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A REVIEW OF *THE TENDERING PRESENCE*, #2

T. CANBY JONES

Thomas R. Kelly says, “I’d rather be jolly Saint Francis hymning his canticle to the sun than a dour old sobersides Quaker whose diet would appear to be spiritual persimmons.” (*Testament of Devotion*, 92) For many Christians, Francis is a delightful and inspiring model of a life wholly and joyfully committed to voluntary poverty, sharing everything and celebrating Christ’s redeeming presence and love with all people. Having renounced his family status and earthly possessions he was called by God to “Rebuild my church.” With the assistance of Sister Clare and a few of his fellows he began to repair a small tumbledown chapel called “Portiuncula” (Little Portion). Relying totally on handouts for food, clothing and equipment, the band gained fame by singing as they worked and preached and the works of mercy they performed.

Whenever my work clothes would get particularly besmudged, I would tell my wife, “Saint Francis would approve!” Francis loved the whole of God’s creation, not only all people but all his other creatures. I am still touched by my memory of Saint Francis Hospital in Nagasaki, Japan, where 400,000 Japanese Christians live. In the courtyard of the hospital is a statue of Saint Francis bending over and petting “Brother Wolf” on the head!

I. JOHN WOOLMAN’S SPIRITUALITY

Five hundred years later (1720-1772), a more serious and self-disciplined John Woolman spent his life crusading for the freedom of slaves, the rights of those who labor and are oppressed, war tax resistance, a just economic system and saving the environment; all of these concerns in the name of and in the love of Jesus Christ!

Because of my personal struggles to grant dignity and full personhood to those whom I think are “dead wrong,” John Woolman’s ability to treat slaveholders and wealthy but selfish persons with grace

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and love, even as he eldered them for their wrongdoing and oppression, amazes me! What a gift of grace!

Mike Heller's book, *The Tendering Presence*, is a widely representative collection of essays on Woolman by an ecumenical group of Woolman students, some of whom are Quakers. They deal with his spiritual formation, his "near sympathy" to everyone, his relations with African and Native Americans, his "Perfect Redemption from the Spirit of Oppression," and his dealing with "Structural Violence and Social Change." What can we learn from these and the other issues dealt with in this collection of essays about John Woolman's inner concerns, principles, suffering courage and faithfulness?

Philip Boroughs, a Jesuit, in the first essay demonstrates that John Woolman was a weighty Friend both in Burlington Quarterly Meeting and in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, who wrote several of the Yearly Meeting Epistles dealing with slaveholding and paying taxes for war. Boroughs highlights some of the social dimensions of Woolman's spirituality under the following headings: "God is the true proprietor of the earth," therefore we can only be stewards of it. "God has a gracious design for creation....Therefore we must live reflectively...discerning God's will in each circumstance [concerning it.]" (7-8)

Boroughs points out that for Woolman God is "no respecter of persons,...does not favor one race over another, nor the affluent over the poor, and that liberty is the right of all people equally." (8) We must trust in God to meet our needs, for God has provided for all. "Moderate work" complements this trust. "Neither the poor nor rich should work too hard." Overwork is an evil derived from greed. (8) Boroughs goes on to say, "Woolman believed that just as Jesus was concerned with the weak, poor and the helpless, so too his disciples should live with the same compassion, abiding in the pure principle of universal love." (9)

Boroughs sees the Cross of Jesus carrying three meanings for Woolman: "First of all, it was an image which represented God's unconditional love for humankind. Secondly, it was a symbol which helped Woolman to unite his suffering with the sufferings of Christ. Finally, it offered a standard against which he measured the values of the world and the quality of his discipleship in the world. Boroughs quotes Woolman: "Now I find that in pure obedience the mind learns contentment in appearing weak and foolish to that wisdom which is of the

world: and in these lowly labours, they who stand in a low place, right exercised under the cross, will find nourishment.” (14-15)

In chapter two Paul Anderson documents the spiritual formation of John Woolman. He finds in the first chapter of Woolman’s *Journal* eight sources of John’s spiritual impressions:

