women. From the 1870s on, therefore, the history of Quakerism in New England became increasingly a part of a national movement, influenced by forces within and without the Society of Friends.

The new evangelical enthusiasm of the 1870s had a much greater impact on Quaker forms of worship and community than did the earlier evangelical enthusiasm inspired by Joseph John Gurney. Although Gurney and his followers had prepared the way for these radical transformations, these changes went beyond anything he had advocated. Prepared messages, reading of the Scriptures, the singing of hymns and, after some years of hesitation, the use of musical instruments became elements of the meeting for worship. The new evangelists enriched the silent worship of meetings with public testimony and vocal prayer, often of a confessional character. Gradually, the old customs of plain speech and dress, rising during prayer, and the wearing of hats by men in meetings were discontinued by both yearly meetings in New England.

The labor of evangelical revival was primarily the product of a younger generation of Friends, most of whom came to the Society as the result of conversion experiences. As the control of the established elders and overseers weakened, active participation in meeting for worship was broadened, and the conduct of business was made more democratic. Young people were encouraged to take an active part in the life of the meeting, and the separation of men and women into their own business meetings, which at one time served a useful function by guaranteeing that a women's forum would have equal standing with

a men's, was now abolished in favor of the more integrated participation of women in all aspects of the meeting's affairs. With broader and more egalitarian participation in the life of the meeting came an expansion of the work of Friends in national Quaker organizations engaged in a wide variety of causes, especially in the establishment of foreign missions and in the promotion of peace and reconciliation.

Another major consequence of the Great Revival for the Gurneyite yearly meeting in the late nineteenth century was the employment of pastors who had responsibility for the pastoral care of the meeting and for a prescribed role in the meeting for worship. The need for such pastoral leadership was understandable given that many of these meetings had grown rapidly and now ran sizeable Bible Schools, evening and mid-week worship groups, Christian fellowship meetings for younger Friends, and women's service groups, and in addition supported an increasing variety of social causes.

Not all Friends in New England adopted these innovations. The Wilburite meetings had always maintained unprogrammed worship, and from the 1920s, newly established meetings in New England met in unprogrammed worship.

National Quaker Organizations

The Great Revival also gave to Friends in New England a broader sense of their own identity than they had had for generations. As did other denominations during this period, Friends developed national organizations in order to support and expand their work in a wide variety of causes. They were especially concerned for the promotion of peace and reconciliation and, in the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, for the establishment of foreign missions.

For the Gurneyite yearly meeting, the most important of these organizations was the Five Years Meeting. Most of the orthodox yearly meetings joined in a series of conferences, first at Richmond, Indiana, in 1887, and subsequently at Indianapolis in 1892 and 1897. Their principal objective was to check the growing tendency among the more evangelical meetings to introduce such outward rites as baptism and communion. Although the attempt to adopt a common Declaration of Faith was not entirely successful, a common book of discipline was eventually accepted by eleven yearly meetings, including New England in 1901. The final outcome of these conferences was the founding in 1902 of a national organization, the Five Years Meeting of Friends, to promote greater unity among Gurneyite Friends. Rufus M. Jones from China, Maine, was one of its most influential leaders. By 1912, the Five Years Meeting had established Boards of Publication, Social Service, Bible Schools, and Young Friends Activities, with a central office in Richmond, Indiana, headed by a general secretary. The Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England was one of the original members, and the reunited yearly meeting remains a member to this day of what is now called Friends United Meeting.

New England Yearly Meeting has also been a member of Friends General Conference since 1959. The General Conference was formed in 1900 and held its first biennial meeting in 1902 for the purpose of bringing together Friends from Hicksite meetings who had been engaged in four areas of work: First Day schools, philanthropic labor, education, and the advancement of Friends' principles. Work with young Friends was also recognized as a

department of the Conference at the 1902 meeting. In keeping with the individualistic tendencies of its Hicksite members, the conference made no attempt to create a unified national organization or a super-yearly meeting, but it did establish an office in Philadelphia and appointed a central executive committee and a general secretary to coordinate the activities of its constituent members.

One of the great benefits of a national organization was its ability to bring Friends together in a common undertaking that individual meetings and even yearly meetings could not have undertaken alone. This benefit was often illustrated in the area of foreign missions in the first decades of the twentieth century. One of the earliest of Friends' missions was the result of a trip to Syria and Palestine by Eli and Sybil Jones of Maine. As a result of their interest and the commitment of New England and British Friends, a school for girls was founded at Ramallah in 1869, and several years later a Friends meeting and a boys' school were started up at Brummana. New England Friends supported these missions until 1920, when this responsibility was transferred to the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions under the auspices of the Five Years Meeting. New England Friends also took an active part in missionary work among American Indians, especially among the Kickapoo and Modoc tribes in the Indian Territory of Oklahoma.

The First World War shifted the attention of a new generation of Friends to the work of post-war relief and reconstruction. In 1917, shortly after the United States entered the war, the American Friends Service Committee was founded in Philadelphia to train Quaker conscientious objectors for reconstruction and relief work in Europe. Once again New Englanders played a prominent part. Rufus Jones was made chairman of the Committee, and Wilbur K. Thomas, who had been serving as pastor to the meeting in Boston, was its executive secretary for ten years, directing it through the critical period of European relief following the war.

The Search for Unity

The founding of the American Friends Service Committee in 1917 provided an unexpected opportunity for Friends in New England to explore possibilities for unity. The relief activities of the Service Committee in Europe had drawn support from Quakers all over the region and had for the first time given Friends of different persuasions a chance to work together in a common endeavor. This spirit of cooperation continued when the Service Committee decided in 1925 to become more than a temporary relief organization. The Service Committee's branch in New England sought to find ways in which Friends could expand their collaboration and create the conditions necessary for a more determined search for unity.

Over the next decade and a half, the two yearly meetings in New England explored the possibilities of reunion with an understandable mixture of reticence and eagerness. The growing sentiment for union was most boldly pursued, however, by newly formed independent meetings of Friends in New England who wished to join neither of these traditional branches of the Society nor to be labeled "evangelical," "conservative," or "liberal." These independent groups maintained that such divisions no longer corresponded to the realities of modern Quakerism and that at least some Friends'

organizations in New England should demonstrate the spirit of unity that they and many others already felt.

It was for these reasons that in 1935 Friends meetings at Hartford, New Haven, and in various smaller towns in the Connecticut Valley joined together to form the independent Connecticut Valley Association of Friends. This Association and the independent meetings of Cambridge and Providence did much to encourage other Friends in the divided Yearly Meetings to find their ways toward the unity that so many were now seeking.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY (1945–1980)

The Reunion of New England Friends

The joining together of the two separated bodies and the three independent groups into the consolidated New England Yearly Meeting of Friends took place on the campus of Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts, on June 21, 1945, one hundred years after the separation. The closing minute of the Yearly Meeting acknowledged that the 1945 session had been blessed by a sense of divine leading and that, in joining together, the Yearly Meeting had truly been born anew. Since this reunion took place in, the closing days of the Second World War, Friends were able to find in their own reunion a hope for the future. "We have felt love, warm and gentle, flowing through this group at Andover, and we have realized that this is the only agent that can unite all the world in one community, resolving difficulties without rancor and providing a firm base on which to build the structure of peace." (Minutes of NEYM, 1945, 80–81)

The task of rebuilding the reunited Yearly Meeting was not completed in a single session, however, for it had to be demonstrated that the spirit of love that flowed through the 1945 session could penetrate to all corners of the Yearly Meeting and inspire all of its activities. One of the most critical early signs of this spirit of reconciliation was the way in which the Yearly Meeting approached the task of revising Faith and Practice, as the book of discipline was now called. There was a recognized need to have some guidance on organization and business procedures. Yet the statements of faith and the various understandings of its application to daily life contained in the 1945 draft prepared by the Five Years Meeting struck many Friends as too doctrinaire and prescriptive. Nor did the draft adequately reflect the preference for silent worship of the Wilburite meetings and of the newer independent groups.

After careful study over the next two years, the Yearly Meeting of 1948 agreed that the discipline must respect this diversity "rather than attempt to ignore it through exclusive emphasis upon points of view thought by us to be the most prevalent or the most "Friendly" (Minutes of NEYM, 1947, 35). Rather than rely upon formal statements of faith and prescriptive applications, the Yearly Meeting turned instead to the diverse testimonies given by Friends during the 300 years of Quaker history. The anthology of Quaker testimonies has remained a part of Faith and Practice ever since, in part because such testimonies have proved instructive and even inspirational to new Friends whose paths to modern Quakerism have continued to be diverse, but also in part because the tenderness with which Friends in the 1940s sought to understand and accommodate each other in

revising the discipline has proved an enduring contribution to the spiritual life of the Society.

The Changing Character of New England Quakerism

The reunion of 1945 took place in the midst of a slow, but persistent, transformation in the character of New England Quakerism. Changes in the forms of worship, in the location and characteristics of meetings, and in the concerns and commitments of members have combined to give New England Friends in the 1980s a character that is recognizably different from what it had been in the 1930s and 1940s.

Well into the 1930s the predominant form of worship had been the prepared or pastoral. By 1980, however, a number of new meetings (such as those in the Connecticut Valley) and revitalized, existing meetings (such as those in Boston and Providence) had grown with the influx of a new generation of Friends, many of whom had experience of silent worship elsewhere. Though usually built around a core of seasoned Friends, these meetings soon attracted members who had no previous experience with Quakerism. On the average, some 90 such newly convinced Friends join New England Yearly Meeting each year, their numbers in large measure compensating for deaths and removals to other yearly meetings of other members. The new and revitalized meetings, concentrated in academic communities and large cities, followed the unprogrammed form of worship. In the 1960s and 1970s, a number of small, new unprogrammed meetings sprang up in northern New England, where many retired Friends and others seeking simple, natural living had settled.

During this same period from the 1930s to 1980, social changes and economic hardships in older industrial cities and rural towns contributed to a decline in membership in a number of pastoral meetings. Before the reunion in 1945, the five largest meetings in New England, all pastoral, were the two Portland meetings and the Worcester, Dover, and Winthrop meetings. By 1980, the five largest in New England, all unprogrammed, were the Cambridge, Hartford, Providence, Mt. Toby, and Wellesley meetings. At the time of the reunion, New England Yearly Meeting had 3,529 members in 36 meetings. In 1980, there were still only 3,693 members, but they were in 57 monthly meetings.

These developments in turn have given rise to important changes in functions and outlook within the Yearly Meeting itself, especially in the areas of evangelism and missions. Until 1945, the Yearly Meeting had an Evangelistic and Church Extension Committee and a General Superintendent, whose primary responsibility was to broaden the work and influence of monthly meetings and to overcome what he called "religious illiteracy" by preaching the Gospel. This evangelistic outlook, seeking to lead other men and women into a knowledge of God and the Christ Way of Life, was gradually transformed into a concern for the quality of spiritual life within the Quaker community itself, an inward looking emphasis which is still present.

Out of concern for the welfare of elderly members, New England Friends have long maintained the New England Friends Home, now located in Hingham, Massachusetts. They have also sought to minister to the young and to promote Quaker values through the development and maintenance of schools that seek to apply Friends' principles and outlook to the whole of life. The oldest of these is the Moses Brown School, and the youngest is

the Cambridge Friends School. The Yearly Meeting's Youth Secretary, China Camp, and Committee on Christian Education have all helped young Friends to understand the values inherent in their Quaker upbringing and to apply them to a complex and changing world.

Concern for the world at large was not abandoned, however. Although more traditional missionary activities were sometimes seen as imposing cultural values rather than sharing Quaker experience of Truth, direct overseas service to schools, clinics, hospitals, and other development projects continued to be supported.

At home, the commitment of New England Friends to peace and social justice remained strong and found new forms of expression. Support for conscientious objection and opposition to conscription have been consistent from World War II to the present. New England Friends have protested military intervention in Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, just as they have worked to end the nuclear arms race. In opposing the spread of militarism in the United States, some Friends have refused to pay taxes that will support militarism and war and have sought legal alternatives like a world peace tax fund.

Working for social justice, Friends in New England promoted inter-racial fellowship in the 1940s and supported racial integration in Quaker and public schools. Through the New England Office of the American Friends Service Committee and the Yearly Meeting Committee on Prejudice and Poverty, they have worked with and supported a wide range of communities whose needs often could not be met elsewhere: refugees, prisoners and ex-prisoners, victims of family violence, Indians, and low-income groups.

The Prophetic Tradition Reexamined

For the past two centuries the Society of Friends has been a small religious group by comparison with other religious organizations in New England. Today it is very small indeed—a body of less than 4,000 in a total population of more than 12 million.

Size alone, however, has seldom mattered to Friends. Instead, they have sought to be witnesses to the Truth.

In this sense they have remained faithful to the prophetic vision that first moved the "Publishers of Truth" to visit these shores. Each succeeding generation has struggled to interpret this vision within the context of its own times and with the spiritual and material resources available to it.

In the twentieth century, the demands upon these spiritual and material resources have at times seemed overwhelming. Two world wars and countless smaller ones, racial hatred at home and abroad, economic and social inequities in the midst of abundance and technological promise, and weapons capable of annihilating millions of people and their civilizations at a stroke have created unprecedented challenges. In the midst of these global issues, and not unrelated to them, modern secular life has given rise to a number of more intimate, personal problems of great consequence to millions of individuals: the disruption of family life, the alienation of workers from their labor, the destructive violence of sexual and racial discrimination, and the uncertainties of growing up in a world of rapid change and shifting values.

It is difficult to live in harmony with a world filled with such problems, yet perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Quaker movement in the second half of the twentieth

century has been its persistent effort to confront these challenges with the confidence that peace and reconciliation, understanding, and justice can be achieved by a people willing to do God's will in the world. This confidence has not been based on a remote hope or on a naive misunderstanding of the difficulties involved. Rather it has been derived from the practical experiments of a living faith experienced by each believer in his or her own life and by communities of believers acting together. For Friends in New England, 's for Friends everywhere, this faith has been sustained and '„nourished by three centuries of a prophetic tradition.

Part II

FAITH INTO PRACTICE

CHAPTER I

The Quaker Faith

THE QUAKER MESSAGE

George Fox, one of the early founders of the Society of Friends in seventeenth century England, had as a youth suffered great anguish as he sought an answer to his spiritual quest. His answer came, after much reading of the Scriptures and visits to many ministers and counselors, when he heard a voice within him which said: "There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." "And when I heard it," he later reported, "my heart did leap for joy." He had found God directly without the aid of ritual or clergy, and henceforth his distinctive message was: (Christ speaks directly to each human heart who seeks Him; listen to the Teacher who is within; He placed His light within each of us, and as we follow the way He directs we shall be led into life and Truth.

The first names for the new movement were Children of the Light and Friends of Truth. William Penn thought of it as "primitive Christianity revived."

Since those early beginnings, Friends have continued to hold that their faith is one of first-hand experience of God in their lives. Spiritual life, they say, does not depend upon the acceptance of certain doctrines, nor the observance of certain rites, but comes as persons are obedient to the light of Christ within them. "They feel free to reject much of the ecclesiastical structure of the times, including priests, church dogmas, outward sacraments, and external authority in religion, because they feel that for them these do not serve the life of the spirit.

This has not been a solitary faith. From the beginning, the Quaker faith has flourished in a group, in a society, in a beloved fellowship. While God may be found in one's inmost life, one is always conscious of being part of a larger group of persons who are likewise joyously following the inward way and seeking to be obedient to the light of Christ within. They seek to be obedient not only in the quiet gathering for worship together, or in their meeting for settling practical affairs, but also as they are led as a group to be concerned for those about them, particularly those suffering injustices or inequities. While Friends

had great respect for the individual person, the real unit in the Society of Friends has always been the Meeting.

Friends traditionally allow great freedom in describing their own religious life and experience. They have no formal creed. They try to weave their faith into life. Are they seriously trying to follow their inward guide? Does the Sermon on the Mount come alive for them as setting standards for Christian action? Are they endeavoring to live by Quaker testimonies of integrity, simplicity, equality, peace, and community? In other words, one can often tell Quakers not so much by what they say as by the way they live.

The excerpts, which follow, are attempts from different points of view to portray this basic Quaker experience.

The End of Words

The end of words (even of Christ's own directions in the days of His flesh) is to turn men to the holy life and power from whence the words came.

Isaac Penington: Works, 1681 ed., Part II, p. 170.

The Presence and Power of the Most High

At last, after all my distresses, wanderings and sore travails, I met with some of the writings of this people called Quakers, which I cast a slight eye upon and disdained, as falling very short of that wisdom, light, life and power, which I had been longing for and searching after. After a long time, I was invited to hear one of them (as I had been often, they in tender love pitying me and feeling my want of that which they possessed). When I came, I felt the presence and power of the most high among them, and words of truth from the spirit of truth reaching to my heart and conscience, opening my estate as in the presence of the Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised; insomuch as my heart, in the certainty of light and clearness of true sense, said: "This is he; this is he; there is no other; this is he whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood, who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart, but I knew him not distinctly nor how to receive him or dwell with him." And then in this sense (in the meltings and breakings of my spirit) was I given up to the Lord to become his both in waiting for the further revealing of his seed in me, and to serve him in the life and power of his seed.

Isaac Penington: 'A true and faithful relation ...' (1667).

Quoted in Thomas Ellwood's "Testimony" in the preface to Penington's Works, 1681 ed., p. xlv.

A Secret Power Among Them

Not by strength of arguments, or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine and conviction of my understanding thereby came [I] to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by [the] 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. And indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian, to whom afterwards the knowledge and understanding of principles

will not be wanting, but will grow up as is needful as the natural fruit of this good root, and such a knowledge will not be barren nor unfruitful.

*Robert Barclay (1648-1696): Apology, prop. 11, sect. 7 1908
Phila. ed., p. 340.*

The Kingdom of Heaven Did Gather Us

The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net, and His heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in; and 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 will He take up His tabernacle among the sons of men, as He did of old? Shall we, that were reckoned as the outcasts of Israel, have this honour of glory communicated amongst us, which were but men of small parts and of little abilities, in respect of many others, as amongst men."

Francis Howgill's "Testimony" in preface to Edward Burrough's Works, 1672. This extract is considerably abridged.

They Were Changed Men

They were changed men themselves before they went about to change others. Their hearts were rent as well as their garments, and they knew the power and work of God upon them. And as they freely received what they had to say from the Lord, so they freely administered it to others. The bent and stress of their ministry was conversion to God, regeneration and holiness, not schemes of doctrines and verbal creeds or new forms of worship, but a leaving off in religion the superfluous and reducing the ceremonies and formal part, and pressing earnestly the substantial, the necessary and profitable part, as all upon a serious reflection must and do acknowledge.

*William Penn's preface to George Fox's Journal, bicent. ed.,
1891, vol. 1, p. xxxvii.*

A New Dimension of Life

The possibility of this experience of Divine Presence, as a repeatedly realized and present fact, and its transforming and transfiguring effect upon all life this is the central message of Friends. Once discover this glorious secret, this new dimension of life, and we no longer live merely in time but we live also in the Eternal. The sense of Presence carries with it a sense of our lives being in large part guided, dynamically moved from beyond our usual selves. Instead of being the active, hurrying church worker and the anxious, careful planner of shrewd moves toward the good life, we become pliant creatures, less brittle, less obstinately rational. The energizing, dynamic center is not in us but in the Divine Presence in which we share. Religion is not our concern; it is God's concern. The sooner we stop thinking we are the energetic operators of religion and discover that God is at work, as the Aggressor, the Invader, the Initiator, so much the sooner do we discover that our task is to call men to be still and know, listen, hearken in quiet invitation to the subtle promptings of the Divine. Our task is to encourage others first to let go, to cease striving, to give over this fevered effort of the self-sufficient religionist trying to please an external deity. God is the Seeker, and not we alone. I am persuaded that religious people do not

with sufficient seriousness count on God as an active factor in the affairs of the world. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," but too many well-intentioned people are so preoccupied with the clatter of effort to do something for God that they don't hear Him asking that He might do something through them.

Thomas Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, pp. 91, 96-7.

God is Loving Heavenly Father

To live one's life to the full, it is surely necessary to base it on a positive hypothesis. And it is helpful also to join together with others who share the same outlook. Many scientists have found in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) the spiritual community that they need. Friends do not accept the idea that the universe occurred by chance, that man is a chance conglomeration of molecules which has developed ideals, a conscience, humanitarian instincts merely in order to survive. That seems to make a god of chance and to attribute motives to a machine. It is wholly incredible, almost more incredible than the idea that there exists nothing but mind. To accept the existence of matter and spirit seems reasonable. To attribute the creation of matter to a Supreme Spirit may be a way of expressing what we do not understand, but it seems more sensible than to suppose that by denying that there is a problem or refusing to admit its significance, we explain it away. But this is not enough. The Society of Friends is a Christian body; it is a body of people who take Jesus Christ as their example and who think of God in terms of Christ's life and teaching. This means far more than to accept the Idea of a Supreme Creative Spirit; it means the basing of the experiment of life on the assumption that God is a loving Heavenly Father who is accessible to man, who cares for man, who would not put man to the indignity of being a perfect puppet, but who suffers when man, having been given free will, chooses to reject Him.

Kathleen Lonsdale: Science and Quakerism, 1956 ed., pp 4, 5.

A Hand Held Out to the Scientist

Religious creeds are a great obstacle to any full sympathy between the outlook of the scientist and the outlook which religion is so often supposed to require. I recognize that the practice of a religious community cannot be regulated solely in the interests of its scientifically-minded members and therefore I would not go so far as to urge that no kind of defense of creeds is possible. But I think it may be said that Quakerism in dispensing with creeds holds out a hand to the scientist. The scientific objection is not merely to particular creeds which assert in outworn phraseology beliefs which are either no longer held or no longer convey inspiration to life. The spirit of seeking which animates us refuses to regard any kind of creed as its goal. It would be a shock to come across, a university where it was the practice of the students to recite adherence to Newton's Laws of motion, to Maxwell's equations, and to the electromagnetic theory of light. We should not deplore it the less if our own pet theory happened to be included, or if the list were brought up to date every few years. We should say that the students cannot possibly realize the intention of scientific training if they are taught to look on these results as things to be recited and subscribed to. Science may fall short of its ideal, and although the peril scarcely takes this

extreme form, it is not always easy, particularly in popular science, to maintain our stand against creed and dogma.

Rejection of creed is not inconsistent with being possessed by, a living belief. We have no creed in science, but we are not lukewarm in our beliefs. The belief is not that all the knowledge of the universe that we hold so enthusiastically will survive in the letter; but a sureness that we are on the road. If our so-called facts are changing shadows, they are shadows cast by the light of constant truth. So too in religion we are repelled by that confident theological doctrine which has settled for all generations just how the spiritual world is worked; but we need not turn aside from the measure of light that comes into our experience showing us a way through the unseen world.

Religion for the conscientious seeker is not all a matter of doubt and self-questioning. There is a kind of sureness, which is very different from cocksureness.

A. Stanley Eddington: Science and the unseen world, 1929, pp. 88-91.

If You Were to Ask Ten Quakers

If you were to ask ten Quakers to explain to whom they were listening and speaking in the silence, and just what was their idea of God, I doubt very much whether you would get two identical answers; and I doubt still more whether an agnostic would find one answer to satisfy him among the lot. The fact is, that when we try to explain, even to ourselves, what we mean by God, ordinary words fail us.

Of course that often happens to a scientist too, when he is talking about science. He could describe atoms in various ways, but not in any way that doesn't enormously oversimplify the problem, or that explains their real nature. Yet scientists believe in atoms; they don't regard them merely as a convenient hypothesis.

To many people throughout history, God has been intensely real because they have found that they can experience communion with God. But such experience is not gained without persistence. We must listen; we must make time to step aside even from good works, in order to talk with God. Sometimes a physical withdrawal is not possible, but when communion has become a constant attitude of mind it is deeply satisfying, because it fulfills our need for the companionship of someone who loves us in spite of our failings.

Kathleen Lonsdale, "Deeper mysteries than life." In The Friend (London), vol. 120 (1962), p. 775.

Bond of Union in Inward Experience

Quakerism, indeed, has always found the bond of union for itself and for the wider fellowship of the Church catholic, in inward experience the experience of the one Divine Life that is reproducing in men the character of Jesus Christ. It has refused to lay the emphasis in creed or ritual or in its days of vigor on institutions. Where Christ is, there is His Church, made up of all who seek to live in His spirit, whatever the words by which they try to find expression for their faith or the practices which have become means of grace to their souls.

William C. Braithwaite: The second period of Quakerism, 1919, p. 641.

Mystical Experience Verified in Daily Life

The mystical experience, which is far more common than the skeptically minded and the critics of mysticism realize, finds its most solid support not in ecstasy or miracle but in the verifying facts of our everyday life. Our simplest faith in the triumphant worth of normal goodness, our steady confidence that the truth we hold is universally true, our conviction that love is something more than a subjective thrill, our intimations that the beauty which we see here and now is only a glimpse of an infinite and eternal beauty all these convictions are built upon the fact that there is a junction of our finite individual lives with one real foundational Spirit who is the ground and source of all the self-transcending values by which we live. Isolate us, insulate us, leave us as lonely oases in a sterile desert and we could not even have mirages of the good, the true, the lovely and the beautiful. Life would dry up and shrivel away. We are these strange eternity-haunted beings just because we are conjunct with God whom some of us at least discover walking with us in the cool of the day, as the fish feels the ocean or the bird feels the air. These experiences of inner fortification and joy help us immensely to bear the "heavy and weary weight of all this unintelligible world" and give us an unwonted buoyancy.

Rufus M. Jones: Fundamental ends of life, 1924, pp. 116-7

Dangers of Creeds

We do not in the least deprecate the attempt, which must be made, since man is a rational being, to formulate intellectually the ideas which are implicit in religious experience. But it should always be recognized that all such attempts are provisional, and can never be assumed to possess the finality of ultimate truth. There must always be room for development and progress, and Christian thought and inquiry should never be fettered by theory. Among the dangers of formulated statements of belief are these:

- (1) They tend to crystallize thought on matters that will always be beyond any final embodiment in human language;
- (2) They fetter the search for truth and for its more adequate expression; and
- (3) They set up a fence which tends to keep out of the Christian fold many sincere and seeking souls who would gladly enter it.

Particularly in these days we need to be on our guard against these dangers. Multitudes of peoples are being shaken out of their comfortable beliefs by the terrific experiences through which the world is passing, and are seeking a secure basis for their

faith. And some are finding a Reality which is much too great to be confined within the narrow limits of a creed.

*The true basis of Christian unity, a statement presented to
London Y.M., 1917.*

The Spiritual Message of Friends

No important religious movement can keep moving and can maintain its vitality and spirituality without a body of cohesive principles which form the central structure the invisible skeleton of its life. These truths and principles often lie too deep for expression in words. They may be woven into the tissue of the life of these people rather than set forth in exact formulae, but nevertheless it will be found that deep down in the central current of the continuous movement there are significant ideas which give direction and moving power to it.

It has been so for nearly three hundred years with the Society of Friends. Its members have usually been hesitant about formulations, and not very successful in making them, but there have always been in operation, in the widely dispersed Society, underlying principles of truth which have made the movement significant in history. There have been repeated tendencies to vary, to divide and to be profoundly influenced by religious currents of thought in the environment, but through all the historical variations at least a feeble grasp, a dim vision of the original central principles of life has persisted at the heart of the movement.

There are three foundation aspects of Quakerism to be explored which underlie the very structure of our life and mission in the world. These three vital aspects cannot be cut apart as though they were independent, but they must receive separate emphasis and interpretation. The first is our essential truth, that is to say, the faith by which we live; the second is our type of worship by which we breathe our higher life; and the third is our mission of service by which we express ourselves to the world.

QUAKERISM in spirit and ideal is neither a form of Roman Catholicism, nor a form of Protestantism. Protestantism in its, original, essential features called for an authoritative creed, specific sacraments and an authentic form of ordination. Quakerism at its birth was a fresh attempt to recover the way of life revealed in the New Testament, to re-interpret and re-live it in this present world. Its founders intended to revive apostolic Christianity. They did not intend to create a new sect. They carefully avoided calling themselves a "Church." They were content to be a "Society of Friends." George Fox said: "The Quakers are not a sect but are [a people living] in the power of God which was before sects were."

The original message of George Fox which gathered the Society of Friends, was never systematically formulated by him. It was essentially the faith, based on personal experience, that God and man have direct relationship and mutual correspondence. This was not, in the first instance, a doctrine, but a live and throbbing experience. George Fox kept his faith as concrete as possible and avoided as far as one can, abstract phrases which tend to become mere words. The principle which he named "that of God in man" was first of all for him a personal discovery that something not himself, something beyond himself, was operating in him as an invading spiritual power. He seemed to have found a central

stream of life, flowing over the ocean of darkness and death, and revealing to him the infinite love of God present here in the world where we live. In his thought he linked up this stream of Life which was revealed within himself with the Fountain of Life which had broken into the course of history in Christ. All that he meant by the word God took for him form and reality and character in Christ and spoke completely to his condition. He never thought out the complications of the inward Christ of his experience and the outward Christ of history and gospel story. In fact he made too little of the historical Christ. But he leaped to the conclusion that Christ is eternally alive and is God continually revealing Himself through the ages in men. That which broke into him as Light and Truth for his time and need seemed to him to be the Light of Christ, coming out of the Eternal World, but rich and concrete with the spiritual content of Christ's definite life here in time.

It means that God has broken into revelation through a person who made love and tenderness the supreme qualities of life both in man and God. It further means that within measure and limits that divine Light and Love and Truth, so wonderful in Him, can be continuously revealed and demonstrated through lives like ours. The central Quaker faith in the seventeenth century was a testimony that man may live in vital contact with the divine Life-Stream and that that divine Stream of Life can flow into expression through man.

WORSHIP. There is a very close and vital connection between this central truth of man's relation to God and the way of worship which the early Friends inaugurated. They were careful not to bisect life into sacred and secular divisions. They wanted all the activities of life to be sacramental. They attempted to carry their lofty faith in the real Presence into every aspect of home and business. They took seriously the apostolic injunction: "Whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatever ye do, do it all to the glory of God" And yet they felt that there ought to be high-tide occasions in the spiritual life, when there should be nothing in the way to interrupt or to disturb the consciousness of communion with God.

They made the discovery that silence is one of the best preparations for such communion and for the reception of inspiration and guidance. Silence itself, of course, has no magic. It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words, or noise, or music. It may be an occasion for slumber, or it may be a dead form. But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalized hush, a creative quiet, an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God. The actual meeting of man with God and God with man is the very crown and culmination of what we can do with our human life here on earth.

While the primary function of the meeting for worship is, no doubt, the direct reception of inward resources of life and power by an entrance into the Stream of Life itself, and by being bathed and refreshed in the waters of Life, it ought also to be an occasion for constructive human ministry. The meeting should be an opportunity for the circulation of life and for the transmission of insights of faith, of truth, of experience, of fresh and vital messages. The focus of emphasis ought always to be the refreshment and edification of the group, not the personal "relief" or "satisfaction" of an individual. Nor is the Quaker Meeting a place for stereotyped "sermonizing," for laboriously "constructed"

addresses. What is needed is a fresh, inspiring, illuminating, uplifting message, which opens the gates of life to struggling and discouraged souls. The meeting will be at its best when all that is spoken coheres and draws toward a single central purpose, so that it culminates in a unity of life.

True religion of the Spirit is bound to bring into play transcendent forces which carry the soul beyond what is and has been. The difference between a Meeting and a lecture or a debate lies in the fact that the Meeting looks for and expects revelation, The breaking in of the Eternal. It ought to be like the rising of the water in a lock which enables the ship to go out for its journey on a higher level.

HUMAN SERVICE. As the Quaker faith is inherently allied to the Quaker way of worship, so also the Quaker impulsion to take up and share "the burden of the world's suffering" springs out of the central faith and the intimate fellowship of worship. A touch of the transcendent aspect of life, the eternal aspect of it, is essential to all three of these foundation features of the Quaker movement its truth, its way of worship and its peculiar practical mission in the world. We should lose the essential mark and badge of our calling if we should allow our Quaker service, our mission to oppressed humanity, to drop to the purely secular level.

We approach all problems with a peculiar faith that man is potentially a child of God, a being of infinite worth. The liberation, the enlargement, the realization and fulfillment of man's true life is, or should be, behind every effort. If we work to change outward conditions, to transform oppressive social and economic systems, to destroy war, to remove brutal forms of punishment and every method of violence, we are all the time concerned to enable man to have better opportunities to come up to his full stature as a man, which cannot be fully done until society itself becomes more richly organized. The method of such human service, if it is to be genuinely Quaker service, that is, "intelligent," "spiritual" service, must be a method that is consistent with the way and spirit of love. It cannot run on a level with the secular theory of force. Its way is deeply sacrificial and costly. It gives and shares, not merely goods and money, but life itself. It enters sympathetically and with an understanding mind into the heart and condition of those who suffer and who are to be helped. It travails and suffers with them and it aims in the end to make a different world through its love and its effort. As John Woolman expresses it, "Love is the first motion." The real hope of such a worker is to be an organ through which the divine Life can break in and come into play.

One of the most important missions of a Society like ours is its prophetic service. We maintain that we must not merely be identified with a party, or a division, or a given system, or a prevailing theory. We must be free and broad-visioned enough to see around and beyond the partial one-sided aspect of the issue for which the "party" stands and to seize the ethical and spiritual significance of the whole situation before us, and deal with it from above the storm and controversy and propaganda of the moment. This attitude brings in once more the transcendent, the eternal aspect, which is precisely the function of a spiritual body as contrasted with a secular one.

The social order must be profoundly transformed and adjusted to the demands of justice and fairness for all men. But whatever happens to the social and economic order, the quality of the spirit of those who compose the social structure will always be the essential matter. No reorganization, whether gradual or revolutionary, will make a good world unless the units themselves are good. Even now, in a world far from being rightly fashioned, we can help toward the reorganization of it by a faithful and consistent practice of simplicity of life, sincerity of heart, brotherliness of spirit toward all men, and confident reliance on the intrinsic forces of the soul in co-operation with God.

Rufus M. Jones, "The spiritual message of the Religious Society of Friends" in World Conference (1937) Report of Commission I, pp. 7-16.

Whereas I Was Blind, Now I See

Hope, peace and encouragement is not enough to depict my religion. When my spirit is animated by my religion and is aware of the inviolable Truth prevailing, my heart dances for joy and gratitude and sings the praise of God! Every moment is a mystery. Even this body of mine, what a mystery it is, whose heart is beating incessantly without my knowing, and whose lungs breathe ceaselessly without my knowing! This air is God's, the light is God's, we are his. I am living with all the universe, and all the universe is living with me, in God.

However others may have been, I have been long in the dark. But my religion has opened my eyes through the immense love of God, and is letting me see things more and more clearly. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." When I came across this sentence I felt like crying for joy and surprise. I felt my 'own thought was expressed there!

Yukio Irie, "My religion: by a Japanese Friend." In The Friend (London), vol. 115 (1957), pp. 163-4.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LIGHT WITHIN

Early Friends referred to their inward experience of God in several ways. They spoke of the Seed, the Divine Principle, that of God in every one, etc. But their most common title was the Light of Christ Within or simply the Light Within, a metaphor probably suggested by the gospel of John (John 1:4-9). The important thing is not the name but the experience of divine guidance which if faithfully followed leads to growth in Christian living.

This inward revelation has not been thought of as opposed to God's outward or historical revelation in Jesus. The two have been considered as different expressions of the same reality. Friends experience God both inwardly and outwardly, both in the "inward vision" and in history.

Friends feel that this experience of inward guidance not only leads them into right paths; it is also the basis for Friends coming together as a Society. In a gathered group it is the basis of their unity. They feel that as they follow divine guidance, they are bound together in a loving fellowship, that the Light Within brings them into relation with One who is greater than any individual. In this respect early Friends were to be distinguished

from similar movements of the seventeenth century, such as the Ranters, for whom any individual leading was valid. Because Ranterism was extreme individualism, it could find no basis for unity and did not continue as a movement.

Friends also feel that God gives light "in some measure" to each of us. George Fox called upon Friends to "answer that of God in every one." By this he meant that in dealing with others we should be aware of the Light which God has placed within them and should respect it. In the Quakers' experience this is likely to lead to a response in the same spirit. At least this has been the Quakers' faith as William Penn and John Woolman approached the Indians, as Mary Fisher approached the Sultan, Elizabeth Fry the inmates of Newgate Prison, Samuel Tuke the mentally ill, and Rufus Jones the Gestapo.

In the following selections Friends have endeavored to portray this experience.

Every Man Enlightened By Christ

Now the Lord God hath opened to me by his invisible power how that every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ; and I saw it shine through all, and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came to the light of life and became the children of it, but they that hated it, and did not believe in it, were condemned by it, though they made a profession of Christ. This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man, neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it. For I saw in that Light and Spirit which was before Scripture was given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all must come to that Spirit, if they would know God, or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, which they that gave them forth were led and taught by.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, p. 33 (entry for 1648).

Present Experience

The Light Within, which is the central Quaker idea, is no abstract phrase. It is an experience. It is a type of religion that turns away from arid theological notions and that insists instead upon a real and vital experience of God revealed to persons in their own Souls, in their own personal lives. Christ no longer stands for a Being who came to the world to effect a mysterious scheme of salvation, a scheme to be mediated henceforth by men by an authoritative church, after He Himself had withdrawn into the heavens from which He came. Christ is God eternally revealing Himself. God in immediate relationship with men. Christ by his coming did not change the divine attitude; He revealed God as He essentially was and is, and made the fact forever plain that He is self-revealing and inwardly present wherever a human life is open and receptive. We no more need to go somewhere to find Him and the fish needs to soar to find the ocean or the eagle needs to plunge to find the air. If that is true, it is a great and momentous truth, worth struggling for and suffering for. The pioneer Quakers believed with all their mind and strength that something like that 'as true, that they had discovered it, tested it, and were themselves a demonstration of it. I feel as sure of it today as they did in Their day. It is not an outdated faith. It is a present experience. There are many of us who can say today: "This is what I

have waited for and sought after from my childhood. This is He. There is no other. I have met with my God; I have met with my Saviour."

We shall do well to proclaim with conviction and demonstration this main truth that God is not absentee, not unknowable, but already revealed, as truly as light or electricity or gravitation or life are revealed, and revealed in the only way in which He could be fully revealed, namely, in a Person. And furthermore we shall do well to declare, so that men will believe it, that the revelation of Him is still proceeding, that we have found Him ourselves and have living relationship with Him and are sure that the spiritual nature of man has access to Him. This kind of experience, the very basis of religion is what "Inner Light" means to us now.

Rufus M. Jones: An interpretation of Quakerism, 1936, pp. 1, 2. (Wayfarer series, no. 1.) Home Service Committee, London Y.M.

A Measure of God's Light To All

And this I declare to all the inhabitants in England and all that dwell upon the earth, that God alone is the Teacher of His people and hath given to everyone a measure of grace, which is the light that comes from Christ, that checks and reproves for sin, in the secrets of the heart and conscience; and all that wait in that light which comes from Christ which is the free grace of God for the power of Jesus Christ to destroy sin and to guide them in obedience to the light, so shall they come to know the only true God and Father of Light, in Christ Jesus who is the way to Him. And this I witness to all the sons of men, that the knowledge of eternal life I came not to by the letter of the Scripture nor hearing men speak of the Name of God. I came to the true knowledge of the Scripture and the eternal rest...by the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

William Dewsbury: Works, 1689, p. 54.

Known By Those Who Are Obedient

The main differences between ourselves and most other bodies of Christians arise from the emphasis we place on the Light of God's Holy Spirit in the human soul potentially in all human souls, and known in actual experience as these are turned towards the Light and are obedient to it. This direct contact between the Spirit of Christ and the human spirit we are prepared to trust to, as the basis of our individual and corporate life.

From this source all our special "testimonies" flow. The Light of Christ in the soul may be experienced by all: no form of the Divine Grace is the monopoly of priestly caste, through whom alone it can be ministered to others; all believers are called to be priests and in this as in all the service of the Church men and women are equally called to partake. Anyone may experience "the anointing," and, if this is known, may be called to minister to others of what God has given. We believe in the ministry as a spiritual service for God and men, free and open to any, whether men or women, who are truly followers of Christ, who know His Life in their souls, and hear His inward call. While the Life will necessarily find expression in some kind of human organization, this must not be allowed to cramp the freedom of the Spirit. It is not the organization, but the Life, that will safeguard the Christian community from error and schism. As the Light of Christ is known and followed,

as men and women truly live their own life with God, they will be kept in unity with Him and with one another.

