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QUAKERISM —
RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

By

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If I were to do as the Irishman did and "say a few words before I begin", I'd express the hope that this lecture on Quakerism might not be like the one which Einstein gave on the subject of relativity. When he first propounded his famous theory, there were only six men in America who understood it. One of these men had the privilege of hearing a lecture by Einstein on the subject, and after that there were only five who understood it.

In the study of any movement, it is well to go back to its beginnings, however far from those beginnings the movement may have departed. And to me Quakerism started with a deep and soul-transforming experience of George Fox.

To understand that experience it is necessary to have some understanding of George Fox himself, of his times, his family background, and his own personal previous experience.

George Fox lived in a day of deep religious exercise on the part of some who moved in supposedly high Christian circles and of cold formalism on the part of others -- and of actual profligacy on the part of some even in the priesthood of the established church, a church of which not too much could have been expected so soon after its separation from the Roman Church, under the leadership of that unsaintly man Henry VIII. In theory and outwardly the Reformation had been completely accomplished

in England. In practice and inwardly it could hardly be said to have begun. The Church of England had devoted Christian leaders both in high and in low places. On the other hand it had priests and prelates no more fit for spiritual leadership than American postmasters under the old spoils system would have been. The priests received their appointments to "livings" under authority of the secular government. What could be expected of them?

"Like priest, like people." In the church of England were many who were as little concerned about spiritual things as the worst of the priests; and in the church also were those in whose minds and hearts spiritual things were the things of supreme value -- to many in their misery the only things of value.

Outside the pale of the church were people of the same kinds, those almost as indifferent as a horse, on the surface at least, to all spiritual interests, and others who were most earnest "seekers" for spiritual truth and spiritual life, and all shades between.

George Fox himself was born of a mother who was "of the seed of the martyrs", and a father of such high character that he was known to his neighbors as "righteous Christer." Born in the established church, these parents of the founder of Quakerism were earnest Christians and faithful members of the Church of England.

But George Fox's personal character and experience mean more than his family or his ecclesiastical or his national background. George was one of those unusual human beings who were seeking for God. He could say with the Psalmist, "My soul thirsteth for

God, for the living God."

In this way he was certainly peculiar, in the common acceptation of that term. Most men do well, for them, when they respond to God's urgent, insistent calls. Very many men want nothing of God but to be let alone by Him -- at least that's what they think they want. But George Fox was seeking earnestly for God, and for a long time failed to find Him.

The Roman church had said, and the English church repeated but with less emphasis, that you could find God in an infallible church. But George Fox could not believe in an apostolic succession through such corrupt channels as some popes and archbishops and others of the hierarchy had been; a church like that could not be infallible, nor did he find God there. Others were sure that God could be found in an infallible book; but so widely different were the interpretations of that book that George Fox knew that if God were found there by all interpreters they did not all find the same God; and he failed to find God there, though there were few of his day or ours more saturated with the Bible than was he. He could repeat a very great part of it from memory.

There is nothing sadder than to be where a loved one has been and is now no longer. Any man who has gone back to the house which has once been the home of himself and the woman who was more than life to him, who has taken down the clothing she used to wear to send it to bless the suffering peoples overseas, who has tried to eat at the table where she used to sit with him after she had prepared his food, and has found eating impossible because the lump in his throat would not permit him to swallow,

who has sat before the fireplace with her empty chair beside him, that man knows what loneliness really is, and can understand the words of Robert J. Burdette after he had lost the wife of his youth:

"Since she went home
 How still the empty rooms her presence blessed;
 Untouched the pillow her dear head once pressed.
 My aching heart has nowhere for its rest
 since she went home."

Well, George Fox was in a world where God had been, but where He seemed to be no longer. God had revealed Himself to Moses; why not to George Fox? God had spoken to David; why not to George Fox? God had shown His will to Paul; why not to George Fox? In this world where God had been and where He had revealed Himself to men, George Fox searched for Him, and searched for a time in vain.