1. Reading Scripture or other good books is mentioned seven times.
2. Parents counsel or instruction is mentioned three times.
3. A dream is mentioned once.
4. Life experiences are mentioned seven times.
5. Divine address and help are mentioned nine times.
6. Corporate meetings for worship and private prayer: three times.
7. Observation and reflection: three times.
8. And the helpful fellowship of supportive Friend: one time. (19)

Under divine address John says, “I was now led to look seriously at the means by which I was drawn from the pure Truth, and I learned this: that if I would live in the life which the faithful servants of God lived in, I must not go into company as heretofore in my own will, but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a divine principle.” (26)

On the next page he continues, “I felt renewed engagements that in all things I might act on an inward principle of virtue and pursue worldly business no further than as Truth opened my way therein.” (27)

Under corporate worship and prayer John insists that “true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator and learn to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men but also toward the brute creature.” (27)

In the same vein, under Observations and Reflections, Woolman says, “I looked upon the works of God in this visible creation and an awfulness covered me; my heart was tender and often contrite, and a universal love to my fellow creatures increased in me.” (28)

Paul Anderson comes up with another helpful table depicting the three phases in the formation of young John Woolman. They are: Emergence of a Personal Vision of Uprightness (ages 6-16); Finding

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a Place between Family and Society (ages 16-21); and Learning to Speak to the Conditions of the World (ages 21-23). (30)

One of my favorite incidents is John Woolman's learning the discipline of following his Inward Guide in speaking in meeting for worship as recounted by Anderson: "Having felt led to speak..." Woolman reports, "...but not keeping close the divine opening, I said more than was required of me; ... I was afflicted in mind some weeks without any light or comfort, even to the degree that I could take satisfaction in nothing." (35-36) It took John six weeks before he felt liberty to speak in meeting again!

One of Anderson's final observations deserves mention: "One is taken by Woolman's acute desire to mind above all else the pure openings of Truth, both in meetings for worship and in the workplace. The commitment to be a seeker and minder of the Truth becomes the trademark of Woolman's maturing spiritual life." (42-43)

Anna Myles in chapter three does a very interesting study of John Woolman and other Friends as "strangers on this earth" and of the role of their "dissent" in the shaping of Quaker and colonial policy. In contrast to their seventeenth century predecessors, eighteenth century Quakers in Pennsylvania were a worldly success story. They exercised both "power" and "dominion" in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Their "dissenting witness" had become heavily compromised.

Myles tells what dissent meant for Woolman. "For Woolman, the act of witnessing was itself an indispensable source of spiritual transformation.... It was through the difficult process of speaking out as a dissenter within and against his own community that Woolman came to understand the plight of society's 'strangers,' an understanding that constitutes the heart of his religious and social message to eighteenth century Friends." (46-47)

As a youth John felt constrained to speak to a tavern keeper about the disorder occurring on the tavern keeper's premises. In much trepidation John did so. Not only did the tavern keeper take John's admonition kindly but thought the more of John for having the courage to do so. Here again, that gift of grace that does not offend when John elders others, really speaks to me! (47)

In 1757, accompanied by his brother, John Woolman sets out to visit slaveholding Friends in Maryland. He explains his purpose: "As the people in this and the southern provinces live much on the labour of slaves,

many of whom are used hardly, my concern was that I might attend with singleness of heart to the voice of the True Shepherd....” (48)

Lest his acceptance of the hospitality of slaveholding Quakers signify his acceptance of the slave system, Woolman with much pain insisted on paying for the slaves’ services to him. (48-49) His pain was such that Woolman identified with Moses in Numbers chapter 11, when Moses is completely overwhelmed by the burden and rebellions of Israel as he sought to deliver them from bondage in Egypt. (49)

The Bible, Myles goes on to remind us, has two contrasting attitudes toward strangers. The first is the strangers are foreigners who are likely to worship foreign gods and are thus likely to lead Israel into idolatry and hence are to be shunned. (51) The second attitude is adopted by Jesus in the New Testament and is found Leviticus 19:33-34: “If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him; but that stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself.” (51)