Paper presented to London Y. M., 1920, by a commission in connection with the World Conference on Faith and Order.

Not a Substitute for Christianity

The actual mystical views of any given period, the symbolism through which these inward experiences are expressed, the "revelations" which come to mystical prophets, all bear the mark and color of their particular age. There are no "pure experiences," i.e., no experiences which come wholly from beyond the person who has them.

The greatest danger from mysticism, and there are dangers, is just this of becoming relatively detached from the experience of the race, the illumination of the great revealers of the past. To sever one's roots in history and in the slowly-gathered content of religious faith, "to build all inward" and to have no light but what comes "pure" by the inward way, is to suffer shrinkage, and to run the tremendous risk of ending in moral and spiritual bankruptcy, with only vagaries and caprices for assets. The sane 'mystic does not exalt his own experiences over historical revelation, he rather interprets his own openings in the light of the 'master-revelations. He does not foolishly conclude, because he has a vision of his own, that "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is out-dated and unnecessary, any more than the artist, with a "gift" of his own, concludes that he had no need of the inspiring guidance of the old masters. Mystical religion, instead of making the soul independent of Christ and of earlier revelations, rather insists that every hint of the Divine meaning that has come in any age, through any person, is precious, and that the supreme unveiling of the nature and character of God, the highest exhibition of the range and scope of human possibility in the person of Jesus Christ, is unspeakably important for anyone whose main concern is to be a son of God. This religion of first-hand experience is not a substitute for Christianity; it is Christianity alive and vocal in personal experience and in individual love.

Rufus M. Jones: Studies in mystical religion, 1909, pp. xxxiii-xxxv.

Faithful in Humble Stations

To most of us are given some common little jobs every day of our lives. To a very few comes the call to do something extraordinary, some great task. The world abounds in men and women who find happiness and opportunities for self-expression in being faithful in the humble stations of life which are theirs at a given time. If we are loyal to the truth as we see it, and respond with our might in the "common" situations in day-to-day living as we face them, the glow of the grace of God deepens and nurtures our faculties for insight and for recognition of the true worth of things and of men.

Ranjit Chetsingh, "The ground on which you stand is holy ground," in Friends World News, Spring 1975, p. 2.

The Spirit's Guidance is Consistent

Friends have been convinced that our God is a God of order and not of confusion. As George Fox wrote to King Charles in 1661 about Friends' attitude to war: "The Spirit of

Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it." That is, the Spirit's guidance is consistent, not leading one person to follow one path and another person an opposite path. Thus, one person's guidance may be expected to supplement that of another. As we learn to trust one another's perception, we discover that guidance may be a group experience as well as an individual one. The testimony against war was an early example of this.

George A. Selleck, "Four questions for Quakers." Address at N.E.Y.M., 1978. Quaker Life, February 1979, pp. 18-19.

A "New Man" Was Born Within

By 1660 [Fox] had taught some 50,000 Friends, as he called them, to sit in silence under the inwardly search lighting truth which showed up every act or impulse of self-will or self-righteousness. Naturally, they quaked, struggled and despaired for months, upheld meanwhile by fellow-quakers alert to self-made escapes, until finally a "new man" was born within, able to respond freely to positive leadings of the Light, and joy broke through. The Light was also the Spirit of Christ, whose power and judgment Friends had found to be loving.

Hugh Barbour, "William Penn, model of Protestant liberalism," Church History, June 1979, p. 158.

The Light Becomes Glorious

The blazing discovery which Quakers made, long ago, is rediscovered again and again by individuals and sometimes by groups. The embers flare up, the light becomes glorious. There is no reason why it cannot break out again, today, with blazing power. The world needs it desperately. All that I would say to you about the past is directed to you in the present. Ask yourself: Am I down in the flaming center of God? Have I come into the deeps, where the soul meets with God and knows His Love and power? Have I discovered God as a living Immediacy, a sweet Presence and a stirring, life-renovating Power within me? Do I walk by His guidance, feeding every day, like knights of the Grail, on the body and blood of Christ, knowing every day and every act to be a sacrament?

Thomas Kelly: The eternal promise, 1966, p. 48.

Living From the Center

THE HOLY SPIRIT is a mighty, rushing wind, and the river of life. It is the pulsing, moving, living, vibrant flow of the power of God. When we are caught up in it we feel the ecstasy of heaven and know that all things are possible, even to the moving of mountains. We know as well that in most of our living we are separated, even alienated, from this power of God and that the very purpose of life is to come ever more fully into harmony with Him so that we rest in the strength of His Being and move in the joy of the flow of His Spirit. When we have become one with His Spirit, it is no longer we who live but the power of the Spirit that lives through us. This is the Kingdom of God, union with God, life in the presence of God, and this is the richness of God's infinite love. This is living from the Center.

Francis B. Hall: Living from the center, 1980, p. 6.

THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

Early Friends thought of the Light Within as the Light of Christ Within. With the gospel of John and the letters of Paul, Friends in speaking of Christ mean both an historical person in Galilee whose life and death and resurrection are thought of as a revelation of God, and a present experience of being guided and sustained by an inward power. Thus Friends have a deep appreciation for the human Jesus, the young Jew who showed such remarkable insight into the ways of God, and who met his death on a cross at the hands of the Roman executioners. But also at the very heart of the Quaker faith there is a first-hand acquaintance with the living spirit of God, whom some Friends have referred to as the Light Within and others have spoken of as the Risen Christ or the Holy Spirit.

This double reference has continued with varying emphases throughout Quaker history. During certain periods the primary emphasis has been upon inward experience, to the neglect of the historical revelation. This happened during the period of quietism in the eighteenth century and again in some of the twentieth century emphasis on a general mysticism. At other times, particularly in the nineteenth century under the influence of the evangelical movement, the pendulum swung to greater emphasis upon the historical Christian revelation. Yet many present-day Friends feel that their faith requires both emphases. Without the historical revelation the inward experience lacks content, and without the inward revelation the historical lacks depth and relevance.

For many Friends, therefore, Quakerism is Christianity known and lived inwardly, yet bearing the outward fruits of the Spirit in loving concern. For these, knowledge of and commitment to the Christian historical revelation is essential to being a true Quaker. They endeavor to lay equal emphasis upon the inner and outer revelation. There may be great freedom and even diversity in describing one's faith or in interpreting the Christian message, but one must be committed to making it real in one's life.

God Known Outwardly in Jesus

Quakerism is primarily a method, just as science is primarily a method. Quakerism includes also a certain body of beliefs, as does science, but in both cases these beliefs are accepted because they have been arrived at by experts using the proper method.

They can be modified by further use of the same method by which they were arrived at in the first place. The scientific method is directed toward the outer world. This is true, even in the case of psychology, which depends as far as possible on laboratory methods. But the Quaker method differs from the scientific method in that it is dealing with what can neither be measured nor weighed. It is directed to the inner life, the response to moral claims and religious insights. Since both Quakerism and science are based primarily on experience, rather than on reason or authority, they have nothing to fear from the results of discovery or research.

Every vital method is inevitably based on accepted facts regarding the objective world. The scientific method assumes that the universe is a cosmos not a chaos, that the same results will follow from the same conditions, that man can, by means of his senses, learn some truth about the physical universe and by a process of reasoning deduce further truth

not revealed to the senses. This, and more, must be accepted by scientific faith and intuition.

Similarly, Quakerism, though primarily directed toward the inner life, accepts objective historical events. Chief among them is the central event in the history of Christianity, the revelation of God in human terms through Jesus of Nazareth. If God had not revealed himself both outwardly in history and inwardly in experience, the outward revelation would have lacked power and meaning and the inward revelation would remain formless and vague. Only as the outward eye of time and the inward eye of eternity are focussed on a single fact does that fact attain the three-dimensional quality of Truth.

Howard H. Brinton: Friends for 300 years, 1952, pp. xiii, xiv.

He Taught Us to Talk with God

The character of Jesus Christ, the tone of his voice over the centuries, so to speak, has made a tremendous appeal to me. I think it very likely that a great deal of legend has gathered round the story of his life; and yet many of his sayings ring so true today that they to use an old-fashioned Quaker phrase they speak to my condition. I rejected a good deal of my religious upbringing during the process of thinking for myself in my teens and later; I found it impossible to accept as true much that I had been told I must believe about Jesus; but thinking for myself brought me closer to Jesus, for he had the simplicity of approach that I wanted. He didn't just talk about God, he talked with God; and he taught his friends to do the same.

Kathleen Lonsdale, "Deeper mysteries than life." In The Friend (London), vol. 120 (1962), pp. 774-5.

Christ is Not Divided

Christ is not divided; the Christ who dwells within, the hope of glory, is the Christ of history. Only as we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and by faith embrace the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer of the world, and as our personal Saviour, can we hope to perform an adequate part in the social and other service which lies before us; for, after all, the world's misery is the result of the world's sin. War, intemperance, avarice, lust, the chief sources of suffering and poverty, are the outcome of selfishness; and all selfishness is sin. Civilization makes but small progress against its ravages. We need a fresh vision of the cross of Christ. Coming as penitents to the foot of that cross, we find pardon, peace and power.

Epistle of London Y. M., 1906.

A Present Help is He

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

O, Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

* * *

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

John G. Whittier: The complete poetical works, 1894, pp. 443-4. "Our Master" written 1866.

Jesus Was the Man of the People

Jesus was the man of the people, who knew their joys and sorrows because He lived as one of them. He learnt life at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth. He knew the trouble His mother had in patching the old garment, the value of the woman's lost coin, the cost to the widow of her two mites, the difficulty of the poor woman in getting justice from the unjust judge. He took our common life and daily toil and made them into divine things. The crowded cities of Galilee were His home. His heart went out to the helpless and the diseased, to the oppressed poor, to the rich, starved of true fellowship, and to the self-

righteous, separated by their hardness of heart from their fellows and from God. He gave Himself to men without reserve, in loving fellowship; their life and lot came into His life; those who opened their hearts to Him knew His life; and overcoming love came into their lives. When His people refused Him, and crucified Him, His love still sought them undespairing.

Epistle of London Y M., 1920.

The Divine Possibilities of Man

Christ is as truly a revelation of man as He is a revelation of God. We see at last in Him what man was meant to be. That means that in the light of His life we ought to reinterpret as we usually have not done the divine possibilities of the human nature we bear. We have seen God revealed in Christ. I wish now that we might learn to see the divine possibilities of man revealed in Christ. He was "a new Adam," as St. Paul puts it, with a stroke of genius "the first born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Nobody has ever said anything bolder than that. He was the first born of a new order of humanity, and nobody really and truly knows man until he has seen humanity reinterpreted in Christ. We have thought of man as a "ruin" and we have seen specimens of the race that plainly revealed the marks of ruin. But Christ is the first born of a new order of humanity. What we see in the everyday man makes us very solemn, but our hope is in the finished product that is forecast in this new type.

What I want, if possible, is to recover Christ as a real person, who lived and taught and healed and suffered and was victorious over temptation and misunderstanding and betrayal and desertion and defeat and death. He must have been the kind of person who could do what He did, the kind of person who could arouse the faith and wonder and adoration He did arouse. What is even more amazing, He must have been the kind of person who could inspire and vitalize a luminous line of saints through the centuries of history. What is still more amazing, He must have been the kind of person who could create and inspire the Church of the ages, and could be the major source of what is highest and best and most spiritual in the civilization of our western world.

Rufus M. Jones: A call to what is vital, 1948, pp. 109-10.

He Goes on Living

We renounce the past tense in our references to Jesus; not because there was not a past-tense time of absolutely crucial importance to our knowledge of him and of God but because we are so desirous not to box him in that past; and still more not to box him in the interpretations of him that were first attempted in the first one or two generations of his early followers. He goes on living, his wonders go on being done, his teaching goes on being added to, his death is died every day, and every day He rises again.

Bernard Canter: editorial in The Friend (London), vol. 119 (1961), p. 723. Slightly altered by author.

Swept into the Ocean of Light and Love

Perhaps for many of us, particularly for those of us who are younger, the way to the knowledge of the meaning of Jesus Christ lies through human friendship and affection and love. Then there may, come the moment when we are carried out of ourselves, far beyond

what we have hitherto known and clung to, and swept into the ocean of light and love that flow over the darkness of the world. We may be overwhelmed, drowned in it, losing all consciousness of self, and then drawn out of those deeps to find we are different people or, better, perhaps to know for the first time the persons we really are and can be. Then we may begin to see and understand the Light of which John wrote, which visits every man and is, as he proclaimed, the Light which is the Life in Christ.

Richenda Scott: "Love and discernment," The Friend, December 5, 1975, p. 1374.

A Life in the Power of the Spirit

Since Quakers believe that God is continually revealing Himself and cannot be captured in any formal creed, the only way we can talk about our experience is in terms of our personal faith. For me, being a Christian means that the life and teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, set the standards for our day to day living. It points further to the source of the power that sustained Jesus as he followed his way of life. For Quakers to be Christian means that they endeavor to follow however imperfectly his way. It is not a creed, but a life to be lived in the power of the Spirit.

George A. Selleck, "Four questions for Quakers." Address at N.E.Y.M., 1978. Quaker Life, March 1979, p. 31.

To Be Like Christ

To be like Christ then, is to be a Christian. And Regeneration is the only way to the Kingdom of God, which we pray for.

William Penn: Some fruits of solitude, 1693, Pt. I, no. 468.

THE VALUE AND USE OF THE BIBLE

Friends have always found great value in the Bible as a record of God's search for communion with men and women. Compiled from the inspiration of many ancient writers, the Bible has been for Friends not a blueprint or final authority but a source of knowledge of God's ways with us. Friends' insights have been confirmed in Scripture: "What the Lord opened in me I afterwards found agreeable to them" (George Fox) Modern knowledge of the history of the Bible has helped to reinforce our understanding of the spiritual values to be gained by its constant study.

Since all Friends are potential ministers, it is especially important that all should know the Bible well. It is the experience of generations of devoted Christians that the deepest meaning of the Bible can be ascertained not through reading any isolated text or texts, but only by viewing it as a whole. To learn its teachings, to understand their application to our lives, and to teach them to our children, we need to use modern scholarship about the Scriptures and to be "in that Spirit by which they were given forth."

To Bring Us to the Lord

And the end of words is to bring men to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter. So, learn of the Lord to make a right use of the Scriptures: which is by esteeming them in their right place, and prizing that above them which is above them.

Isaac Penington: Letters, ed. John Barclay, 1828, pp. 39-40. Letter XVI, undated.

Held in No Slight Esteem

These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter, but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God, by whom the Holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the Holy Scriptures, but they were very precious to me, for I was in that spirit by which they were given forth, and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, p. 34 (entry for 1648).

Guiding Truths for Modern Times

The weight of the words which are from God's spirit is according to the strength of life which he pleaseth to clothe them with. The message that he thus sends in any age hath a peculiar reference to the state of the world, and the state of the people of God in that age; and none can slight it (whether it be signified by word or writing) without dashing against God's authority, and despising him that speaketh in these latter days. Yea, the immediate word of the Lord, spoken and declared at this day, by any man to whom it pleaseth the Lord to commit the same, is of no less authority, nor more to be slighted now, than it was in his servants in the days past, by whom the Scriptures were given forth.

Isaac Penington: Works, 1681 ed., Pt. 11, p. 329. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized.

A Record of God's Dealings with Men

People say that the Bible is like a chain, and that no chain can be stronger than its weakest link; but the Bible is not like a chain. It is a library, for the word Bible comes from a word meaning not book but books, one volume may be of more importance than another without destroying the value of the rest.

The Bible does indeed now have to be regarded from an altered point of view. We cannot look upon it as an infallible teacher on points of history, or geology, or astronomy, for it is not. We cannot be sure as to the authorship of certain parts that we used to think unquestioned. But it remains true that it contains a record of God's dealings with men, and that here we have under the illumination of the same spirit as was in the people who wrote, the needed teaching and safe guidance.

Richard H. Thomas (1854–1904), from Life and letters by Anna B. Thomas, 1905, pp. 388-9.

Inspired Because They Inspire Us

The canon of Scripture may be closed, but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has not ceased. We believe that there is no literature in the world where the revelation of God is given so fully as in our New Testament Scriptures; we go back to them for light and life and truth. But we feel that the life comes to us, not from the record itself, but from communion with Him of whom the record tells. Through His own Spirit we commune with Him himself. In the words of Coleridge: "I meet that in Scriptures which finds me."

We feel them to be inspired, because they inspire us; we go to them for guidance because as we read them we feel our eyes are being opened and our spirits kindled. We

search them because "these are they that testify of Me." It is the living Christ we want to find, the eternal revealer of the will of God. It is the spirit behind the letter that we need.

Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, statement in London Y. M. Proc., 1919, p. 188.

Record of a Revelation

Though we agree with our fellow Christians in this high esteem for the Scriptures, from the earliest days the Society of Friends has regarded them as the record of revelation rather than the revelation itself, and has insisted that the Scriptures be not substituted for the Spirit which gave them forth or for Christ or for the Inner Light to which they testify. They are not the primary rule for faith and conduct, though genuine experience and sound moral conviction are found to be confirmed by them.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1930, p. 16.

The Experience of Sainly Lives

The Light Within ... is, of course, not a substitute for history the slow verification of truth by historical process; nor is it a substitute for Scripture, the loftiest literary expression of religious experience. There is no "substitute" for either of those ways of divine revelation. No one who neglects the unfolding of the will and purpose of God in history and in Scripture can ever make up for this neglect by stressing his claim to be the recipient of private revelation. No one can break the organic connection with the spiritual movements of the past, and confine himself to his thin channel of supplies, without suffering loss. But at the same time, it is clear, on the basis of the Quaker faith, that Scripture cannot be thought of as the one source of truth and revelation, the one and only word of God. It takes its place rather as a pattern of spiritual literature, rich with the experience of saintly human lives and raised by unmistakable inspiration to an incomparable religious value.

*Rufus M. Jones: An interpretation of Quakerism, 1936, p. 2.
(Wayfarer series, no. 1) Home Service Committee, London Y. M.*

A Growing, Expanding Revelation

[The Bible] is a growing, expanding revelation, indicating all the time the intellectual, moral and spiritual level of the time, but in every instance the writer proves to be a spiritual genius, touched with inspiration, so that even the most primitive sections and there are primitive sections are charged with insight and vision.

The unique feature of the Old Testament is the high quality of inspiration that throbs and beats through it. It is spiritual literature of an unusual order. The reader of it, in a new world and in a new world order, with an outlook wholly unlike that of these writers, still feels himself powerfully moved as he reads this inspired story of the far past, and feels that it is penetrated with a divine message and makes the God he loves and worships the living God of that far past.

[The] four Gospels, even with all the gaps, and after all the influence of transmission, are utterly unique creations, touched everywhere with divine inspiration, and they give us, to be sure, not a biography, but in very truth they give us a person, living, acting,

teaching, healing, loving, suffering, dying and living gain, great enough in person and life to guide the world through the ages and to be the revealer of God and man.

I have a profound faith that this literature of the ages, which has been passing through an eclipse in this scientific period, will come back into full sunlight splendor, as readers with highly trained minds come to see it for what it really is rather than viewing it in terms of a traditional theory.

Rufus M. Jones: A call to what is vital, 1948, pp. 49, 52, 116.

FRIENDS AND THE SACRAMENTS

The absence from Friends' worship of the outward observance of the sacraments is due to emphasis on the reality of inward experience. The direct communion with God and fellowship with each other known in the meeting for worship at its best, and the power of a true baptism with the Holy Spirit make the outward rites seem unnecessary, and to some, even a hindrance to the full attainment of the spiritual experiences which they symbolize.

With full appreciation of the help which has come through the outward forms to countless generations of Christians, Friends symbolize by their very lack of symbols the essentially inward nature of the sacraments. Friends' testimony is not a negative protest but an affirmation of the sacramental nature of the whole of life when it is under the leading of the Spirit.

No Outward Rites Needed

Our experience leads us to emphasize the fact that entrance into the community of Christ's people requires no outward rite, but is to be known only through trust, obedience, love, and commitment. As these are brought forth in us, we find ourselves drawn together into a unity with one another in which the presence of the Spirit of God is realized. Similarly we believe that our corporate experience at its best justifies us in claiming, in humility, that Christ's real presence is indeed known by us when even two or three are gathered together, in quiet expectancy, in his name.

We desire to bear a corporate testimony to the fact that, while to be made a member of Christ's body does not necessarily involve any outward rite, it does inescapably require an inner transformation of the whole self by the indwelling Spirit of God. And we would bear witness to the certain fact that, in a gathered company of worshippers, and apart from the use of the outward elements of bread and wine, the real presence of Christ is to be truly and effectually known, bringing us into unity with one another and with himself.

Maurice A. Creasey: Sacraments, a Quaker approach, 1956, pp. 6-8. Home Service Committee, London Y. M.

The Whole of Life is Sacramental

We need to guard against under-valuing the material expressions of spiritual things. It is easy to make a form of our very rejection of forms. And in particular we need to ask ourselves whether we are endeavoring to make all the daily happenings and doings of life which we call 'secular' minister to the spiritual. It is a bold and colossal claim that we put forward that the whole of life is sacramental, that there are innumerable "means of grace" by which God is revealed and communicated through nature and through human

fellowship and through a thousand things that may become the outward and visible sign" of an "inward and spiritual grace."

*A. Barrett Brown: Wayside sacraments, 1932, pp. 9, 10.
Published by the Literature Committee of London Y. M. for the
Yorkshire Friends Service Committee.*

All Called to Minister

Another main feature of Quakerism is the experiment which it has made, and is making, in the practice of lay-religion. Quakerism proposes to drop overboard the whole heavy load of theological "notions," including the innate depravity of man; it proposes also to jettison every shred and relic of priestcraft, everything that implies sacred talism or religious mediation for one person by another. Every person, male or female, is assumed, in this bold experiment, to possess spiritual capacity and, since God is Spirit, can come without mediation into direct living relation with Him. There are no "favorites," no persons who have exclusive privileges and so can do the "sacred things" for others. Every person must be religious for himself or he will never have any of the fruits of religion. Life is essentially sacramental and many of the most common things of daily life bring to us the consciousness of the real presence, so that, here again, there is felt to be no need for special sacrament or for a privileged mediator. Ministry is a very varied service. Anyone who can be a Christian can be a minister of some sort. There are many types, many forms, many degrees of it. But like life itself, spiritual value will be determined largely by personal faith, qualities of character, dedication of spirit, sensitiveness to guidance and willingness to pay the cost of excellence. This venture of faith in the experiment of lay-religion is one of the most original, one of the boldest and one of the most crucial attempts that Quakerism has made.

*Rufus M. Jones: An interpretation of Quakerism, 1936 pp. 2,
3. (Wayside series, no. 1.) Home Service Committee, London
Y. M.*

Inward Grace Without Outward Symbols

Our testimony as Friends concerning the use of the outward symbols is not, of course, that they are wrong but that the inward grace it is claimed that they convey is not dependent upon them and can be and is known to the sincere worshipper apart from the administration of the symbols. There may come a time and, indeed, for some there does come a time, when the outward symbols become a hindrance and not a help to that inward communion with Christ which it is our common desire to know in ever fuller and richer measure.

Most of our fellow-Christians believe that Jesus himself ordained this particular sacrament and that to neglect it would be a deliberate disloyalty to him. So far as I know this created no difficulty for early Friends who were fully assured that they knew the presence of Christ in their worship in such manner that no outward symbols could deepen the reality or were needed to mediate or authenticate the experience: an experience which has certainly been known in measure amongst Friends ever since.

I sometimes doubt, however, whether Friends are as clear in their own minds on this important matter as they should be and whether, in fact, we do know, as we claim to do,

that communion with Christ, at its deepest, which the sacrament of Holy Communion mediates to the majority of our fellow-Christians. Unless, in our worship, we know a similar experience our testimony can become a snare and a hindrance to a fully articulated Christian experience.

We know the grace of God ministered to us in countless ways in the sacraments of nature, of the family, of friendship, of books, of music, of art. These and other such ministries become the symbols of God's ever-loving presence and of his care for even the least of his wayward children. Through such manifestations he has revealed himself to us: they are sacraments, and as we remember them we "feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving".

*Edgar G. Dunstan: Quakers and the religious quest
(Swarthmore lecture), 1956, pp. 34-6.*

The Faithful Church is a Sign of God's Presence

We reaffirm the Friends' testimony to the essentially spiritual nature of the believer's relationship to God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Inward Way of the Spirit is not dependent upon specific visible signs. Because we believe that Christ himself has come to teach His people, any outward sign may become a hindrance to experiencing the presence and grace of God. It is only the living presence of Christ that is efficacious for reconciliation with God. The visible sign of that living presence is the faithful and obedient Church.

Friends United Meeting, 1980.

FRIENDS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

From the very beginnings of formal organization Friends have been keenly aware of their integral role in the Christian movement. Consequently the title of Society was chosen because it was considered that the term "church" belonged to the whole body of Christ and that no portion of that body had a right to assume to itself a name that implied any exclusion of the others.

Friends rejoice at the growing spirit of cooperation among all religious bodies. Although Friends work in many ways with those of other churches, we feel that unity of spirit comes not from intellectual acceptance of a definition of faith, but from a common commitment to the way of Christ.

Most Friends meetings in New England are members of or co-operate with local and state councils of churches. New England Friends are also connected with the work of the National Council of Churches and with the World Council of Churches through the participation of Friends United Meeting, of Friends General Conference, and of Friends World Committee for Consultation.

He That Keeps Not a Day

He that keeps not a day may unite in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same love, with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day may unite in heart and soul with the same Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other because of either of these errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and so breaks the bond

of unity. And here is the true unity, in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity.

And oh, how sweet and pleasant it is to the truly spiritual eye to see several sorts of believers, several forms of Christians in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their several places and different performances to their Master. For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit and life in him walking sweetly and harmoniously 'together in the midst of different practices.

Isaac Penington: Works, 1681 ed., Pt. I, pp. 240-41.

The Basis of Christian Unity

In the eighteenth century a Friend, Thomas Story, said: "The unity of Christians never did nor ever will or can stand in uniformity of thought or opinion, but in Christian love only."

In our experience we have found this to be true.

There is a unity among all who are responding to God's love and truth and who are accepting commitment to the way of Jesus Christ. Response and commitment lead to practical experience and application of faith rather than intellectual acceptance of a definition of faith.

We would not undervalue the importance of reasoned and sustained thought and the necessity of communication through language. But, in matters of religious faith, when it is sought to define concepts which are beyond full human understanding, tensions are often aroused instead of unity of spirit.

It is our experience that unity comes at a deep level from response to God's promptings, from commitment to the way of Jesus, and from the joyous interaction of Christian love. Those who share such unity are increasingly aware of the presence of God and have a consciousness of his activities and purposes in men's lives.

*From "Statement on basis of Christian unity" approved by
London Y M., 1964. See The Friend (London), vol. 122 (1964),
p. 966 (Aug. 14).*

A Prism and a Lens

In the Ecumenical Movement we are witnessing a stirring of the Spirit comparable in importance to the Reformation. The Reformation acted rather like a prism; it broke up the white radiance of the re-discovered Christ into rainbow colours and each of the Reformation Churches (of which the Society of Friends was one) tended henceforth to centre all its attention on its own particular band of colour. In the Ecumenical Movement Friends have the opportunity to see the action not of a prism but of a lens, gathering together, harmonising and focusing these isolated refractions.

*Maurice A. Creasey, as reported in account of London Y. M.
(1960) in The Friend, vol. 118, p. 761. (Selection slightly
altered by M.A.C.)*

A Common Witness

Fellowship with those who are concerned in "strengthening the Christian witness throughout the world" has helped Friends in appreciating the importance of standing together for a belief in the purposes of God in a world where indifference and materialism prevail. Friends have come to see the importance of a common witness with others arising from a common Christian faith rather than because they happen to agree in some one application of such faith. Responsibility for maintaining our special testimonies remains; but these should be seen not in isolation, but as expressions of our Christian faith.

*Report of Christian Relationships Committee, in London
Y. M. Proc., 1954, p. 123.*

The Holy Fellowship

Yet still more astonishing is the Holy Fellowship, the Blessed Community, to those who are within it.

In the Fellowship cultural and educational and national and racial differences are leveled. Unlettered men are at ease with the truly humble scholar who lives in the Life, and the scholar listens with joy and openness to the precious experiences of God's dealings with the working man. We overleap the boundaries of church membership and find Lutherans and Roman Catholics, Jews and Christians, within the Fellowship. Particularly does devotional literature become illuminated, for the Imitation of Christ, and Augustine's Confessions, and Brother Lawrence's Practice of the Presence of God speak the language of the souls who live at the Center. Time telescopes and vanishes, centuries and creeds are overleaped.

And this Fellowship is deeper than democracy, conceived as an ideal of group living. It is a theocracy wherein God rules and guides and directs His listening children. The center of authority is not in man, not in the group, but in the creative God Himself.

Thomas R. Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, pp. 81-4.

Mutual Irradiation

In the years immediately following the First World War, the Quakers worked in Poland distributing food and clothing. One of the workers who served a cluster of villages there became ill with typhus and in twenty-four hours he was dead. In this village there was only a Roman Catholic cemetery, and by canonical law it was quite impossible to bury one not of that confession in its consecrated ground. So they laid their cherished friend in a grave dug just outside the fence of the Roman Catholic cemetery. The 'next morning they discovered that in the night the villagers had moved the fence so that it embraced the grave.

This moving outwards of every type of fence so that it may embrace but not erase the unique and very special spiritual witness of the different religious groups, comes very close to the heart of what we really mean by the new ecumenism. We want to try to learn, even if with many painful mistakes along the way, how this creative interpenetration can be

carried out in such a way that fences can be moved but at the same time the fresh unique witness of each group, actively operating in the whole, may be kept.

Douglas Steere: Mutual irradiation, a Quaker view of ecumenism (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 175), 1971, p. 7.

A Hidden Convergence

For the ecumenical encounter to be creative, there is required not only the tender effort to understand, but an equally frank and open climate that acknowledges that genuine differences exist and that they matter, in fact matter terribly; and it will encourage each to probe his differences and to share them in all of their starkness. But it has found, and may find increasingly, that something happens in the course of understanding another's truth that irradiates and lights up one's own tradition and that on rare occasions may even give one a hint of a truth that embraces both, a hint of a hidden convergence.

Ibid.

PUBLISHING TRUTH

Though the methods have varied from one generation to another, Friends have always been interested in sharing their faith. A keen sense of mission carried the first generation of Quakers quickly over most of the then-known world. In 1656, they arrived in New England. In the 1700s the methods were quieter, but the message was spread. The evangelical movement of the 1800s stimulated Quaker interest in missions, in which New England Friends Eli and Sybil Jones, working in Jordan, were pioneers. During the twentieth century, many Friends have regarded service and relief activities as a further way of sharing their Quaker faith through loving action.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Friends World Committee for Consultation reported almost 200,000 Friends in the world, with approximately 118,000 of them in North America, 39,000 in Africa, 22,000 in Europe, 13,000 in Central and South America, 3,300 in Asia, 2,000 in Australia and New Zealand, and 100 in the Middle East. This world family, with all its diversity of culture, practice, and language, still feels called to share its Quaker faith with seekers everywhere.

Walk Cheerfully Over the World

Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue nor pen; but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the work and be valiant for the Truth upon earth; tread and trample all that is contrary under. Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, p. 263 (entry for 1656).

Let Your Lives Speak

In the fulfillment of our fundamental responsibility of bringing men and women to God there are openings for every Friend. Some have gifts that will help those with spiritual problems; other are better equipped to meet intellectual difficulties; all must strive for a

rich and joyous fellowship in the meetings into which we should draw seeking souls. We must go out to those around us in a spirit of love and prayer, letting our lives speak.

London Y. M. Proc., 1953, Min. 17, p. 253.

Have We "Good News"?

The early Friends were fully assured that they had a message for all men not merely that one or another of their testimonies was specially relevant to their own time, but that their message in its totality, in its wholeness, was God's good news for all sorts and conditions of men. "Have you anything to declare?" is a vital challenge to which every one of us is personally called to respond and is also a challenge that every meeting should consider of primary importance. It should lead us to define, with such clarity as we can reach, precisely what it is that Friends of this generation have to say that is not, as we believe, being said effectively by others. What, indeed, have we to declare to this generation that is of sufficient importance to justify our separate existence as part of the Christian fellowship? If we regard the Society of Friends merely as an ethical society we have no message for a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow and suffering. It is insufficient merely to offer palliatives to physical suffering, important and necessary as they are. There are those whose needs are on a different level and we should covet to have for these others at least an equal concern. Have we "good news" for them?

*Edgar G. Dunstan: Quakers and the religious quest
(Swarthmore lecture), 1956, pp. 60-1.*

We Must Go When We Are Sent

To whom and when shall we go? The answer is very simple we must go, and only go, when we are sent, and go where people are and especially "where there are no Friends" maybe into an emperor's parlour to talk and pray with him as Stephen Grellet did; into a war-stricken area or into a miner's kitchen. The Lord has a great and wide service for Friends to do, and never more than now. The market crosses still stand for us to occupy, the friendly pulpit, the disused meeting house, the town or country Friends living room. We must begin again, where people are, seeking them out, confident in the divine power of our Gospel to lift men out of disillusionment, despair, dishonour and inhumanity into the new day of truth, mutual trust, decency and hope.

*John A. Hughes: The light of Christ in a pagan world
(Swarthmore lecture), 1940, pp. 95-6.*

Planting a Seed

Quakerism, in its essence, is not a system; it is a spirit. If we could get back to the living experience of the early days, all that would be needed would be to go out and communicate it, and leave the results with God. This is exactly the point of view from which we ought to work in a mission field, planting a seed, not setting up a system. The creed, the ritual, the organisation, if needed at all, would develop normally in order to clothe the living organism, to give stability or coherence, a totally different thing from their being superimposed as part of the essence of a "foreign religion". The task is not to

be measured by the numbers who are in religious fellowship with Friends. Let us rather measure it by the greatness of the truths for which they stand.

*Henry T Hodgkin: Friends beyond the seas, 1916,
pp. 227, 238.*

Friends and Other Faiths

Early Friends were confident that God had placed the Light of Christ in every heart. And Friends traveled to far places talking to peoples of other faiths, convinced that God's spirit would provide a ready understanding and response. It was in this faith that William Penn and John Woolman approached the Indians in America and found acceptance.

In the past two centuries, Friends in their mission and service activities have been increasingly in touch with devout persons of other religious traditions, and the increased awareness of Eastern religions in recent decades has illuminated for some Friends the mystical elements of their own faith. Among many groups, Friends have found persons whose approach to religion is similar to their own. Without denying their Christian heritage, and in fact as an expression of it, Friends have often been able to enter into a relationship of mutual understanding and cooperation with those of other faiths.

Devout Souls Will Know One Another

The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.

William Penn: Some fruits of solitude, 1693, Pt. 1, no. 519.

There Is a Principle

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever they become brethren in the best sense of the expression.

John Woolman: "Considerations on keeping Negroes, Part Second." (written in 1761) in The journal and major essays, ed., Phillips P. Moulton, 1971, p. 236.

Love Was the First Motion

Love was the first motion, and thence 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 among them.

In ibid., p. 127 (entry for 1763)

A Christ-Shaped Window

All Quakers from George Fox to the present day have glimpsed God through a Christ-shaped window. It is true that some strange things are said and done in the name of Christianity. It is also true that Quakers recognize that many people receive the light of God through other-shaped windows, and recognize it as the same light of the same God. But until we are prepared to say that some other window is more illuminating, and that

we have to identify ourselves with that path, we cannot afford to disassociate ourselves from Christ in any way.

Hugh Campbell Brown, "Some thoughts of a Quaker by conviction." In Friends Bulletin of Pacific Y. M., May 1956, p. 2.

God Speaks to All

The Quaker conviction that God speaks directly to every man who has ears to hear without regard to race, color, status, or religion is a principle that stands above all historic religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity. But this principle found unique historic expression in the life and teaching, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The early Friends believed they were reviving primitive Christianity, and no recognized statement of Friends has ever questioned this. One is aware of the keen sense of need for a spiritual sanction above all divisive factors religious as well as political, economic and social. But Friends will contribute to this desired end by producing the fruit rather than by denying the root of their faith.

*Alexander C. Purdy: Questions about Quakerism, 1964, p. 4.
(The Quaker lecture at Indiana Y. M.)*

Universal Love of God

Our only reply might be that having felt inwardly in the presence of the living Christ both the joy and the misery of the world and having felt our arms being opened to the whole creation, while we may not ourselves at this point be able adequately to formulate a view of the universal Christ, we can be among those who are most open to it. For this universal burst of the limitless love of God has brought us not only to a Jesus Christ who is a "man for others," but to one who is "man for all others," and to sense that his very uniqueness is grounded in his universality.

Feeling this openness may for Friends be accompanied by a somewhat unique fearlessness in entering these ecumenical engagements in confidence that they will not rob us of Jesus Christ. The small clues that we have had up to now would indicate that any truth that we have found in these great world religions has only sharpened the urgency of Christ's inward call upon us and has given us a new sense of how little we yet know of him, and of how much we have yet to learn perhaps through these very meetings with our brothers in other Christian faiths and in the world religions. What these encounters do rob us of is the picture of Jesus Christ in our conventional Western institutional and theological dress. And what they have lavished upon us is that he would have infinitely more to disclose to us, if our free responses both to him and to each other were more adequate.

Douglas Steere: Mutual irradiation, Quaker view of ecumenism (Pendle Hill Pamphlet, no. 175), 1971, pp. 29-30.

No Nation Without a Witness

Is it right for us to put limitations on God to work in a set procedure? Can He not meet the needs of the people of different regions of this world in His own way? Does He have to conform to our method, or do what we comprehend to be the right method? Must we sit in judgment and condemn others because they do not follow our particular "method" of seeking God? How can we ever call ourselves His disciples if we fail to recognize that

He indwells every man, every human being with or without a label? That He is the light within the light that enlightens the whole world is a concept that embraces all and all must embrace.

God has at no time left any nation or people without a witness, without His presence. The great religions of this world are part of His revelations, His scheme to save mankind, to bring man closer to Himself, to reveal Himself as the God of Love. And those of us who have had that "Christ-experience" through His earthly ministry 2000 years ago must not only recognise His revelations through other faiths but learn from them and see His hand working through the mosaic of religious experiences.

Jesus Christ did not at any time indicate that he had either come to found a religion of His own or to appoint a certain group of people to do so. He came as the "Light of this world," as the Saviour of this world, as One who would reconcile man to God who would give others the power to overcome in their day-to-day lives and cause the kingdom of God to come upon this earth. This was the sum and substance of His message. The only way those of us who have experienced Him in our lives can serve His cause and further His Kingdom upon this earth is by sharing our Christ-experience with others so that they may be able to recognise the "indwelling Christ" and enter into that state of "asceticism" where everything fades into the background and one is overwhelmed by the ecstasy of His presence. It is a state when one is not conscious of possessing but being possessed, being lifted up to soaring heights.

Niranjan Nath Kaul, "What say ye of Christ?" Friends World News, Spring 1978, p. 3.

CHAPTER 2

Faith into Practice in the Life of the Meeting

The Meeting for Worship

The meeting for worship is the heart of every Friends' Meeting. It is based on faith that men and women can enter into direct communion with God.

In the excitement of their discovery that Christ was alive and had "come to teach His people Himself," early Friends gathered for worship fully expecting the Spirit to be present, and out of their hushed expectancy they entered into a fellowship with God that changed their lives. In the course of such worship came new revelations of Truth and a force that drove Friends out into the world to spread the news and to serve humanity.

Friends in New England try in their meetings for worship to capture the same spirit, a sense of God's presence in the midst, and to be open to new revelation. Some New England Friends gather in silent waiting upon God without designated leadership or program. Some are led in worship by a pastor whose function is to encourage and cultivate the ministry of each individual. In either case, for the meeting to be successful, all must share and respond.

Preparation for worship is essential. Preparation is a continual process of prayer, of reading the Bible and other religious literature, of learning from human experiences, and of daily practicing the presence of God. Some come on Sunday morning expecting to receive God's revelation with no previous effort on their part. For the cup to overflow on Sunday, however, it must be filled up all through the week. Early Friends came to worship with their cup overflowing, and it was then that the power was given to go out and to share the Truth that had come to them.