You are familiar with some of the details of that search, in which he sought the aid of those who were supposed to be spiritual guides. One of them advised him to take up the smoking of tobacco; but George Fox knew better than to follow that advice. Tobacco smoke has never yet made a man's eyes clearer to see the things of God. Another advised him to get married. Later he did that, and a very good job he did of it. But in the days of which we are speaking he was not seeking for a woman, even if she were the best woman on earth; he was seeking after God.

Every Friend should be familiar with the story. In his extremity, where all else had failed and he was in despair of help from any other source, there came that voice which said to

him, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition."

Those of us who have thus found Jesus Christ and have been found of Him do not wonder at Georg Fox's testimony that his soul "did leap for joy."

There and then, as I see it, was Quakerism born, however and whenever it may have been conceived. Here was apostolic Christianity rediscovered and revived. Here was the realization that God is accessible to the individual heart, without the intervention of priest or ritual or any other intermediary save Jesus Christ, who can bring God and man together because he is the God-man.

Not all at once did the full implication of this new revelation of old truth become clearly apparent to George Fox and his associates; but it was not long till the colossal truths that grew out of it began to unfold.

In the first place, it meant the "savability" of all mankind. The God who was accessible to George Fox was accessible also to the thief, the harlot, the murderer, as well as to the "better element" of society, many of whom were as deeply in need of God as those incarcerated in the prisons.

And this immediate relation between man and his God meant that man could be completely saved, transformed, God-possessed, and could, should, must live a sinless life.

And this meant, of course, the inestimable value of human personality which early Christianity had recognized but which had later been forgotten. Prisons must be reformed -- the people incarcerated there were potential saints and of incalculable value. Slavery must end, for man is not his own and

cannot rightly be the property of any other man; the human being of inestimable value belongs to God alone. War is impossible, for your supposed enemy has access to the same God and the same riches of grace that you have. How could a Christian destroy a man, a human personality of inestimable value, of such value that Christ died for him? And so we might go on and on.

The result of the Quaker acceptance of these peculiar new ~~f~~ old views brought intense persecution, as in the early days of the church.

A superficial look at the situation would incline one to wonder that such deeply religious folk with such good news should have been so bitterly persecuted; but looking deeper it is not hard to see that such persecution was inevitable.

In the first place, their teaching of the possibility of sinless living was diametrically opposed to both the teaching and practice of most religionists of that day. Methodism had not yet been born, but there were plenty in the Church of England as well as out of it who believed and practiced what the old lady called "that dear old Methodist doctrine of falling from grace." To preach the necessity of sinless living in a church where the priest taught that sin was inevitable and showed that in his own case at least ~~it~~ continued to be actual, very naturally brought down on the early Quaker the wrath of the priest and of those who believed in and honored the priesthood.

And the way in which this teaching was done by the Quakers added to the offence which they gave. "Right out in meeting," as our fathers used to say, these early Friends would take issue with what they held to be false teaching, and would argue with

the [priests in their own services. No wonder the "steeple houses" were often the scenes of riots that were hardly befitting the holy sabbath day.

And from the secular government also, so closely connected with the ecclesiastical, persecution was inevitable. The Quakers made it very clear that to them the state was by no means supreme in its authority, and in the words of the author of "Rebel Saints" they "gave government a liberal education in minding its own business." The government says I must go to war and fight; but God has enabled me to live in that spirit which takes away the occasion of all wars, and bids me love as He loves, and so I shall not go to war, though refusal may mean that I must go to prison and perhaps to death. The government bids me pay tithes for the support of the established church; but God bids me refuse to support a priesthood many of whom were never called by God and some of whom are positively corrupt. (It may be well in passing to note that it was this ecclesiastical-secular priesthood of the established church that early Friends opposed as a "hireling ministry"; they did give liberally for the support of their own ministers and their families when these ministers were away in the service of God or were in prison because of that service.)