Woolman goes on to identify the plight and needs of spiritual strangers with those of political strangers and sees them both as experiencing “marginality.” (51)

Myles goes on to quote Woolman: “to enforce the duty of tenderness to the poor, the inspired Lawgiver referred the children of Israel to their own past experience, ‘Ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt’ [Ex. 23:9] He who hath been stranger amongst unkind people or under their government who were hard-hearted, knows how it feels; but a person who hath never felt the weight of misapplied power comes not to this knowledge but by an inward tenderness, in which the heart is prepared to sympathize with others.” (52)

After reminding us of the withdrawal of Friends from the government of Pennsylvania during the French and Indian War in 1756 through the Quakers’ refusal to raise taxes to pay for the war, Myles quotes Woolman on the subject: “It requires a great self-denial and resignation of ourselves to God to attain that state wherein we can freely cease from fighting when wrongfully invaded....Whoever rightly attains to it does in some degree feel that spirit in which our Redeemer gave his life for us, and though divine goodness many of our predecessors and many now living have learned this blessed lesson.” (55)

Near the end of her essay, Anna Myles, describes John Woolman's most humiliating moment. Clad in undyed clothing and fresh from a month at sea in the steerage of his ship, John Woolman appeared in London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders and presented his Traveling Minute endorsed by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The gathered Friends were horrified at this "apparition" from the wilderness of America. Advising Woolman that he had made his appearance and presented his certificate, they coldly counseled him that he was now at liberty to go home. Dissolved in tears at this rejection by his English fellow Friends, John Woolman finally felt an inner compulsion to rise, speak in ministry and explain his calling by Jesus, his Lord, to visit English Friends in the love of the Gospel. The gathering was transformed by John's humility, the power of his message, and his lack of resentment at his rejection. They endorsed his minute and liberated him to carry out his visit.

Lisa Gordis, in chapter four of *The Tendering Presence*, examines John Woolman's use of language, especially that inspired by the Holy Spirit. Woolman speaks of the solid and substantial nature of words born out of the communion of silent worship. He says: "If Christ is our Shepherd, and feedeth us, and we are faithful in following him, our lives will have an inviting Language, and the Table of the Lord will not be polluted." (69)

Woolman has a fascinating vision of Truth, which gives certainty and authenticity to divinely inspired language: "It was dark and no appearance of day nor moonshine, and as I opened my eyes I saw a light in my chamber at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, easy brightness and near the center, the most radiant. As I lay still without any surprise looking upon it, words were spoken to my inward ear which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effect of thought nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy One spoken in my mind. The words were, 'Certain Evidence of Divine Truth,' and were again repeated in exactly the same manner, whereupon the light disappeared."

For years I have wanted to know what that "Evidence" is, or how "certain" it is. Other eighteenth century worthies said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." That certainly is the case here. Divinely inspired language is self-authenticating. We know it and feel it when we hear it "In this example of divine speech," Gordis continues, the distinction between *verba* and *res* collapses." (70) In Thomas

Kelly's words, "The burning bush is kindled in our midst, and we stand together on holy ground."

Like George Fox before him, John Woolman thought that divinely inspired words were a promise of humanity's return to the pure single language people spoke before the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel. "Woolman links spiritual purity and linguistic purity." (76) To implement this concern Woolman wrote and "published a primer entitled *A First Book for Children*." (76-77)

Michael Birkel in his chapter of *The Tendering Presence*, entitled, "Preparing the Heart for Sympathy: John Woolman Reading Scripture," stresses that for Woolman, "true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator and learn to exercise true justice and goodness." The result of such inward experience is "a lively operative desire for the good of others." (91) I was taught that both the Gospel of John and the Letter to the Hebrews were favorites of early Friends. That opinion is borne out by the fact that Hebrews 9:13-14, which I think is the theme of Hebrews, is central for Birkel's understanding of John Woolman. The passage reads: "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth for the purifying of the flesh; How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Birkel cites Woolman on his sea voyage to England in 1772: "And I have felt a renewed confirmation in the time of this voyage that the Lord in infinite love is calling to his visited children to give up all outward possessions and means of getting treasures that his Holy Spirit may have free course in their hearts and direct them in all their proceedings. To feel the substance pointed at in this figure, man must know death as to his own will." (95)