In the unprogrammed meeting, as the worship proceeds, out of communion with God a message may come to one of the worshipping individuals. Sometimes the message is purely personal; at other times it seems to belong to the meeting. The worshipper is then under divine compulsion to share it with fellow seekers, to contribute to the vocal service of the meeting, however haltingly.

In the meetings with pastoral leadership, the pastor may prepare a message and an order of service during the week, but the pastor is only a worshipper among worshippers, and the life of the pastoral worship depends on the response of the group. Ideally the prepared message arises not just from the pastor's own spiritual resources, but from the worship of the group.

Not all meetings, whether pastoral or based on silence, achieve a high level. Yet God does break through the crust of apathy, of worldly preoccupations or lack of preparation. We are humble learners in the school of Christ, and our weaknesses and failures should not deter us. When a meeting for worship gathers in active expectancy of God's presence with complete openness of heart and mind, the power to change lives will arise.

In That Which is Eternal

Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.

George Fox: "Epistle 149" (1657), in Works, vol. 7, 1831, p. 141.

The First That Enters

The first that enters into the place of your meeting turn in thy mind to the light, and wait upon God singly, as if none were present but the Lord; and here thou art strong. Then the next that comes in, let them in simplicity of heart sit down and turn in to the same light, and wait in the spirit; and so all the rest coming in, in the fear of the Lord, sit down in pure stillness and silence of all flesh, and wait in the light. Those who are brought to a pure still waiting upon God in the spirit, are come nearer to the Lord than words are; for God is a spirit, and in the spirit is he worshipped. In such a meeting there will be an unwillingness to part asunder, being ready to say in yourselves, it is good to be here: and this is the end of all words and writings to bring people to the eternal living Word.

Letter of Alexander Parker to Friends, dated 14.xi.1659 (i.e., Jan. 1660). Abram Rawlinson Barclay, ed.: Letters, etc., of early Friends, 1841, pp. 365-6.

The Meeting

And so I find it well to come
For deeper rest to this still room,
For here the habit of the soul
Feels less the outer world's control;
The strength of mutual purpose pleads
More earnestly our common needs;
And from the silence multiplied
By these still forms on either side,
The world that time and sense have known
Falls off and leaves us God alone.

John Greenleaf Whittier, "The meeting."

Waiting Upon the Lord

When you come to your meetings what do you do? Do you then gather together bodily only, and kindle a fire, compassing yourselves about with the sparks of your own kindling, and so please yourselves, and walk in the "Light of your own fire and the sparks which you have kindled?" Or rather, do you sit down in True Silence, resting from your own Will and Workings, and waiting upon the Lord, fixed with your minds in that Light wherewith Christ has enlightened you, until the Lord breathes life in you, refresheth you, and prepares you that you may offer unto him a pure and spiritual sacrifice?

*William Penn: Works, ed. Joseph Besse, 1726, vol. 1, p. 219.
"A tender visitation," published 1677. Spelling and punctuation modernized.*

Inward Condition of the Soul

As there is no true prostration of heart before Him without submission, no one can worship, in the true sense of the word, whose intentions and plans are consciously out of line with the Lord's will. If God is everywhere, and equally near to us at all times, and if the essence of spiritual worship consists in our inward attitude before Him, then nothing however it may stimulate worship in its outward form is worship apart from this inward condition of soul. There is no form or ceremony that can by itself be an act of worship; neither can there be such a thing as worship by proxy.

Richard H. Thomas: The objects of public worship, Yorkshire 1905 committee leaflet.

Ideal of Pastoral Worship

The Quaker method is extremely simple. No intermediary, ritual, or ceremony is required. Words are not essential. God does not need to be brought near for "Closer is He than breathing and 'nearer than hands and feet.'" It is the human mind and heart that need to be adjusted and made conscious of His presence. And as the sincere worshipper waits in silent meditation, or voices prayer or praise, he experiences this fresh sense of God, and with it a renewal of spiritual strength in communion with God and with his fellow worshippers.

In such a setting the whole meeting becomes a listening post for divine intimations and revelations. Vocal prayer gathers up the aspirations and needs of all the group. Hymns and spiritual songs, sung with the spirit and with the understanding, are not only appropriate but become the normal and helpful expression of faith, hope, and love toward God and in praise of Christ, the Savior of mankind. And the minister speaks with freedom and power; his message, whether conceived in previous meditation and prayer or given by the immediate operation of the Spirit on his mind, will be fresh, illuminating, and uplifting. He will be able to draw on the resources of past experience and study as well as to interpret helpfully the present manifestations of God's will and word.

North Carolina Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1962, p. 27

We Can Find God

We can find God when we are out on the hills or alone in the quiet of our own rooms or listening to great music. But we need to find Him too in the world of men, and for some of us this may be more difficult. The vision we have seen is to be brought back into daily life among people who are difficult to get on with as well as those who are easy. Because we are not separate and apart, we need to worship together as well as alone. We are all part of the great family of God and we cannot fully be ourselves without the help of other people. Jesus spoke of himself as the vine and of us as the branches and God as the vinegrower. Each branch is small and may look insignificant, but each is part of the vine, and is essential to the whole and has its meaning as part of the whole. The larger life surrounds and explains and glorifies all our small individual parts. We are essential to God and He and our fellow men are essential to us. We need the help of other souls who are striving upward, too, and who help us forward by the unseen threads that bind us together. One helps another with or without words and sometimes in our Meeting for Worship we

shall know the experience of a thought that has come to us, being voiced by someone else and carried further than we could carry it. This seems strange and wonderful, but it is part of the great unseen life in which we are all linked together.

Ruth M. Fawell: Worship and our Quaker meeting, 1957, p. 3.

Deeper Than Words

A Friends' meeting, however silent, is at the very lowest a witness that worship is something other and deeper than words, and that it is to the unseen and eternal things that we desire to give the first place in our lives. And when the meeting, whether silent or not, is awake, and looking upwards, there is much more in it than this. In the united stillness of the truly "gathered" meeting there is a power known only by experience, and mysterious even when most familiar. There are perhaps few things which more readily flow "from vessel to vessel" than quietness. The presence of fellow-worshippers in some gently penetrating manner reveals to the spirit something of the nearness of the Divine Presence. "Where two or three are gathered together in His name" have we not again and again felt that the promise was fulfilled and that the Master Himself was indeed "in the midst of us?" And it is out of the depths of this stillness that there do arise at times spoken words which, springing from the very source of prayer, have something of the power of prayer something of its quickening and melting and purifying effect. Such words as these have at least as much power as silence to gather into stillness.

Caroline E. Stephen: Light arising, 1908, pp. 68-9.

God Was There

The following is the testimony of an American Protestant minister attending Friends' meeting in Cambridge, England.

We had the great privilege of sharing in silent worship there for two years, in what is one of the most dynamic of Christian fellowships. There was no question in our minds as we left that house of prayer and meditation each week that something real had happened, that we had found God directly, immediately, experientially, corporately. We could feel the presence of spirit as definitely as we could feel the temperature. To be sure, it fluctuated. The meetings were not on the same level.

There would be "highs" and "lows." That variation, however, did not deny it rather confirmed our consciousness that here was a reality more than just the sum total of our individual and pooled insights, however limited it might be by those. God was there, where two or three were gathered together. We anticipated each coming Sunday with the same eagerness, and the same expectation of reality, with which a father in a distant city anticipates his week-end at home with his family.

Robert H. Beaven: In Him is life, 1946, pp. 175-6.

Prayer is a Great Power

Prayer offered in the right spirit is a great power and has a wonderfully unifying and quickening effect. The times of silent waiting in our meetings for worship are not intended only for the refreshment of the individual worshipper. If the silence be a living one, in which the worshippers seek to enter into each other's needs and to bear in their hearts the sufferings of the world without and the call to dedication in the service of the kingdom of

God, silent prayer may naturally lead also to vocal prayer. The expression of prayer will not be of the nature of an address to the congregation, neither exhortation nor exposition of doctrine. If it is offered simply and humbly in fellowship with others and as a heart-felt cry of man's spirit to his Heavenly Helper, it is of the utmost value in building up our common religious life. If we meet as members of one family in the presence of our Father, we should not shrink unduly from this offering of love.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 300.

Worship That is Creative

When it comes to the apparatus of worship that can renew men and women in attentive awareness to the living Listener, the classical Quaker practice of corporate silent waiting on God seems stark indeed to those who are used to the elaborate forms of a liturgical or even a free church service.

In laying them aside as Quakers do in their silent waiting worship, there is a responsibility whose magnitude it is scarcely possible to exaggerate that is placed squarely upon the Quaker worshipper himself. Here indeed is a service of worship that demands that every believer be his own priest. For in the Quaker meeting for worship, the member must still his body, still his mind, must attend to the presence of God, must thank and adore him for being what he is, must feel the incongruities in his own life that are out of keeping with such a presence, must long for their removal and for forgiveness, must be inwardly absolved, must become conscious of persons and situations in special need and draw them into this presence, must wait in utter stillness before God, and if some even deeper insight into his own condition should be discovered to him by any vocal ministry that may occur in the meeting or by the unhurried stay in the presence of the Divine Listener, he must be ready to yield to what is required of him.

In the Quaker waiting silence, there is a freedom and an absence of externally guided order which is both baffling and deceptive to one on first acquaintance with it. Only slowly do the inner forms of discipline of this form of worship make themselves known. One thing, however, is clear. This type of free worship can only be creative in a company of people who are intimately aware of and intimately gathered round the living Listener who knows all yet cares, who shares, and whose expectation never wavers in its constancy. The dilemma which anyone seeking to explain Quaker worship faces is that only when this inner ordering has dropped into the background as we are swept up into the presence of the Listener himself can the real significance of the preparation become apparent.

Douglas V. Steere: On listening to another (Swarthmore lecture), 1955, pp. 31, 33-6.

Not Alone in the Spoken Word

The gathered group depends utterly upon the Spirit of God for direction and leadership, and meets in the faith that that Spirit is available and can be known to all. He may be known in that "sound of gentle stillness" in which the ancient Hebrew prophet found him; in private and personal pressures and restraints which are significant for the individual worshipper and known to him alone; in vocal ministry which is initiated by the Spirit of God in the midst; in the spoken prayer, sometimes haltingly uttered and perhaps

offered in deep misgiving, yet in the belief that he to whom the prayer is addressed has prompted it. In all the rhythm of our worship we seek to be guided by and sensitive to the movement of God's Spirit in our own hearts within the gathered community. It would, however, be a great mistake were it to be assumed that only in the spoken word is God's message given to the worshipper. In the silence the faithful listener may catch the accents of a Voice within and become vividly aware of a demand which has absolute authority, a demand to which he must be obedient or betray something deep within him which has, for him, become the voice of God himself.

*Edgar G. Dunstan: Quakers and the religious quest
(Swarthmore lecture), 1956, pp. 32-3.*

Greatly Edified and Refreshed

Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have passed without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God's power and Spirit, which without words hath been ministered from one vessel to another.

Robert Barclay: Apology, prop. 11, sect. 6, 1908 Phila. ed., p. 336.

Group Worship Differs from Private Devotion

Those who persevere in group worship know that it differs from private devotion as the music of an orchestra differs from the music of a single player.

Beatrice Saxon Snell, A joint and visible fellowship, (Pendle Hill pamphlet no. 140), 1965, p. 10.

The Basis of Holy Obedience

Worship, according to the ancient practice of the Religious Society of Friends, is entirely without any human direction or supervision. A group of devout persons come together and sit down quietly with no prearrangement, each seeking to have an immediate sense of divine leading and to know at first hand the presence of the Living Christ. It is not wholly accurate to say that such a Meeting is held on the basis of Silence; it is more accurate to say that it is held on the basis of "Holy Obedience." Those who enter such a Meeting can harm it in two specific ways: first, by an advanced determination to speak; and second, by advanced determination to keep silent. The only way in which a worshipper can help such a Meeting is by an advanced determination to try to be responsive in listening to the still small voice and doing whatever may be commanded.

*Statement prepared for a Friends' meeting attended by
delegates to the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam,
Holland, in 1948.*

As Many Candles Lighted

As many candles lighted and put in one place do greatly augment the light and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together into the same life there is more

of the glory of God, and His power appears to the refreshment of each individual, for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself but in all the rest.

Robert Barclay: Apology, prop. 11, sect. 17, 1908 Phila. ed., pp. 364-5.

The Body of Christ

Quakerism revived a doctrine, central in the experience of the early Christian church. This was the belief that the Spirit would be poured out upon the congregation ready to receive it. I his Spirit, or "that of God in every man," or Christ within, or the Seed of the Kingdom, or the Truth, or the Inward Light, or he Witness of God in all Consciences, to use some of the many names which the Quakers applied to the Divine Presence in the midst of the worshipping group, unites all the members into a single organic whole, the body of Christ. The individual experience of inward oneness with an invisible Reality is also an experience of the mystical union of individuals with one another.

Howard H. Brinton: The society of Friends (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 48), 1949, pp. 3, 4.

What Friends Receive in Silence

Long experience shows that out of a living silence there may come precious openings of truth, and that words may be spoken to the condition of those present. When the spoken ministry is exercised under the leading of the divine Spirit, and not under the stress of a fixed engagement, it is felt that it is truly a response to a community need, and the spiritual level of the meeting is lifted to a higher plane. Comforted, supported, inspired, as the case may be, the worshipper does not take leave of God for a week; but inwardly assured of his loving presence, he goes out with a tendered conscience to meet the tasks ahead, strengthened in his purpose to live under divine guidance to the glory of his Master's name.

William Wistar Comfort: Just among Friends the Quaker way of life, 1945, p. 28.

No Set Form of Worship

We find that Jesus Christ prescribes no set form of worship to his children. In the whole New Testament there is no order nor command given in this thing, but to follow the revelation of the Spirit, save only that general one of meeting together; a thing dearly owned and diligently practiced by us. True it is, mention is made of the duties of praying, preaching and singing; but what order or method should be kept in so doing there is not one word to be found; yea, these duties are always annexed to the assistance, leadings, and motions of God's spirit.

Robert Barclay: Apology, prop. 11, sect. 10, 1908 Phila. ed., pp. 347-8.

Aware of a Deeper Life

Fox's whole method of worship was an outgrowth of his belief in and his experience of this close intimate inward relation between God and man. He thought of worship as mutual and reciprocal communion between the Human soul and God. The problem is never one of going somewhere to find a distant and hidden God. The problem rather is one of human preparation for meeting and communing with a God who is always near at

hand but cannot be found and enjoyed until the soul is ready for such an exalted experience. It means, therefore, that the worshipper, if he is to enter into this great attainment, must cease his occupations with external affairs, his thoughts of house and farm and business, and centre down into those deeper levels of his being where he can feel the circulation of spiritual currents and have healing and refreshment and restoration and fortification flow in from beyond himself. This is not worship, but it is preparation for it, and there comes, with this awareness of the deeper Life, a palpitating sense of joy and wonder, and a surge of appreciation and adoration which form the heart of worship. It was in moments like that in the early Quaker meetings there came tremulous waves of emotion, which set the entire group into a state of quaking, from which the name of the movement was born.

Rufus M. Jones: George Fox, seeker and Friend, 1930, pp. 73-4.

VOCAL MINISTRY IN THE MEETING FOR WORSHIP

The dynamic, spoken word has always had an important place in bearing witness to the faith of Quakers. When nurtured in prayer, our vocal ministry has the power to change life. Vocal messages can be as effective in a few halting but spiritually filled words as in the most learned and articulate message given in a meeting for worship. Friends should be encouraged to share in the gift of vocal ministry.

No Quenching of the Spirit

When we gather together in worship let us remember that there is committed to each of us, as disciples of Christ, a share in the priesthood. We should help one another, whether in silence or through spoken prayer or words of ministry. Let none of us assume that vocal ministry is never to be our part.

Our daily lives should be linked with the meeting for worship. Day by day we can dwell prayerfully on thoughts which may at some time lead to ministry. We should try to discern and to interpret the spiritual meaning of the movements of thought and action at work in the world around us, entering into understanding sympathy with our fellow worshippers.

If the call comes, there should be no quenching of the spirit; the sense of our own unworthiness must not exempt us from this service, nor the fear of being unable to find the right words.

Faithfulness in speaking, even very briefly, may open the way for fuller ministry from others. The tender and humble-minded utterance, given faithfully, can carry its message to the hearts of hearers. Above all in vocal prayer even broken and imperfect words springing from a deep place in the heart may wonderfully draw those present into communion with God and with one another.

London Y. M. Proceedings, 1949, p. 32, and amended p. 297

Keep Close to the Divine Opening

From one month to another this love and tenderness increased, and my mind was more strongly engaged for the good of my fellow creatures.

I went to meetings in an awful frame of mind and endeavoured to be inwardly acquainted with the language of the True Shepherd. And one day being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up and said some words in a meeting, but not keeping close to the divine opening, I said more than was required of me; and being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could take satisfaction in nothing. I remembered God and was troubled, and in the depth of my distress he had pity upon me and sent the Comforter. I then felt forgiveness for my offense, and my mind became calm and quiet, being truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies. And after this, feeling the spring of divine love opened and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting, in which I found peace. This I believe was about six weeks from the first time, and as I was thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the language of the pure Spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart and taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet through which the Lord speaks to his flock.

John Woolman: The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, pp. 30-1 (entry for 1741 or 1742).

All Are Called

In the earliest period of the Christian Church His Spirit was, agreeable to ancient prophecy, poured upon servants and upon handmaidens; and we believe He continues to call from the young and from the old, from the unlearned and from the wise, from the poor and from the rich, from the women as well as from men, those whom He commissions to declare unto others the way of salvation.

From the address issued by the London Y M., 1841.

Keep Close to the Gift

We do not regard those who have the gift of "ministry" as infallible, or even as necessarily closer to God than many of the silent worshippers who form the great majority in every congregation. We feel that the gift is from above, and that on all of us lies the responsibility of being open to it, willing to receive it, should it be bestowed, and to use it faithfully while entrusted with it. But we fully recognize that to do this perfectly requires a continual submission of the will, and an unceasing watchfulness. We know that to "keep close to the gift" is not an easy thing. We know that the singleness of eye which alone can enable any one always to discern between the immediate guidance of the Divine Spirit and the mere prompting of our own hearts, is not attained without much patience, and a diligent and persevering use of all the means of instruction provided for us.

Caroline E. Stephen: Quaker strongholds, 1891, p. 58.

True Ministry Comes from Life

The Quaker group silence, the cooperative team work of the entire assembly, the expectant hush, the sense of divine presence, the faith that God and man can come unto mutual and reciprocal correspondence, tend to heighten the spiritual quality of the person who rises in that kind of atmosphere to speak. But that group situation, important as it is, will not work the miracle of producing a message for the hour in a person who is sterile

and has 'thing to say. Even the miracle of feeding the multitude in Galilee needed at least a nucleus of loaves and fishes to start with. Vital ministry is not abstract and doctrinal, it is charged with insight for the meaning and significance of life. It answers back to specific human need. It "speaks to the condition" of souls. It correlates with concrete reality. It sets hearts beating. It quickens drooping spirits. It restores waning faith. It fortifies the wills of those who hear it. It makes the world look different. That means that it must come out of life and, if it is to have value, it must refresh life.

Rufus M. Jones: The trail of life in the middle years, 1934, pp. 45-6.

A Truly Covered Meeting

In a truly covered meeting an individual who speaks takes no credit to himself for the part he played in the unfolding of the worship. For the feeling of being a pliant instrument of the Divine Will characterizes true speaking "in the Life." Under such a covering an individual emerges into vocal utterance, frequently without fear and trembling, and subsides without self-consciousness into silence when his part is played. For One who is greater than all individuals has become the meeting place of the group, and He becomes the leader and director of worship. With wonder one hears the next speaker, if there be more, take up another aspect of the theme of the meeting. No jealousy, no regrets that he didn't think of saying that, but only gratitude that the angel has come and troubled the waters and that many are finding healing through the one Life. A gathered meeting is no place for the enhancement of private reputations, but for self-effacing pliancy and obedience to the whispers of the Leader.

Thomas R. Kelly: The gathered meeting, 1941 ed., p. 6. The Tract Assoc., Philadelphia Y M.

How Ministry Comes

Out of this leveling and this "gathering" of the meeting, some vocal ministry often develops. It is not the abolition of ministry but the abolition of the passive laity that the Society of Friends has ever striven for. One never brings anything to meeting with the certainty of giving it there, but one tries not to come empty. Under the influence of the quiet prayer and this sense of unity in the meeting, what light one brought is often completely set aside, or one feels that this should be reserved for another occasion, or it is made over, or new accents, new illustrations, new simplifications are effected. The mind is often drawn to an entirely fresh seed that unfolds itself there in the consciousness of the worshipper.

When I feel drawn to share something in the quiet meeting for worship, I simply rise and say it as briefly as I know how, seeking ever to "keep close to the root" and to avoid all vain and distracting ornamentation. The other worshippers often do not raise their heads or open their eyes. If they feel in unity with what I have shared and if it speaks to the condition of the meeting, out of which, if it be genuine, it originally sprang, then it becomes a seed for their meditation and something to search themselves in regard to. If it does not, they pay little attention to it and continue in their own worship. If this or something given by one of the other members of the meeting interprets the common need

and exercise of the meeting, it is often added to by others and a common theme is developed that grips the mind of every participating worshipper who is present. I say "participating" worshipper, for it is possible to come to a Friends' Meeting and just "sit" or perhaps wait and often wait in vain for someone to "say something." Perhaps in no service of worship is so much left to the worshipper as in a Friends' Meeting.

Douglas V. Steere: A Quaker meeting for worship, 1941 ed., pp. 9-11. Leaflet published by Philadelphia YM.

Moved to Speak

If I have not been moved to speak before arriving, such an impulse, if it comes at all, is likely to arise after I have been waiting a while. It arises within my silence. An insight or understanding flashes into my mind. A prayer or a pleading or a brief exhortation comes upon me. I hold it in mind and look at it, and at myself. I examine it.

Is this a genuine moving that deserves expression in a meeting for worship, or had I best curb and forget it? May it have some real meaning for others, and is it suited to the condition of this meeting? Can I phrase it clearly and simply? If it passes these tests I regard it as something to be said but I am not yet sure it should be said here and now. To find out how urgent it is, I press down and try to forget it. If time passes and it does not take hold of me with increased strength, I conclude that it is not to be spoken of at this time. If on the other hand, it will not be downed, if it rebounds and insists and will not leave me alone, I give it expression.

If it turns out that the words were spoken more in my own will than in the power, I feel that egotistical-I has done it, and that this self-doing has set me apart from the other members of the meeting. I am dissatisfied until again immersed in the life of the group. But if it seems that I have been an instrument of the power, I have the feeling that the power has done it and has, by this very act, joined those assembled even closer. Having spoken, I feel at peace once again, warmed and made glowing by the passage of a living current through me to my fellows. With a heightened sense of fellowship with man and God, I resume my silent practices.

N. Jean Toomer: An interpretation of Friends' worship, 1947, pp. 26-7 Friends General Conference.

Guidance in Ministry

What it is that constitutes guidance in ministry, and the means by which it is to be sought and found, is a difficulty with 'many. Some are afraid to speak in a meeting for worship, because, though they know something of the love of Christ, they do not seem to have any experience of a call that is undeniably supernatural. Others may be too readily taking their own thoughts and feelings as a warrant for obtruding them on others. Our natures differ greatly, and it is not possible to lay down any precise rules that all can follow. To some it seems that God speaks, as it were, by the earthquake and the whirlwind; to others it is in a very still small voice. There are strong impulses which make the heart beat and body tremble; there are, on the other hand, faint whispers which we need to be on the alert to hear. Both may be equally the voice of the true Shepherd, calling us to follow His leading. What we can safely say is that His guiding hand and voice are not

confined to meetings for worship, and that we need to recognise it along the common ways of life, and to find it through the right use of our natural faculties. If we are going our own way six days in the week, it is presumptuous to expect that He will guide us miraculously on the seventh. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

London Y.M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 291.

The Gathered Meeting Speaks

In the Meeting for Worship after the manner of Friends, it sometimes befalls that a person who feels moved to break the silence and share a fresh insight unknowingly expresses the thoughts of those listening. The speaker is not speaking to the Meeting; the gathered Meeting is speaking through one member.

Daisy Newman: A procession of Friends, 1972, p. vii.

Meeting Leadership

Human beings possess a diversity of gifts. Friends acknowledge the guidance of God received through any member, even while recognizing particular members' special gifts for leadership.

Though Friends do not ordain ministers, they seek to identify and to encourage in individual members the gift to minister or to counsel or to coordinate or to advance a discussion in the spirit of God. Thus leadership in the meeting is widely shared, and the full body profits from that which each member can contribute.

Able Leadership

For any religious movement to be effective, it must have able leadership. We know that our growth and outreach are dependent upon leaders with vision and understanding who can give capable guidance to our Quaker organizations and to our local Meetings. What we desire is not an authoritarian hierarchy, but rather a multitude of proficient and dedicated workers, with sufficient guidance to give efficient co-ordination and direction to our activities. Organization is not an end in itself, but merely a necessary means for the effective promotion of our Lord's work.

Seth B. Hinshaw: Developing Quaker leadership, 1964, pp. 5-6.

Some Are Particularly Called

We do believe and affirm that some are more particularly called to do the work of the ministry, and therefore are fitted of the Lord for that purpose; whose work is more constantly and particularly to instruct, exhort, admonish, oversee, and watch over their brethren; and that there is something more incumbent upon them in that respect than upon every common believer.

Robert Barclay: Apology, prop. 10, sect. 10, 1908 Phila. ed., p. 310.

All Wait on the Lord Together

While we gladly acknowledge the gift of pastors to the church, we feel the necessity of the greatest care and watchfulness, lest a misapprehension of the place and duties of a pastor defeat the very purpose for which a pastoral gift was bestowed. No meeting can be

held to the glory and in the power of God where His message, even through one of the weakest or most unattractive of his instruments, is suppressed.

Minutes of Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, 1900, p. 50.

Men and Women Equal in Service

From the beginning Friends have stood for equality of opportunity and of responsibility in the service of the Church as between men and women. One of the functions of the Church is to set concerned and qualified persons free for religious service; "to liberate them" is the phrase actually used among Friends. All that this involves in training, oversight, organization and finance is applied equally in the case of women with that of men; nor is any woman excluded as such from any function held to be proper to the Church. Historical study might show indeed that women had a very special part to play in prophecy; and the preaching office is open to them in more than one Church. It is a matter, however, of some concern to Friends that in fact equality is not fully achieved even in our own Society. Quaker women have not set themselves entirely free of the shyness of the sex long kept in the background and deprived even of education. While desiring to treat with respect the traditional convictions of other Churches in this subject, Friends feel that they have a testimony to offer in the interests not so much of women themselves as of the proper functioning of the Church.

Percy W. Bartlett: Quakers and the Christian church, 1941, pp. 36-7 Faith and Order Commission, London Y. M.

The True Pastoral Leader

The true pastoral leader, as Friends in our strongest periods have shown, is not a person of exalted status and certainly not the "head" of the meeting. He is always at work, encouraging this one, teaching that one, walking with another. He may speak on public occasions, but often his leadership is not obvious at all. He will not do anything if he can get another to do it, not because he is lazy, but because the doing will develop the other person, and it is the development of others that is always his goal. He will speak if he needs to do so, but he knows that speaking is only one of many tasks which spiritual nourishment requires. He may teach more than he preaches, and he will not be afraid to be silent or to sit within the congregation rather than face it, if he believes this will facilitate the general sense of responsibility.

D. Elton Trueblood: "The paradox of the Quaker ministry," in Quaker religious thought, 1962, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 12-13.

The Good Pastor

The good pastor conducts himself in the worship service so that everyone present feels a sense of responsibility, and a sense of freedom. Vocal participation is encouraged. The atmosphere of reverent worship is cultivated and everyone is encouraged to be faithful to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The "program" itself, if there be one, is sufficiently flexible to allow for any immediate Divine leading. Sometimes it may happen that the pastor does not speak at all, or speaks very differently than he had planned. The operation

of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of dedicated people is not hampered by a pastor who is himself under the guidance of the same Spirit.

The pastor in a Friends' meeting must follow the difficult and exacting way of worshipping with the people rather than merely preaching to them.

Five Years Meeting: Friends worship in a pastoral meeting, 1960. Study booklet no. 1, p. 17

All Are Co-Workers

The membership of a Friends Meeting, or of the Society of Friends, is made up of persons with varying gifts or abilities. Each gift or each type of ability may be a form of ministry, and hence of leadership, and each member is a part of "the body" or the whole. Each member in the exercise of such a gift or gifts of ministry is a nurturing, functioning part of the body.

Some members have gifts of teaching and counselling, or of 'organization and administration, or of vocal ministry or public speaking, or other similar gifts which identify them as leaders. Members with other gifts are not simply passive followers, but all are co-workers in the care and nurture of the body and its members. And all are co-workers in witness to our faith and in the service of love and justice among people and nations.

"Friends as leaders: The vision, instrument and methods," report on workshop at Pendle Hill, 1979, pp. 13-14.

Resources of the Membership

The average Friends Meeting in these days has resources in its membership for a thorough program of adult religious education. This does not mean that it has experts in these various fields; it means that its membership usually includes persons who can, in their spare time and as an avocation, make themselves authorities in some field pertaining to the religious life of the Meeting. We know this because in any Meeting there are a number of persons who have done just that in following their hobbies. If they could be challenged with the possibility of becoming a Meeting resource in this or that aspect of religious knowledge and skill there are no limits to the possibilities of religious education in and through the Meeting.

Alexander C. Purdy: An adequate leadership for Friends meetings (Ward lecture), 1950, pp. 15-16. Guilford College.

Corporate Guidance

The corporate guidance and testing of the clearness of individual leading are crucial functions of the local Meeting. The special value of this system of support and accountability is the opportunity it provides for individuals to grow spiritually and to acquire skill in articulating an inner vision, in facilitating the vision of others, and in translating vision into corporate work and witness.

"Friends as leaders: The vision, instrument and methods," report on workshop at Pendle Hill, 1979, p. 11.

Authentic Leadership

Friends believe that true leadership consists first and foremost in being led. This conception involves a curious but profound paradox. True leaders are not in any important

sense initiators; rather, they are chiefly responders to the Divine Will. This means that the chief determinant of authentic leadership is not human talent but availability to the Divine. The only authentic leadership is divine followership. The converse of this is that when leadership ceases to be Spirit-led, it ceases to be authentic.

Ibid., p. 9.

THE MEETING FOR BUSINESS

In meeting for business, Friends are seeking to discover and to implement the will of God. Aware that they meet in the presence of God, Friends try to conduct their business reverently, in the wisdom and peaceable spirit of Jesus. Insofar as a divine-human meeting takes place, there is order, unity, and power.

The Quaker way of conducting business is of central importance. It is the way Friends have found of living and working together. It can create and preserve the sense of fellowship in the meeting, and from there it can spread to other groups and decisions in which individual Friends or meetings have a part. Thus it contributes to the way of peace in the world.

Proceed in the Wisdom of God

Being orderly come together [you are] not to spend time with needless, unnecessary and fruitless discourses, but to proceed in the wisdom of God not in the way of the world, as a worldly assembly of men, by hot contests, by seeking to out speak and overreach one another in discourse, as if it were controversy between party and party of men, or two sides violently striving for dominion not deciding affairs by the greater vote but in the wisdom, love and fellowship of God, in gravity, patience, meekness, in unity and concord, submitting one to another in lowliness of heart, and in the holy Spirit of Truth and righteousness, all things [are] to be carried on; by hearing, and determining every matter coming before you in love, coolness, gentleness and dear unity.

Edward Burrough: Testimony, 1662, in Letters of early Friends, 1841, p. 305.

Sense of Community

Friends found that even the proper functioning of the Quaker business meeting depended upon a strong sense of community, or caring in the group. Decisions were reached without a vote, by "gathering the sense of the meeting." But this would happen only when those taking part respected and cared for one another. It was one of the happier discoveries of the early Friends not only that individuals endeavoring to follow the Light of Christ Within would be led to a unity, but that the caring group could be led as well, and might even be given a higher insight than any individual.

George Selleck: Quakers in Boston 1656–1964, 1976, p. 270.

The Quaker Method of Reaching Decisions

According to the Quaker method, decisions are reached not by voting nor gathering the majority opinion, but by gathering the "sense of the meeting." It was the experience of the early Friends that faithful following of the Light of Christ Within led them into unity with one another, and their experience has been repeated generation after generation to

the present time. Their great affirmation that the Light is given in some measure to every one implied that each may also be led, if not in the same path, at least in the same direction. Thus the nearer the members of a group come to this one Light, the nearer they will be to one another.

The possibility and likelihood of such unity in a Friends meeting for business is the basis of the Quaker attempt to gather the sense of the meeting. Friends have faith that there is a unity there to be gathered the Divine will in this instance, as grasped by those present in this group. Not only do Friends feel that by pooling their individual insights they may come close to finding the Divine will, but Friends are also convinced that there is such a thing as corporate guidance, where a group, meeting in the right spirit, may be given a greater insight than any single person. It is this unity of insight that Friends seek and that the clerk hopes to capture in his or her minute. If an individual differs from what appears to be the general sense of the meeting, it may be taken as a sign that the Divine will has not quite been grasped and that the inclusion of the new insight may give a more accurate determination of the Divine will.

After due consideration has been given to all points of view expressed in the meeting, it is the duty of the clerk to weigh carefully the various expressions and to state what he or she believes to be the sense of the meeting, not alone according to numbers but also according to the recognized experience and spiritual insight of the members.

This matter of weighing the individual utterances in arriving at the sense of the meeting is quite fundamental to the Quaker method. Several Friends may quite sincerely speak in one direction, and then one Friend may express an insight which carries weight and conviction in the meeting in a different sense. This one acceptable communication may outweigh in significance several more superficial ones.

George A. Selleck: Principles of the Quaker business meeting, pp. 7-9.

The Mind of the Meeting

It would be too high a claim to make to say that Friends have perfected the method here indicated, but it may rightly be said that they have put it into practice as few others have done and have found it the most satisfying and creative way of approximating to what is for us the will of God in a given situation: the will of God, that is, in so far as we are then able to apprehend it. The "mind of the meeting" may not always reach that clarity which we could have wished, yet we may be satisfied that, having regard to the frailties of human nature, our partial apprehensions of truth, the varying gifts with which we have been endowed, the fallibilities of our judgement, the decision we have reached is for us, in this situation, right and proper, and should do no final violence to the judgement of any member.

Edgar G. Dunstan: Quakers and the religious quest (Swarthmore lecture), 1956, pp. 58-9.

The Search for Unity

The continuing search for unity is what makes the conduct of Friends business so uniquely coherent and effective. Friends are not trying in the business meetings to find the

broadest area of common acceptance in order to form a consensus, but are searching for the Truth and for an understanding of our own relationships to it. That understanding may include quite a range of views, each of which must be valued, if not finally accepted. It is our ability to pass through our particular views to the common center of our Spiritual lives that makes the Friends business method both difficult and rewarding, and ultimately sustaining.

William B. Watson, Before business begins, 1976, p. 18.

Work in a Humble and Loving Spirit

Friends should endeavor to work with one another in a humble and loving spirit, each giving to others credit for purity of motive, notwithstanding differences of opinion. They are cautioned, however, to exercise mutual forbearance and, having expressed their views, to refrain from pressing them unduly when the judgment of the meeting obviously inclines to some other view.

George A. Selleck, Principles of the Quaker business method, p. 10.

Speaking to Business

Since our method of transacting business presumes that in a given matter there is a way that is in harmony with God's plan, our search is for that right way, and not simply for a way which is either victory for some faction, or an expedient compromise. In a Meeting that is rightly ordered no one wins or loses, but Truth prevails.

Everyone has the privilege and the duty to lay before the Meeting whatever relevant insight one may possess. Out of this sharing of light may come a greater light which would not have been possible had some refrained from speaking.

Our conviction of God's care for this world and our respect for the dignity of man must carry over into the conduct of our Meetings for Business. We are called to love those present enough to listen to what they have to say and to speak what is worth their hearing.

Thomas S. Brown, When Friends attend to business.

Quaker Unity

The crucial difference between the secular methods of human consensus or unanimous consent and the Quaker business method is that, while the former seeks to find a unity according to human wisdom, the latter endeavors to do so according to the leadings of the Spirit of God. In the religious context of worship in a Friends meeting for business, Friends have learned to tell the difference. A strong feeling on the part of even one Friend that the meeting is moving in opposition to the Truth, to the guidance of the Spirit, may properly be sufficient to block action of a meeting, whereas the objection of several on the basis of prudence or of human wisdom may not be.

George A. Selleck, Principles of the Quaker business meeting, p. 14.

Sense of the Meeting, Not Consensus

I am convinced that there is a profound difference between consensus and the sense of the meeting, for the latter involves faithfulness to the promptings of the Spirit. Most Friends understand that the sense of the meeting does not necessarily mean 100 percent

approval. However, it does mean the Friends are in unity. Unity is a far stronger definition than "general agreement" or "solidarity in sentiment and belief." The sense of the meeting means that, while some Friends may not be in full agreement regarding a proposed course of action, they are willing for the meeting to move forward.

This concept was seldom more dramatically exemplified than at an early meeting of the American Friends Service Committee. Portions of several days were spent in discussing a proposed new program. Each time the matter was discussed, a Friend spoke against the involvement of the AFSC. Finally, Rufus Jones, who was presiding, said, "Friend, we have listened to your views and feelings about this matter. Yet it is clearly the sense of the meeting that we approve the program. Are you willing to stand aside in view of the desire of the meeting to move forward?" The response was "yes," and when the meeting concluded, the man came forward and said, "Rufus, it's going to take money to start this program. Here's my check." There was clearly more than 'general agreement' at work in this meeting! The profound difference is that unity was sought in a meeting for worship in which business affairs were considered. In the search for unity, the group was sensitive to the leadings of the Spirit as it sought to discern its movement in the life of the gathered meeting.

Elwood Cronk, "Not consensus," in Friends Journal, April 1, 1982, p. 11.

Truth Which Satisfies Everyone

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.

At its best, the Quaker method does not result in a compromise. A compromise is not likely to satisfy anyone completely. The objective of the Quaker method is to discover Truth which will satisfy everyone 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.

Howard H. Brinton: Friends for 300 years, 1952, p. 109.

THE MEETING AS A CARING COMMUNITY

The nature of their purpose and quest as Friends binds members of a meeting and of the whole Society into an intimate fellowship whose unity is not threatened by the diversity of leadings and experiences which may come to individual Friends. To share in the experience of the Presence in corporate worship, to strive to let Divine Will guide one's life, to uphold others in prayer, to live in a sense of unfailing Love, is to participate in a spiritual adventure in which Friends come to know one another and to respect one another

at a level where differences of age or sex, of wealth or position, of education or vocation, of race or nation are all irrelevant. Within this sort of fellowship, as in a family, griefs and joys, fear and hopes, failures and accomplishments are naturally shared, even as individuality and independence are scrupulously respected.

The Love Which Abounded Among Us

William Caton, a servant in the Fell household, who became a "Publisher of Truth," wrote as follows:

Oh the Love which in that Day abounded among us (especially in that Family) and oh the freshness of the power of the Lord God, which then was amongst us; and the Zeal for God and his Truth, the Comfort and Refreshment which we had from his Presence; the nearness and dearness that was amongst us one toward another; the sights, openings and Revelations which we then had! I confess I find myself insufficient to declare these things to the utmost; neither do I now intend to go about to describe the multitude of them particularly: for then I might make a larger Volume by much, than now I am intended; howbeit, my very heart is affected with the remembrance of them at this very day.

And in them days were Meetings exceeding precious to us, insomuch that some few of us did commonly every night, spend sometime more, sometime less time in waiting upon the Lord; yea, often after the rest of the Family were gone to bed: But, Oh the comfort and refreshment which we had together, and the benefit which we reaped thereby, how shall I declare it? For if we had suffered loss in the day time when we had been abroad about our business, or the like, then we came in a great measure to be restored again, through the Love, Power and Mercy of our God, which abounded very much unto us.

William Caton: A journal of the life of Will. Caton, 1689 ed., pp. 6, 7

The Disciples Plus Christ

The Church is not simply, in the Quaker conception, a fellowship of disciples at work for the Kingdom of God; it is such a fellowship, plus Jesus Christ Himself, in whose Spirit, the Spirit which unites them one to another and to Him, they become together "one flock, one Shepherd."