[And there were other institutions besides church and state that helped in this Quaker-baiting. To quote again from "Rebel Saints," these early Friends held that if an evil had always existed, it had existed quite long enough and ought to be abolished. And so slavery must be done away, though the Quaker opposition to it appeared like "opposing a pin-point against the shield of Pelides." War must go, though this seemed as un-

thinkable as it would have appeared to the ancient Romans that Irene, the goddess of peace, should overcome Mars, the god of war, in battle. The practice of getting just as much as possible out of every business deal, charging "all that the traffic will bear" for every article sold, and thus taking advantage of those who are more ignorant or less skilful in bargaining, seemed unfair, and so the Quaker dealer adopted the policy of a fair profit only and one price to all -- and he got the business, and his commercial competitor was injured in the pocketbook, one of the most sensitive spots in the human anatomy.

The Quaker insistence on absolute honesty was a constant challenge and accusation to those who were inclined to let covetousness render their business dealings a bit slippery. "A Quaker's word is as good as his bond" came to be an accepted statement of fact in business dealings. We hope it is still true. My own heart was made glad some few years ago by an instance. In 1914 a man had given his note for \$300.00 to the college I was serving, and soon afterward he lost all he had, and for some time was on relief, and for a longer time was living in his age and comparative helplessness in the homes of his children. But one day, many years after the note had been outlawed, he came to me with the entire amount, saved during a quarter of a century, a nickel and a dime at a time, and paid off his note. I said to him, "It used to be considered that a Quaker's word was as good as his note. I've found a Quaker whose word is better than his note. The note was outlawed long ago; your word was still good".

Well, by their teachings and by their practices the Quakers made themselves obnoxious to church and state and vested

interests and to private individuals. Of course it was the conventicle act, forbidding all religious meetings other than those of the established church, which filled the prisons with thousands of Quakers. (No wonder they were eager for prison reform. They knew the horrors of prison life by inside experience. They had "inside information.")

Some of the peculiar customs to which their new vision of truth led these early Quakers now seem to many to be ludicrous, and most of them have been largely abandoned. The observance of some of these customs later proved far from being a blessing.

My neighbor, a humble farmer or day laborer, may be far better and worthier than the king or the magistrate. Why then should I take my hat off to the king, even though refusal to do it may mean that my head may come off with the hat? Why should I use a plural language in speaking to my "superior" when I use the common language of the common people in the singular when speaking to my humble neighbor, who may be in the things that make a true man, far superior to his "superior". Why should I follow the foolish fancies of the unworthy nobility in the matter of dress, when the common man wears the drab clothing and the broad hat that are far more serviceable?

The marriage customs of the Friends were based, of course, on the fact that a marriage in England could not then be legal unless solemnized by a clergyman of the established church; and since the Quakers would not use the services of these priests, they tried to surround marriage with every safeguard, so that if and when England returned to sanity these marriages would be recognized and all the children born in Quaker homes would be ^{recognized} as legitimate.

The so-called "meeting on the basis of silence" (I dislike the term, since it seems smugly to imply that other meetings are on the basis of noise, and our meetings should be on the basis of spiritual guidance by the Spirit of God) grew out of the realization that God can reveal His will to the humblest of His followers; and the early Friends found it helpful to wait in silence, as they sought, individually and jointly, to reach communion with God, to know the divine will, and to receive from God the message that was to be delivered vocally, if there were such a message.

It may be well to remark in passing that neither George Fox nor his associates (I like that word better than "followers", for they were seeking to follow Christ, not to follow any human being) supposed that they were giving forth any new or revolutionary teaching. One who reads George Fox's Letter to the Governor of Barbadoes can hardly fail of the conviction that the early Friends were thoroughly grounded in the basic things of evangelical Christianity; and if it be urged that the writer of this letter was under a sort of coercion to justify the Quaker in the minds of other Christians, it is well to recall how difficult it was to coerce George Fox in any matter. They tell of an able-bodied, able-minded woman who was the wife of a small and rather insignificant looking man, and who was testifying in court as to a business matter in which they were both involved. Asked if her signature to a certain document was made under any form of duress, she inquired as to the meaning of the term and was informed that it might mean compulsion by her husband, for instance. She looked at him scornfully, and said, "I'd like to see him 'compulse' me." It was never easy to "compulse" George

Fox. He made the statements in this letter, I am convinced, without any coercion. He and his associates were thoroughly evangelical Christians, and insofar as we have ceased to belong in that category, we have departed from Quakerism as it was in its beginnings. Let us be Christians first, then Friends.