In another place Birkel quotes Woolman, who stresses that love of neighbor equals justice: "When we love God with all our heart and all our strength [Lk. 10:27], then in this love we love our neighbors as ourselves, and a tenderness of heart is felt towards all people, even such who as to outward circumstances may be to us as Jews were to the Samaritans. 'Who is my neighbor?' See his question answered by our Saviour [Lk. 10:25-37]. In this love we can say that Jesus is Lord [Phil. 2:11], and the reformation in our souls, manifested in full reformation of our lives, wherein all things are new and all things are

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of God [2Cor. 5:17-18]—in this the desire of gain is subjected. And employment is honestly followed in the light of Truth, and people become diligent in business, ‘fervent in spirit serving the Lord’ [Rom. 12:11]—here the name is opened. “This is the name by which he shall be called: ‘The Lord our Righteousness.’” [Jer. 23:6]

Two final thoughts from Michael Birkel: love, according to Woolman, “is inextricably linked to righteousness because righteousness is here revealed as the very name and nature of the divine.” “For Woolman, love is what righteousness looks like when it is lived out!” (98)

Margaret Stewart concludes this section of *The Tendering Presence* by discussing Woolman’s thoughts about death. (105ff.)

Our culture is “death-denying.” Woolman’s perspective, though, was “death-observing,” and he put much stock in the death-bed statements of the pious. A favorite Quaker collection of such incidents was called *Piety Promoted*. (107) She then goes on to relate Woolman’s youthful killing of the mother robin and his remorseful dispatching of her young. He concludes his confession by quoting Proverbs 12:10: “The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”

In 1770 Woolman fell dangerously ill and records his best known encounter with death: “In a time of sickness with the pleurisy... I was brought so near to the gates of death that I forgot my name. Being then desirous to know who I was, I saw a mass of matter of a dull gloomy colour,... and was informed that this mass was human beings in as great a misery as they could be and live, and that I was mixed in the with them and henceforth might not consider myself as a distinct or separate being. In this state I remained several hours. I then heard a soft, melodious voice, more pure and harmonious than any voice I had heard with my ears before, and I believed it was the voice of an angel.... The words were ‘*John Woolman is dead.*’ I soon remembered that I once was John Woolman, and being assured that I was alive in the body, I greatly wondered what that heavenly voice could mean.... Then the mystery was opened, and I perceived there was joy in heaven over a sinner who had repented and that the language *John Woolman is dead* meant no more than the death of my own will.” (111-113)

II. LITERARY, HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS &
III. ISSUES OF OPPRESSION, SOCIAL CHANGE AND
EDUCATION

Because of the extensive space I have devoted to John Woolman's Spirituality, I can only share a few incisive comments and observations about the issues discussed in the following two sections.

Mary Rose O'Reilly, in her discussion of "John Woolman: The Unconstructed Self," notes that he was a master of deep spiritual listening, and that he sought to build community through an innate sympathy with the oppressed, with all persons and all creatures. "Having unconstructed himself—thrown off the false persona—he was able to turn his attention to constructing the community." (143) "His favorite role was fool for God." (144) Remember that was a favorite description of Saint Francis!

In her chapter, "African Americans and Native Americans," Jean R. Soderlund presents an imaginative and insightful description of John Woolman's burning concerns against slavery, the amazing tenderness with which he labored with slave holders, and his concern for the oppression of Indians and the expropriation of their hunting grounds by Europeans. She refers to Woolman's visits among slaveholding Friends in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina in 1746 and to the publication of his tract, "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes" in 1751. The Delaware Indian with whom William Penn made peace fled to northeastern Pennsylvania where Woolman visited them at Wyalusing during the French and Indian War in 1756. A majority of those Delawares were wiped out by the European disease, smallpox. (148-166)