W. C. Braithwaite in Braithwaite and Hodgkin: The message and mission of Quakerism, 1912, pp. 25-6.

The Art of Christian Caring

In our Meeting we should learn the art of Christian caring for one another, something more than the expression of natural kindness, or the impulse to hold out a helping hand in moments of disaster, because Quakerism derives not only from the light of nature, but from the light of Christ. Do we know one another well enough to know one another's needs, what enjoyment this one needs to share, from what burden of fear or worry that one needs to be set free? The Overseers are the guardians of our watchfulness over one another, but we must all share in it, and be ready to seek and respond to the guidance of God. Only so can we take and use our gifts to meet the needs, sometimes even of those whom we do not know. Into such Meetings a stranger will come and feel that he has come into a group where people are upheld in prayer. From such Meetings our members may

go out, even to tasks involving great responsibilities and even great isolation, knowing that they are supported by our understanding, our love, and our prayers.

Epistle of London Y M., 1960.

Living Fellowship Needs Fresh Forms

Fellowship in a common faith has often brought a religious society into being before it was in any way organized into an institution. It was so with the primitive Church and with the Society of Friends. Organization is a good servant but a bad master; the living fellowship within the Church must remain free to mould organization into the fresh forms demanded by its own growth and the changing needs of the time. Where there is not this freedom the Church has its life cramped by ill-assorted clothes, and its service for the world becomes dwarfed or paralyzed.

Thomas (Anna L.B.) and Emmott (E.B.): W. C. Braithwaite, Memoir and papers, 1931, p. 118. "The widening of the Quaker fellowship" written 1905.

Concerns and Loyalty

In the history and experience of the Society of Friends individualism has been co-existent with a strong sense of fellowship and of the whole body. In large part Quakerism can be explained as a tension, a balance, between individual faithfulness and corporate responsibility around a common centre of concern and loyalty. The individual is not really free to act until his concern has been laid before and shared by the whole meeting. The meeting, in its respect for the minority and for personality, must seek the deeper unity; it cannot over-ride or do violence to conscience; it cannot be totalitarian. The spirit of mutual respect and of reconciliation, with patient waiting upon the will of God, makes possible something more than a political unanimity.

Percy W. Bartlett: Quakers and the Christian church, 1941, pp. 14-15. Faith and Order Commission, London Y. M.

No Bond But Love and Fellowship

By the opening of the eighteenth century the Friends were one people throughout the world, though there was absolutely no bond but love and fellowship. There was no visible head to the Society, no official creed, no ecclesiastical body which held sway and authority. But instead of being an aggregation of separate units the Society was in an extraordinary measure a living group. Friends had suffered together and they were baptised into one spirit. Wherever any Friend was in trouble the world over, all Friends, however remote, were concerned and were ready to help share the trouble if it could be shared. The greatest and the best of the entire Society made their way from meeting to meeting, and from house to house even into the cabin of the settler on the frontier and they wove an invisible bond, stronger than the infallible decrees of Councils, which held the whole body together as an integral unit. Hospitality with the Quaker was not a virtue, it was an unconscious habit.

Rufus M. Jones: The Quakers in the American colonies, 1911, pp. 314-5.

Visiting is a Ministry

In our Society visiting is a ministry in which many should share. It should not be restricted to any official body in the meeting. It cannot be neglected if inner fellowship is to flourish. Any group within the Society of Friends who have ever tried to establish a new meeting or to revive a dying one know that the first essential is to visit, and the second essential is to visit, and the third essential is to continue visiting. These visits help to draw the meeting for worship into a basic fellowship that can yield to the Spirit. If the members of the meeting know of difficulties that one or another in their midst may be facing, they can literally draw on the bank of God's healing power for that member.

Douglas V. Steere: Community and worship (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 10), 1940, pp. 18-19.

Not to Possess But to Share

God not only gives, God shares. Through Jesus God shares his Divinity with us. God not only gives love, God shares his love, for love becomes a reality only as it is shared. The more we share, the more we have like the parable of the widow's cruse of oil.

This same principle is evidently true in regard to all that we call our own possessions. Our whole purpose in life is not to possess, but rather to share. Joy not shared becomes stale we must tell someone. And sorrow not shared becomes an unbearable burden. Bearing one another's burdens becomes a reality through experience.

Levinus K. Painter, A Christmas meditation, 1980.

Corporate Life Fostered

This note of fellowship, and of a corporate binding in the life of God, is of special importance. However fully it has been realised by others, it is in fact the single dominant characteristic of Quakerism throughout the history of the Society. It appears in sharp contrast to the anarchical and individualist tendencies of much so-called "spiritual" experience. Where these appear, whether in earlier or later times, they are condemned by a strong common sense. The danger of the more intimate type of spiritual fellowship lies precisely in the tendency to hold the private experience as valid without an adequate check by the community as a whole. Within the Society, Friends have sought to recognise and guard against this danger. From early days the corporate life was fostered with care, while the whole body, likewise, cared for the life and service of the individual. Thus the ideal of a free ministry, with free maintenance during its exercise, was at a very early date associated with the care of the poor and distressed, especially those suffering in the cause of truth.

*London Y. M.: The nature of the Christian church, 1945, p. 12.
Committee on Christian Relationships, London Y. M.*

Inward Seeking, Outward Acts

The core of the Quaker tradition is a way of inward seeking which leads to outward acts of integrity and service. Friends are most in the Spirit when they stand at the crossing point of the inward and the outward life. And that is the intersection at which we find community. Community is a place where the connections felt in the heart make themselves

known in bonds between people, and where the tuggings and pullings of those bonds keep opening up our hearts.

The Society of Friends can make its greatest contribution to community by continuing to be a religious society I mean, by centering on the practice of corporate worship which opens itself to continuing revelation.

Parker J. Palmer: A place called community, (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 212), 1977, p. 27

Living in Solitude and Community

I am convinced that to be a complete Christian is to learn to live both in isolation and community. The group-minded must overcome his fear of solitude by the living practise of the belief that nothing but sin can separate him from God; the solitary must overcome his dread of his fellows by the living practice of the belief that "there is that of God in every one." Those who know communion with God most easily in isolation do not always realise that the Bread of Heaven on which they feed is given them for others as at the Last Supper, it must be broken and passed on. Those who know communion with God most easily through a group will only find in solitude whether they are depending on him or on their fellowmen.

Beatrice Saxon Snell: A joint and visible fellowship, (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 140), 1965, p. 7

Nurturing a Spirit of Community

Friends have discovered, therefore, that there are two primary ways of nurturing a spirit of community: through encouraging the sensitivity of individual persons as they endeavor to be responsive to the Light of Christ Within in their work and worship; and through fostering their outward concern and care for one another.

George A. Selleck: Quakers in Boston, 1656-1964, 1976, p. 270.

SHARING FAITH

From the beginning, the spiritual vitality of Quakerism has been strengthened and advanced by those moved to carry "the word of the Lord." Introducing others to Truth as Friends perceive it has been an aid to many in clarifying how God's love is manifest in ourselves and in society, as was first set forth by Jesus and later by George Fox. Concern to share this Truth has led Friends to carry their message by visitation, speech, and writing at home and abroad. The Quaker message has always been portrayed by those whose lives reflect a fulfillment of the fruits of the Spirit, often bringing about a desire in others to become associated with Friends.

What I Have Met With

But some may desire to know what I have met with. I answer, "I have met with the Seed" Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied, and inquire no further. I have met with my God, I have met with my Saviour, and he hath not been present with me without his salvation, but I have felt the healings dropped upon my soul from under his wings. I have met with the true knowledge, the knowledge of life, the living knowledge, the

knowledge which is life; and this hath the true virtue in it, which my soul hath rejoiced in, in the presence of the Lord.

Isaac Penington: Works, vol. I, p. xlvii, 1784 ed., (written 1658).

Quakers Can Talk to All Comers

Quakers can therefore talk to all comers, in terms of their own experience, and they do not have to couch the expression of that experience in particular symbolic terms. Nor do they feel bound to deny the validity of experience which is expressed in different terms or which is seen against a different religious or cultural background.

Every Quaker defines his position fully and clearly by his life, and particularly by that central part of his life, his participation in Meeting for Worship. And it is here particularly that we can speak to others, of any religion or none. For those who come to our Meetings and sit quietly with us, our message is there. It is a message of hope, because it speaks of the available and continual presence and love of God, in each one of us.

Geoffrey Hubbard: Quaker by conviction, 1974, p. 243.

Ministry to the World

It is the very essence of the Christian Gospel that it proclaims a life and message to be shared with others.

Without imposing their views upon others, Friends need to be unapologetic about sharing their faith. They could well recover a sense of mission in their ministry to the world. It need not take the exact form of the Quakers of an earlier period, but it should be motivated by the same concern to share the good news that there is not only "an ocean of light which overcomes the ocean of darkness," but that "the power of the Lord" can enable man to overcome meaninglessness, frustration, and despair in life.

Wilmer A. Cooper: "The nature of the Friends meeting," in No time but this present, 1965, p. 95.

Meetings for Worship Open to Anyone

Quaker meetings for worship are open to anyone who desires to share in them. This welcome applies equally to members of other churches or religious groups, who may, from time to time, wish to share in Quaker worship. It also applies to people who have, for one reason or another, become disenchanted with the worship they have previously experienced, yet who still feel the need for some kind of religious practice. Quakers also welcome to their meetings people who have great hesitation in saying that there is anything in their experience that could be called religious, yet are seeking for something which will bring a new dimension to their lives, that will enlarge their vision and sustain them.

George H. Gorman: The amazing fact of Quaker worship (Swarthmore lecture), 1973, p. 6.

Our Mandate for Outreach

We seek to share our visions of God, the Truth underlying reality, in the hope that this sharing helps others to approach God and to achieve full stature as God's children. Further, we hope to build up a community where those who share our visions and their

consequences can continue on the search, live in conformity with their discoveries, and support each other in the process. In George Fox's formula, we want to bring people to Christ, their living Teacher, and to leave them there in communities of obedience. We cannot make the survival of our particular Quaker organizations the main goal, nor should we operate with the attitude that our message is the only available path to Truth.

But if we are faithful to our leadings and our heritage, we can continue to provide a home for those who are drawn to us.

Johan Maurer, Our mandate for outreach, 1977

Thou Hast Sown a Precious Seed

O Blessed God! Thou has been graciously pleased to begin a good work, a glorious work of righteousness in our days and times. Blessed God and Father! We humbly pray Thee, carry it on and make it prosper. Prosper the souls of thy people in it, that they may be a growing, thriving and increasing people in thy holy ways and in thy blessed work; and as Thou hast sown a precious seed and planted a noble vine by thine own Almighty hand; and hast given us a root of life, the foundation of our faith, love and obedience, which foundation Thou hast laid in Zion; Lord, keep thy people sensible of it; that they may mind it, and wait upon Thee, and be preserved in that root of life wherein thy blessing is; that thy people may partake of thy blessing, and grow up into the nature of that life, to bring forth fruit to Thee to increase in faith and love, in obedience and humility, and meekness; that the life of true Christianity may be promoted and increased among thine heritage.

Robert Barclay: Scripture truths demonstrated, Part 111, 1824, pp. 44-5.

MEMBERSHIP

For the first several generations of the Quaker movement there was no such thing as formal membership. Persons were known as Quakers if they participated in gathered meetings and were prepared to witness in public to their beliefs. Over the years since then, Friends have developed a variety of standards for membership in the different yearly meetings, but these standards have all begun with the understanding that membership is founded on the experience of God's presence in our own lives.

Quakers endeavor to live their daily lives in keeping with the spirit of Christ. Membership may be thought of, therefore, not as a bestowal of a gift by a group, but rather as a mutual recognition by applicant and meeting that they are joined in their commitment to that way of life.

The spiritual preparation for membership', can take as many paths as there are lives to lead, for it is out of one's own experiences that the spiritual life is developed and focussed. Friends have always recognized, moreover, that the reading of devotional literature, above all the study of the Bible, can help develop a fuller spiritual life. Ever since the publication of the first Quaker journals at the end of the seventeenth century, Friends have also found inspiration and guidance from the testimonies of earlier Friends. The reading of these testimonies, combined with a knowledge of the history of the Society of Friends, has been found to be helpful in preparing for a commitment to membership.

Most of all, however, a potential Friend discovers the testimonies of Friends and their meaning for the twentieth century by participating in the life of a monthly meeting. Because membership in a meeting means membership in a community, one of the tests of membership is compatibility with that community. Applicants need to feel in harmony with the community they are joining. They should be able to accept the diversity of Friends, both locally and at the national and world levels. An applicant considering membership should feel a sincere responsibility for the group and be prepared to enter wholeheartedly into its spiritual and corporate activities. Service on committees or in other work of the monthly meeting or of the quarterly or yearly meetings should be considered with the same sense of concern as service in more dramatic ways. Membership also includes a financial responsibility to the meeting.

Prospective members should have attended meeting for some time and have developed an appreciation for Friends' forms of worship and business. The appropriate time to apply for membership will vary from person to person. One indication that the time to apply may be approaching is the recognition that meeting for worship has become a central part of one's life. Applicants are not expected to state their religious beliefs in any prescribed fashion, but may assume that their own search for an understanding of the Truth will be valued by other "seekers and humble learners in the school of Christ."

The Experience of Richard Claridge, about 1697

This was the way that Friends used with me, when I was convinced of truth, they came oftentimes to visit me; and sate and waited upon the Lord in silence with me; and as the Lord opened our understandings and mouths, so we had very sweet and comfortable seasons together. They did not ask me questions about this or the other creed, or about this or the other controversie in religion; but they waited to feel that living Power to quicken me, which raised up Jesus from the dead. And it pleased God so in his wisdom to direct, that all the great truths of the Christian religion were occasionally spoken to. Now this was Friends way with me, a way far beyond all rules or methods established by the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God: And this is their way with others that are convinced of the truth.

Lux evangelica attestata, 1701, p. x.

Membership in a Community

As membership in the meeting is membership in a community, the test of membership is compatibility with the meeting community. Members are either born into the meeting or join it because they desire to fit into the pattern of behavior peculiar to the meeting and find themselves able to do so. The test of membership is not a particular kind of religious experience, nor acceptance of any particular religious, social or economic creed. Sincere religious experience and right religious belief are both important, but they develop in the course of participation in the activities of the meeting. Anyone who can become so integrated with a meeting that he helps the whole and the whole helps him is qualified to become a member.

Howard H. Brinton: Friends for 300 years, 1952, p. 127

Membership Not Based on Worthiness

Our membership of this, or any other Christian fellowship, is never based upon worthiness. We none of us are members because we have attained a certain standard of goodness, but rather because, in this matter, we still are all humble learners in the school of Christ. Our membership is of no importance whatever unless it signifies that we are committed to something of far greater and more lasting significance than can adequately be conveyed by the closest association with any movement or organization.

Our membership of the Society of Friends should commit us to the discipleship of the living Christ. When we have made that choice and come under that high compulsion, our membership will have endorsed it.

*Edgar G. Dunstan: Quakers and the religious quest
(Swarthmore lecture), 1.95h, p. 68.*

Suitability of an Applicant

To enable the Monthly Meeting to come to a right judgement as to the suitability of an applicant for membership the chief conditions to be looked for are that he is a humble learner in the school of Christ, that his face is set towards the light and that he is able to find spiritual help and teaching in our meetings for worship notwithstanding the absence of outward form. If it seems clear that an experience of the reality and power of God is being manifested in him he should be warmly welcomed into association with us. We believe that habitual dependence on the unseen Guide and Teacher, aided by the help the Church can give, will lead him forward on the path of spiritual and practical Christianity.

London Y. M.: Christian discipline, Pt. 3, 1951, p. 14.

Membership in the Whole Society

Other Christians are very conscious of being a part of the whole church. The newly admitted Friend also joins not only a local meeting but also the whole Society and soon becomes conscious of it as he assumes his privilege in taking part in many kinds of meetings and committees and finds that he is welcome in meeting houses in many parts of the world.

The Society has shown itself in experience and in action to be in a very full sense corporate; and its foundation principle is in fact not in the sanctity of human personality but in the joint call of a group of children of the Light, of Friends of Truth, of men and women subject to corporate guidance. From the beginning it was a deeply religious fellowship. George Fox, who, though not a law-giver for the Society, said many things that command respect, urged those around him to know one another in God. A. Neave Brayshaw, typical perhaps in his deep sense of membership, continually urged the young Friends by whom he was surrounded to plumb the depth of the phrase, "One another," and he did so in a quite definitely Christian context.

Whether the Society is to be regarded as a company of lay folk or a society of ministers and both views are tenable our membership one of another is a foundation fact of Quaker religious experience.

*Percy W. Bartlett: Quakers and the Christian church, 1941, p.
20. Faith and Order Commission, London Y. M.*

FRIENDS' EDUCATION

Friends' concern for education has been stimulated by the Quaker search for Truth. For Friends, new knowledge has not threatened religious faith, but rather has confirmed their belief in the continuing revelation of God to human beings.

Friends' involvement in education has traditionally included oversight of Quaker schools and colleges and thoughtful planning and conduct of Christian Education programs in their meetings. But because many modern Friends send their children to public schools, Quaker concern for education now extends beyond that valuable but limited traditional involvement.

Friends seek to bring to the task of teaching and learning in any educational situation an attitude which derives from the Quaker imperative to answer to that of God in everyone, everywhere. When teachers and students truly respond to the Light in each other, respect, dialogue, and active engagement in the learning process follow. Cooperation and compassion mark the atmosphere. The clear presence of the Spirit at work in the lives of teachers offers as important a model for students as do the teachers' intellectual accomplishments. Ideally, knowledge gained is to be converted to service, not to selfish or destructive purposes.

While Meetings have the opportunity to make visible these attitudes and ideals in the schools and Christian Education programs under their care, they must also be responsive to the Quaker parents, teachers, and students involved in public education, through spiritual refreshment and guidance that will enable them to witness to their values in the wider community.

Respect for the Soul of a Child

Our belief in the divine spark in each individual person involves complete respect for the soul of a child: he belongs to himself even before belonging to his parents, from whom he is often different in temperament, tastes and abilities. The most important duty facing parents who take religion seriously is to hand on to their children those things that they hold to be true and good.

L'Education Religieuse des Enfants, France Y. M., 1963.

That Children May Know God

To watch the spirit of children, to nurture them in Gospel Love, and to labour to help them against that which would mar the beauty of their minds is a debt we owe them; and a faithful performance of our duty not only tends to their lasting benefit and our own peace, but also to render their company agreeable to us. A care hath lived on my mind that more time might be employed by parents at home and by tutors at school in weightily attending to the spirit and inclinations of children, and that we may so lead, instruct, and govern them in this tender part of life that nothing may be omitted in our power to help them on their way to become the children of our Father who is in heaven.

John Woolman: On schools (written probably in 1758) in The journal and essays, ed. Amelia M. Gummere, 1922, p. 392.

The Concern of the Meeting

Religious education in our Society cannot be left as the concern of individual Friends in a Meeting, nor of the full-time officers of permanent committees. The drive behind it must come from the membership as a whole. While the problem of meeting the existing demands for such instruction is a pressing one, a much more urgent matter is that of awakening a sense of the need for this task to be undertaken. It is not too much to say that the two most important duties of our Society are to publish the truth as we understand it and to educate our children in our faith and life.

London Y. M., Friends Education Council: Up to eighteen, 1949, pp. 6, 7

Essential Traits of the Quaker School

A Quaker school emphasizes the testimonies or values important to Friends, such as the value of consensus, the Meeting for Worship, the principles and practice of non-violence, the dignity of physical work, the liberty of an unencumbered life-style, and the value of an atmosphere of trust.

In a Friends school, human development and human excellence take precedence over academic excellence.

A Quaker school strives to demonstrate that love is possible in a group significantly larger than the family.

A relevant Friends school today must strive to foster and restore authentic speech. "Yes" must mean yes in a Friends school, and "No" must mean no.

Earl G. Harrison Jr. at New England Yearly Meeting, 1974

To Experience Divine Discontent

To believe that Truth is continuously being revealed, to expect that one can approach perfection, and to commit one's self to live in Truth is to experience divine discontent. A Friends school should be divinely discontented. I feel uncomfortable when I am with a head and faculty who are contented, who have no innovative experiments in mind, who seem to believe that the Kingdom has already arrived at their school. Should not a Friends school be a restlessly searching, experimenting, risking place, ceaselessly seeking to attain new levels of perfection? It is growing rather than the stasis of contentment that brings a sense of aliveness, even happiness.

Douglas H0eath: The peculiar mission of a Friends school (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 225), 1979, p. 8.

Quaker Education Should Be Experiential

Hence Quaker schools and colleges are not such because they furnish courses in the Bible, in religion, or in Quakerism. These may all be present in an institution untouched by dynamic religion, and a school which teaches none of them may yet be deeply religious in its influence. Quaker education cannot be considered as something apart from religious education, for Quaker education is by definition religious; the teacher who has experienced the power of God within him is always teaching religion by that discrimination among values which colors thoughts, and words, and actions.

A religion based on adventure and experiment should be served by schools devoted to adventure and experiment. "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition." "This," said George Fox, "I know experimentally." Schools which translate the religious experiences of Friends into educational terms cannot be static. A religion whose essential message is "a constant renewing of the spirit to the end that there may be a progressively widening view of the will of God for man" will be reflected in schools that are adventurous.

*World Conference, 1937: Report of Commission IV. pp. 20-1.
"Friends contribution to education."*

Avenues to Fuller Life in God

I may reach God through Keats, you by Beethoven, and a third through Einstein. Should not education to the Christian mean just this enlarging and cultivating the country of God; and the subjects on any school time-table be thought of as avenues to an increasingly fuller life in God, or, to change the metaphor, windows, each of which give a new view of the Kingdom of Heaven? This may seem a fantastically idealised view of what happens in a school, especially in these days of examinations, but is there any other open to the religiously-minded teacher? Is the commercial side of school and college life, the exchange of intellectual wares for examination results, so many facts and opinions for so many marks, which is so terribly dominating nowadays, to be allowed to weaken the allegiance of the young to knowledge and beauty as bringers of God to mortal men? No examination has yet been devised the passing of which will guarantee wisdom or culture. For these are slow-growing breeds, matters of character as well as of intellect and sentiment, the outcome of long exposure to the influence of truth and beauty.

Caroline C. Graveson: Religion and culture (Swarthmore lecture), 1937, pp. 21-2.

Discovering God as Creative Purpose

Religious education aims to help adults and children to realize God as the creative, active Purpose underlying the structure of the universe as well as of each individual life.

Religious education aims to help adults and children to experience God as creative, redemptive love, working at all levels in the personal and social structure toward the brotherhood of man.

Religious education seeks to develop a growing awareness of God's purposes and will, and a commitment and dedication to these purposes at each stage of development.

*Friends General Conference, Religious Education Committee:
Objectives of religious education, 1955.*

The Purpose of Christian Education

The purpose of Christian Education is to help persons enter into a vital and loving relationship with God. Friends believe that God is experienced supremely through the Living Christ and we are called to be sensitive and responsive to this Inward Teacher. The Christian imperative is that we increasingly understand and do the will of God; that we love and serve God in all human relationships.

*Friends United Meeting, Educational task for Friends, 1967,
pp. 11-12.*

The Ideal Young Friends Group

The local Meeting thus needs to devise situations in which young members can find their place: the ideal Young Friends' group is not a class, but a team of workers. Older Friends, accustomed to waiting for the individual to offer his services under concern, may need to think with special tenderness of their younger members, and to make plans for their shapeless concern to find a form. A sense of concern may grow while the work is being done; and if it does not the experience will not be lost: most education proceeds on the assumption that by doing one thing we acquire readiness to do another.

Harold Loukes: Friends and their children, 1969, p. 93.

A Christian Community Open to the Young

We must, as the first act of our religious education, provide a Christian community open to the young. Not only must we offer the opportunity for young Friends to follow their own ends, but we must ensure that the adult community itself is alive and forward-looking. The forward look is different from the downward look: youngsters do not want to be humoured or talked down to, nor do they really expect their elders to know all about modern dancing. What they ask is that we should be looking forward into the world they are to live in, and show some awareness of their own problems as they enter it. Beneath their manifold frivolities they have two profoundly serious preoccupations: they want to make sense of the world as it is, and they want to see it better. They may not give this impression as they exchange their trivial chatter, but they are ready to listen to and be inspired by anyone who is profoundly concerned about the meaning and hope in the human situation.

Ibid., p. 86.

All Have Gifts of Teaching

In the Society of Friends we are members one of another in worship in a very particular way, and we rejoice that it is so, but often we take too lightly the responsibility that this lays upon us individually. We ought to see to it that we are ... equipped to be of use to younger members [and] to make the maximum use of the variety of gifts represented in the membership of our Meeting. Some Friend, for example, may feel rightly hesitant about teaching in the Children's Class or leading a discussion, but as a keen gardener, as a gifted pianist or as a skilled craftsman he may bring delight and interest to the younger members of his Meeting and enrichment to the life of the Meeting as a whole. There are many and varied ways in which we can become bound together as a family, helping one another and encouraging one another. We ought not to become stereotyped in our methods, or to be too timid to experiment; for boys and girls, who love life and movement and adventure, should find these qualities in our Meetings.

London Y. M., Friends Education Council: Growing up in Quaker worship, 1952, p. 35.

Truth Waiting to be Discovered

The prime object of Quaker religious education is this: that children should use it to arrive at the religion of their judgement, and not stay content with what they have received

at secondhand. It is offered in the belief that there is Truth to be found, indescribable and incommunicable, but waiting to be discovered in the mystery of personal encounter.

Harold Loukes: Friends and their children, 1969, p. 127

CHAPTER 3

Faith into Practice in Personal Life

Ever since Jesus challenged us, "Be ye perfect," the basis of our personal living has been laid deeper than mere respectability, deeper than the observance of some moral minimum based on the old law of "thou shalt not." Yet, beset by weakness and temptation, we have learned that lives of purity, integrity, purpose, and joy are beyond our abilities except as we are open to permit God's Spirit in us to rule our lives. Our individual leadings will vary, as will our responses to them, yet we would make the testimony of our daily lives clear. In a world in need of people whose yea is yea and whose nay is nay, we pray that our lives may make it easier for all to believe in God.s

PRAYER

A life committed to experiencing the presence of God is a life in which prayer prevails. Prayer takes many forms. It may be consigned to a particular part of each day or exist continuously as one dimension of the project of living. Prayer means surrender to the Light Within. Prayer means seeking guidance from the Light. Prayer listens and prayer petitions. In all cases, prayer responds in love to the reality of God.

Friends sometimes resist formal instruction in how to pray, perhaps in an effort to acknowledge the multitude of valid approaches to practicing the presence of God. Instruction may be helpful, however, so long as the unlimited variety of answers to the question "How do I pray?" is appreciated.

Still and Cool in Thy Own Mind

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. That is it which moulds up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayedness, into quietness, up to God, with his power.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, p. 346 (Fox's letter to Lady Claypole, 1658).

Pray One for Another

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

*Isaac Penington: Letters, ed. John Barclay, 1828, p. 139.
Letter LII, 1667*

Underlying and Undergirding Worship

Underlying and undergirding the unprogrammed worship of Friends is prayer: the prayerful corporate waiting which takes place in any meeting when it has centered down. As we go deeper and deeper, prayer is our task as individuals and as a group a loving attention to God, a surrendering of our minds and our wills to that same spirit which found

expression through Jesus, the man, and which, after the crucifixion, was recognized by the first Christians as the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and by the first Friends as the indwelling Christ, the spark, the seed. This is a very special kind of attentive waiting: waiting for God, Simone Weil has called it. Waiting for God might well describe in a phrase the special function of a gathered meeting for worship.

Helen G. Hole: Prayer (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 123), 1962, pp. 10-11.

Simple Prayer and Inward Worship

How, then, shall we lay hold of that Life and Power, and live the life of prayer without ceasing? By quiet, persistent practice in turning of all our being, day and night, in prayer and inward worship and surrender, toward Him who calls in the deeps of our souls. Mental habits of inward orientation must be established. An inner, secret turning to God can be made fairly steady, after weeks and months and years of practice and lapses and failures and returns. It is as simple an art as Brother Lawrence found it, but it may be long before we achieve any steadiness in the process. Begin now, as you read these words, as you sit in your chair, to offer your whole selves, utterly and in joyful abandon, in quiet, glad surrender to Him who is within. In secret ejaculations of praise, turn in humble wonder to the Light, faint though it may be. Keep contact with the outer world of sense and meanings. Here is no discipline in absent-mindedness. Walk and talk and work and laugh with your friends. But behind the scenes, keep up the life of simple prayer and inward worship. Keep it up throughout the day. Let inward prayer be your last act before you fall asleep and the first act when you awake. And in time you will find as did Brother Lawrence, that "those who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep."

Thomas R. Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, pp. 38-9.

To Renew Your Strength

To many there are difficulties in prayer; how can we influence God? Ought we to try to do so? How can we pray aright? What are we to think when our prayers go apparently unanswered? No solution of these problems can here be attempted. We would only say that the testimony of multitudes who have persisted in prayer is that it is the most real fact of experience and that whether or no it receives its answer in the sense of gaining the immediately desired object, it always ultimately attains the far fuller end of knowledge of God and increase of His power to life. To those therefore who feel these difficulties we would say, do not wait till you have solved them but pray.

No living creature can create energy; the physical energy which we derive from our food comes from the sun's light and heat. So also we cannot create spiritual power; we can only draw on the springs which flow from God. Prayer is the attitude of mind in which we may get into contact with God and renew our strength. In it our desires are brought before God with an open mind to try to understand His will. This attitude involves a complete surrender on our part.

We would encourage Friends, therefore, reverently yet daringly to make fuller experiment of the life of trust and consecration through prayer, that they may know relief

from the burden of anxiety and perplexity and realize the joy of health and victory, whereby they may become centres of radiant energy for the help and healing of others.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 312.

Prayer is Communion

Prayer, then, is communion, whether it take the form of petition, intercession, thanksgiving, or whether it be just the quiet unveiling of the heart to a trusted friend, the outpouring of the soul to the one who is nearest of all.

William Littleboy: "The meaning and practice of prayer," 1937, p. 10. Article in The Friend (London), vol. 95 (1937), p. 176, reprinted as a pamphlet.

The Aspiration of the Soul

Prayer is the aspiration of the soul. It is man's communion with God and is an essential to religious life. The result of prayer becomes apparent in the nobler lives of those who are constant in its exercise. We, individually, should cultivate the habit of turning to God at all times, and of seeking Divine guidance in all things that we may, in truth, be led by Him. Vocal prayer, when prompted by a deep concern and a sense of human need, is a vital part of public worship and often helps those assembled to come into the consciousness of God's presence.

New York Yearly Meeting: Discipline, 1950, p. 9.

The Riches of their Interior Lives

When I first became associated with the Society of Friends my interest in prayer as a meaningful possibility for adult people was revived. This was largely because so many of the Quakers I knew displayed such a positive attitude to life. Their personalities and characters revealed an integrity, power and security to which their practice of prayer clearly contributed. For them prayer was a joyful, natural thing: the possession of the riches of their interior lives. They spoke of it as the means by which they held a regular simple communion with a loving God, which coloured their lives with tranquillity. I was particularly struck by the fact that those of them who seemed most sincere, real people were reluctant to use the word prayer too easily. At the time that I was going to my tribunal as a conscientious objector, and specially needed their support they said they would "think of me." Whereas most other Christians would have offered to "pray for me." I knew that the thinking of my Quaker friends would be a deeply sincere imaginative, involved activity based upon their loving concern for me as a person, and coupled with their real experience of a loving purpose arising within but transcending normal life.

George H. Gorman: The amazing fact of Quaker worship (Swarthmore lecture), 1973, p. 82.

The Right Relationship With God

And let us remember that true prayer begins when we put aside spasmodic, erratic and irregular efforts, when we take ourselves in hand and subject ourselves to a discipline, when we order our existences according to the principles which will deepen the life of prayer, knowing that the right relationship with God is of prime importance and that prayer is at the heart of it. Gradually, irrevocably, we find as we walk the path that every

part of our lives calls for revision: routine, recreation, relationships with others, perhaps even our vocation all must be brought together so as to operate from the center.

Helen Hole: Prayer (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 123), 1962, p. 19.

SIMPLICITY AND INTEGRITY

Central to the Friends' testimony on simplicity is the injunction to seek first the kingdom of God. In a society that is becoming increasingly more complex, Friends are called to abandon those things which divert them from this goal. They may need to restrain themselves from involvement in many good causes and activities in order to remain true to their inner voice. Simple tastes in possessions and entertainment can do away with rivalry and the false sense of superiority created by undue luxury. A simple lifestyle promotes fullness of life.

Friends' adherence to a life of simplicity is also rooted in economics and the right sharing of the world's resources. In the words of William Penn, "the very trimming of the vain would clothe all the naked one."

Friends profess a genuineness of life and speech which leaves no room for deceit or artificiality. Throughout their history, therefore, they have borne witness against judicial oaths as suggesting a double standard of truth. Devotion to what is true and eternal requires openness, honesty, and careful speech in social, business, and family relationships. As early Friends took care to avoid flattering titles and phrases, modern Friends need to discourage the insincerities and extravagances that are prevalent in their society. With cordiality and kindness, Friends are called to speak the truth, in love.

Quality of the Soul

In all the best generations of Quakerism, the ideal aim and the controlling expectation of the wiser members have been to live *the simple life*. It is, of course, a vague and indefinable term. It begins inside with *the quality of the soul*. It is first and foremost the quality of sincerity, which is the opposite of duplicity or sham. ... Unclouded honesty at the heart and centre of the man is the true basis of simplicity. ... This kind of simple life will call, among other things, for an attitude of meekness and humility. ...

All one needs to do, if he means to be "humble," is to keep a constant contrast in mind between himself as he now is and that larger, truer, richer potential self which he all the time feels hidden away within himself. ... It involves not merely honesty and sincerity in all the relationships with one's fellow men, but it also calls for utter clarity of spirit in all one's relationships with God.

Rufus M. Jones: The faith and practice of the Quakers, 1927, pp. 90-1.

Beyond Complexity

The last fruit of holy obedience is the simplicity of the trusting child, the simplicity of the children of God. It is the simplicity which lies beyond complexity. It is the naivete which is the yonder side of sophistication. It is the beginning of spiritual maturity, which

comes after the awkward age of religious busyness for the Kingdom of God yet how many are caught, and arrested in development, within this adolescent development of the soul's growth! The mark of this simplified life is radiant joy. It lives in the Fellowship of the Transfigured Face. Knowing sorrow to the depths it does not agonize and fret and strain, but in serene, unhurried calm it walks in time with the joy and assurance of Eternity.

Thomas R. Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, p. 73.

Life Simplified by Concerns

I wish I might emphasize how a life becomes simplified when dominated by faithfulness to a few concerns. Too many of us have too many irons in the fire. We learn to say No as well as Yes by attending to the guidance of inner responsibility. Quaker simplicity needs to be expressed not merely in dress and architecture and the height of tombstones but also in the structure of a relatively simplified and coordinated life-program of social responsibilities.

Ibid., p. 110.

Sensitive to God's Call to You

Incomparably the most important thing is that each one of us should be sensitive to the call of God to ourselves and not spend time in passing judgement on the lives of others. To some the call will be to adopt the witness of great simplicity, perhaps to live in an Indian village or in a London slum. To others the most important thing will be to maintain our ancient testimony against "fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever." But perhaps most will be called to the humdrum tasks of serving an employer supremely well, or running a house, bringing up a family, keeping the peace with difficult neighbors, serving the community in little things the tasks which, because they are simple, are in fact most difficult to do with dedication.

Industry and the Social Order Conference: Preparatory document 5, Christian responsibility and material possessions, 1958, p. 5.

Not Dependent on Things

Christianity is tested, not only in the shop and in the office, but also in the home. In the standard of living adopted by the home-makers, in the portion of income devoted to comforts, recreations and luxuries, in willingness to be content with simplicity, the members of a household, both older and younger, may bear witness that there is a Way of Life that does not depend on the abundance of the things possessed.

Epistle of London Y. M., 1911.

Simplicity Promotes Fullness of Life

All that promotes fullness of life and aids in service for Christ is to be accepted with thanksgiving. Simplicity, when it removes encumbering details, makes for beauty in music, in art and in living. It clears the springs of life and permits wholesome mirth and gladness to bubble up; it cleans the windows of life and lets joy radiate. It requires the avoidance of artificial or harmful social customs and conventions but it opens wide the door to cultivate and express to all sincere cordiality, kindness and friendliness. This sort of simplicity removes barriers and eases tensions. In its presence all can be at ease. ...

Simplicity is closely akin to sincerity a genuineness of life and speech in which there is no place for sham or artificiality. The care given by early Friends to avoid flattering titles and phrases and to aim for rectitude of speech undoubtedly has done much to turn attention to honesty in the spoken and the written word. Care is needed to avoid and discourage the insincerities and extravagance that are prevalent in the social world. We need also to speak the simple truth, in love, when occasion requires it. Such an attitude does not exclude sincere cordiality and kindness. A life of simplicity and sincerity may be full of activity but it must be a life centered in God.

Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, pp. 22-4

Loyalty Oaths

Though most law now permits the use of affirmations instead of oaths, for many Friends the prevalence in recent years of loyalty oaths and non-disloyalty disclaimers has added a new dimension to this ancient testimony. Conscientious honesty and Friends' faithfulness to their testimony against oaths can help create a society based on trust in one's neighbors and in the validity of their words.

New England Y. M.: Faith and Practice, 1966, p. 147

Swear Not at All

Advised, that our Christian testimony be faithfully maintained against the burden and imposition of oaths, according to the express prohibition of Christ, and also of the apostle James: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thine head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 570.

LEISURE, RECREATION, AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Recreation is necessary to every normal person in the maintenance of physical, mental, and spiritual health. The ability to recreate reflects God's act of creation in our own lives and can strengthen the individual, the family, and relationships with friends. Church and community should cooperate in furnishing wholesome and constructive recreation which will provide for social and mental as well as physical needs. Friends should promote high standards of quality and moral influence in all forms of entertainment.

Friends seek to live in the world, to be a part of it, and to be a leaven to its standards of daily conduct and custom. Respect for themselves and the determination not to encourage weakness in others by their own conduct has led Friends to advocate abstinence from use of alcohol, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs, from gambling and lotteries, and from entertainments or amusements which are tawdry or merely sensational in their appeal. Friends should be clear that abstinence is not an end in itself but a means to

fullness of life. When it is necessary for Friends to dissent from familiar social usage, let it be done without self-righteousness and in a loving spirit which will maintain fellowship with those who still accept the practices and standards Friends have been led to reject.

True Leisureliness

True leisureliness is a beautiful thing and may not lightly be given away. Indeed, it is one of the outstanding and most wonderful features of the life of Christ that, with all his work in preaching and healing and planning for the Kingdom, he leaves behind this sense of leisure, of time in which to pray and meditate, to stand and stare at the cornfields and fishing boats, and to listen to the confidences of neighbors and passers-by.

Most of us need from time to time the experience of something spacious or space-making, when Time ceases to be the enemy, goad-in-hand, and becomes our friend. To read good literature, gaze on natural beauty, to follow cultivated pursuits until our spirits are refreshed and expanded, will not unfit us for the up and doing of life. Rather will it help us to separate the essential from the unessential, to know where we are really needed and get a sense of proportion. We shall find ourselves giving the effect of leisure even in the midst of a full and busy life. People do not pour their joys or sorrows into the ears of those with an eye on the clock.

Caroline C. Graveson: Religion and culture (Swarthmore lecture), 1937, pp. 37-40.

Art is Part of Truth

The truth which the artist seeks and which he expresses through his Art is part of the Universal Truth, just as the truth sought and expressed by the philosopher and the scientist and the theologian is part of the Universal Truth. The man who can only see the significance of his own specialised field of vision may not mar his own contribution, but inevitably he will impoverish it. Happy is the artist, the philosopher, the scientist or the theologian who recognizes that all Truth is one.

Elfrida V. Foulds: Living in the kingdom (William Penn lecture), 1955, p. 14. Philadelphia Y M.

Participants Rather Than Spectators

In these days a vast amount of time is spent by many in listening to radio or in looking at television and professional sports. While such entertainments may have a proper place if kept in moderation, recreations in which we are participants rather than mere spectators are usually more beneficial and are much needed.

Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, p. 25.

Lest We Strengthen Evil

Every degree of luxury of what kind soever and every demand for money inconsistent with divine order hath some connection with unnecessary labour. To labour too hard or cause others to do so, that we may live comfortable to customs which Christ our Redeemer contradicted by his example in the days of his flesh, and which are contrary to divine order, is to manure a soil for propagating an evil seed in the earth. Such who enter deep into these considerations and live under the weight of them will feel these things so heavy and their ill effects so extensive that the necessity of attending singly to divine wisdom will be

evident, thereby to be directed in the right use of things, in opposition to the customs of the times, and supported to bear patiently the reproaches attending singularity. To conform a little to a wrong way strengthens the hand of such who carry wrong customs to their utmost extent; and the more a person appears to be virtuous and heavenly-minded, the more powerfully does his conformity operate in favour of evil-doers. While we profess in all cases to live in constant opposition to that which is contrary to universal righteousness ... what language is sufficient to set forth the strength of those obligations we are under to beware lest by our example we lead others wrong.

John Woolman: "A plea for the poor," (written in 1763-4) in The journal and major essays ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, pp. 246-8.

Use and Misuse of Alcohol

Friends as well as all other Christian groups have much to contribute to a creative solution of the problems of the use and misuse of alcoholic beverages. These problems have become more and more acute as the tensions of life have increased and controls have been relaxed. For over a century the Religious Society of Friends has discouraged its members from the use of intoxicating liquors and more recently has pressed the cause of total abstinence.

There are many cogent arguments against alcohol: its physical effects, even in moderate quantities, on the human body; the fact that it is a habit-forming drug; that it is a depressant and reduces acuteness of hearing and vision; that the immediate and continuing effect of alcohol as a beverage is to dull the higher mental processes, such as judgement, self-criticism and self-control. There is a close association of alcohol with crime and indeed with many of our social ills.

Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, p. 33.

Friends and the Use of Alcohol

American Friends were certainly affected by the national perception that Prohibition was a noble experiment but a failure. Following Repeal in 1933, it became difficult to find a position regarding alcohol on which Friends could unite whole-heartedly.

But recently there has been increased concern about the seriousness of drunk driving, spouse and child abuse, and other alcohol-related problems. In the latter category many Friends have revealed the existence of such difficulties within their own families. In recent months Young Friends in our own Yearly Meeting [Baltimore] have asked adults whether they have not in fact been condoning a double standard of behaviour with regard to alcohol consumption.

Accordingly, we recommend that Baltimore Yearly Meeting:

- (1) Affirm as a goal that Friends minimize the consumption of alcohol in all situations.
- (2) Strongly uphold members who feel led to a position of complete abstinence, and seek to encourage situations where it will not be felt necessary to serve alcohol to achieve either good-fellowship or individual self-respect.
- (3) It is felt that Friends will wish to be especially conscious of these concerns during all Friends gatherings.

(4) Unite with other Friends bodies, and in coalitions with other like-minded groups, to develop general educational material on the use of alcohol, and to work actively for significant changes in relevant public policies. Actions to be studied should include limitations on alcohol advertising, increasing taxes on alcoholic beverages, ending Government subsidies on the sale of alcohol on military bases, and the strengthening of both private and Government-supported organizations and programs which deal with alcoholism and with alcohol-abuse.

From a minute approved February 20, 1983, Langley Hill Friends Meeting.

Gambling and Lotteries

We recognize and deplore the prevalence of the gambling spirit throughout the world. It extends to all classes of society and permeates finance and commerce as well as sport and recreation. Its indulgence not only causes the material ruin of many individuals, but dwarfs and warps their moral and spiritual lives. From early days Friends have recognized these facts and have opposed "lotteries, wagering, and other species of gaming." The evils in the grosser forms of gambling are apparent, but are less so in the petty forms that prevail in connection with games and other recreations.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1930, p. 108.

Appeal to Covetousness

Gambling by risking money haphazardly disregards our belief that possessions are a trust. The persistent appeal to covetousness is fundamentally opposed to the unselfishness which was taught by Jesus Christ and by the New Testament as a whole. The attempt, which is inseparable from gambling, to make profit out of the inevitable loss and possible suffering of others is the antithesis of that love of one's neighbor on which our Lord insisted. Moreover, we must consider the moral and spiritual plight of those who by indulgence in gambling become suddenly possessed of large financial resources for which they have rendered no service to the community.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 567.

Reject Gambling as Revenue

We reject the spurious argument that the gambling instinct is too strong to be outlawed and that therefore the state should legalize gambling and raise revenue from it. This is wrong in principle, for we should tax ourselves for the services we require. We should not depend on the weaknesses of our fellow men to finance these services.

Drafted by the 1965 Revision Committee.

Tobacco Injures and Shortens Life

Medical research makes it clear that the use of tobacco, especially in the form of cigarettes, injures and shortens life. Friends are urged to consider whether it is wise to indulge because of the effect on their own health, and because of the example Friends may set to youth. Furthermore, smoking is often practiced with little regard for the comfort of others.

Drafted by the 1965 Revision Committee.

Secret Organizations

The Society of Friends bears a testimony against membership in secret organizations. Secret societies are capable of producing much evil, and are incapable of producing any good which might not be effected by safe and open means. The pledge to secrecy may be in itself a surrender of independence, which tends to moral decadence and spiritual loss.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1950, p. 97.

Exclusiveness of Secret Societies

We especially admonish our younger members against college societies whose proceedings are hedged with secrecy. The Society of Friends is opposed to ceremonialism and the exclusiveness of secret societies gives to the fellowship which they promote a flavor of selfishness.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1930, pp. 55-6.

Recreation is Relief and Restoration

Recreation is relief and restoration; the ultimate basis of inward peace and security is trust in God, consciousness of His love and guidance, and whole-souled commitment to Him in work and play.

Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, p. 25.

ECONOMIC LIFE

The economic life of Friends should be founded on the recognition that all that they have and all that they may come to have belong to God and should be used in the service of God. The earning of a livelihood is not an end in itself but only a means to maintain life, whose real purpose is to discover and to obey God's Will. Pursuit of profit is an inadequate and unworthy motive if its goal is only self-enrichment.

Friends should take care to choose occupations through which they may serve God and humanity; they should invest their funds carefully, avoiding investments, no matter how rewarding, which might serve anti-social or immoral ends; they should avoid the illusory benefits of highly speculative schemes or of practices, like gambling, which seem to promise something for nothing; especially they should avoid economic practices which can bring benefit to them only by hurting someone else. Honesty, moderation, and conscientious stewardship are qualities of Christian economic life.

Deal Justly and Speak the Truth

In fairs also, and in markets, I was made to declare against their deceitful merchandise and cheating and cozening, warning all to deal justly, to speak the truth, to let their "yea" be "yea," and their "nay" be "nay"; and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them.

George Fox: Journal, ed. J. L. Nickalls, 1952, pp. 37-38. Entry for 1648.

Free from Entanglements

My mind through the power of Truth was in a good degree weaned from the desire of outward greatness, and I was learning to be content with real conveniences that were not costly, so that a way of life free from much Entanglements appeared best for me, though

the income was small. I had several offers of business that appeared profitable, but did not see my way clear to accept of them, as believing the business proposed would be attended with more outward care and cumber than was required of me to engage in. I saw that a humble man with the blessing of the Lord might live on a little, and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving, but that in common with an increase of wealth the desire for wealth increased. There was a care on my mind to so pass my time as to things outward that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the True Shepherd.

John Woolman: The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, p. 35 (entry for 1743).

Organized Perfection

The two great features of the economic life of the Society of Friends were first, the practice of the "minor virtues" or personal probity, thrift, simplicity of life, and hard work; and second, the willingness to innovate, to try out new ways of doing things, not only in manufacture and trade, but in human relations as well. The particular quality of virtue which characterized Friends, which had profound economic consequences was a direct result of the nature of the Society of Friends as an experiment in organized perfectionism. It has been pointed out that the feature which distinguished early Friends from the Puritans around them whom in so many ways they resembled was not so much their mysticism as their perfectionism. George Fox's great objection to the Puritans was that they "pleaded for sin," and the Puritans' great objection to the Quakers was that they had the temerity to assert that a life without sin could be lived on this earth, and methodically went about organizing a society with this end in view!

Kenneth E. Boulding: "Economic life." In John Kavanaugh, ed.: The Quaker approach to contemporary problems, 1952, p. 47

Enterprise and Brotherhood

There are two great concepts around which the life of Quakerism revolves: enterprise and brotherhood. The spirit of enterprise is that which leads into more knowledge and power, and into better ways of doing things, whether producing an article or producing fellowship and community spirit. It leads into social experiments of all kinds by seeking out better ways not only of making things, but of living together. The spirit of brotherhood leads into peaceableness, into the search for ways of reducing tensions, and of eliminating oppression in all its forms. It sees economic and social life as an essentially co-operative structure, an arrangement for mutual aid. It goes beyond this and sees society as an expression of love and concern of all for all, in which the needs of those who cannot contribute are met as well as the needs of the contributors.

Between enterprise and brotherhood there should always exist a creative tension. It is enterprise which leads to wealth and power, not only for the individual but for the society as a whole. Without enterprise brotherhood is an impotent sentiment. Without brotherhood, however, enterprise leads to oppression and wealth leads to damnation in the satisfaction of inferior desires. This is true under any kind of economic or social system. And separated from God, separated from the sensitizing of the spirit in worship and

communion with the source of all love and truth, enterprise leads to damnation in pride, brotherhood leads to damnation in sentimentality. This remains the most important thing which the Society of Friends has to say, even in the field of economics.

Ibid., pp. 57-8.

Meaning in One's Work

A man's work is perhaps the most important contribution he makes to society. It should therefore offer good possibilities of spiritual contentment. And it happens quite often that people find satisfaction, joy and meaning in their work. But, of course, it is not always the person who looks for the job; often the job looks for the person. Many jobs, especially in industry, are mechanised and humdrum, and offer the worker few possibilities of deeper satisfaction. It is especially bad if the social contacts at the place of work are also unsatisfying. It is an obvious task for Friends and others, to help to produce such an atmosphere in the work place that people can meet in mutual understanding.

William Aarek: From loneliness to fellowship (Swarthmore lecture), 1954, pp. 76-7

MARRIAGE

Marriage, if rightly conceived and faithfully maintained, is one of the most sacred of human relationships. Marriage was honored and blessed by Jesus. It is a true example of divine-human cooperation, perfecting a social structure "for the help and continuance of the human family" and "for the mutual assistance and comfort" of both man and woman that they may be "help-meets to each other in things temporal and spiritual." Marriage, therefore, "should be entered upon discreetly, soberly and in the fear of the Lord." It can never be truly accomplished merely by outward forms; rather, it requires the spiritual union of hearts, together with mutual pledges of continued love and loyalty, all under a sense of divine approval.

Never Marry But For Love

Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely.

He that minds a body and not a soul has not the better part of that relation, and will consequently want the noblest comfort of a married life.

Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love. As love ought to bring them together, so it is the best way to keep them well together.

A husband and wife that love and value one another show heir children and servants that they should do so too. Others visibly lose their authority in their families by their contempt of one another; and teach their children to be unnatural by their own example.

Let not enjoyment lessen, but augment affection; it being the basest of passions to like when we have not, what we slight when we possess.

Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure, where the field is large and full of variety, and of an enduring nature; sickness, poverty, or disgrace being not able to shake it, because it is not under the moving influences of worldly contingencies.

Nothing can be more entire and without reserve; nothing more zealous, affectionate and sincere; nothing more contented and constant than such a couple, nor no greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.

William Penn: A collection of the works, 3rd ed., 1782, vol. 5, pp. 129-32. "Some fruits of solitude," printed 1693. Maxims 79, 95, 100, 101, 103, 81, 97, 99.

The Right to Choose

Single young adults, searching for a satisfying life style, need reassurance that their choices may be, and should be, made to suit their individual needs and not to conform to family expectations or societal pressures. Such pressures may push many into marriages for which they are not ready or not suited. Perhaps more people today have the courage to choose singleness and make a whole life. There have always been beautiful examples of this among Friends, and their lives shine.

Family Life Subcommittee of New England M. Committee on Ministry and Counsel: Living with oneself and others, 1978, p. 37

The Rewards of Unfolding Years

To become a husband and wife makes each of you responsible no longer for yourselves alone. It demands of each an increase, beyond all you now might think, of patience to bear the enlarged responsibilities, and to bear with the incapacities, the weaknesses, the human failings which you are each aware of in yourself and will discover in the other. For God has created no man or woman even nearly perfect. But we grow in both our virtue and our capacity to love by the testing, against the world and each other, of those weaknesses which by the grace of God we can convert into strengths; and by the finding of those strengths and beauties in each other which we hardly dared suspect were there. But these are the rewards of unfolding years; years, not weeks or months. The glory of a great marriage lies in the surprises which loving support, acceptance, and graceful forgiveness can bring forth.

R. B. Crowell: "Words at a Quaker wedding," Friends journal, November 1, 1974, pp. 560-61.

Reverent and Understanding Love

In looking forward to the lifelong comradeship of marriage, remember that happiness depends upon an understanding and imaginative love on both sides. Seek to be joined in a common discipleship of Jesus Christ, desiring that your union may be owned and blessed by him. Consider together the responsibilities of parenthood. Remember the help which you may draw from older and more experienced people including your parents. Ask God's guidance continually; and when difficulties arise remind yourselves of the value of prayer, of perseverance, and of a sense of humour.

London Y. M.: General advices, adopted 1964. See The Friend, London, vol. 122 (1964), p. 940 (7 August).

The True Enjoyment of Marriage

Job Scott writes to Eunice Anthony in 1780, shortly before their marriage:

Having felt thee abundantly near this evening, I am free to write what revives for thy perusal, hoping it may be useful towards our rightly stepping along through time together. First, dearly beloved, let me tell thee, that however short I may be of strict adherence to the Light of Life; yet it is my crown, my chief joy, to feel the holy harmonious influences and inshinings of the love of Jesus my Savior upon my soul; and I feel that without this I must be miserable indeed. I also believe that the true enjoyment of the marriage union consists eminently in both being engaged to draw near to the Lord, and act in his counsel; which I not only wish but in a good degree expect, may be our happy case. If it should, though we have as it were a dry morsel to partake of, as to the things of this life; yet we may joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of our salvation. Thou knowest I have no great things to invite thee to. May we, the remainder of our lives, earnestly press after resignation to the Lord's will, and above all things, strive to please him who only can give peace, in whatever circumstances we may be. Then, I trust, the guardian angel of his holy presence will encamp around us, and his everlasting arms be underneath to support.

Job Scott: Journal, 1797, pp. 74-5.

A Wealth of Tacit Commitment

I have casually referred to my second marriage in 1902, as though it were merely one event among the many events which came in succession. But it was very far from an "ordinary" happening. Every aspect of my life was touched and transformed by that initiation into a new and sacred fellowship. We promised in simple Quaker marriage custom to be "faithful and loving," but we little knew what a wealth of tacit commitments lay hidden under those three explicit words of promise. How little of life, especially of married life, can be pattern-stamped and groomed into line by explicit agreements in advance. Every crisis of life brings situations which could not be anticipated or planned for beforehand, and for which there could be no contractual arrangements. Every occasion of our lives has brought into play the unformulated and tacit commitments which only love can supply.

Rufus M. Jones: The trail of life in the middle years, 1934, pp. 86-7

Seek Timely Advice

We would counsel Friends to take timely advice in periods of difficulty. The early sharing of problems with sympathetic Friends or marriage counsellors can often bring release from misunderstandings and give positive help towards new joy together. Friends ought to be able to do this, but much will depend on the quality of our life together in the Society. If marriages among us fail, we are all part of that failure. We need to be more sensitive to each other's needs, knowing one another in the things which are material as in the things which are eternal.

Report of Marriage and Parenthood Committee. London Y. M. Proceedings, 1956, p. 102.

Demonstrate All We Stand For

Do we not have, in marriage, a powerful opportunity to demonstrate in one nuclear human relationship all we stand for, and all we seek to proclaim to the wider world?

Separation and Divorce

For many years divorce was rare among members of the Society of Friends. In recent years, it has become more common, reflecting the trend in society at large. Meetings have often felt inadequate to deal with problems raised by the break-up of a marriage in the meeting fellowship.

Yet Friends know that God is involved in every aspect of their lives and can speak to their condition in times of difficulty and pain. The meeting has a special opportunity to help early in a troubled marriage, to support impulses toward reconciliation, to help the couple considering separation and/or divorce to be more objective about the issues involved, about the impact on children and on wider relationships. The meeting should uphold the value and integrity of each individual, helping each to affirm self-esteem and purpose.

Support by the meeting through loving concern and the insights of Ministry and Counsel or an appointed committee can facilitate the healing process. All of those involved should be open to what God has to teach them through the experience so that they may look to the future with confidence and hope.

Love Must Change and Mature

Since God is the author of love, no couple can without Him make good their promise to love one another for the rest of their lives. By nature, we cannot love for ever with the same tempo of love the young man or woman we married in our twenties because we fell in love, not only with all that they then were, but also with all that was potential in them and in ourselves through them. Love must inevitably change and mature, and every relationship has its times of stress as well as its times of renewal. But there are periods in some married lives when all that can be done is to go on trying to love and to continue to believe in the elusive and unique quality for which we gave ourselves to our partner until death should part us.

What a triumph when old love is transformed into a deeper surer new love which can accept more fully what each has, and the pair find a rebirth together in those things which are eternal, and through this a renewal of their every-day living it is a path not a few Christian people have to follow. For a couple deeply rooted in the wide charity of Christ, marriage is safe and spiritually fruitful.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 489.

Healing and New Growth

Among Friends, marriage is entered into as a life-long commitment. Nevertheless, some marriages may become so painful and destructive to the persons involved that they can find no better solution than separation or divorce. The dissolution of a marriage which began in faith, love, and joy saddens us all. However, the recognition of this dissolution through divorce or separation may be the beginning of a process of healing and new growth.

Even those of us who disapprove of divorce can feel an obligation to nurture and support the individuals.

*Family Life Subcommittee of New England Y. M. Committee
on Ministry and Counsel: Living with oneself and others,
1978, p. 27.*

Open to the Light

In individual cases we cannot judge what is right or wrong for a person to do. ... No one except the individuals involved know all the circumstances. The final decision of what is right must be left to the individual conscience. There may be cases in which separation or divorce is the best action that can be taken in that situation. There are always, in each of our lives, duties and commitments which call us to take the path which is not easy. We affirm marriage and the commitments to which it calls us, but to suppose that divine will puts regard for the "institution" of marriage above concern for persons and the human need for fulfillment, seems to many neither psychologically nor spiritually sound. ... We must try ... to be open to the Light, and to grow in our understanding of God's will.

Ibid., p. 24.

A Meeting Needs to be Sensitive

Clearness committees for divorce could serve the same purposes as clearness committees for marriage. If couples in love may be blind to their incompatibilities, couples in trouble may be blind to latent possibilities in their relationship. Just because two people claim that their marriage is over does not mean that it necessarily is. A substantial proportion of decisions to divorce are ultimately reversed, even after couples have filed suit for divorce. Thus, a couple who informed their Meeting that they were contemplating divorce should no more be assumed to have made the right decision than a couple who informed their Meeting that they were contemplating marriage.

For divorced persons, care is almost always needed. A single parent with custody of the children often needs assistance with the care and rearing of his/her children. Both the man and the woman are apt to need post-divorce counseling to help them work through their sense of personal failure and of bereavement over the collapse of the marriage. Finally, a Meeting needs to be sensitive to the desire of a divorced person to find companionship with persons of the same and the opposite sex to replace the former partner's companionship. He or she may welcome assistance in meeting new friends and opportunities to talk through with Friends the problems involved in resuming dating after a lapse of some years. The sexual issues involved in post-divorce friendships often are of special concern.

*Bob Blood, "Divorce in Friends meeting" Friends journal,
November 1, 1972, pp. 574-75.*

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

In a time of confusion, Friends need to declare such truths about sexual relationships as they have discovered. At the moment, these are variously perceived in our Yearly Meeting. Some members feel comfortable with the recent emergence of intimate relationships other than those defined in marriage. Some find this difficult to accept. On

one point, however, there is unity Friends who have made genuine commitments, founded on mutual respect and caring, which are truly a response to that of God in another person, are to be tenderly regarded. As we hold one another in the Light and continue to seek God's will together, we trust that we shall achieve a more adequate understanding of the proper place and purpose of sex and sexual relationships in our lives.

Sexuality is a Part of Life

Sexuality is part of life from the moment of our birth to the end of our days. We know that two aspects of sex, pleasure and procreation, have often been used without a sense of responsibility for their consequences present and future for the individuals involved, for others not directly involved, and for society. Any irresponsible use of sex is likely to damage individuals and society; therefore such irresponsibility is, in the deepest sense, immoral.

Because of the work in which both of us have been involved over the past fifteen years, we share the conviction of countless others that sexuality is one of the two great human endowments, comparable to the mind in importance, and that pleasure and joy from the use of both these great human faculties is enhanced by sound knowledge about them, combined with the conviction of the infinite worth of each individual person.

We believe that a family is the best setting for learning how to develop and use one's sexuality. We are convinced that caring and trust are essential for the development of love within the family, and that love is essential to the development of true intimacy between all family members. Such intimacy within a family is what human beings need, seek, and long for from their earliest days to their last. But we recognize, too, that not all persons are able or willing or, in some cases, do not choose to develop this part of their lives.

We have spoken of trust. Trust has to be built on truth. If family members keep the truth from one another, they cannot learn to trust each other, no matter what their ages may be. As Quakers, our moral values depend on our belief in the infinite worth of each human being and on our belief that as human beings we are obliged to deal with others as we would like others to deal with us trustingly, caringly, and responsibly.

We believe that responsible people can accept these positive moral values no matter what their religious beliefs may be, or even if they do not consider themselves to be religious at all. These values relate to all of life, not just to sex and sexuality. We believe that sexuality as a part of life has no morality special to itself but that morality or immorality lies in the way each of us uses sexuality in our life relationships.

Mary S. Calderone, M.D., and Eric W. Johnson: The family book about sexuality, 1981, pp. xvi-xvii.

Love is a Blend

Love is a blend of several elements sexual attraction, companionship and care.

SEXUAL ATTRACTION. Love is not merely platonic, not viewing from afar, but a desire for physical proximity. This doesn't mean that the proof of love is willingness to have premarital intercourse. Rather, it means enjoying each other's presence, being quickened by the sight and especially by the touch of the other, being physically impelled toward each other.

COMPANIONSHIP. This is the social element in love: the enjoyment of doing things together, of togetherness quite apart from sexuality. It is the basic element in friendship and is simply intensified in love. It is one of the redeeming elements that make married love more than mere sexual desire.

CARE. Both sex and companionship can be exploited selfishly. But care is by definition altruistic. It involves concern for the partner, interest in his welfare, and effort to meet his needs. One of the rewarding aspects of being in love is knowing that somebody cares. Being in love is rewarding not only in receiving care but also in giving it. To meet the partner's need is to be needed oneself.

Robert O. Blood, Jr.: Marriage, 1962, pp. 95-7, 115, 145-6.

Society's Responsibility

It is right and proper that many boys and girls and young men and women should fall in and out of love a number of times before they marry and this process will involve emotional heights and depths. If these experiences are to be educative, they must involve all the personality, but such a series of experiences will be, generally, less disruptive if the final sexual commitment is avoided. Society can and should offer educational relationships by giving opportunities for the young to do things together. While they have no resources but to sit entwined in the cinema, watching huge photographs of impassioned love scenes, they will learn no outlet for their feelings for each other save those of passionate love-making. But an activity shared with other couples may help a pair to look outward at life together rather than inward at each other, and so save them from being deeply committed physically before they are otherwise ready.

Towards a Quaker view of sex, an essay by a group of Friends. Alastair Heron, ed., 1964, p. 52.

Family Should Be Safeguarded

The central concept of sexual morality in Christian countries is the integrity of the family. Most people religious or otherwise in our own and other countries would agree that the family as a social unit should be safeguarded and sexual practices that threaten its stability vigorously discouraged. The Christian family is a monogamous one, held together by an understanding love and responsibility and by an acceptance of a faith and purpose in life.

Ibid., p. 8.

Temptation is a Testing

We must realize that it is not sinful to be tempted, nor is it unique. All men are tempted all the time. The word temptation means simply a test or trial, so that every temptation overcome gives new strength. Before he could begin his public ministry, Jesus had to go into the wilderness to suffer temptation. The gospels suggest that the one was a necessary prelude to the other. And George Fox went through a period after his conversion when he experienced temptations so terrible that he cannot name them in his journal. He reports that he cried to the Lord in great agony, asking why he should so tempted, seeing he had never felt these urges before. And the Lord replied that he must know all conditions in order to speak to all conditions. We are, then, not saved by our untried and cloistered

virtues but by our temptations, if we will have the courage to acknowledge them for what they are and the determination not to settle for less than the fullness of our humanity. And, by the grace of God, we are able to learn from our failings to speak to others' conditions out of the sorrow of our own lives. God grant that we may be able to sustain each other in overcoming temptation because we realize how much alike we are in being tempted.

Paul A. Lacey: Temptation, a meditation on sexual morality, 1964, pp. 7-8. (Pendle Hill Bulletin, no. 170).

Friends Are Being Tested

Friends are being tested as never before with opportunities to know what it is to be a Friend. The unmarried young couple, and perhaps even the unmarried older couple, the homosexual, whether man or woman we can reach out to that of God in them even though they are different from us, confident that if our reaching be true and loving, then that of God in them will respond in turn to that of Him in us. There may always be a chasm between us, one that might appear unbridgeable because it may never be possible for us to be like each other, to understand each other's differences, or even to establish a friendship. But love, that of God within us that we also share, is the bridge that is eternally there, across any chasm between human beings.

Mary S. Calderone: Human sexuality and the Quaker conscience, 1973, pp. 19-20.

Home and Family

The Quaker home offers a supreme opportunity for the expression of the Quaker way of life. Within this environment, simplicity, integrity, and love can be fostered. The early introduction of family worship and silent waiting can lend a rootedness to the practice of worship in meeting and enrich the family experience.

Although we have come to recognize a number of alternative family forms, nothing has changed the basic spiritual experience of Quaker homemaking. Family members are partners with God.

In the busy years of home life the family members are upheld and strengthened by their dependence upon God and upon one another. The efficient running of the home, the simple hospitality, the happy atmosphere are all outward signs of this threefold inner relationship. Homemaking is a Quaker service in its own right. It should be recognized as such and a proper balance preserved, so that other activities even the claims of Quaker service in other fields are not allowed to hinder its growth.

Where God Becomes More Real

Do you make your homes places of friendliness, refreshment and peace, where God becomes more real to those that dwell therein and to all who visit there? Do you consider the serious responsibilities of parenthood and do you welcome the counsel you may receive from your own parents?

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1950. Query 5, p. 99.

Parents Are the First Teachers

The child's first teachers are his parents. It is in the home that Friends' principles first become practices. The home is founded upon love and depends constantly upon loving sympathy, understanding and cooperation. Love binds the family together and yet allows freedom for each member to develop into the person he was meant to be. Loving guidance, constructive in its attitude rather than authoritarian or possessive, will help the child to discover his own potentialities and interest. Love reaches farther than words and is understood long before words have meaning. Parents' love for God, for each other and for their children, brings stability and security. This outpouring of the spirit creates the religious atmosphere of the home.

Hospitality in the home is a vital force in spiritual nurture. The contacts of parents with their children's companions and the child's association with adult guests are important influences. Parental attitudes towards neighbors and acquaintances are often reflected in the children. Family conversation may determine whether or not children will look for the good in the people they meet, whether they will be sensitive to that of God in every man.

Philadelphia Y.M.: Faith and practice, 1961, p. 27

Roots of Faith Formed in the Home

While I was too young to have any religion of my own, I had come to a home where religion kept its fires always burning. We had very few "things" but we were rich in invisible wealth. I was not "christened" in a church, but I was sprinkled from morning till night with the dew of religion. We never ate a meal which did not begin with a hush of thanksgiving; we never began a day without "a family gathering" at which mother read a chapter of the Bible, after which there would follow a weighty silence. These silences, during which all the children of our family were hushed with a kind of awe, were very important features of my spiritual development. There was work inside and outside the house waiting to be done, and yet we sat there hushed and quiet, doing nothing. I very quickly discovered that something real was taking place. We were feeling our way down to that place from which living words come and very often they did come. Someone would bow and talk with God so simply and quietly that He never seemed far away. The words helped to explain the silence. We were now finding what we had been searching for. When I first began to think of God I did not think of Him as very far off. At meeting some of the Friends who prayed shouted loud and strong when they called upon Him, but at home He always heard easily and He seemed to be there with us in the living silence. My first steps in religion were thus acted. It was a religion which we did together. Almost nothing was said in the way of instructing me. We all joined together to listen for God and then one of us talked to Him for the others. In these simple ways my religious disposition was being unconsciously formed and the roots of my faith in unseen realities were reaching down far below my crude and childish surface thinking.

Rufus M. Jones: Finding the trail of life, 1929, pp. 21-2.

Taught Early to Pray

Children should be taught early to pray, and as soon as possible they should be encouraged to speak to God in their own way; the natural difficulties that occur when prayer seems to bring no result should be handled with understanding and sympathy.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960 no. 507

Sacrifices for a Secure and Lasting Home

We recognise the new freedom and equality of those marriages in which both parents are able to pursue careers and to share the duties of the home. We are proud to think that in the past, by liberating women in the ministry and encouraging them in service, we have helped to create this pattern. But we know, too, that it brings its own tensions and dangers. If parents pursue their own interests and vocations (however worthy) without consideration for their families, the children will suffer. There are times when family calls must be put before all others, even those of our Society. We do not believe that rules of conduct can be strictly laid down, but we beg parents to be ready, in this as in other ways, to sacrifice monetary advantage, the pleasure of liberty, or the interest of their professional life, in order to preserve and build the family. The institution of marriage has survived many revolutions, social changes, and altered moral codes; we believe that it will survive others. Our task is to apply eternal principles in changing circumstances, and to make homes that are secure and lasting.

Ibid., no. 503.

Adequate Sex Instruction

It is the responsibility of parents to see that their children are reliably informed about the formation and functions of their own bodies, and concerning their manner of coming into the world. There must be the fullest confidence between parents and children in this matter, and the responsibility should be shared by both parents. Information about sex which is naturally sought for by the enquiring mind should be given gradually, in a simple and informal way, according to the growth of the child towards maturity.

Ibid., no. 509.

Partners in Adventure

As the boy or girl grows towards adolescence parents often have to stand back, for other people can frequently give better help at this stage. If the parents' way of life continues to make them acceptable partners in adventures of the spirit, and if they are willing to be called upon when needed, they still have opportunities to help the adolescent, but these opportunities come only now and then in actual words. The parents, however, must hold firmly to their own religious faith and principles, and can help the adolescent best by doing so. Trust, a sense of humour, a ready forgiveness, and the ability to "speak the truth in love" are other elements of the good home background for this age. Parents, too, should be ready to share experiences that they have found precious not only specifically religious experiences, but experiences of people, art, music, poetry and nature.

London Y M., Friends Education Committee: Growing up in Quaker worship, 1952, pp. 14-15.

Family a Path to a Better Society

The future of the family is a subject often approached with great anxiety in these times. I propose to strike a new tone of inquiry, and to ask what discoveries lie before us about the family. Since family-type togetherness is the oldest and longest-continuing human experience, it is not unlikely that what lies ahead for us as members of the human race will be arrived at in the context of having been formed as persons in family-type settings in the past and in the present. As a futurist, I have long been convinced that families are the primary agents of social change in any society. It is in this setting that individuals first become aware that the passage of time means growth and change, that tomorrow is never like yesterday. It is in this setting that one's first daydreams about a different future take place. In this view the family is not a barrier between us and a better society, but a path to that better society.

Elise Boulding: The family as a way into the future (Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 222), 1978, p. 3.

DEATH

Our mortality is a precious reminder of God's immortality. Knowledge of the Resurrection and of the Eternal God is a cause for hope, the hope that our lives bear witness to a reality above and beyond our own mortality.

The presence of death may nurture a sense of humility; life may be enhanced and regarded as a gift. However, the death of a loved one or simply the recognition of human frailty may lead to a profound despair and doubt.

Friends need to understand the special needs of both the dying and the bereaved. The dying mourn their own deaths as they anticipate the completion of their lives. The bereaved mourn the deaths of others. The natural process of grieving to express a sense of loss, if understood, can be encouraged along to its successful completion in both the dying and the bereaved. Expression of such emotion can be viewed as a healthy reaction, testifying to the significance of life itself.

Friends affirm that through our lives God may be revealed. Matters of life and death, such as abortion, euthanasia, suicide, fear of life or death, and aging, are held up to the Light to gain insight into God's will for our lives. It is this Light Within to which our faith is directed. It is this Light which gives life its dignity.

Turning from Time to Eternity

And this is the Comfort of the Good, that the Grave cannot hold them, and that they live as soon as they die. For Death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity. Death, then, being the way and condition of life, we cannot love to live, if we cannot bear to die.

They that love beyond the World, cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies.

Nor can Spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle the Root and Record of their Friendship.

If Absence be not Death, neither is theirs.

William Penn, "Some fruits of solitude," in *The witness of William Penn* (eds. F. B. Tolles and E. Gordon Altderfer), 1957.

The Vigil

During the few remaining days of her life, there were moments of lucidity and times of speaking in code, which neither of us understood. Her vitality was visibly slipping away; often she had barely enough energy to acknowledge my presence. I moistened her lips, held her hand, and waited. Four days before she died, I was sitting quietly beside her, watching the only sign of life the pulse throbbing in her throat. I was silently praying for her to be released. Suddenly her eyes flew open. Her face took on an ecstatic expression as she gazed at the ceiling. The door had opened for her; she was seeing what lay beyond. A few moments later her eyes closed. She looked so happy and peaceful, I felt it would be an intrusion to say goodbye. The same thing happened the next day. Two days later she went through that door and found the peace she had yearned for for so long.

I, too, was at peace. A profound sense of loss will remain with me always, but contrary to all my expectations and fears there was no period of mourning and very little grief-work to be done. I had been mourning throughout. Grief-work, as I understand it, is the expression of an unfulfilled relationship of regrets, feelings of guilt, especially about unexpressed love. We were both grateful for what we had meant to each other; we had said so; and at the end we were eager for the peace that was to be hers. I felt I had completed and fulfilled a relationship that had begun at my birth.

As she lay dying, I learned much about living: it is in the lines and between the lines I have written. I learned about the power of the bonds that link mothers and daughters my mother and my daughter; about the need for letting go of old resentments and angers and the liberating effect of doing so; about the importance of frequently expressing love in verbal and non-verbal ways and the deep happiness and comfort this brings; about putting aside reticence and fears and taking risks; about paying more attention to and having faith in the non-rational aspects of our lives the dreams and day-dreams, the visions, prayers, intuitions, and imaginative happenings. I am left with the overwhelming conviction that the exits from life are as important as the entrances and that they are far more difficult to achieve with courage and dignity than most of the crises that lie in between.

Betty Gulick: "The vigil: a daughter's poignant journal of her mother's final illness, and how each came to terms with it," *Prime time*, April/May 1981, pp. 60-8.

Death Rims Life with the Beauty of Transiency

Hill and valley and still water, mountain and canyon and deep are the work of one creation; and why have I been placed in it? And what do I do in it, with such a little while before I am gone? In the valley stays, and the hills I climb now, and the still waters run, and I will be laid somewhere beneath them all. Yet in time they, too, will be gathered up in some mighty motion of fire or flood or ice. Therefore all valleys are shadowed with death, yet they live in beauty. And the shadow, as in painting, is what gives roundness and ripeness to shapes and colors that would otherwise have little beauty at all. Death rims life with the

beauty of transiency. It is because beauty is always passing clouds moving, waters flowing, leaves scattering, youth aging that it so pierces our hearts.

Bradford Smith: Dear gift of life, p. 19.

Return from Dying

The experts who haven't gone through it speak of transcendental perimortum or near-death experiences. I call it being dead/dying. It happened and I survived, although the "I" is different than it was before.

The process of "centering down" for meeting requires a discipline of self and conditions which are conducive to the process. The process of physiological shock brought me to a different level of consciousness and a sense of quietness and peace that was much akin to centering down. The primary difference was that the shock made this process both effortless and profound. Without thought, or release from thought, I was suddenly there. All of the positive feelings and perceptions that I ascribe to God within, or without, were there. This was the promised rest for the weary, hope for the hopeless, and love for the forsaken. I doubt that I will again feel this sense, but I know what it is that I strive to feel. I know what it is that I will return to when I am no longer bound to this life. This knowledge is comforting, and it makes me feel very loved.

Life is commonly perceived as good. Death is defined as the absence, conclusion, or opposite of life. If death is the antithesis of life, then death must be bad. If death is bad, then it should be fought with all of the skills at our disposal. In contrast, if we accept life and death as parts of a continuum of development and reject the adversarial relationship of these states, we can accept both death and life on their own terms. My experience has led me to believe that death is no more the opposite of life than walking is the opposite of swimming. Both belong within the right environment and the right time. This manner of thinking allows one to defend life on its own terms without reference to death. I cannot help but think that life is good for its own sake and not because it constitutes a denial of the presence of death.

An acceptance of death, without reference to life, liberates our thinking about sustaining life and helping a person to die. If we are not faced with the image of death as a victory over life, we can deal with it on its own terms. We can think in terms of easing the transition to death for both the dying and the survivors. It becomes possible to be grateful for a death that released a person from suffering while damning the fate which compels the survivors to go on without the living presence of one who is loved. It becomes possible to be grateful for life and yet grateful that it will end and death will come.

S. Jean Smith-Hoffman, "Return from dying" Friends journal, March 1, 1979, pp. 13-14.

Death is the Way Life Renews Itself

And so comes the next opening the sense of being part of a universe, of a personal relatedness to all life, all growth, all creativity. Suddenly one senses that his life is not just his own little individual existence, but that he is bound in fact to all of life, from the first splitting off of the planets, through the beginning of animate life and on through the slow evolution of man. It is all in him and he is but one channel of it. What has flowed through

him, flows on, through children, through works accomplished, through services rendered; it is not lost. Once given the vision of one's true place in the life stream, death is no longer complete or final, but an incident. Death is the way the only way life renews itself. When the individual has served his purpose as a channel, the flow transfers itself to other channels, but life goes on. And in this great drama of life renewed, one sees and feels the divine presence, and feels himself one with it.

Bradford Smith: Dear gift of life, p. 15.

The Quality of Life Determines the Quality of Death

The time to think about death, most truly to face it creatively, is not when it is near, but rather when one is at the peak of one's life's energy and creativity. Certainly this was the attitude of early Friends. Of course they knew death would come, but in the reading of thousands of the pages of the writings and journals of early Quakers, I have been impressed by how little concern the journal writer expressed for her or his own death or for what would happen after death. This is all the more remarkable when one remembers how common death was in those times, how central it was in most thought, and that the religions contemporary with Quakerism heavily emphasized the transition at death from physical life to heaven, hell, or purgatory, and each religion promised the best road to heaven.

Instead, Quakers, quietly placing their faith in the God they worshipped to handle all that happens after human death, concentrated their energy and their faith on the living of a holy life. I or, as Fox says repeatedly, our task, our responsibility is to make this present life holy, consecrated, a temple of the living God, the indwelling Christ. This gives to us the power to be the people of our God, to master and conquer temptation, to order our lives by the divine principles steadily revealed to us.

When I was a child, like so many others, I learned the little prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

The prayer meant nothing to me then, for my death seemed an impossibly far-off event. We have created a culture which resists even the idea of mortality and, when it has to be faced, puts it in sanitized, impersonal hospitals and surrounds the disposal of the body with flowers, music, beautiful words and carefully kept cemeteries. Now that this illusion is shattered and I face each day knowing it really can be the last day of my life, I believe I have come to a more wholesome understanding of the relationship of life and death. And the fundamental truth which emerges is that the quality of one's life determines the quality of one's death. William James wrote that Quakerism is fundamentally a religion of integrity. Nowhere is the level of our integrity tested better than in the way our lives measure, when we know we face death, with what we would have wanted them to be.

Cecil E. Hinshaw, "On living and dying," Friends journal, August 1-15, 1979, pp. 4-5.