In chapter nine, J. William Frost tackles the difficult and subtle task of demonstrating how much John Woolman was influenced by "The enlightenment of the 18th Century." While William Penn, Anthony Benezet and the clerk of London Yearly Meeting, Alexander Arscott, show a clear dependence on dogmas of the Enlightenment such as "reason and natural law" as justification for their faith and their commitment to liberty and justice for all, John Woolman shows no such exclusive dependence on those principles. In his tracts he uses some of those arguments from nature and reason, but his faith and basic arguments remain God- and Christ-centered. Frost goes on to conclude that "Woolman's particular gift was to show in his life and writing how to keep a balance between his thirst for inward knowl-

edge, appreciation of outward nature, and quest to create a moral social order. To support his view, Frost cites one of Woolman's most important aphorisms: "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." (184)

Gerald Szama, in chapter 10, examines Woolman's tracts "Conversations on the True Harmony of Mankind" and "A Plea for the Poor." Woolman's starting point is the two great commandments of "Love to God and love of neighbor." If, contends Woolman, we abide by these commandments God will provide for all of our wants.

As the basis of modern economic theory Adam Smith assumes that people are inherently selfish, indolent, seeking gain from the least effort. For such people work is a curse. "Whereas, Woolman speaks of the dignity and creativity of...balanced work as integral to our coming into unity with God." For Smith capital gain is the main aim. "While Woolman constantly counsels the rich and the landholder to live simple lives and accumulate no more than is necessary..." (200) Woolman's radical alternative to modern economic and social theory *scars* Szama. (204)

Christopher Varga, in chapter 11 of *The Tendering Presence* in his analysis of Woolman's tract, "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes," is intrigued by Woolman's indirect strategy in presenting his concern to slaveholders. The terms "slave" and "slavery" are never used, "servitude" only twice, "slaveholders" only once, and "them that keep Negroes" only twice. Woolman deliberately chose this indirect strategy because of this concern to reach those with high stakes in the institution of slavery in the most considerate and persuasive way possible. Understatement and "quiet, kindly persuasion" were his method. He reserved the full force of his arguments for his insistence on abiding by principles of justice and freeing the oppressed. (208)

People owned slaves "for the sake of earthly riches," "slavery was a business matter" and "not a matter of religious concern in the minds of many." They forget that God is no respecter of persons or their social status but every one is born to a "natural right of freedom." Quoting Genesis 3:20, Woolman insists that "all nations are of one blood," and that Christians "ought to regard all humanity as their family and each person as a brother or sister."

This concern culminates in Woolman's claim "that when one neglects or injures, one neglects or injures the whole of creation." (212) "God's love is universal."

Michael Graves, in his chapter on "A Perfect Redemption from this Spirit of Oppression: John Woolman's Hopeful World View in 'A Plea for the Poor,'" finds Woolman's moral demands placed directly on his own conscience. Interestingly he analyzes "A Plea for the Poor" by "cluster analysis." This process involves identifying key terms in the essay, then clustering "for the Poor": 1) Rich/Poor, 2) Oppression/Love, 3) Usefulness/Luxury, 4) Reason/Feeling and 5) Children.

In contrast to a society where "money talks" and "power dominates," Woolman sees one in which "Divine love enlarges every heart toward mankind universally [and] stops every corrupt stream and opens those channels of business and commerce in which nothing runs that is not pure." (227)

Vernie Davis, in essay number 12, "John Woolman and Structural Violence: Model for Analysis and Social Change," first points out that Woolman challenges the popular view that the individual is powerless to effect social change. (243) Davis then defines structural violence as "harm caused by structures of culture (socio-economic, political, and /or belief systems), [as] one of the major problems facing the world today....Starvation and malnutrition...are seen as violence resulting from an inequitable world economic system and repressive regimes." (244)

Davis then examines responses to structural violence. In contrast to the violent ones, he cites from Saul Alinsky and others. Woolman reverses "the means/end perspective of Alinsky because for Woolman the means *are* the end. The moral imperative for Woolman is to do what is right regardless of the outcome." (246) Davis then identifies five essential ingredients of Woolman's approach: "inward self-examination" (247); "the recognition that war has its roots in greed for wealth and power" (252); the necessity of "subordination of personal will to divine will" (253); "that true harmony is dependent on universal love" (255); and finally that Woolman is called to minister to the wealthy and powerful and to slaveholders. (256)