Reverent Simplicity

Reverent simplicity in respect to the outward practices attending death we earnestly commend to Friends everywhere. The funerals of Friends should be held in a spirit of quiet peace and trust. Natural sorrow there will be, especially for friends taken away in youth and in the strength of their days, but often our thought may be one of great thankfulness for lives which have borne witness to the upholding power of Christ.

London Y M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 529.

CHAPTER 4

Faith into Practice In Social Concerns

The Kingdom of which Jesus preached and to which Christians have aspired ever since is a spiritual kingdom. Nevertheless, Jesus, recognizing that the spirits of men and women can be chained in bonds of despair, of hate, of fear, or of pain, was constant in His ministry to the ills of this world. He fed the multitudes; He made the blind to see; He healed the sick; He instructed the worshipper to leave the temple and make peace with his brother before he returned to pray. The goal of this healing ministry was that fullness of life which permits the human spirit to know and to rise in praise of the loving God.

Jesus's ministry made clear that acts of reconciliation, of healing, and of service nurture the Seed and extend the Gospel. He demonstrated that the religious life is incomplete without the religious act, the practice of worship sterile without the practice of loving concern for distressed people. The truth He demonstrated has caused Friends to make labor in the areas of their social concerns an essential part of their religious life.

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF FRIENDS' SOCIAL CONCERNS

Friends' faith is deeply rooted in the practice of personal contact with God, out of which come the leadings and concerns which shape their lives.

A Painful Discrepancy

The basis of Friends' social concerns is the same as the basis Of Quakerism as a whole the belief in the within-ness of God. This is not original with Friends. Many other groups have believed that God is within as well as above and beyond man. However, the emphasis on the within-ness of God in all human beings, in the capacity of the individual to communicate directly with God, to experience the spirit of Christ and express it in every aspect of life has led us to adopt patterns of behavior which may be considered distinctively Quaker.

This is the spiritual basis of the Friends' distinctive form of meeting for worship waiting in the Light for direct revelation of God's will for us. It is the basis for the distinctive form of meeting for business seeking unity in the Spirit. And it is the basis for all the social testimonies. For three centuries Friends have been exploring the application of this belief in the within-ness of God in all men to the problems of human relations and the end is certainly not yet.

A Quaker social concern seems characteristically to arise in a sensitive individual or very small group often decades before it grips the Society of Friends as a whole and as much as a century or more before it appeals to the secular world.

The concern arises as a revelation to an individual that there is a painful discrepancy between existing social conditions and what God wills for society and that this discrepancy is not being adequately dealt with. The next step is the determination of the individual to

do something about it not because he is particularly well fitted to tackle the problem, but simply because no one else seems to be doing it.

Dorothy H. Hutchinson: The spiritual basis of Quaker social concerns, 1961, pp. 1-2. Friends General Conference.

The Business of Our Lives

Our gracious Creator cares and provides for all his creatures. His tender mercies are over all his works; and so far as his love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.

John Woolman: 'A plea for the poor,' (written in 1763-4) in The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, p. 241.

Moral Concern

There was in the Quaker movement a moral earnestness and a social intensity which saved it from the easy pitfalls of mystical quests. If these men had their moments of transport when they felt themselves "in the Paradise of God" they never lost their hold upon the central purpose of their lives to transform this present world to the end that society here on earth might take on a likeness to the Kingdom of Heaven. Fox had his first awakening in his nineteenth year, not over his own sins, but over the moral conditions and social customs about him.

It was in this focussing upon moral effort that the Quakers differed most from the other sects of the Commonwealth period. Their "views" were not novel or original. Every one of their peculiar ideas had already been proclaimed by some individual or by some religious party. What was new was the fusing of their ideas into one living truth, which was henceforth to be done, was to be put into life and made to march.

Rufus M. Jones in introduction to William C. Braithwaite's The beginnings of Quakerism, 1923, pp. xlii, xliii.

Injustice "Struck at Their Life"

The social testimony of the Society of Friends did not arise out of any doctrinaire theory of human rights or of the nature of a just society. As the living experience of the inward light of Christ became a reality to the first followers of George Fox, a force moulding character and making all things new, they found that the many forms of social injustice witnessed round them, "struck at their life" and could no longer be tolerated. It was from this central experience that they sought a new order of human relationships in the humdrum tasks of earning a living and in their contacts with their workpeople and customers. In their own business relationships they sought to maintain a simple and steadfast integrity, determining to make or sell only things of good quality. The apprentice in the shop, the serving girl in the home, the labourer at the plough, each was a human personality, lit with a spark of the divine light, and, therefore, demanding respect. The earliest social testimony was eminently practical, setting a new standard to be followed by

Friends in all their business activities a standard of quality in the goods handled, a standard of fairness and consideration in their dealings with all men.

Industry and the Social Order Conference, 1958: Preparatory document 2, Friends and the industrial and social order, p. 3.

Religious Experience Comes First

Quakers are not perfect; they are essentially human and weak and inept and stupid like everyone else. But their being Quakers does make a difference to their attitude and their behaviour and it is to this that their influence in history and society, which is out of all proportion to their numbers, is attributable. There is a tendency to put the cart before the horse, to say that they are people who find happiness in serving others and who seek to find religious belief through such service. This is quite the wrong way round, apart from having a concealed and unjustified implication that Quakers are simply those who have a particular psychological quirk which drives them to service and sacrifice as a means of self-gratification. What comes first is the religious experience which leads to religious belief. Out of this comes a compulsion to work for others in some way or other. For many it is in practical matters, for some it is a drive towards a contemplative and mystical life for this too serves others, bringing us all closer to true awareness of God through its actual being.

Geoffrey Hubbard: Quaker by conviction, 1974, p. 169.

Unity of Faith and Works

Our vision of our Meetings for Worship is of places where God is present, where God brings us into unity, where through corporate worship and the ministry arising out of it, we may be strengthened in our convictions, awareness, work, and faithfulness.

Our vision is of the unity of faith and works. We recognize that some come to works only after gaining faith, and some come to faith through working. Ideally, we reach inward to the Spirit that speaks to us and guides us, and outward to the world which needs us and which we need if we are not to drift into empty piety or self-glorification.

Workshop at Pendle Hill, July 8-13, 1979, "Friends as leaders: the vision, instrument, and methods," p. 8.

Characteristics of a Quaker Concern

I shall call attention to seven characteristics of Quaker social concerns in general. First and foremost, *a Quaker concern requires a prepared individual*. This preparation, in the great among us, seems to have a pattern which is visible in retrospect but is not visible to the individual at the time he is being prepared. ... It seems that faithfulness in apparently unrelated aspects of life is preparation most necessary for a Friend who will be subsequently called to carry through a concern.

A second characteristic of a Friends' social concern is that *the concerned individual makes direct contact with the evil* which needs attention. That is why Elizabeth Fry had so much more practical insight than other prison reformers of her day. ...

A third characteristic of the concerned Friend is his *ability to establish empathy with the objects of his concern*, e.g. to achieve imaginative identification with prisoners as Elizabeth Fry did. ...

A fourth characteristic of the concerned Quaker is his *willingness to work for any minor, unspectacular, partial solution of a big problem*, which seems, at the moment, achievable. Often minor reforms are the only realistic possibility and to over-reach is to prevent any progress. ...

A fifth characteristic of a Quaker's concern is that *it does not rest until it has penetrated through the superficial evil to its root causes*. In looking for causes, Quakers cannot, as many Christians have done, fall back upon the hopeless depravity of man as the cause of social evils. Friends recognize that man's depravity is real, but they have never considered it his essential quality nor felt obliged to wait till man is less depraved before attacking social evils. They have, on the contrary, felt that, since every man contains the Divine essence, we need not be without hope. Friends, therefore, look for social causes and at least partial cures for social evils. ...

A sixth characteristic of social concern is that *the person who is sensitive to one social concern becomes inevitably more sensitive to all social evils*. ...

Lastly, *the person with a social concern is willing to accept censure and ridicule*. ... Yet in the last analysis, obedience to the Light is the only satisfying course. Approval is not the criterion. ... Results are not the criterion. ... I am convinced that if one is obedient, failure is impossible. ... The results, when they appear, will rest upon the foundations laid by many anonymous builders. To be one of these is not to fail.

Dorothy H. Hutchinson: The spiritual basis of Quaker social concern, 1961, pp. 4-10. Friends General Conference.

What Does He Lay Upon Me?

Thus the state of having a concern has a foreground and a background. In the foreground is the special task, uniquely illuminated, toward which we feel a special yearning and care. This is the concern as we usually talk about it or present it to the Monthly Meeting. But in the background¹ is a second level, or layer, of universal concern for all the multitude of good things that need doing. Toward them all we feel kindly, but we are dismissed from active service in most of them. And we have an easy mind in the presence of desperately real needs which are not our direct responsibility. We cannot die on every cross nor are we expected to.

Thomas R. Kelly: A testament of devotion, 1941, pp. 108-9.

Personal Obedience

I think I have wasted a great deal of my life waiting to be called to some great mission which would change the world. I have looked for important social movements. I have wanted to make a big and lasting contribution to the causes I believe in. I think I have been too ready to reject the genuine leadings I have been given as being matters of little consequence. It has taken me a long time to learn that obedience means doing what we are called to do even if it seems pointless or unimportant or even silly. The great social movements of our time may very well be part of our calling. The ideals of peace and justice and equality which are part of our religious tradition are often the focus of debate. But we cannot simply immerse ourselves in these activities. We need to develop our own unique

social witness, in obedience to God. We need to listen for the gentle whispers which will tell us how we can bring our own lives into greater harmony with heaven.

*Deborah Haines, "Living in harmony with heaven on earth,"
Friends search for wholeness, 1978, p. 139.*

A Meditation

If I can live in simple comfort and owe no man anything, sharing intimately with loved ones life's varied experiences; if I can bring a touch of healing and a clearer outlook into the trials and problems of those with whom I mingle; if I can humbly undertake public service when the public calls me, caring neither too much nor too little for popular approval; if I can give spiritual values always the first place as did Jesus of Nazareth, and gladly sink from sight like a bit of leaven that [the] coming of his kingdom may be hastened, then will this experiment of living yield in full measure the true wealth of contentment.

*Alfred Osborne, from his personal papers. Printed in New
England Y.M. minutes, 1952, p. 17*

True Godliness

True godliness don't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavors to mend it.

William Penn: No cross, no crown, 1682, ch. 5, sect. 12.

EQUALITY

Friends believe the divine Light is accessible to all people, regardless of race, sex, age, or material wealth. Everyone has the potential to respond to God within. All persons ought to have the opportunity to develop their talents and skills under the leadings of the Spirit. Equality is not sameness. It is equality of respect. Every person is a child of God.

Early Friends refused to acknowledge class distinctions, hence the use of plain language and refusal of hat honor. Education of both men and women was considered essential in order to develop the potential to serve God. Eighteenth and nineteenth century Friends were called to witness against slavery and against the unequal opportunities open to women. Twentieth century Friends have tried to address the problems of racism, women's rights, and the unequal distribution of the world's resources.

God Revealed in Every Person

A very far-reaching part of the Quaker message, affecting character and behavior unconsciously, is the affirmation that if God is revealing himself to every human person, then there can be no parts of life which are "secular" in contrast to other parts which are "sacred." God is equally relevant to every part of life, whether it is Saturday (recreation), Sunday (worship), or Monday (work). The attempt is made to level up, even though in practice we sometimes level down; the underlying faith is that at all times our behavior should reflect the conviction that God is at work in those with whom we mix, and in ourselves; that every human encounter can fan or quench the divine spark in another; and that our lives are at all times lived in the presence of God.

*Hugh L. Doncaster: The Quaker message (Pendle Hill
pamphlet, no. 181), 1972, p. 17*

Everyone is Equal in the Sight of God

I have never lost the joy of sitting in silence at the beginning of Meeting, knowing that everything can happen, knowing the joy of the utmost surprise; feeling that nothing is preordained, nothing is set, all is open. The Light can come from all sides. The joy of experiencing the Light in a completely different way than one has thought it would come is one of the greatest gifts that Friends' Meeting for Worship has brought me.

I believe that Meeting for Worship has brought the same awareness to all who have seen and understood the message that everyone is equal in the sight of God, that everybody has the capacity to be the vessel of God's word. There is nothing that age, experience and status can do to pre-judge where and how the Light will appear. This awareness the religious equality of each and every one is central to Friends. Early Friends understood this and at the same time they fully accepted the inseparable unity of life, and spoke against the setting apart of the secular and the sacred. It was thus inevitable that religious equality would be translated into the equality of everyday social behaviour. Friends' testimony to plain speech and plain dress was both a testimony of religious equality and a testimony of the unacceptability of all other forms of inequality.

Ursula M. Franklin: Perspectives on Friends' testimonies in today's world (Gardner Lecture, Canadian Y. M.), 1979, p. 8.

All Are in the Family of God

I was moved of the Lord to recommend to Friends, for the benefit and advantage of the Church of Christ, that the faithful women who were called to the belief of the Truth, being made partakers of the same precious faith, and heirs of the same everlasting Gospel order, and therein be meet helps unto men in the restoration, in the service of Truth, in the affairs of the Church, as they are outwardly in civil, or temporal things. That so all the family of God, women as well as men, might know, possess, perform, and discharge their offices and services in the house of God.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, p 668 (entry for 1673).

Power of the Lord Speaks in Women

Those that speak against the power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a woman, simply by reason of her sex or because she is a woman, not regarding the Seed and Spirit and Power that speaks in her, such speak against Christ and his Church.

Margaret Fell, Women's speaking, 1666, p. 4.

Women are Messengers of Redemption

Thus we see that Jesus owned the Love and Grace that appeared in Women and did not despise it; and by what is recorded in the Scriptures, he received as much love, kindness, compassion and tender dealing toward him from Women, as he did from many others. Mark this, you that despise and oppose the message of the Lord God that he sends by Women: what had become of the redemption of the whole body of man-kind, if they had not believed the message that the Lord Jesus sent by these Women, of and concerning his resurrection?

Ibid., pp. 6-7

God's Love is Universal

To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favours are peculiar to one nation and exclude others, plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding. For as God's love is universal, so where the mind is sufficiently influenced by it, it begets a likeness of itself and the heart is enlarged towards all men.

John Woolman: The journal and major essays of John Woolman, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, p. 200.

Roots of Racial Prejudice

The roots of racial prejudice lie deep within us, and in seeking a solution to the evil results of racial tensions we need to search our own hearts. Our belief in the significance of every individual in the sight of God and his need for an abundant life can guide us even when we shrink before the vastness of the problem.

London Y. M. Proceedings, 1952, min. 41, pp. 233-4.

Children of One God

Racial discrimination arises because fundamentally it is easier to see a man as a stranger rather than as a brother if his skin is of a different colour. The stranger tends to be feared rather than loved, and it must be remembered that fears engendered by such differences are not always imaginary. They can be resolved only in so far as relationships between man and man, of whatever race, are conceived in terms of a constant realisation that the members of one race are the children not of the members of another race but the children of God. Against this, imperialism, exploitation and even paternalism cannot stand.

Race Relations Conference, 1954, min. 4.

Redemption From the Spirit of Oppression

Oppression in the extreme appears terrible, but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression, and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive: that labour for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world.

John Woolman: "A plea for the poor," (written in 1763-4) in The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, p. 262.

PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE

The witness for peace is an affirmation of the divine Light in every human being. Christ teaches us to love our enemies. George Fox calls us to seek that of God in everyone. Warfare denies these teachings, denies the sanctity of human life.

God's essential nature is love. The church transcends all divisions of nationality, all prejudices and hatreds of nation for nation, and of class for class. We are called to respect all other persons, to love them as we love ourselves, to overcome evil with good, and to meet our enemies with positive good will.

Friends hold that it is inconsistent with these religious principles to participate in military service and have, therefore, sought exemption on grounds of conscience. But more than a mere refusal to participate in the military is required of the servant of peace.

We are called to root out the causes of war from our own lives and from the political and social structures about us. We must seek out and remove the seeds of hatred and greed. Instead of self-seeking, we must put sacrifice; instead of domination, cooperation. Fear and suspicion must give place to trust and the spirit of understanding. The barriers of race and class, of exaggerated notions of national sovereignty, must give way to a fellowship that makes all humanity a society of friends. Our peace testimony must be inclusive of the whole of life.

Spirit of Christ Leads Not to War

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight any war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls 1952, pp. 399-400 (a declaration presented to King Charles II, 1661). The extract as printed is abridged and omissions are not indicated in the text.

Origin of the Peace Witness

Despite the fact that the Society of Friends developed in an age of violent revolution and has had a witness against war for all of its history, the origin of the peace witness did not start with a concern about war. The Quaker peace witness developed from a deep faith in the essential unity of mankind and the sacredness of each individual because of that "of God" or the "Inward Light" in each person comprising that unity.

Lawrence Scott: "Non-violent action and the Quaker peace witness," in No time but this present, 1965, p. 230.

That Life and Power That Takes Away the Occasion of War

My time being nearly out of being committed six months to the House of Correction, they filled the House of Correction with persons that they had taken up to be soldiers; and then they would have had me to be captain of them to go forth to Worcester fight and the soldiers cried they would have none but me. So the keeper of the House of Correction was commanded to bring me up before the Commissioners and soldiers in the market place; and there they proffered me that preferment because of my virtue, as they said, with many other compliments, and asked me if I would not take up arms for the Commonwealth against the King. But I told them I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars, and I knew from whence all wars did rise, from the lust according to James's doctrine.

Still they courted me to accept of their offer and thought that I did but compliment with them. But I told them I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were. And they said they offered it in love and kindness to me because of my

virtue, and such like flattering words they used, and I told them if that were their love and kindness I trampled it under my feet.

Then their rage got up and they said, "Take him away gaoler, and cast him into the dungeon amongst the rogues and felons;" which they then did and put me into the dungeon amongst thirty felons in a lousy, stinking low place in the ground without any bed. Here they kept me a close prisoner almost a half year.

George Fox: Journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, pp. 64-5 (entry for 1651).

"I Did It From Principle"

During the American War of Independence, the Quaker whaling community on the island of Nantucket suffered heavily from both sides for their neutrality. William Rotch (1734-1828), one of their leaders, had in a disused warehouse a consignment of bayonets which had been taken from muskets which he had accepted twelve years earlier in payment of a debt, and sold as hunting pieces. In 1776 the bayonets were demanded from him by the Americans:

The time was now come to endeavor to support our Testimony against War, or abandon it, as this very instrument was a severe test. I could not hesitate which to choose, and therefore denied the applicant. My reason for not furnishing them was demanded, to which I readily answered, "As this instrument is purposely made and used for the destruction of mankind, I can put no weapon into a man's hand to destroy another, that I cannot use myself in the same way." The person left me much dissatisfied. Others came, and received the same denial. It made a great noise in the Country, and my life was threatened. I would gladly have beaten them into "pruning hooks," but I took an early opportunity of throwing them into the sea.

A short time after I was called before a Committee appointed by the Court then held at Watertown near Boston, and questioned, amongst other things respecting my bayonets.

I gave a full account of my proceedings, and closed it with saying, "I sunk them in the bottom of the sea, I did it from principle, I have ever been glad that I had done it, and if I am wrong I am to be pitied." The chairman of the Committee Major Hawley (a worthy character) then addressed the Committee, and said "'I believe Mr. Rotch has given us a candid account, and every man has a right to act consistently with his religious principles, but I am sorry that we could not have the bayonets, for we want them very much.'" The Major was desirous of knowing more of our principles on which I informed him as far as he enquired. One of the Committee in a pert manner observed "then your principles are passive Obedience and non-resistance." I replied, "No, my friend, our principles are active Obedience or passive suffering."

William Rotch: Memorandum written in the 80th year of his age, 1814, pp. 3-5.

Preparation for Peace

If any of us feel daunted, let us take heart. Remember that the Kingdom of God is within us and seek to reveal it. Remember that Jesus also said, according to Thomas, "The Kingdom is spread upon the earth but ye see it not" let us seek to see it. We must realize, that is, make real, these things in our lives and we shall have no fear and no doubts. No

need to worry what to do. No need to feel that unless we are demobilising the armies or stopping the arms races or dismantling the multinationals, we are doing nothing. We never know what ripples spread from what seems the smallest action. Only let us be led by the spirit and we will vanquish the philosophy of death. This is the 'only preparation for peace.

Adam Curle: Preparation for peace (Gardner lecture, Canadian Y.M.), 1980, p. 20.

A Higher Loyalty

We declare our faith in those abiding truths taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ that every individual of every race and nation, is of supreme worth; that love is the highest law of life, and that evil is to be overcome, not by further evil, but by good. The relationship of nation to nation, of race to race, of class to class, must be based on this divine law of love, if peace and progress are to be achieved. We believe in those principles, not as mere ideals for some future time, but as part of the eternal moral order and as a way of life to be lived here and now. War is a colossal violation of this way of life. If we are true to our faith we can have no part in it.

We affirm the supremacy of conscience. We recognize the privileges and obligations of citizenship; but we reject as false that philosophy which sets the state above the moral law and demands from the individual unquestioning obedience to every state command. On the contrary, we assert that every individual, while owing loyalty to the state, owes a more binding loyalty to a higher authority the authority of God and conscience.

*Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, pp. 38-9.
Statement adopted 1934.*

Conscription of Tax Money

No person can decide for another what his or her witness shall be. But it has always been the practice of Friends to act upon the leadings of their consciences and to support each other in their right to do so. The conscription of tax money to build weapons of destruction is something that many Friends find immoral. William Penn, in refusing to send money to England for war with Canada, said, "No man can be true to God and false to his own conscience, nor can he extort from it a tribute to carry on any war, nor ought true Christians to pay for it." Therefore, we stand in loving support of any of our members who are called by conscience to oppose and refuse taxes that are to be used for military purposes.

Minutes of Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative), 6-VIII-83.

Alternative to Violence

Nationalism, sovereignty, conventional patriotism, are all breeders of war. It is the Quaker's concern to counter all these influences where he may to help his countrymen think non-nationally on international matters, to be inventive and patient in the search for alternative procedures, and to suggest by deed and word an alternative way.

A conspicuous example has been the foreign service of Friends in recent years. Two major wars and minor ones have made the need for physical aid tragically abundant. The British Friends Service Council and the American Friends Service Committee separately

and together have intervened in these situations not out of humanitarianism alone but to give expression to the positive alternative to war. Their service is not part of the war effort. In this it differs sharply from the political use of food, clothing, and technical assistance to "win friends and influence people." Its aim is to be friends rather than to win friends. It is specially concerned to cross the frontiers of hatred, suspicion, and rivalry. Its disinterestedness is to be seen when it labors on both sides of a civil war, a world war, or a cold war. Only persevering years of such experience can establish to an incredulous enemy nation, past or potential, the distinctive character of Quaker service. Here is a language other than force that can be understood by Jew and Catholic, by Arab or Hindu, by persecutor and persecuted, by fascist and communist. In such service it is particularly true that "the gift without the giver is bare."

Henry J. Cadbury, "Peace and war" in The Quaker approach to contemporary problems, ed. John Kavanaugh, 1953, p. 17

The World Awaits Its Own Rebirth

The world is awaiting its own rebirth. With each new dawn, with each new day, the peoples of the earth have risen with the morning star, hoping that today will bring news of peace. Yet each day is a disappointment, as nations continue to arm, preparing for war, and looking upon their neighbors with hatred and suspicion.

Because of the incomparable evil presented by the threat of nuclear war, we are moved to bear a passionate witness for life and peace. As Christians, we believe that the example of Christ's life, death and rebirth requires among us and all peoples a rebirth of love and peace. So, with humility and hope, we seek to confront and overcome the evil of nuclear weaponry. We believe the presence of nuclear weapons in our midst threatens all of humanity and is incompatible with the life and living spirit of Christ.

Syracuse Monthly Meeting, February 1980.

Violence Can Exist in the Absence of War

A Call for Peacemaking must also be a call for promoting worldwide economic and social justice, including respect for human rights. Violence, we know, can exist even in the absence of war. Poverty-ridden, oppressed peoples are victims of economic violence. Peace is hollow without more equal sharing of the world's wealth and power.

Maynard Shelly: New call for peacemakers, 1979, p. 99.

Military Service

Believing in the law of love, and striving to live "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars," we in the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends are deeply opposed to war and the preparation for war, including military conscription and registration for conscription.

We know that many young people who are legally required to register for the draft hold strong moral scruples against war. We reaffirm our long-standing support for those, both Friends and non-Friends, whose consciences lead them to reject participation in the armed forces. We encourage them to follow their consciences, and we stand ready to help, to the best of our ability, with information, counselling, and spiritual and practical support.

New England Y. M., Minutes, 1980, p. 33.

God is at Work in Every Human Being

Many experiences in the post-war period gave me ever increasing certainty that hostility can at least be modified, even if not dissolved, in spite of the greatest conflicts in men's ideas, interests, even moral principles. There is an approachability in people, even in individuals in power, which in our weaker moments fear often prevents us from believing in. I repeatedly found confirmation of this during the Occupation, and often also still later, in transactions between East and West. The Soviet officers were of an age to have grown up in the thought-world of communism, so that there were no points of contact in Christian terms. But it was my experience again and again that when one approached them honestly, naturally, without aggression or fear, they reacted no differently than people brought up as Christians. It confirmed my faith that God is at work in every human being, as Quakerism teaches, even in a person who outwardly shows no hesitation in being hard or doing evil.

*Margarethe Lachmund: With thine adversary in the way
(Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 228), 1979, p. 23.*

Living Lives in the Power of Love

What matters is living our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results. In doing this, the means become part of the end. Hence we lose the sense of helplessness and futility in the face of the world's crushing problems. We also lose the craving for success, always focusing on the goal to the exclusion of the way of getting there. We must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love, it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold.

*Wolf Mendl: Prophets and reconcilers: reflections on the
Quaker peace testimony, 1974, p. 102.*

Peace is the Experience of Christian Love

We begin to feel energized and expansive; joy flows in us and through us. It touches others and some may join us in the witness. We no longer feel isolated or overwhelmed, for the witness to peace is the experience of Christian love. It is that love made visible. Christ told us we must love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, and that we must live our lives in that love. This is why the Peace Testimony is at the very center of our faith.

*Alan Eccleston: "Witnessing to peace for ourselves and for
each other," Friends Journal, October 1, 1980, p. 15.*

STEWARDSHIP

To be good stewards in God's Kingdom means that we are not to be possessed by our possessions, that we learn to live more simply and with a willingness to share with others. In the contemporary world, which makes increasing demands on the earth's finite resources, Friends are challenged to exercise the care and concern that can assure that future generations may inherit an earth on which they can live in hope and dignity.

The Earth is the Lord's

The Creator of the earth is the owner of it. He gave us being thereon, and our nature requires nourishment which is the produce of it. As he is kind and merciful, we as his creatures, while we live answerable to the design of our creation, we are so far entitled to a convenient subsistence that no man may justly deprive us of it. By the agreements and contracts of our fathers and predecessors, and by doings and proceedings of our own, some claim a much greater share of this world than others; and whilst those possessions are faithfully improved to the good of the whole, it consists with equity. But he who with a view to self-exaltation causeth some with their domestic animals to labour immoderately, and with the moneys arising to him therefrom employs others in the luxuries of life, acts contrary to the gracious design of him who is the owner of the earth; nor can any possessions, either acquired or derived from ancestors, justify such conduct.

John Woolman: "A plea for the poor," (written in 1763-4) in The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P Moulton, 1971, pp. 239-40.

Be Not Cumbered With the Riches of This World

Neither be cumbered nor surfeited with the riches of this world, nor bound, nor straitened with them, nor married to them; but be free and loose from them, and be married to the Lord.

George Fox: "Epistle 161" (1658), in Works, vol. 7, 1831, p. 152.

Tenderness Toward All Creatures

[I] believe that where the love of God is verily perfected and the true spirit of government watchfully attended to, a tenderness toward all creatures made subject to us will be experienced, and a care felt in us that we do not lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation which the great Creator intends for them under our government.

John Woolman: The journal and major essays, ed. Phillips P. Moulton, 1971, pp. 178-9 (entry for 2nd day, 6th month, 1772).

Distributing the Gifts of God

As Christians, all we possess are the gifts of God. Now in distributing it to others we act as his steward, and it becomes our station to act agreeable to that divine wisdom which he gracious gives to his servants. If the steward of a great family, from a selfish attachment to particulars, takes that with which he is entrusted and bestows it lavishly on some to the injury of others and to the damage of him who employs him, he disunites himself and becomes unworthy of that office.

John Woolman: "A plea for the poor," (written in 1763-4) in Ibid., p. 249.

The Seeds of War

Oh, that we who declare against wars and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the Light and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding great

estates! May we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses and our garments and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions or not.

Ibid., p. 255

A Peacemaking Way

We are called to a peacemaking lifestyle that follows Jesus' way in personal relationships and economic decisions.

A peacemaking lifestyle requires a positive, creative love and respect for the integrity of each person, especially in situations of conflict and confrontation. It requires us to take the way of the cross to absorb suffering rather than to inflict it, and to demonstrate the power of forgiving love.

An affluent lifestyle contributes to violence because it is based on waste, on competition, and on demanding more than a fair share of the world's resources. Let us undertake the examination of our personal and corporate stewardship of money and natural resources, reduce the level of consumption, and become more discerning in our investments.

Helen Fletcher: "A new call to peacemaking," Friends world news, Autumn 1979, p. 17

The Earth is Held in Trust

Together, the world's people have been granted stewardship over the Earth, to enjoy it briefly, then to surrender it to succeeding generations. The Earth is not a possession but a trust. Those dramatic photographs from the moon showed us all what is ours to care for a green and blue jewel shining in the blackness of space. What steward would risk turning such a gem into a radioactive cinder?

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Statement to United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, June 12, 1978.

Simplifying Our Lives

Learning to live contentedly without high consumption goes against the grain of our culture, but is possible in the context of community. Incomes can be cut if every family does not have to have its own laundry facilities, tools, automobiles, house, etc.

Concern for the ecosystem adds to the need for developing a simple yet adequate life style. Simplifying our lives also means pruning our scatter of activities to focus energy and to provide time to be present to each other.

American Friends Service Committee: Taking charge, 1975, p. 23.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Friends recognize the role of the state in promoting the common good and in preserving order. They hold it should derive its authority from the consent of the governed. Like the Quaker faith, it should respect the sacredness of the individual and acknowledge that each person may contribute something of worth. Under our democratic system of government, it is the duty of Friends to influence the actions of government by voting in elections, by encouraging an informed and articulate public opinion, and by willingness to

consider accepting public office. Friends in office should have integrity, be faithful to the moral law as it is revealed to them, and endeavor to serve the public welfare.

Friends have always counselled loyal obedience to the state, subject to the religious principle that their first allegiance is to God. The state has no claim to moral infallibility. If its commands appear to be contrary to divine will, Friends can only take prayerful counsel to arrive at a Christian decision. When the decision is to refuse obedience to laws, in accordance with conscience, it is usual for Friends to make clear the grounds of their actions. If the decision involves legal penalties, Friends generally have suffered willingly and fearlessly for the sake of their convictions. Friends not personally involved strengthen the meeting community by supporting their fellow members with spiritual encouragement and, when necessary, with material aid.

That These Things May Abound

We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God, and with one another, that these things may abound.

Edward Burrough: The memorable works of a son of thunder, 1672, p. 604.

Instrument for Meeting Human Needs

Friends' attitude toward the state is conditioned by the fact that the state presents two different aspects. As a coercive agency, resorting to violence, it often does not conform to Friends' interpretation of Christian principles. On the other hand, as a great instrument for meeting human needs, it commands their respect and cooperation. The philosophy of the democratic state, in particular, grows out of the same roots as the Quaker faith. Basic to each is the belief in the sacredness of the individual and the conviction that each person may contribute something of worth.

Friends are not opposed to all forms of coercion. Police activities, incidental to carrying out the rightful purposes of the state and directed solely against individuals who refuse to abide by the law, seem necessary and helpful. From its earliest days, however, the Society has held that war is contrary to the will of God; and it has counselled its members to refuse to bear arms or to accept membership in military forces.

As the state is more and more responsible for advancing human welfare, members of the Society increasingly face civic duties, especially those which have long been among their chief concerns. Through the ballot and in other ways Friends may help to direct public policy toward the fulfillment of Christian principles, thus contributing to an enlightened and vigorous public opinion. Men and women of intelligence, high principle and courage are needed to combat ignorance, self-interest and cowardice, when these impede the wise solution of national and international problems.

Philadelphia Y M.: Faith and practice, 1961, p. 41.

Integrity and Public Office

Since integrity and diligence are of the utmost importance in the holding of public offices, Friends should not allow matters of preference and convenience to deter them from this service. Necessity for group action may, however, present difficult problems for the office holder who seeks to be single-minded in his loyalty to God. A prayerful search may lead to a suitable adjustment which need not establish a precedent but should be kept before the Father in Heaven for further light. It may become necessary to sacrifice position to conscience and expediency to principle.

For those not holding public office there is a wide field for voluntary public service in agencies and organizations that exist for civic betterment.

Ibid., p. 42.

Conscientious Objectors

Friends set definite limitations, however, to the authority of their rulers. More than once George Fox demanded of officers of the law whether he should obey God or man, and warned the king to "hearken to God's voice" or he would be overthrown. If occasion arises when it is necessary to refuse obedience to unjust laws, such conscientious objection should not be entered into lightly or hastily, and should be made with love and forbearance toward those who disagree. The conquest of evil is to be effected only by the overpowering force of truth and righteousness.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1950, p. 88.

A Call to Quaker Participation

If we, as Friends, claim special exemptions from military preparation or service, then we have more than ordinary call to work on the onerous task of civilian problems. Our sacrifice in this field should be such that our neighbors cannot doubt our caring for each and all.

Millicent Foster: "A call to Quaker participation," Quaker life, October 1980, p. 9.

Role of Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience means open, considerate, non-violent defiance of some law which is against the conscience of those who disobey it, and is resorted to after all means of altering it have been exhausted. Since the purpose of civil disobedience is to compel others to re-examine the conscientious basis of the law, the proposed disobedience and the reasons for it are widely announced in advance. The law enforcement authorities are given every opportunity to prevent the proposed action and to punish the participants. The necessary role of the authorities in enforcing the law is recognized and they are treated courteously, but opposition to the law is unyielding and its opponents willingly accept prison sentences and sacrifice all rather than to comply. This builds a moral force which no law can withstand if the cause is just and the disobedience is sufficiently widespread and prolonged.

Insincerity is easily sensed by the adversary and destroys the persuasiveness of the action. The only legitimate motive is to maintain the truth as we see it. If sacrifice is involved, that is merely a by-product. In short, we must beware of the martyr complex.

Lawrence S. Apsey: Transforming power for peace, 1960, pp. 62, 73.

Taxes for War Purposes

Taxes for war purposes have again and again raised problems for Friends, with no final solution of universal approval or disapproval. In modern times some Friends have refused to pay at least that proportion of income tax which corresponds to the proportion of the national budget spent on military matters. That the government has ways of collecting these amounts without consent has doubtless discouraged others from attempting refusal.

*Henry J. Cadbury, "Peace and war" John Kavanaugh, ed.:
The Quaker approach to contemporary problems, 1953, p. 7*

An Uncalculated Risk

We know of but one way to meet the forces of disintegration that threaten us. The first step is to release into society integrated men and women, whose lives are at one with God, with themselves and with their fellow men. But even this is not enough. If there is to be a religious solution to the social problem there must also be renewed in a disintegrating society the sense of community, of mutuality, of responsible brotherhood for all men everywhere. Such community is built on trust and confidence, which some will say is not possible now because the communist cannot be trusted. The politics of eternity does not require that we trust him. They require us to love him and to trust God. Our affirmation in this day is that of John Woolman in his: "I have no cause to promote but the cause of pure universal love." We call for no calculated risk on behalf of national interest or preservation; rather for an uncalculated risk in living by the claims of the Kingdom, on behalf of the whole family of man conceived as a divine-human society.

The politics of eternity works not by might but by spirit; a Spirit whose redemptive power is released among men through suffering endured on behalf of the evildoer, and in obedience to the divine command to love all men. Such love is worlds apart from the expedient of loving those who love us, of doing good to those who have done good to us. It is the essence of such love that it does not require an advance guarantee that it will succeed, will prove easy or cheap, or that it will be met with swift answering love. Whether practiced by men or nations, it well may encounter opposition, hate, humiliation, utter defeat. In the familiar words of the epistle, such love suffers long, is always kind, never fails. It is a principle deeply grounded in the years of Quaker sufferings, imprisonments and death. From the dungeons of Lancaster Castle Friends spoke this Truth to Power: "But if not then shall wee lye downe in the peace of our God and patiently Suffer under you." This is the Spirit that overcomes the world.

American Friends Service Committee: Speak truth to power, 1955, pp. 68-9.

Translating Principle Into Actuality

If a concerned Quaker (or any man or woman committed to an absolute religious ethic) decides to enter practical politics in order to translate his principles into actuality, he may achieve a relative success: he may be able to raise the level of political life in his time, as John Bright did, or maintain a comparatively happy and just and peaceful society, as the Quaker legislators of Pennsylvania did. But he can apparently do it only at a price the price of compromise, of the partial betrayal of his ideals. If, on the other hand, he decides to preserve his ideals intact, to maintain his religious testimonies unsullied and pure, he may be able to do that, but again at a price the price of isolation, of withdrawal from the main stream of life in his time, of renouncing the opportunity directly and immediately to influence history.

Let me call the two positions the relativist and the absolutist. And let me suggest that perhaps each one needs the other. The relativist needs the absolutist to keep alive and clear the vision of the City of God while he struggles in some measure to realise it in the City of Earth. And conversely, the absolutist needs the relativist, lest the vision remain the possession of a few only, untranslated into any degree of reality for the world as a whole.

Frederick B. Tolles: Quakerism and politics (Ward lecture), 1956, p. 20. Guilford College.

Steps Toward the Goal

Do minor reforms make great social evils easier for people of tender conscience to accept and therefore delay the final solution of these evils? If I understand the experience of Quaker reformers, this has not been their view. Quakers have seen as two-fold their function in a non-Quaker society: (1) to hold up the ideal; never to forget it nor allow others to forget it as a goal, and (2) at the same time to initiate small, imperfect steps with which they, themselves, are dissatisfied because of their partial nature. It seems to me to be, not only more useful, but to take more courage to work at these partial solutions rather than in effect, to wash one's hands of evil by rejecting every solution which is less than the ideal.

Dorothy H. Hutchinson: The spiritual basis of Friends' social concern, 1961, p. 7 Friends General Conference.

Distinctive Quality

In all our fervor in all my fervor to be doing, have I paid too little attention to the power that lies in being? Do we remember that it is the spirit of our service, the aura that surrounds it, the gentleness and the patience that marks it, the love made visible that compels it, that is the truly distinctive quality that lifts Quaker service above lobbying, above pressure, above coercion, that inspires the doubtful, and reaches to the heart of the adversary?

Stephen G. Cary: "The Quaker proposition," Friends journal, November 1979, p. 4.

OTHER SOCIAL TESTIMONIES

Friends have always sought to witness to the issues of their own times. By placing a particular concern in the Light, they have individually and then collectively sought right

action which would be in harmony with eternal wisdom. Some of these testimonies, such as work for oppressed groups, for prisoners, or for the victims of war, have eventually found corporate agreement.

There are issues, however, which should rightly arouse our Christian concern, but upon which the Society of Friends has as yet formed no corporate judgment. Some of our new technologies, such as nuclear power, genetic engineering, and the use of computers, present complex, ethical issues which many Friends believe we need to address.

Although we cannot as yet unite upon the answers to these questions, our responsibility to press the urgency of them is not lessened. With changing circumstances and fresh insights that new experiences may make possible, we have faith that light will be given us to see the will of God more clearly.

Sensitive to All Oppression

Fellowship in the life eternal brings a sensitiveness to all wrong and oppression and a desire to identify ourselves with our fellows and to take our share of the burden of the world's suffering. How hard it is to put ourselves in other men's shoes! During our Yearly Meeting we have tried to realize something of what it means to be a refugee, an unemployed man, a prisoner, a juvenile offender. We have had brought before us the privations of the underpaid and underfed at home and abroad, the disabilities laid on people of other colour and race, the failure of men to distribute equitably the abundant produce that the earth can supply. As followers of Jesus we are called to strive to remedy these injustices, not clinging to exclusive privileges for ourselves or for our nation, but remembering that the earth is the Lord's and that the fullness of it should be used for the well-being of all his children.

We have longed that in this time of world crisis the Society of Friends everywhere may be faithful in its witness to truth, as truth has been and is being revealed to us. Peace and righteousness are inseparable. Outward peace maintained by the conscious surrender of truth and justice can never be lasting. We may never desert the victims of oppression, but we must endeavor to realize the conditions and needs both of the oppressor and the oppressed. While we hate wrong, we must love our fellow wrongdoers. There is no place for self-righteous indignation, since the roots of evil are in our own hearts. Only by action that flows from penitence and love can hatred and tyranny be overcome.

Epistle of London YM., 1938.

Fate of All Interrelated

The conception of the Inward Light leads to a belief that the fate of all men is inextricably interrelated; that, ultimately, no man is free so long as one person remains in bondage, that no man is secure so long as one man lives in fear, that no man is virtuous so long as one person is lacking in virtue, that no man is wealthy while another lives in poverty, and that God may make truth available through anyone.

Robert O. Byrd: Quaker ways in foreign policy, 1960, p.17.

Special Interest in Prisons

The terrible sufferings of our forefathers in the prisons of the seventeenth century have given us as a people a special interest in the management of prisons and the treatment of crime. George Fox protested to the judges of his day "concerning their putting men to death for cattle and money and small matters;" and laid before them "what a hurtful thing it was that prisoners should lie so long in jail;" showing how "they learned wickedness from one another in talking of their bad deeds."

In a later day Elizabeth Fry was the means of introducing urgently needed reforms in the administration of English prisons, particularly those for women. During the two world wars the imprisonment of many on grounds of conscience has made Friends more aware of prison conditions and has deepened the concern of many for more enlightened treatment of the offender. We gratefully recognize the reforms which have already been effected.

There is, however, much work still to be done, in creating a right understanding of the nature and causes of crime, and in emphasizing the need for redemptive treatment rather than retributive punishment.

London Y. M.: Christian faith and practice, 1960, no. 573.

Prevention Rather Than Punishment

Friends' influence has been felt in the abrogation or modification of harmful laws and customs in many fields. Government by spiritual forces rather than by arbitrary compulsion and the prevention of criminal acts rather than their punishment are the primary objectives of Friends. Their testimony against capital punishment is based on the belief that it is a violation of the sacredness of human personality, that it disregards the fundamental capacity of all persons to respond to right influences, and that it gives no opportunity to reform the offender.

New England Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1950, p. 89.

Deep Reverence for Human Life

The real security for human life is to be found in a reverence for it. If the law regarded it as inviolable, then the people would begin also so to regard it. A deep reverence for human life is worth more than a thousand executions in the prevention of murder; and is, in fact, the great security for human life. The law of capital punishment while pretending to support this reverence, does in fact tend to destroy it.

John Bright, in letter to Martin H. Power, 1868. In Report of Select Committee on Capital Punishment, London Y. M. Proc., 1930, para. 283.

Sanctity of Human Life

We feel that we should at this time declare once again our unwavering opposition to capital punishment. The sanctity of human life is one of the fundamentals of a Christian society and can in no circumstances be set aside. Our concern, therefore, is for all victims of violence, not only the murderer but also those who suffer by his act.

The sanctioning by the State of the taking of human life has a debasing effect on the community, and tends to produce the very brutality which it seeks to prevent. We realize

that many are sincerely afraid of the consequences if the death penalty is abolished, but we are convinced that their fears are unjustified.

London Y. M. Proc., 1956, p. 241. Statement contained in minute 39.

Healing the Soul as Well as Body

Most relief work begins with some obvious physical need. But almost always there is, behind the physical need, something much less concrete, a damaged or lonely or hopeless or hungry spirit, and relief work which does not penetrate to this level, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, and make some contribution to healing is a job only partially done.

Inspired relief workers cease to be external agents; like Woolman they have a sense of "being mixed in with" suffering mankind: unselfconsciously they become part of the chaos, the misery and the perplexity in which they move, and yet they neither accept nor are degraded by the situation. Because of their certainty of the will of God for them they are not frightened to find themselves in the centre of the world's evil, and because of their experience of the love of God, they have the patience and the understanding to speak to the condition of their fellows. They do not go about looking for a job to do. They are drawn by their divinely-rooted imagination to the service of God and their fellows in the way that the Lord wills. A relief organization, then, ought to be a corporate body capable of both common-sense and imaginative action, combined with a natural ability to convey to others a sense of inner peace and stability, surviving outward chaos and yet not divorced from it.

Roger C. Wilson: Authority, leadership, and concern (Swarthmore lecture), 1949, pp. 15, 18-9.

Serving God in Addressing Poverty and Unemployment

In practice we find that divine leading is inseparable from a righteous adjustment of our lives to our mundane surroundings, and especially to the lives of others. Experience has shown that we cannot draw a line between religious and secular affairs. The service of God may be found in seeking work for the workless and in searching for the underlying causes of poverty and unemployment as much as in preaching the Gospel in England or broad.

Shipley N. Brayshaw: Unemployment and plenty (Swarthmore lecture), 1933, pp. 118-9.

Larger Measure of Liberty

We have thought of the widespread exploitation of economically underdeveloped peoples, and of those industrial and other workers who are also exploited and heavily burdened. We must therefore work for a larger measure of liberty in political and economic life. For not only is this at the heart of the Christian message, but we have seen that peace stands on a precarious footing so long as there is unrelieved poverty and subjection. Subjection, poverty, injustice and war are closely allied. This situation demands sweeping political and economic changes; and we are convinced that the hope of freedom does not lie in violence, which is at its root immoral, but in such changes as may be brought about by fellowship and mutual service.

Epistle of London Y. M., 1937

Part III

ADVICES AND QUERIES

CHAPTER I

Advices and Queries

THE ADVICES

The Advices have served Friends for many generations in their search for a life centered in the Spirit. Arising from the experience and aspirations of successive generations of Friends, the Advices are illustrations of how they seek to carry their faith into all aspects of life.

Advices first appeared in the form of epistles sent among Friends to encourage and strengthen each other in their faith. The earliest surviving collection of Advices was issued from Balby in England in 1656. Its concluding statement begins, "Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by."

Friends find their essential unity in their profound and exhilarating belief in the pervasive presence of God and in the continuing responsibility of each person and worshipping group to seek the leading of the Spirit in all things. Obedience to the leading of that Spirit rather than to any written statement of belief or conduct is the obligation of their faith.

Yet the Advices should have a quickening influence in shaping our daily lives. Their reading is intended to remind us that all aspects of our lives are under divine guidance and to heighten our awareness that in all our relationships we act in the sight of God.

Spiritual Life

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It is God's redemptive love that draws us, a love shown forth by Jesus in all his life, on the cross, and in his abiding presence.

Friends are advised to make a quiet place in their daily lives for prayer and communion with God and to be constant in the reading of the Bible and other devotional literature.

Let us cherish the seed of God in ourselves and in others, that we may be open to new revelations of truth. Let us look to our meetings to guide and stimulate our spiritual growth.

Meeting for Worship

Consider with care how God reaches us in meeting for worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by word, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

Meeting Business

In meetings for business, and in all duties connected with them, seek again the leadings of the Light; let our utterances be brief and without repetition. Let us keep from obstinacy and from harshness of tone or manner and admit the possibility of being in error. In all the affairs of the meeting community, let us proceed in a peaceable spirit, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.

The Meeting Community

Let us live in love as members of a Christian community. Let us be ready to give and receive help, to rejoice together in the blessings of life and to sympathize with each other in its trials.

Let us maintain unity: let us avoid tale-bearing and detraction, acknowledge differences and seek to settle conflicts promptly in a manner free from resentment and all forms of inward violence; let us visit one another, making sure that those who are alone are drawn into the wider family of Friends. Thus, we may know one another as fellow workers in the things that endure.

Outreach

The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth; therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no one, let us seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable.

Friends are advised to witness to the power of Truth and justice and to foster growth of the divine community at home and abroad. While remaining faithful to our Quaker insights, and ready to share them with others, let us seek to understand the contributions made by the people of God everywhere. Whenever possible, let us seek to enter into prayer and work with the wider community of faith.

Personal Conduct

Let us bring the whole of our daily lives under the ordering of the Spirit. Let our faith free us from crippling fears so that we may live adventurously. In relations with others, let us exercise imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Let us live and work in the plainness and simplicity of true followers of Christ.

In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks and from the abuse of drugs, Friends are advised to consider whether they should refrain from using

them, from offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale. We should not let the claims of good fellowship or the fear of seeming peculiar influence our decision.

Let us maintain integrity in word and deed. Holding to the simplicity of truth, let us keep free of oaths. Remember how widespread and diverse are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence often leads by degrees to wrong-doing. Let us avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling and commercial speculations of a gambling character.

Friends have always held that the sacred nature of a sexual relationship is affirmed only in marriage. In recent times, however, some Friends have found such affirmation in other contexts. Let us be certain, in any case, that we hold up to the Light any sexual relationship we may be considering and reject any relationship that may violate the integrity or spiritual welfare of either of the partners or of others. No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

Home and Family

Let your lives benefit from the power of friendship and the solace of solitude. Rejoice in the beauty of those friendships which grow in depth, understanding, and mutual respect.

Friends are advised to seek divine guidance when considering marriage and to enter marriage with a commitment to cherish each other for life. In marriage, treasure the joys of intimacy, share the sorrows of losses, and mediate differences with patience. Be ready to seek the counsel of your own parents or of other experienced persons as it is needed. Consider together the responsibilities of parenthood.

Let us trust in the Light and witness to it in our daily living. We and our families are children of God with a rich accessible record of God's dealings with humanity. In dress, in furnishings, in manners, in diet, and in entertainment, let us choose the simple, the wholesome, and the beautiful. Let us be cooperative and creative in family recreation so that it encourages mutual activity and sharing.

Let us dwell with thankfulness on the blessings and happiness that life has brought us. Friends are advised to try throughout life to discern the appropriate moment to relinquish responsibilities to others. Let us face with courage the approach of old age, both for ourselves and for those dear to us, realizing that even as our outward activity lessens, our seasoned thought and prayer may liberate love and power in others.

Friends are advised to make provision for the settlement of their affairs while in health so that others may not be burdened. Such provision may include maintaining an up-to-date will and discussing with family and doctors our wishes in the event of serious illness or death.

Care of Children

Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend. Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, of wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love. Both parents and meetings

need to guard against letting other commitments deprive children of the time and attention they need.

Friends are advised to seek for children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. All Friends are cautioned against harshness of tone or manner when offering counsel or reproof. To the child, even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of repentance or growth, and a lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended. Let us nurture a spirit of common concern, thereby giving children a sense of belonging to a larger community.

Stewardship

Friends are advised to consider our possessions as God's gifts, entrusted to us for responsible use. Let us free our time and our abilities to be able to follow the leadings of the Spirit. Let us cherish the beauty and variety of the world. Friends are urged to speak out boldly against the destruction of the world's resources and the difficulties that destruction prepares for the future generations. Let us guard against waste and resist our extravagant consumption, which contributes to inequities and impoverishment of life in our own and other societies. Let us show a loving consideration for all God's creatures. Let kindness know no limits.

Vocations

In our relations with others in our daily work, let us manifest the spirit of justice and understanding and thus give a living witness to the Truth. While trying to make provision for ourselves and our families, let us not be anxious, but in quietness of spirit trust in the goodness of God. When we suffer from unemployment, let us seek the support and encouragement of our meetings. When we have a choice of employment, let us think first of the service that we may render. Let us be ready to limit our engagements, to withdraw for a time, or even to retire from a business that we may be free for new service as God appoints it.

Social Responsibility

Friends are called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us strengthen a sense of kinship with everyone. Let that sense of kinship inspire us in our efforts to build a social order free of violence and oppression, in which no person's development is thwarted by poverty and the lack of health care, education, or freedom. Friends are advised to minister to those in need but also to seek to know the facts and the causes of social and economic ills and to work for the removal of those ills. Let us cherish every human being and encourage efforts to overcome all forms of prejudice.

Peace and Reconciliation

Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Let us keep primary, therefore, Friends' concern for removing the causes of war. Let us seek, through God's power and grace, to overcome in our own hearts the emotions that lie at the root of violence. At every opportunity, let us be peacemakers in our homes, in

our communities, and in our places of work. Let us take care that we who declare against war do not nourish the seeds of war in our possessions. Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes. Let us support in all possible ways the development of international order, justice, and understanding.

Finally, dear Friends, let us follow steadfastly after all that is pure and lovely and of good report. Let us be prayerful, be watchful, be humble. Let not failure discourage us. Let our whole conduct and conversation be worthy of disciples of Christ.

THE QUERIES

Friends have developed the Queries to assist us to consider prayerfully the true source of spiritual strength and the extent to which the conduct of our lives gives witness to our Christian faith. To these ends, the Queries should be read frequently in private devotions and regularly in monthly and quarterly meetings.

In using these Queries, meetings should be aware that our standards of conduct do not derive from an outward set of rules but rather from the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, from the examples offered by the spiritual experiences and lives of those who have preceded us, and from our own encounters with that inward revelation through which "the way, the truth, and the life" seek expression today.

1. Spiritual Life

Do you live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit? Do you seek to follow Jesus, who shows us the way? Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?

2. Meeting for Worship

Are meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are you faithful and punctual in attendance? Do you come in a spirit of openness with heart and mind prepared for communion with God? Do both silent and vocal ministry arise in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Do all other activities of your meeting find their inspiration in worship, and do they, in turn, help to uphold the worshipping group?

3. Meeting Business

Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of Truth? Are all members encouraged to use their talents in the service of the meeting? Do you undertake your proper share of the work and financial support of the meeting?

4. The Meeting Community

Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Do you share each other's joys and burdens? When conflicts arise, do you seek in mutual forgiveness and tenderness to resolve them speedily? Are you careful of the reputation of others? Do you seek beyond all differences of opinion and circumstance for unity in the divine life?

5. Outreach

Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting? Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation? Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message? Are you patterns, examples; do your lives preach among all sorts of people, and to them? Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

6. Personal Conduct

Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates

your life's activities? Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?

7. Home and Family

Do you make your home a place of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where God becomes more real to those who live there and to all who visit there? Is worship a daily part of your personal and family life? Do you recognize marriage as a sacred, loving, and permanent relationship requiring mutual consideration and adjustments? Should conflict or crisis threaten the stability of the home, are you open to seeking all necessary help, both from your meeting and from the larger community?

8. Care of Children

Do children receive the loving care of your meeting? Does the meeting nurture their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends? Are you an example to your children in your faithfulness to the ideals you profess? Do you promote your children's moral and spiritual development by loving oversight of their education, recreation, and social activities? Do you listen to children, recognizing that the Spirit may lead them along paths you have not foreseen? Do you assist them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

Stewardship

Do you revere all life and the splendor of God's continuing creation? Do you try to protect the natural environment and its creatures against abuse and harmful exploitation? Do you regard your possessions as given to you in trust, and do you part with them freely to meet the needs of others? Are you frugal in your personal life and committed to the just distribution of the world's resources?

Vocations

Do you respect the value of all useful work, whether paid or unpaid, whether physical or intellectual, whether performed in the home or in the larger community? Does your daily work use means and serve goals which are consistent with the teachings of Jesus? Are you honest and trustworthy in all business transactions, prompt and just in payment of debts? By counsel and example, do you encourage young people to enter vocations which will serve society?

Social Responsibility

Do you respect the worth of every human being as a child of God? Do you uphold the right of all persons to justice and human dignity? Do you endeavor to create political, social, and economic institutions which will sustain and enrich the life of all? Do you fulfill all civic obligations which are not contrary to divine leadings? Do you give spiritual and material support to those who suffer for conscience's sake?

Peace and Reconciliation

Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"? Do you faithfully maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war, as inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of Christ? Do you strive

to increase understanding and use of nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts? Do you take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations? When discouraged, do you remember that Jesus said, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears"? John 14:27 NEB

Part IV

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

CHAPTER I

Organization and Business Procedure

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

Since the seventeenth century the Religious Society of Friends has followed the same basic principles of organization, principles unique among Christian groups. To early Friends the term Society meant a fellowship held together by spiritual forces operating through each individual. The Society of Friends was to be a community in which there would be no intermediary affecting any individual's relationship to God and but one Guide at the head of all meetings, whether for worship or business.

In the transaction of Friends' business, therefore, the same attentive waiting prevails as in the meeting for worship. Since it cannot be predicted through whom the Spirit of God may speak, unhurried and sympathetic consideration is given to all proposals and expressions of opinion.

Friends recognize that God has endowed members with varying gifts and capacities. The common source of these varied talents makes them all valued and respected and precludes the investing of any meeting appointment with special status or with arbitrary or final authority. To insure the full development of the talents within a meeting, Friends seek to distribute responsibility widely among members, taking care that few do not carry the burdens of many and that final authority for decisions rests in the meeting as a whole.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Friends are organized into monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, which take their names from the frequency with which they ordinarily meet to consider business matters.

The foundation upon which Friends have built their organization is the monthly meeting. The monthly meeting is the body in which membership resides, to which most matters affecting the life of the religious society are referred, and from which flow many of the initiatives for action among Friends. The monthly meeting takes responsibility for its own affairs, including the determination of membership matters, the performance of marriages, the holding of property, and the management of finances.

In New England Yearly Meeting there are two kinds of preparative meetings. Some preparative meetings form the smaller components of a larger monthly meeting and as such do not expect to change their status. Other preparative meetings are newly formed meetings that will eventually become monthly meetings whenever their stability seems assured. Both kinds of preparative meetings have limited authority to conduct business, mainly related to local property and finances, and both kinds prepare business for submission to the monthly meeting with which they are associated.

Two or more monthly meetings in the same geographical area are usually united in a quarterly meeting.

Two or more quarterly meetings in a larger geographical area may unite in a yearly meeting.

Responsibility for the care and oversight of preparative meetings is carried out by monthly meetings, to which they report. Similarly, care and oversight of monthly meetings is carried out by quarterly meetings, and theirs in turn by the yearly meeting. Preparative meetings appoint representatives to attend the sessions of their monthly meetings, and monthly meetings appoint representatives to attend the sessions of their quarterly meetings and of the yearly meeting. Quarterly meetings are established or discontinued by the yearly meeting; monthly meetings by the quarterly meeting; preparative meetings by the monthly meeting.

Nearly all yearly meetings, including New England, are represented on the Friends World Committee for Consultation; and New England Yearly Meeting is associated with other yearly meetings in the Friends United Meeting and in the Friends General Conference. There is no national or international body of Friends which is superior in authority to the separate yearly meetings.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings

A monthly meeting may be established either upon the initiative of the quarterly meeting or by that body upon request of a group of members desiring to organize a monthly meeting. Some of the different circumstances that might lead to the establishing of a monthly meeting are outlined below.

If a monthly meeting considers it advisable to separate into two monthly meetings or to establish a new monthly meeting within its limits, the matter should be brought before the quarterly meeting for approval. If, after investigation by a committee named by the quarterly meeting, the plan seems suitable to the quarterly meeting, the new meeting is established and the action is reported to the yearly meeting.

If members of various monthly meetings desire to organize a new monthly meeting, they should bring their request before the quarterly meeting with which they wish to be associated. If, after investigation by a committee appointed by the quarterly meeting, the request is approved, the quarterly meeting then designates those Friends as members of the new meeting and appoints a committee to convene the first meeting and to assist in the organization of the new meeting, including the appointment of officers. Members of

the new meeting should then request certificates from their monthly meetings to be forwarded to the newly appointed clerk.

If persons who are not Friends become interested in the principles of Friends and believe it would benefit their religious life to be organized as a Friends meeting, they are advised first to make application for membership as individuals in an established monthly meeting, and, when accepted into membership, to proceed as in paragraph 2.

Preparative Meetings

Preparative meetings can be formed by a monthly meeting under a wide variety of circumstances, but generally such meetings will develop in order to meet the particular spiritual needs of a local group of Friends. Usually a definite group of monthly meeting members will assume responsibility for organizing the preparative meeting and for reporting frequently to the monthly meeting.

Worship Groups

Whenever a sufficient number of interested persons can be gathered, Friends are encouraged to hold meetings for worship. Such worship groups, meeting regularly and wishing to be part of the Society of Friends, should request care and oversight of the nearest appropriate monthly or quarterly meeting. These are gatherings for worship only. Groups moving toward the establishment of a business meeting should seek preparative or monthly meeting status.

Quarterly Meetings

A quarterly meeting may be established either upon the initiative of the Yearly Meeting or upon that body's approval of a request from two or more monthly meetings or from a quarterly meeting which desires to be divided into two similar meetings. The Yearly Meeting should be prepared in any case to assist in the organization and to appoint a committee of oversight for that purpose.

Transfer of a Meeting

The Yearly Meeting may transfer a monthly or quarterly meeting upon request of that body to join another yearly meeting. Before the transfer is completed, the yearly meeting to which transfer is made must approve and notify the meetings involved of its action.

A quarterly meeting may transfer a monthly meeting upon the request of that body to join another quarterly meeting. Before that transfer is completed, the quarterly meeting to which the transfer is made must approve and notify the meetings involved of its action.

DISCONTINUANCE OF MEETINGS

If it becomes desirable in the judgment of the constituent members of any meeting to discontinue it or to unite with another, the request should be laid before the larger meeting with which it is associated. For example, a preparative meeting should not discontinue or suspend its meetings without first consulting the monthly meeting of which it forms a part; a monthly meeting should, in like manner, obtain the approval of the quarterly meeting; and a quarterly meeting wishing to discontinue should refer such a request to the Yearly Meeting.

If the request is approved, a committee should be appointed to assist in making necessary business arrangements and, upon the discontinuance of a monthly meeting, to arrange for the proper transfer of individual members to another meeting. Information of such action should be forwarded promptly to the Yearly Meeting.

Whenever meetings have ceased to function or to report regularly to the larger bodies which have care and oversight for them, the latter may take the initiative to discontinue them.

A quarterly meeting at its discretion may review the status and the spiritual condition of its monthly meetings and may determine that, in the best interests of the Society of Friends as a whole, one or more such monthly meetings should be joined, divided, or laid down. Such action should not become final until approved by the quarterly meeting in at least one of its regular sessions in each of three successive years.

When a meeting is discontinued, the records, physical property and investments belonging to that meeting vest in the Yearly Meeting, except when otherwise determined by deed or other legal obligation. Such property may be used for the advancement of the general work of the Yearly Meeting or for some specific purpose, as that body may determine. All funds held from such discontinued meetings should be administered as far as possible in accordance with the directions of the original donors. All records of the discontinued meeting should be deposited in the archives of New England Yearly Meeting.

A meeting is not to be considered as discontinued if it unites as an organized group with another Friends meeting.

CONDUCT OF MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Searching for the Truth in a spirit of worship and waiting for a sense of the meeting to grow among all members are characteristics of the way Friends conduct their business. The meeting for business is not a body whose members engage in debate; rather business is raised and decisions are made in the same expectant waiting upon the Spirit as in the meeting for worship. In searching together for the will of God in matters before the meeting, Friends are seeking the Truth so that all may join in its affirmation. It is the responsibility of all members to participate in this search.

A clerk is chosen by the meeting to preside and determine the sense of the meeting as the decision of the meeting. Other clerks, such as reading and recording clerks, may also be named.

The right conduct of business meetings, even in routine matters, is important to the spiritual life of all. Care must be taken that the enduring value of a spiritual community is not sacrificed to the immediate goal of action. In its discussions the meeting should be especially tender to sincere expressions of difference from a generally favored course of action, recognizing that individual insights may bring to the meeting the will of God. Similarly, a member dissenting from a generally favored proposal should recognize the validity of corporate leadings and be sensitive that God's will is often revealed to a seeking group. In difficult situations, a period of quiet helps the meeting to achieve unity and

acceptance; the decision may be to drop the matter, to proceed, to delay decision, or, very often, to accept a newly conceived and satisfactory solution.

After due consideration has been given to all points of view, it is the duty of the clerk of the meeting to weigh carefully the various expressions and to state what he or she believes to be the will of the meeting, not alone according to numbers but also according to recognized experience and spiritual insight of the members. The silence of some is often of greater significance than the speech of others. The continuing search for unity is the responsibility of all members, but it is the clerk, often assisted by the recording clerk, who must discern the meeting's united spirit and state it in a form the meeting can affirm. It will be much harder for the clerks to do this if they try at the same time to be participants in the discussion.

Once a sense of the meeting has been achieved, it should be promptly recorded as a minute and read back to the meeting for its approval. Any member may offer a substitute for the clerk's minute, and the meeting may approve, modify, or reject it, in exactly the same manner as if the minute were submitted by the clerk. Friends have not completed their action until they have approved the minute, and no body of Friends will be better prepared to give or withhold its approval than the one that has just achieved unity of purpose. The reading back of the minute to those who have just made it, moreover, stands as an affirmation of their collective action and united spirit.

The business of the meeting is recorded in the minute books that comprise the permanent records of the meeting. All matters of substance brought before the meeting for its consideration and decision should be included in these minute books, including reports on membership and the state of the Society, financial statements, and memorials.

THE MONTHLY MEETING

The basic unit in the Religious Society of Friends is the monthly meeting. It consists of all persons recorded on its list of members. It fosters their spiritual life as they worship and conduct their business together. Responsibility for decisions made and actions taken by the monthly meeting or its committees rests with its members.

The monthly meeting

- receives, transfers, and discontinues members;
- provides for the oversight of marriages;
- provides for the oversight of memorial meetings and for the preparation of memorial minutes when appropriate;
- treats in a spirit of restoring love those who depart from Friends' principles and testimonies;
- issues travel minutes (see Appendix 2, C. on travel minutes and letters of introduction); and
- sets up or lays down preparative meetings or worship groups.

It also

- collects funds required for its works;
- holds and administers real estate and other property;

- appoints members and committees for special service and acts on their reports;
- appoints representatives to attend quarterly meetings and Yearly Meeting and considers their reports;
- appoints members to Yearly Meeting committees as requested; and
- prepares and dispatches reports requested by quarterly meetings or Yearly Meeting.

The monthly meeting usually meets monthly for the transaction of business and, in any case, such meetings should be held regularly. Both the individual member and the group are strengthened in faith and practice by prompt and regular attendance at these meetings. The Advices and Queries should be read at frequent intervals. Any session of a monthly meeting may be adjourned and continued at a later date.

Special or Called Meetings

Special meetings of the monthly meeting may be called by the clerk, or by the clerk upon request of three members. Notice shall be given at a regular meeting for worship at least seven days before the date of holding the special meeting; it shall name the business to be considered and the persons calling for the special meeting. No business may be considered at a special meeting other than the business for which it was called.

Officers of the Monthly Meeting

Once a year each monthly meeting appoints a clerk and other officers of the meeting as appropriate for the size and character of the meeting.

CLERK. The clerk conducts all business sessions, sees that business is properly presented to the meeting for consideration, and announces decisions when made. The clerk is responsible for keeping accurate minutes, properly dated and signed, showing all matters discussed and actions taken. These shall be kept in permanent form in a minute book after they have been approved by the meeting.

The clerk carries out the instructions of the meeting on all matters pertaining to the accomplishment of its business and signs necessary documents on behalf of the meeting. The clerk also receives, transmits, and acknowledges communications; the meeting may appoint a correspondent to assist with these matters. In the absence of the clerk, the meeting may appoint another Friend to be clerk for the day.

RECORDING CLERK. The recording clerk keeps accurate minutes showing all actions taken by the meeting. When appropriate, the recording clerk may assist the presiding clerk in framing a minute.

TREASURER. The treasurer receives and disburses funds as the meeting directs. The treasurer keeps the account books of the meeting and reports regularly to it. The accounts should be audited annually.

RECORDER. The recorder keeps the permanent records of all changes in the status of membership, such as births, deaths, marriages, applications, transfers, and withdrawals. Records should be kept in a form approved by the Yearly Meeting and statistics on membership submitted as called for. It is recommended that recorders issue annually to the membership an up-to-date list of names and addresses of all members. Such a list

should be appended to the monthly meeting minutes every ten years, beginning with the first monthly meeting in 1985.

Election of Officers

In cases where a meeting has been incorporated and state laws require the election of officers of the corporation, such election may be accomplished by instructing the clerk to cast a unanimous ballot for the officers appointed by the meeting. In most cases, properly minuted actions taken by the business meeting in accordance with Faith and Practice will satisfy legal requirements without the necessity of a vote. (See Appendix 1, Some State Laws.)

Ministry and Counsel

A meeting or committee on ministry and counsel oversees and nurtures the spiritual life of the meeting. (See Chapter 3 of Part IV.)

Standing Committees

Each monthly meeting appoints such committees as may be needed to accomplish its work. Each standing committee submits a complete report once a year and may report at more frequent intervals on matters of special importance or interest to the monthly meeting.

Friends should bear in mind that a committee is a group of individuals who, out of a sense of calling or concern, and by appointment, have been given special responsibility for some aspect of the life of the meeting. Committee work often gives the corporate support and guidance needed to carry forward an individual concern, but it should never become a substitute for personal leading and action, nor for the corporate leading and action of the whole meeting.

Members ought to feel a sense of rightness of their service a sense of divine calling. Appointments should not be accepted nor declined lightly. Their acceptance should mean willingness to be regular in attendance, to work with others, and to share and to listen. Preparation for effective service is important, involving the ordering of personal affairs so that it is possible to give fully of time, energy, and spiritual resources.

Committees of the monthly meeting may include the following:

NOMINATING COMMITTEE. The nominating committee makes nominations throughout the year for officers, committees, representatives, and other positions of responsibility as directed by the monthly meeting. Members of this committee are chosen with regard to their discernment, seasoned judgment, and general knowledge of the membership of the meeting. They confer with proposed nominees before presenting their names to the monthly meeting. Any member of the meeting may suggest changes in the nominations. Members of the nominating committee serve for no more than three consecutive years.

FINANCE COMMITTEE. The finance committee is responsible for raising funds and preparing a budget for the consideration of the monthly meeting.

OTHER COMMITTEES. Other committees, such as Christian education, peace and social concerns, literature, and outreach, are formed as needed by the meeting.

Tenure

Monthly meeting appointments are for one year unless otherwise stated. All appointees hold their positions until successors are appointed. The responsibilities of holding office and of committee membership should be shared as widely as possible. Where numbers permit, committee members may be appointed on a two-year or three-year cycle, and a monthly meeting may establish a regular policy of limiting the number of successive terms that may be served in any capacity.

Property

Monthly and other meetings holding property should seek competent legal advice to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and to ensure desirable methods of holding such property, whether by appointment of trustees, by incorporation, or otherwise. (See Appendix 1, Some State Laws.)

THE QUARTERLY MEETING

Quarterly meetings are designed to bring together a larger group for inspiration and counsel and to consider more varied interests than any single meeting embraces.

Membership

A quarterly meeting consists of the entire membership of its constituent monthly meetings. Each monthly meeting appoints representatives to attend the sessions, although all other members are encouraged to attend and take part.

Organization

Officers of the quarterly meeting consist of a clerk, an assistant or recording clerk, and a treasurer, whose names should be presented by a nominating committee to the quarterly meeting for its approval. A nominating committee should be appointed annually to serve throughout the year. Additional nominations may be suggested by any member in the sessions of the quarterly meeting. The quarterly meeting also appoints any committees or representatives needed for carrying on its work. The quarterly meeting ministry and counsel is discussed in Chapter 3.

Functions

The quarterly meeting has care and oversight of the monthly meetings and worship groups within its area. It may review their proceedings and examine their records so that any irregularities in proceedings may be corrected by the monthly meeting. It shall receive appeals from decisions of monthly meetings and decide upon them and shall grant appeals from its own decision to the Permanent Board of Yearly Meeting.

The quarterly meeting receives the State of Society, statistical, and other reports from its monthly meetings and forwards its Own State of Society report and other such messages and concerns to the Yearly Meeting.

Responsibility for setting up, discontinuing, transferring or combining monthly meetings belongs to the quarterly meeting. All such actions taken should be reported to the Yearly Meeting. It may also have responsibility for the care of new worship groups.

A quarterly meeting may record Friends with gifts in the ministry. (See Chapter 3.) It may also endorse travel minutes for any of its members who feel called to travel in the ministry outside the quarterly meeting.

The Advices and Queries should be read regularly in whole or in part in quarterly meeting sessions and time allowed for prayerful consideration.

THE YEARLY MEETING

The Yearly Meeting consists of the entire membership of its constituent monthly meetings. The purpose of its annual assemblies is to help order their affairs and to maintain and promote Christian faith, love, and practice. All members have both the privilege and the responsibility of attending sessions and participating in the deliberations.

The Yearly Meeting is a meeting for worship for the transaction of business. It exists principally to provide a larger group to undertake matters of concern which cannot be accomplished by the smaller bodies. It can engage in any activity or foster any work which the membership considers appropriate, including provision of funds and supervision for common projects. Among its numerous functions, the Yearly Meeting issues advices, queries, and reports of its proceedings to the monthly meetings. It exercises general oversight and care of quarterly and monthly meetings, aiding in the development of their concerns, providing inspiration and stimulation.

In order to assure attendance from all parts of the Yearly Meeting and to carry information and concerns to and from the local meetings, each monthly meeting should appoint representatives up to the number of five. These representatives should attend business sessions and report to their local meetings on the work and life of the Yearly Meeting.

Much of the Yearly Meeting's work is carried forward by committees, which the Yearly Meeting may establish and lay down as need arises. The Yearly Meeting defines the purpose of each committee.

The Yearly Meeting publishes and distributes its agenda prior to each session. Business properly comes through its standing committees, quarterly meetings, or the Yearly Meeting Program Committee. The Yearly Meeting receives reports from its committees and from its constituent meetings. It reviews the State of Society reports and considers communications addressed to it. It alone has authority to establish or change its book of Faith and Practice. It provides for participation in the work and financial support of wider Friends' organizations. It maintains contact with other yearly meetings and exchanges epistles with them. It considers minutes from other yearly meetings. At its discretion the Yearly Meeting may endorse travel minutes of Friends from other yearly meetings.

The Permanent Board

The Permanent Board represents the Yearly Meeting between annual sessions. It may act on behalf of the Yearly Meeting in cases where the interests of Friends may render action advisable.

The Yearly Meeting appoints the Permanent Board consisting of not more than fifty members with each quarterly meeting represented. One fifth of the Board is appointed

each year to serve for a term of five years. Annually it appoints a clerk for the care of its business. The Board meets at such times and places as the Yearly Meeting may designate or upon its own adjournment. Special meetings may be called by the clerk and shall be called upon the request of five members. Ten days notice of special meetings must be given in writing to all members, and the business to come before the special meeting must be stated in the call. At least one fourth of the total number of members is required for the transaction of business. The Board keeps a record of its proceedings and annually presents a summary to the Yearly Meeting. During the sessions of Yearly Meeting the Board attends only to such business as that body may refer to it.

The Permanent Board shall nominate the Yearly Meeting clerks annually. The Yearly Meeting in session acts on these nominations. When approved by the Yearly Meeting, the clerks take office at the close of the Yearly Meeting session and hold office until their successors are appointed and assume office.

The Permanent Board makes recommendations to the Yearly Meeting for hiring staff and provides oversight of personnel as needed between Yearly Meeting sessions.

The Board inspects and perfects, when necessary, titles to lands and other estates belonging to any meeting. It attends to the appropriation of charitable legacies and donations except when these are cared for by persons appointed for the purpose.

It extends such advice and assistance to persons suffering for their Christian testimonies as their cases may require and may petition the government or persons in authority on behalf of such sufferers.

It considers appeals forwarded to it by the quarterly meetings. It examines memorials of deceased members transmitted to it from quarterly meetings and in exceptional cases may recommend them to the Yearly Meeting for publication.

A Friend with a concern to be carried beyond the Yearly Meeting limits shall present the concern to the Permanent Board. If the Permanent Board unites with the concern, it will provide a travel minute. (See Appendix 2, C.)

The Board may authorize the treasurer of the Yearly Meeting to pay the necessary expenses incurred in carrying out its duties.

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee of the Yearly Meeting is appointed to help coordinate the work of committees, and to advise them as needed. This committee has no responsibility for making decisions, but after "seasoning" refers matters to other appropriate persons or bodies for review and action. The Coordinating and Advisory Committee consists of the Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, the Clerk of the Permanent Board, the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, the Field Secretary, and the Administrative Secretary.

The Committee on Ministry and Counsel

The Committee on Ministry and Counsel of the Yearly Meeting consists of those persons designated by the monthly meetings, recorded ministers, pastors, and such other persons as the Yearly Meeting may wish to add. The Committee should be responsive to leadings of the Spirit throughout the Yearly Meeting and endeavor to foster the spiritual

growth and strengthen the religious life of the membership. Among its specific duties are the following: to nurture meetings, to arrange for intervisitation among meetings, to encourage and assist meetings in their witness and ministry to the wider community, to oversee the worship at Yearly Meeting sessions, to plan the session on ministry and counsel at Yearly Meeting, to receive reports on spiritual condition from monthly and quarterly meetings and report on them to the Yearly Meeting, and to care generally for the spiritual condition of the Society.

The Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee of the Yearly Meeting consists of those persons designated by the monthly meetings for the purpose, together with such other persons as the Yearly Meeting may wish to add. This Committee nominates to the Yearly Meeting Friends to serve on committees and boards and makes such other nominations as may be referred to it by the Yearly Meeting.

It is the policy of the Yearly Meeting that a committee member's consecutive, full terms of service shall be limited to two. In rare cases when the special competence of a member makes continued service on a Yearly Meeting committee desirable, the Permanent Board may authorize the Nominating Committee to suggest a third term. A member who has completed service on a committee may be reappointed after an interval of one or more years.

The Finance Committee

The Finance Committee of the Yearly Meeting consists of 15 members nominated by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee and appointed by the Yearly Meeting, together with such other persons as the Yearly Meeting may wish to add. A member serves a three year term and may be appointed to a second consecutive three year term. It annually considers proposals for appropriations and estimates what amounts the Yearly Meeting needs to raise for its budget. The proposed budget is presented to the Yearly Meeting for action. The Committee arranges for the audit of the accounts of the Treasurer and of the various boards and committees which have their own treasurers handling Yearly Meeting funds.

The Finance Committee should annually nominate to the Yearly Meeting a person to serve as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the money of the Yearly Meeting as directed by the Yearly Meeting or the Permanent Board.

Young Friends and Junior Yearly Meeting

The Youth Programs Committee and the Sessions Committee of the Yearly Meeting plan and provide for the meetings of the Young Friends and of Junior Yearly Meeting. These are similar in pattern to the adult Yearly Meeting, with which they coincide. A fourfold program of worship, education, work, and play is carried on.

These younger Friends appoint officers and committees from their own number and carry on their business according to the manner of Friends. They participate in meetings for worship and conduct discussion on Quaker concerns. Classes are provided for the study of the Bible and of the history, teaching, and practices of Friends. Reports are forwarded

to the adult Yearly Meeting, and communications exchanged with other young Friends groups and junior yearly meetings.

FUNDS, PROPERTIES, AND TRUSTS

All money and property held by any meeting is considered as held in trust for the objects, uses, and purposes of the Religious Society of Friends, subject to any special conditions of trust. A meeting's business agreements, trusts, and conveyances governing its finances and property shall be exactly recorded and duplicated for security.

No meeting property shall be distributed or partitioned among the individual members of a meeting. If any meeting ceases to exist, its property shall pass to the Yearly Meeting, or if a preparative meeting, to its monthly meeting.

The Yearly Meeting takes such action, by appointment of trustees or otherwise, as may be desirable for the holding of titles and the management of real estate. Investment trustees may be appointed to invest funds and other personal property, whether received by bequest, donation, or otherwise, and to administer them according to the direction of the Yearly Meeting and the conditions prescribed by the donors. Competent legal advice should be sought to ensure appropriate methods and compliance with the law.

RECORDS

Minutes and records of proceedings of all meetings and committees should be written clearly and accurately and preserved carefully. It is recommended that meetings review their records every ten years beginning in 1985, and prepare an inventory of the location and status of these records. This inventory should be appended to the meeting's minutes. Records no longer in current use by the meeting should be transferred to the Yearly Meeting archives. When a committee is discontinued, its clerk or record-keeper should send its records to the clerk of its meeting. When a meeting is discontinued its records become property of the Yearly Meeting and are transferred to the Yearly Meeting archives.