Davis then cites a vision Woolman had to which we have not elsewhere referred: "I was then carried in spirit to the mines, where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christian

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and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ, at which I was grieved for his name to me was precious. Then I was informed that these heathens were told that those who oppressed them were the followers of Christ, and they said among themselves, 'If Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant.'" (257)

Susan Dean and Anne Dalke, in chapters 14 and 15, examine the influence of John Woolman in American Multicultural studies and his value for American pedagogy. Dean points out that Woolman was addressing 18th century Friends in New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania, who were in a well off, admired and privileged social, political and economic position in those three colonies, vastly different from their persecuted forebears in 17th century Britain. She sees Woolman's calling to empathize with all who suffer oppression and to labor in love with those who cause and are responsible for the suffering. Regardless of the incredible odds against his success, Woolman labors with each slave owner, wealthy person or owners of "superfluities" with confidence that the Holy Spirit will sustain and enable him to succeed in his mission to deal in love with both the oppressed and their oppressors. (268-270)

Anne Dalke, in her "Fully Attending the Spirit: John Woolman and the Practice of Quaker Pedagogy," does a wonderful job of analyzing and explaining the true Quaker practice of teaching and learning as found in Woolman. The four principles of Quaker pedagogy Anne champions are precisely those I tried to implement in my forty years of teaching in a Friends college, Wilmington College. She says, "I find four key concepts in Woolman useful in my teaching practice: his counsel against overworking, his counsel to work outward from a motion of love, his conviction of the mutuality of the learning process and...the necessity of the humility of the teacher. She finds value in the Quaker business meeting in which we seek humbly a "sense the the meeting," with an obligation to share personal concerns relevant to the business and with a willingness to bow to and accept the group decision even though it opposes what we originally felt. It is unfortunate that Anne, though such an inspired advocate of Quaker process, is unable to share John Woolman's conviction of "the Truth which is one and unchangeable." (281-292)

Paul Lacey, in chapter 16 of *The Tendering Presence*, treats the topic, "Answerable to the Design of Our Creation: Teaching 'A Plea for the Poor'." In struggling to teach Woolman to large classes of Earlham College students, Paul elicited a priceless objection to

Woolman from one of those students: “John Woolman had no individualism, he just did what God told him to do!” Wow! What a comment on both this generation and on John’s faithfulness! (295) Further on Lacey quotes Woolman: “The primary test of our tenancy of God’s earth is whether...we live answerable to the design of our creation.” “Those who are righteous on principle, Woolman says, do good to the poor without making it an act of bounty. By avoiding superfluities, they encourage moderation in others.” “Work is not a curse...but a gift... which we receive from and share with God the Creator. By our design, all human beings are entitled to ‘a convenient subsistence’ and the moderate labor to attain it. (298) “No one has a ‘right’ to property separate from how it is used.” “In giving them life, Woolman argues, God gave all humans a prior right, a claim to the fruits of the earth which supersedes any great landlord’s claim to luxury.” (306)

IV. SCHOLARS WHO BECAME DISCIPLES

The last section of *The Tendering Presence* honors Phillips P. Moulton and Sterling Olmsted for their great contribution to Woolman studies. Phillips Moulton devoted years of research, two of which were spent in the Haverford College Quaker Collection, preparing his complete and critically correct edition of John Woolman’s *Journal*. In like manner, Sterling Olmsted spent years studying and comparing the non-violent witness of John Woolman with that of Mahatma Gandhi. He published a Pendle Hill pamphlet entitled *Motions of Love: Woolman as Mystic and Activist*. Then with co-author, Mike Heller, he edited and published in 1988 the book *John Woolman: A Nonviolence and Social Change Sourcebook*.

I close this study with a lovely quotation from Woolman located by Sterling Olmsted in a letter by John Woolman dated the 16th of ninth month 1772. It reads: “I cannot form a concern, but when a concern cometh, I endeavour to be obedient.”