CHAPTER 2

Membership

BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends, as a part of the Christian fellowship, is both a privilege and a responsibility. Ideally, it is the outward sign of an inner experience of the Living God and of unity with the other members of a living body. It implies a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and to assume responsibility for both service and support, as way opens. Faith in God and an effort to follow the life and teachings of Jesus under the guidance and authority of the Light Within are the bases of our Quaker faith. The Society should reach out to and welcome into active membership all who find unity with the principles and the testimonies of Friends, as reflected in this book of Faith and Practice.

Only monthly meetings are empowered to accept individuals into membership and to record them as members of the Religious Society of Friends. Membership in a monthly meeting entails membership in the quarterly meeting, the New England Yearly Meeting, the Friends United Meeting, the Friends General Conference, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

BECOMING A MEMBER

Preparation

Personal and group worship is the vital center of Friends' religious life. It is important that those who desire to join the Society of Friends attend meeting for worship regularly. Regular attendance at the meeting for worship establishes personal responsibility for sharing in the search for divine guidance, a responsibility that must continue if membership is to be fruitful both for the individual and for the group.

By careful reading of this book of Faith and Practice, by discussion with meeting members, and by study of the literature interpreting Friends' beliefs, applicants can gain a sympathetic understanding of Friends' mode of worship, the transaction of business, and the responsibilities of membership.

Application

When, on the basis of this understanding, a person feels moved to apply for membership, application should be made in writing to the monthly meeting. The letter should state why the applicant feels drawn into the fellowship of Friends, and to what extent he or she is in unity with Friends' principles and testimonies. Before the application is considered by the monthly meeting, it is sent to Ministry and Counsel. When an applicant for membership brings a letter from another religious denomination, this document should also be presented to Ministry and Counsel together with the applicant's own letter.

Ministry and Counsel or Friends appointed by Ministry and Counsel will instruct and guide the applicant as seems appropriate. They should inquire by personal visits into the

applicant's earnestness and conviction concerning Friends' principles, and they should satisfy themselves that the applicant desires to live in a manner consistent with these principles. Although preparatory proceedings, outlined above, have been followed, nevertheless the method and spirit in which Friends' meetings for worship and for business are conducted should be carefully explained to the applicant, together with such responsibilities implied by membership as faithful attendance at meetings for worship and business, service on committees, a willingness to share a just portion of the financial support of the meeting, and participation in larger Friends' groups.

If Ministry and Counsel reports favorably, the monthly meeting may then receive the applicant into membership. If Friends feel the need to become better acquainted with the prospective member, action may be postponed. Sometimes a special committee is appointed to call on the applicant as a means of facilitating better acquaintance.

When an application has been approved, the monthly meeting records the acceptance into membership, furnishes the new member with a copy of the approving minute, and may appoint a welcoming committee.

An application for membership in the monthly meeting which comes with a letter releasing the applicant from another denomination is dealt with in the same way as described above. A Friend wishing to reaffirm membership which is held as a result of parental request (see page 237) also follows this procedure.

Other applications may come by certificates of transfer of membership from another monthly meeting. Although the last will ordinarily be dealt with without delay, all these applications are initially referred to Ministry and Counsel.

Membership by Parental Request

Monthly meetings record minor children as junior members upon (a) request of both parents if they are members of the meeting; (b) request of a member parent and consent of a non-member parent; (c) request of a guardian; and (d) under other appropriate circumstances upon recommendation of Ministry and Counsel. Members so recorded are counted in the monthly meeting's statistical reports.

Enrolling children as junior members in this way is an expression of the conviction that children and young people have a special interest in and claim upon the Society. It should earnestly foster their spiritual well-being and growth. As spiritual maturity develops in parallel with an understanding of Quaker principles, such members are expected when the time seems right to express in writing to Ministry and Counsel their wish to affirm and continue their membership in the monthly meeting. (See Chapter 3, Duties of Ministry and Counsel.) Ministry and Counsel then meets with the Friend, just as in the case of a new application for membership, and reports to the monthly meeting for business on the suitability of the proposed continuation of membership. The monthly meeting will welcome this letter whenever the junior member feels moved to write it; this should be no later than age twenty-five unless the member expresses in writing to the meeting a need for more time to consummate the decision. At age twenty-five any such junior member who has neither written in this way to the monthly meeting nor indicated a likelihood of doing so shortly thereafter will be removed from the rolls; but it will be

made clear that a future application for membership will be considered sympathetically by the monthly meeting.

Junior members should be encouraged to attend both meeting for worship and meeting for business and also, if it can be arranged, to work as members of meeting committees. Some meetings appoint for each junior member an older Friend to serve as counselor, with whom the boy or girl might feel free to discuss the development of religious faith and the responsibilities of meeting membership.

Sojourning Membership

A monthly meeting may accept as sojourning members persons maintaining membership in other Friends' meetings who wish to be associated with the local monthly meeting while residing temporarily within its area. Their wishes in this connection should be set forth by minutes or letters from their home meetings. It is expected of such members that they will share as fully as they conveniently can in all aspects of the meeting's activities, including meeting for worship, meeting for business, committee service, and financial support.

Such membership is not counted in statistical reports and ceases when the host meeting informs the home meeting that the sojourner has left the area of the meeting or has become inactive.

NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS

Monthly meetings should keep in touch with members living at a distance, including those sojourning in another meeting. At least once a year a personal letter with a message of kindly interest and inquiry into the Friend's religious life and activities should be sent to each non-resident member, particularly those who are separated from Friendly associations. When appropriate, members should be advised of the advantages of transferring membership to a meeting in their immediate neighborhood, or, if their absence is temporary, of becoming sojourning members in such a meeting. In either case, they should request a minute from their home meeting to be sent to the monthly meeting with which they wish to be associated.

If no information has been or can be received from a member for a period of three years, the monthly meeting may at its discretion remove the name from the list of members.

TRANSFER AND REMOVAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Transfer by Certificate

A member of a monthly meeting living beyond the meeting's reasonable limits should arrange for the transfer of membership to a more conveniently located meeting, preferably the one where residence has been established. Not doing so means a loss both to the individual and to the meetings involved, as well as failure to assume the full responsibilities of membership. When a monthly meeting receives a request for transfer, careful inquiry should be made by Ministry and Counsel to ascertain the conditions of the Friend's religious and temporal affairs. At the discretion of the monthly meeting, a

certificate of transfer (see Appendix 2) should be issued when a member requests it or, in default of such a request, when the monthly meeting deems it appropriate.

When a certificate is received, it should be referred to Ministry and Counsel. It should be accepted promptly by the monthly meeting unless sufficient reason shall appear to the contrary. Until this is done, the Friend remains a member of the former monthly meeting. In every case the monthly meeting receiving a certificate of transfer should inform the meeting which issued it of the action taken. One or more Friends may be appointed to visit the transferred member and to extend a welcome.

A certificate of transfer should be issued only to a monthly meeting and should be sent to the clerk. If the member requesting a transfer is a recorded minister, this fact should be noted on the certificate of transfer.

Joining Other Bodies

If a member in good standing wishes to unite with some other religious denomination, the monthly meeting may grant a letter of recommendation (see Appendix 2), whereupon membership with Friends shall cease. Any member who unites with another denomination without having requested a letter of recommendation from the monthly meeting shall be dropped from the rolls and informed of this action.

Resignations

When a member resigns, the monthly meeting is advised to appoint a committee to visit in a tender spirit and to inquire into the cause of the action. If the Friend's purpose continues unchanged and the meeting accedes, a minute may be drafted granting the Friend's request for release, and the Friend shall be furnished a copy of this minute.

Discontinuance

When any member habitually neglects attendance at meeting, fails to contribute to its support, or in other ways evidences a lack of unity with Friends, the monthly meeting upon recommendation of Ministry and Counsel may remove the Friend's name from its list of members and should so inform the person concerned.

When any member's conduct is considered unbecoming a Friend, Ministry and Counsel should bring the matter to the attention of the monthly meeting. The monthly meeting shall appoint a committee to confer with the Friend in question. If the committee considers that the Friend is in error, it should endeavor in a spirit of love and tenderness to engender that state of mind and heart that will enable renewed fellowship with the meeting. If the exercise of due care and forbearance appears to be of no avail, the meeting should remove the Friend's name from its list of members and should so inform the person concerned.

A Friend whose membership has been discontinued by the monthly meeting may, if dissatisfied with the decision, file an appeal with the quarterly meeting within three months for a review of the matter. If either the Friend whose membership is in question or the monthly meeting concerned is dissatisfied with the decision of the quarterly meeting, an appeal may be addressed to the Permanent Board of the Yearly Meeting. The decision of the Permanent Board shall be final.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

The acceptance and issuance of all certificates and letters should be recorded in the minutes of the monthly meeting, and the list of members should be changed accordingly. An accurate list of members should be appended to the monthly meeting minutes every ten years, beginning with the first monthly meeting in 1985.

CHAPTER 3

Ministry & Counsel

PURPOSE

The functions of a Meeting or a Committee on Ministry and Counsel are to oversee and nurture the religious life of the meeting, to foster the spiritual growth of the entire membership, and to enhance the community life of the membership. Members of Ministry and Counsel are expected to be regular in their attendance at meeting for worship in order to carry out their responsibilities faithfully.

ORGANIZATION

The responsibilities for Ministry and Counsel of the meeting traditionally belonged to elders and ministers, who met as an independent Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. In recent years these responsibilities in many meetings have been shared more widely among members of the meeting, and Ministry and Counsel has functioned as a committee of the meeting rather than as an independent meeting. Both forms of organization are currently used in New England.

Each monthly meeting should ordinarily appoint at least six members to Ministry and Counsel. Appointments to Ministry and Counsel should be carefully considered by the monthly meeting after proposal by the nominating committee. Long time appointments may lead to sterile ministry and counseling. Too frequent change may leave the meeting without the depth of spirit that is nurtured through service. Term of office is three years with one third of the members appointed each year. In some cases where previously appointed Friends manifest special ability and concern, the meeting may find it desirable to reappoint them to a second successive term. They may be reappointed beyond a second successive term after an interval of one or more years. Pastors, meeting secretaries, and monthly meeting clerks may be members of this body *ex officio*. Resident recorded ministers may be members of this body only as they are appointed by the monthly meeting.

When the monthly meeting comprises several preparative meetings, it is important that each preparative meeting have adequate representation. The membership of Ministry and Counsel should be sub-divided, with each group assigned to a particular preparative meeting, but it is expected that the entire Ministry and Counsel of the monthly meeting will also meet and act jointly.

Ministry and Counsel should annually appoint one of its members as clerk to preside at its meetings and to keep minutes of its proceedings.

Ministry and Counsel should hold regular sessions preferably each month but not less frequently than once in three months. Special meetings may be called by the clerk on request of three members.

To coordinate and strengthen the work of the monthly meeting, Ministry and Counsel may call in for consultation other persons or committees of the meeting or appoint an ad hoc group as needed.

Ministry and Counsel of the monthly meeting should appoint two or more of its members as representatives to attend and report on each session of Ministry and Counsel of the quarterly meeting. The appointment of representatives does not limit the responsibility of any other member of Ministry and Counsel to attend and take part in the work of the larger body.

DUTIES OF MINISTRY & COUNSEL

Ministry of the Meeting

Ministry and Counsel should be especially attentive to the quality of the meeting for worship. Humility of spirit and confidence that the power of God will work in each person are essential to this service.

Ministry and Counsel should encourage those whose vocal ministry gives evidence of true spiritual insight and offer guidance to those whose messages seem inappropriate to a meeting for worship. The depth and timeliness of the message and its harmony with the spirit of the meeting are more important than the form. The example of one struggling to be faithful in a difficult task may be more helpful than a polished address. Although the vocal ministry serves an important purpose, Friends should be constantly aware that the opportunity for silent communion with God is basic to their religious practice.

Ministry and Counsel initiates the recording of gifts in the ministry. (See page 246.)

Where ministry is offered through music, Ministry and Counsel should be sensitive to its contribution to the quality of worship.

Ministry and Counsel should also encourage private prayer, meditation, and devotional reading which promote growth in the spiritual life and prepare each worshipper for the corporate worship of the meeting.

Pastoral Care

Members of Ministry and Counsel should come to know all members and attenders, to share their joys and sorrows, and to find ways to encourage and help them. Love is nurtured by visits and correspondence. From time to time Ministry and Counsel may call a special meeting or appoint a special committee to help Friends who are seeking guidance or in other ways wish support from the meeting. Ordinarily such committees, unlike clearness committees, do not report back to the monthly meeting.

Ministry and Counsel should encourage participation by all members in the work of the meeting. They should assist new and young members to become acquainted with the organization and function of the meeting and to find their best place in its several activities. They should particularly encourage junior members who have reached the age of eighteen to consider and to test their readiness to affirm their membership. They should labor with inactive members for restoration of their interest.

Ministry and Counsel should help young people, attenders, and seekers to understand Friends' principles and testimonies and encourage them to apply for membership when appropriate.

Membership Changes

Ministry and Counsel serves as a committee to consider all applications, transfers, affirmations, or terminations of membership before these are presented to the monthly meeting for action. Its responsibilities and procedure in these matters have already been described in the chapter on membership.

Outreach

Ministry and Counsel may undertake the conduct of study groups, public meetings, circulation of literature, and other outreach for the general instruction of Friends and others in the religious beliefs and practices of the Society and in the advancement of Friends' principles. (See Chapter 4.)

Overseers

In larger meetings a portion of the duties of Ministry and Counsel may at the option of the monthly meeting be assigned to a separate body of overseers, appointed in the same way as Ministry and Counsel. The overseers report directly to the monthly meeting. Overseers and Ministry and Counsel should meet jointly from time to time to ensure a common understanding of their respective responsibilities and of meeting problems.

State of Society Report

At the end of each calendar year Ministry and Counsel should appoint one or more of its members to prepare and present to its sessions a report on the state of the monthly meeting. The report when approved should be forwarded to the monthly meeting for approval and by that body to the quarterly meeting and the Yearly Meeting.

The report should be a searching self-examination by the meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interest and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the meeting. Meetings may wish to consider one or more of the following:

- quality of worship and spiritual ministry;
- efforts to foster spiritual growth;
- stand taken on Friends' principles;
- personal and family relations;
- relations with community and other religious groups;
- participation in general activities of Friends;
- significant activities, outreach, or concerns of the local meeting;
- youth of the meeting;
- meeting community.

Memorials

In cases it deems appropriate, memorials of deceased members may be prepared by Ministry and Counsel, considered by the monthly meeting and, when approved, entered in the minutes. If the Spirit through these members reached larger bodies of Friends, the records of their religious life may be transmitted successively at the discretion of each body

to Ministry and Counsel of the quarterly meeting, the quarterly meeting, the Permanent Board, and the Yearly Meeting. Each step may occur with or without revision, but, before recording or transmitting, the memorial should be read and considered.

Appointment of Pastors or Meeting Secretaries

Those meetings desiring the help of pastors or of meeting secretaries should consult with the Field Secretary and with other persons made responsible by the Yearly Meeting for such service. Ministry and Counsel should consider the qualifications of candidates and make recommendations to the monthly meeting for action. Pastors or meeting secretaries may be engaged or dismissed only by action of the monthly meeting or its constituent meetings.

QUARTERLY MEETING MINISTRY & COUNSEL

Quarterly meeting Ministry and Counsel consists of all members of Ministry and Counsel of the constituent monthly meetings. It should meet regularly, near the time of the quarterly meeting, to transact business pertaining to its responsibilities, which consist of general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the constituent meetings. It receives reports from Ministry and Counsel of the constituent meetings and gives attention to the problems of those meetings. It should be concerned particularly with new worship groups and meetings and with meetings which are lacking in leadership. It should also have a concern for meetings greatly reduced in size or for meetings where there is lack of unity. It may recommend appropriate action to the quarterly meeting. The sessions should emphasize the spiritual quality of Friends' beliefs and practices and seek to deepen Friends' sense of God's presence in their lives.

Quarterly meeting Ministry and Counsel annually appoints a clerk to preside at its sessions and to keep minutes of its proceedings. It also appoints any committees needed for carrying on its work. It submits a state of the quarterly meeting report to the quarterly meeting for approval and for forwarding to the Yearly Meeting. (See Chapter 1, The Yearly Meeting, page 228.)

RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY

Friends have the practice of officially recognizing a gift in the ministry when a member has consistently spoken to the edification and spiritual help of the meeting. Not every member who has spoken acceptably in meeting has been given official recognition. Some meetings of New England Yearly Meeting have chosen to give up this practice, but all meetings seek to encourage such gifts when they appear. Meetings wishing to record gifts in the ministry should use the following procedures.

When a member gives evidence of such a gift, Ministry and Counsel may consider whether official recognition should be given. It should be borne in mind that such recognition in ministry not only is an expression of approval of one who is locally helpful but also is an affirmation of the Friend's ability to interpret the Society of Friends to the wider community.

When Ministry and Counsel is satisfied that a member has a sustained gift in the ministry, this may be reported to the monthly meeting. If the monthly meeting approves, Ministry and Counsel should prepare a minute for consideration of the quarterly meeting Ministry and Counsel, which will appoint a committee to appraise the general fitness of the individual under consideration and to report at a subsequent session of the quarterly meeting Ministry and Counsel. If the committee reports favorably, the matter should be brought before the quarterly meeting by an extract from the minutes of the quarterly meeting Ministry and Counsel.

When the quarterly meeting has acted favorably upon the matter, the recording is thereby completed, and the clerk should furnish a copy of the minute to the monthly meeting of which the individual is a member. The latter should enter this minute in full on its book of record. The action should also be reported to the Yearly Meeting Committee on Ministry and Counsel.

When a proposal to record a member as a minister is not approved, the body taking this action should so inform the Ministry and Counsel in which the recommendation originated.

In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost the gift or usefulness in the ministry, a proposal to rescind the action recording him or her as a minister may originate in Ministry and Counsel of either the monthly meeting or the quarterly meeting of which the person is a member. In every case final action should rest with the quarterly meeting. The individual concerned and the monthly meeting to which he or she belongs should be notified before final action is taken.

The status of a recorded minister is transferable with a certificate of membership from one monthly meeting to another and from one yearly meeting to another.

PASTORS AND MEETING SECRETARIES

To coordinate and to expand the pastoral and other Christian work both within and without the meeting, some meetings have found it helpful to have the services of a pastor or meeting secretary.

Pastors are usually expected to serve the meeting in the public ministry in its meeting for worship. They should always give consideration to the value of silent worship and the freedom of expression which is characteristic of vital group worship. A meeting secretary may be primarily a coordinator and expeditor of meeting work. Both pastors and meeting secretaries are considered as co-workers with the members of the meeting, and one of their major contributions may well be developing and encouraging leadership and the assumption of responsibility by the members.

The services of a pastor or meeting secretary should provide inspiration for all members to cultivate and expand their Christian service.

Ministry and Counsel should have direct oversight of the work of pastors, meeting secretaries, and volunteers doing special pastoral work. At the discretion of monthly meetings, pastors and meeting secretaries may be asked to maintain a cooperative relationship with some or all of the committees of the meeting or with ecumenical bodies.

If a meeting feels it necessary to call one who is not a member of the Society of Friends to serve as its pastor or secretary, Ministry and Counsel will have a special obligation to oversee the work and to offer guidance in the ways of Friends.

QUERIES FOR MINISTRY & COUNSEL

Ministry and Counsel should read these queries at regular intervals and from time to time may find it valuable to answer them in writing.

1. Ministry

Does the ministry in your meeting for worship open hearts and minds to the indwelling Spirit of God, enabling worshippers to proclaim the Christian message by life and word? Does it promote the spiritual growth of the meeting? Is there evidence of fresh vision and desire for service in the ministry? Does it come forth with full sincerity out of the person's own inward experience and from the leading of the Holy Spirit?

2. Pastoral Care

Do you take an interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of each individual in your meeting? Do you make yourself easily available to any who seek counsel and advice? Is your attitude one of friendliness and love as you listen to others? Do you endeavor to encourage in your meeting a sense of responsibility toward attenders, toward your neighborhood, and toward those who have no religious affiliation?

3. Oversight

When members or attenders engage in actions or words which seem inconsistent with the ideals of the Society of Friends, do you feel the responsibility to share with them, in love and humility, your own understanding of Friends' practices and testimonies? Do you encourage them to examine their own consciences in the light of the Holy Spirit? Are you willing to listen to them and support them as they pursue that examination?

4. Quaker Youth

Do you exercise a loving and watchful care over the young people of your meeting? Do you endeavor to promote their instruction in the essentials of Christianity and the distinctive emphases of the Society of Friends? Do you share with others ways you have found helpful in awakening religious experience among your own children? Do you seek ways to help parents and children to share together religious experiences in the home and in the meeting for worship? By example, encouragement, and counsel, do you help young people to develop personal values which will reject harmful indulgences of body, mind, or spirit?

CHAPTER 4

Outreach

The community beyond the meeting will learn most about the beliefs and practices of Friends from the lives and demeanor of Friends in its midst. Meetings should, nevertheless, take explicit steps to make themselves accessible and welcoming to seekers and to others in the community who wish to learn of Friends' experience of God. Some meetings may wish to assign particular responsibility for outreach to Ministry and Counsel or to a special committee, but all Friends should welcome opportunities to share their faith.

Notices, whether signs or advertisements, should regularly inform the community of the time and place of Friends' meeting for worship and of its being open to all interested attenders. Visitors should be greeted and made welcome. Brief leaflets and pamphlets explaining the meeting for worship and the distinctive beliefs and practices of Friends should be available and offered. Visitors should be invited to speak about their spiritual interests and concerns with appropriate members of the meeting and should be encouraged to attend frequently enough to discover whether the meeting may offer and provide them a spiritual home. Friends should be alert to the readiness of attenders for membership and invite them to apply.

Participation in local ecumenical activities may permit meetings both to be enriched by and to enrich the total spiritual life of their communities. Meeting-sponsored public gatherings and observances may also offer occasions for Friends to share their faith and witness.

To share the religious experience of Friends and to answer the spiritual needs of others are the goals of our outreach and may become blessings both to others and to ourselves.

CHAPTER 5

Marriage Procedures

MARRIAGE THROUGH THE MEETING

The Quaker wedding, when two persons join together with their family and friends in worship, is a natural expression of what we believe. In the presence of God they take each other freely and equally as lifelong partners, asking for divine blessing on their union and dedicating their own new life together to God's service. Both the form of the ceremony and the process to prepare for it remain the same as in the early days of the Society. The form, in keeping with Friends' religious ideals, includes the following important features: the avoidance of undue haste, the seeking of early approval of parents or guardians to preserve family unity, emphasis on equality of the partners, the responsibility of the monthly meeting, the thoughtful attention to religious, moral, and physical qualifications, the statement of the contracting parties of the vows, and the signing of the certificate by all present. Moderation and simplicity in all proceedings also reflect Quaker ideals.

The following marriage procedure allows opportunity both for Friends to nurture the spiritual basis of the marriage and for the couple to deepen their ties to each other and to their monthly meeting. Those wishing to unite in marriage under the care of the monthly meeting should proceed as follows:

Intentions

The parties should write a brief announcement of their intentions to the monthly meeting or meetings of which they are members. The letter should be signed by them both and submitted well in advance of the contemplated date. A sample of such a letter is to be found in Appendix 3. The proposal may be accompanied by written approval of parents or guardians of either party.

Clearness

The meeting of which the man is a member should appoint two men Friends to make inquiry as to the qualifications for marriage, such as clearness from other engagements, to make sure as far as possible that there is nothing to interfere with the permanence and happiness of the marriage, and to offer guidance and counsel. The meeting of which the woman is a member should appoint two women Friends for like purpose. Whenever practical the separate clearness committees should meet jointly with the couple and act cooperatively with each other. Help should be given to be sure all legal requirements are known. Reports may be made to the next regular sessions of the respective monthly meetings or to special sessions. The parties should be present, if possible, at the monthly meetings when reports on clearness are presented. If the reports are found satisfactory, they should be forwarded to the monthly meeting in which the marriage is to be accomplished. With that meeting's approval, the parties are at liberty to proceed with the marriage.

Where distance is a problem, a meeting may request another meeting to appoint a clearness committee on its behalf and to send its report back to the requesting meeting. If

one party is not a member of Friends, a committee of two men and two women Friends should be appointed by the monthly meeting of which the other party is a member. The men will meet with the man, the women with the woman, and the whole committee with the couple. The report will then be made to the meeting as specified in the previous paragraph.

A monthly meeting may in like manner allow a marriage to be performed within the meeting when both parties are non-members. In such case the meeting should take special care to ascertain that its undertaking would comply with legal requirements. It should also determine what commitments to Quaker ideals and to the meeting community led the couple to request care by the meeting of their marriage. It is recommended that in each case the acceptance of the responsibility of the meeting be approved by Ministry and Counsel or the marriage committee before being referred to the monthly meeting for consideration. In all cases the clearness process is a serious one, that should allow couples occasion to explore possible problems as well as the strengths in their relationship. If hesitations arise, delay is better than too hasty marriage.

Oversight

After the couple has been liberated to proceed with arrangements for their marriage, the meeting should appoint at least two men and two women Friends as a committee to attend and oversee the marriage. The parties may propose a time and place for the meeting at which the marriage is to be accomplished and may suggest the names of the Friends who, if approved, are to serve as the committee of oversight.

The duties of the committee of oversight are to advise with the parties as to the proper procedure for the accomplishment of their marriage, to see that a marriage license has been obtained, to assure that any revision of the vows retains their religious character, to attend the marriage and to see that it is properly conducted, to attend the reception and to see that it is appropriate to the religious character of the occasion, to see that all other requirements of the law are fulfilled, to make sure that the marriage certificate has been delivered to the recorder for recording, and to make a report to the monthly meeting.

When the couple for adequate reasons has chosen to be married in a meeting to which neither belongs, the usual procedure for securing the approval of the home meetings is carried out. The clerk of the woman's meeting, or if she is not a Friend, of the man's meeting, initiates correspondence with the clerk of the meeting where the marriage is to take place, asking for its cooperation. A committee of oversight should be appointed by the initiating meeting and should include, when possible, members resident in the state where the marriage is to take place.

Marriage Ceremony

The marriage should take place in a regular meeting for worship or in a special meeting arranged by the monthly meeting at a time convenient to the contracting parties. At a suitable time in the meeting the parties should stand and, taking each other by the right hand, should declare to this effect, the man first:

“In the presence of God and before these friends, I take thee, ____, to be my wife, promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband as long as we both shall live.”

The woman in like manner:

“In the presence of God and before these friends, I take thee, ____, to be my husband, promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife as long as we both shall live.”

Following the marriage, a certificate should be signed by the man and the woman. It should then be audibly read by a designated person. At the conclusion of the meeting it should be signed by everyone present.

RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARIZED

A condensation of the duties of individuals may prove useful:

Responsibilities of the Persons to be Married

1. To write a letter to the clerk of the monthly meeting under whose care they wish to be married, signed by both bride and groom, stating their intention of marriage and enclosing, if available, the blessings of their families.

2. To meet with a designated committee of clearness and to supply relevant documents and references as arranged before hand.

3. To write a second letter to the clerk for presentation to the session of the monthly meeting at which the committee on clearness makes its report, requesting permission to be married in a regular or appointed meeting (the latter is more usual) and proposing, if they so desire, the names of Friends they suggest to serve as a committee of oversight for the wedding. The day, hour, and place where they desire to have the marriage take place should be included.

4. To refrain from sending wedding invitations until the proposed marriage is allowed by the meeting.

5. To meet with the committee of oversight at a time and place suggested by the committee to discuss plans for the wedding and reception to follow, including such matters as any proposed change in the wording of the vows, the choice of persons to read the marriage certificate and to close the meeting for worship.

6. To have the Friends' marriage certificate prepared in ample time. Information concerning the details involved in this part of the procedure may be had at the office of the Yearly Meeting. (See Appendix 3, B.)

7. To inform themselves of the legal requirements of the state in which the marriage is to take place, and to obtain the forms to be used to comply with them.

8. To be sure that the license is given to the committee of oversight before the wedding and that the marriage certificate is present at the wedding.

9. To commit to memory long before the wedding day the promises to be made to each other.

10. To sign the marriage certificate after the promises have been made.

Responsibilities of the Clerk

1. To present the letter of intention to marry and the letters from the parents or guardians, if available, to the monthly meeting immediately following the receipt of them.
2. To see that the committees on clearness report to the monthly meeting.
3. When the report has been accepted:
 - a. To request that the meeting appoint a committee of oversight for the wedding and also that it grant permission for a meeting for worship to be held at the time and place requested for the wedding.
 - b. To inform the bride and groom that they are free to proceed with their plans.
4. To sign the marriage license and deliver it to the appropriate civil authorities.

Responsibilities of the Committee on Clearness

1. To make inquiry and conscientiously satisfy itself that there is nothing to interfere with the accomplishment of the marriage. The bride and groom should be visited together as well as individually. The two women Friends inquire into the bride's clearness for proceeding in the marriage, and the two men Friends make similar inquiries of the groom. Neither reticence nor timidity should prevent discussing any subject relevant to the marriage.
2. To report its findings and recommendations to a subsequent session of the monthly meeting.
3. To make available books and pamphlets on marriage, and, when appropriate, to refer the bride and groom to an available marriage counselor.
4. To be informed concerning legal requirements for obtaining a marriage license.
5. To make sure that the welfare of children has been considered and their rights legally secured, if the bride or groom has children.
6. To be available to assist in any way that may be needed.

Responsibilities of the Committee of Oversight

1. To see that the wedding is accomplished with dignity, reverence, and simplicity.
2. To meet with the persons being married to discuss plans for the wedding, including any proposed changes in the wording of the vows, the choice of persons to read the certificate and to close the meeting.
3. To see in advance that all legal requirements have been met and that the proper license has been secured; also to see it properly executed and filed by the clerk with the appropriate civil authorities within the specified time.
4. To arrange for the care of the certificate following the meeting for worship and to see that opportunity is given for those present to sign it.
5. To arrange for recording the certificate, as required by the monthly meeting, and to give the recorder an address to which the certificate is to be returned.
6. To report to the monthly meeting whether the marriage has been suitably accomplished, whether the legal requirements have been satisfied, whether the certificate

has been properly recorded, and to report the married names for recording in the monthly meeting minutes.

7. To see that the reception, if any, to follow the wedding is appropriate to the character of the occasion which it celebrates.

WITH PASTOR PARTICIPATING

Some persons may prefer to have a pastor conduct the marriage service. The procedures outlined under MARRIAGE THROUGH THE MEETING (page 172) should be followed.

MARRIAGE NOT UNDER THE CARE OF MEETING

Pastors are advised to exercise care to observe all legal requirements as set by the several states and also to endeavor to make the exchange of marriage vows a matter of the deepest religious import to the contracting parties and to all who are present.

Personal counsel with individuals and couples is advised. In cases where previous consultation has not been possible, pastors are urged to ascertain as fully as they are able all circumstances that would concern the qualifications of the contracting parties for marriage and to satisfy themselves that all legal and moral requirements have been observed.

Pastors and other ministers are encouraged to employ a marriage service in keeping with the ideals of Friends.

MARRIAGE WITHOUT THE MEETING

If the marriage of a member is not under the care of the meeting, Ministry and Counsel or the overseers should either visit or correspond with the newly married couple expressing the interest of the meeting in their new home. It should be assumed that members will continue the earlier relationship with the Society. If one of the parties is not a member, the non-member should be made welcome and invited to attend meeting.

MEETING RESPONSIBILITY TO SUSTAIN MARRIAGES

The life of the meeting community should sustain and enrich marriages through worship, marriage and family programs, and counseling.

In the event that a couple experiences marital difficulties or contemplates separation or divorce, the meeting should make available to them whatever of its resources may be helpful. A special committee named by Ministry and Counsel may be useful to them. The committee would explore all possible options. If separation or divorce should be decided upon, the committee should assist, in a loving and friendly manner, the couple going through these processes.

CHAPTER 6

Practices at the Time of Death

When a death occurs in the meeting community, Friends should assist the family in whatever ways may be needed, such as help with the children, with food or housework, or with hospitality for visiting relatives. The sympathy and affection of Friends for those in sorrow is best shown by compassionate support.

The family should arrange for the disposal of the body in accordance with legal requirements and the wishes of the deceased. In such matters Friends should practice simplicity and avoid display or excessive expense.

A meeting for worship is the proper form for a memorial service or funeral. The presence of God brings comfort, hope, and consolation. Ministry and Counsel or a special committee should oversee all arrangements. The monthly meeting should consider writing a memorial minute.

CHAPTER 7

Burial Grounds

Meetings maintaining their own burial grounds should establish rules and regulations governing interments, the marking of graves, and keeping of records. The meeting should appoint a committee of two or more Friends to have oversight of the burial grounds and to see to the enforcement of the rules. The committee should take care to make no commitment of a plot or reservation of space in the burial ground which, in the passage of time, may permit the plot to pass from meeting control or ownership. In cases where the maintenance of a burial ground no longer in use has proved burdensome to the meeting, the possibility of turning it over to the care of others may be considered, with due regard to the use to which the ground would be put.

In establishing regulations as to gravemarkers, meetings should be careful to observe the principles of moderation and simplicity.

CHAPTER 8

Revision of Discipline

Proposals for change of this book of Faith and Practice may originate in a monthly meeting, a quarterly meeting, or in the Yearly Meeting itself. A proposal from a monthly meeting, after receiving the approval of its quarterly meeting, will be transmitted by the quarterly meeting to the Yearly Meeting for final action. In any case, the proposed changes must be given preliminary approval and be published in the minutes of the Yearly Meeting. Only then may final action be taken on them at the next succeeding Yearly Meeting.

APPENDIX 1

Some State Laws Pertaining to Friends in New England

There are several areas of law which might be of importance to Friends:

1. Laws pertaining to the incorporation of New England Yearly Meeting;
2. Laws pertaining to the incorporation of monthly meetings;
3. Laws pertaining to churches, church government, religious societies in general, or in some states “non-business” corporations;
4. Laws pertaining to property tax exemption;
5. Laws pertaining to military exemption;
6. Laws pertaining to Friends' manner of marriage;
7. Laws pertaining to oaths/affirmations;
8. Laws pertaining to records (minutes, letters, etc.).

Connecticut

Connecticut General Statutes Annotated

3. Title 33 Sections 243-264
4. Title 12 Section 81
6. Title 46b Section 22
7. Title 1 Section 23

Maine

Maine Revised Statutes Annotated

1. Laws of Maine 1875 Chapter 127, 1876 Chapter 296 Private and special laws of Maine 1945, Chapter 13, Section 592
2. Title 13 Section 2986
3. Title 13 Chapter 93
4. Title 36 Section 652
5. Title 37B Section 225
6. Title 19A Section 658
7. Title 1 Section 72 (1A)

Massachusetts

Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

1. Mass. Acts 1828 Chapter 86
2. Chapter 68 Sections 10 , 11
3. Chapters 67 & 68
4. Chapter 59 Section 5
6. Chapter 207 Sections 38 , 40 , 42
7. Chapter 233 Section 17
8. Chapter 66 Section 16

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated

2. Chapter 306 Section 11
3. Chapters 306 , 307
4. Chapter 72 Section 23
6. Chapter 457 Section 37
7. Constitution Part 2 Article 84 and Chapter 21 Section 24

Rhode Island

General Laws of Rhode Island

1. Charter: Acts and Resolves 1823. Amended 1875, 1893, 1923, 1933, 1944, 1945.
Change of name 1945.
3. 7-6(1-30) non-business corporations
4. 44-3-3
6. 15-3-6
7. 43-3-11

Vermont

Vermont Statutes Annotated

3. Title 13 Sections 1471-1571
4. Title 32 Sections 3802 , 3832
6. Title 18 Section 5144
7. Title 12 Section 5851

APPENDIX 2
Forms for Use by the Clerk

The following forms are suggested for the use of the clerk.

A. TRANSFER CERTIFICATE

To _____ Monthly Meeting of Friends.

Dear Friends:

This is to certify that (name[s]) a member (members) of this Meeting has (have) requested a certificate transferring membership to your Meeting. Upon due inquiry no obstruction appears to granting this request. We therefore recommend (him, her, them) to your Christian care. Please acknowledge receipt of this certificate and acceptance of the transfer by completing, and returning to the clerk, the annexed statement.

In love, we are your friends.

Signed by direction and on behalf of

_____ Monthly Meeting of
Friends, held at (City or Town), State of (State), the day of (month) month, 19--.

(Signature), Clerk

Address: _____

Acknowledgement

To _____ Monthly Meeting of Friends

Dear Friends:

We have received the transfer certificate issued by you on the (Date) day of (Month) month, 19-- and have accepted (Name) into membership with us.

Signed by direction and on behalf of

_____ Monthly Meeting of Friends,
held at City or Town), State of (State), on the (Date) day of (Month) month, 19--

(Signature), Clerk

B. LETTER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS

To (the Church), (City), (State)

Dear Friends:

(Name[s]), a member (members) in good standing in this Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, has (have) expressed the desire to unite in membership with your Church. Upon due inquiry no obstruction appears to granting this request. We therefore recommend (him, her, them) to your Christian care. Upon receipt of acknowledgement of your acceptance of this letter the membership with this Meeting will cease.

Signed by direction and on behalf of

_____ Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends held at (City or Town), State of (State), on the (Date) day of
(Month) month, 19--.

(Signature), Clerk

Address

Acknowledgement

To _____ Monthly Meeting of Friends,

We have received the letter issued by you on the day (Date) of the (Month) month, 19--, and we have accepted (Name[s]) into membership with us.

Signed on behalf of (the Church), (Name)

(Date), (Month), 19—

C. TRAVEL MINUTES AND LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

The spiritual life of the Society of Friends has long been nourished by visitation outside one's own meeting. Such visitation may be thought of by the visitor as "casual," or as "concerned." A casual visit should have some motive of concern with the deepest values of friendship, of fellowship, and the life of the spirit. Whether or not motivated by special mission, the visits of those who come in love and fellowship are likely to enrich those involved, and indeed the life of the Society.

Often Friends have felt a special concern to visit other groups of Friends. A Friend with such a concern, which he or she feels is genuine, will be glad to test its genuineness by presenting it for approval at a session of the monthly meeting. If a visit is planned outside the Yearly Meeting, it should also be presented (in person, if reasonably practicable) for approval by the quarterly meeting and by the Permanent Board.

The meeting gives its endorsement to a project of visitation by providing the traveler with a minute which may be presented to other meetings and Friends. A travel minute should be carefully worded, providing a succinct account of the purpose of the visit and identifying the traveler in places where otherwise he or she would be a stranger. Meetings visited customarily write return minutes or endorsements on the back of the travel minute, to be presented to the issuing meetings of the traveling Friend upon return.

In recent years some Friends traveling without a special concern or on personal business have often been given letters of introduction to Friends meetings in places where they may visit. Such letters of introduction may be helpful in identifying the visitors when they come among Friends.

APPENDIX 3
Marriage Procedure Forms

Forms referred to in Chapter 5, Marriage Procedures.

A. SAMPLE LETTER OF MARRIAGE INTENTIONS

To the _____ Monthly Meeting.

Trusting in God's guidance and the approval of Friends, we intend marriage with each other. We should like to be married under the care of Monthly Meeting.

(Signed) A.B.

(Signed) D.E.

B. CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

Whereas A.B., of (City or Town), County of (County), and State of (State), son of C.B., and E., his wife, of (City or Town); and D.E., of (City or Town), County of (County) and State of (State), daughter of H.E. and K., his wife, of (City or Town), having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held at (City or Town), (State), according to the good order used among them, their proposed marriage was allowed by that Meeting.

NOW THESE ARE TO CERTIFY that for the accomplishment of their marriage, this (Day) day of the (Month) month, in the year nineteen hundred and (Year) they, the said A.B. and D.E., appeared in a duly appointed meeting held at (City or Town), (State), under the oversight of Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and A.B., taking D.E. by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that he took her to be his wife, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband as long as they both should live; and thereupon D.E. did in like manner declare that she took him, A.B., to be her husband, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful wife as long as they both should live.

And in further confirmation thereof, they, the said A.B. and D.E., [she, according to the custom of marriage, adopting surname of her husband*] did then and there to these presents set their hands.

(Signed) A.B.

(Signed) D.E.[B*]

AND WE, having been present at the solemnization of the said marriage, have as witnesses thereto, set our hands.

(Witness)

(Witness)

(Witness)

(Witness)

* *Optional*

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