The outstanding characteristic of the Quaker movement grew out of that basic discovery that Jesus Christ was ready to meet the need of the individual man or woman, directly, personally, effectively, completely; and that through Him the power of God was available to all mankind. Gone was the doctrine of inescapable damnation; gone was the theory that there are infants in hell not a span long; gone was the idea that the fact that a man or woman had become criminal was evidence that he or she was foredoomed to final and eternal condemnation. All were "savable". And all should be reached with this good news, this gospel, this evangel. God is accessible to you, murderer. God's grace is for you, harlot. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. None too high and none too low to receive this message. In prison and in palace it should be proclaimed. In the wigwam of the Indian and in the palaces of the sultan and the tsar were those who should hear it -- and did, thanks to the burning evangelistic zeal of that first generation of Quakers, who were at first leaders in a movement, not founders of a sect.

One of the great leaders of Methodism of a generation ago declared publicly that if Quakerism in the second century of its existence had been what it was in the first, there would never have been a Methodist Church; all the early leaders of Methodism would have been and would ~~have~~ have remained Friends. Be that as it may, Quakerism did undergo a tremendous transformation

as the generations passed. Some of these changes seem almost unbelievable now, as they would have seemed impossible to George Fox and his associates.

The early Friends were in active revolt against some of the forms, ceremonies, rites, customs of their day. It is a sad commentary on human nature that they should presently have bound themselves to forms of formlessness, should have made a ritual of their lack of ritual, should have revolted from custom to institute an iron-bound custom of their own.

They had seen the folly of the almost unbelievable extravagances of style in the early days of the society, and did not change with the passing years from the serviceable plain bonnet and broad hat of the common people; and presently plain bonnets and broad hats were as definite a style for the Quakers as hoop-skirts and powdered wigs for the devotees of fashion. Many a Quaker woman was as proud of her expensive silk bonnet as a woman of the court was of her Gainsborough hat. More iron-clad was the Quaker style than the style of the stylish -- we disowned members for "deviation from plainness of dress." We had made an obligatory style out of our refusal to follow the styles, an obligatory fashion out of our refusal to follow the fashions.

It was the same in the matter of speech. We revolted against the use of the plural speech in the singular, and insisted on the use of the language of common people, whether speaking to a pauper or a prince. But when this plural language was no longer a singular speech but the plural second personal pronoun had become singular as well as plural, we insisted on the use of the old-fashioned singular pronoun, which had now become very singular -- insisted on it so strenuously that we

disowned members for "deviation from plainness of address." How singular this would have seemed to George Fox, who, when William Penn asked him about the wearing of a sword, replied "Wear it as long as thou canst".

We took the same attitude in regard to our marriage customs. When England had returned to a measure of sanity in the matter of marriage laws (America never had the same form of insanity in the matter) and some of the safeguards that Friends had thrown about marriage were no longer so greatly needed as they had been, we still insisted on what had now become an obligatory part of our discipline. It was not enough that a Friend should make a suitable choice of a life companion from among Friends; he must carry out the letter of the law as to the forms and proceedings required by the discipline. My father was disowned for marrying my mother, which in spite of some of its results named Levi seems to me one of the best things he ever did. Both were Friends, in good and regular standing, but they did not go through the disciplinary procedure that was required, but were married in a home by a Friends minister, who, strangely enough, was not "dealt with." Each was later given by the overseers who "dealt with them" a statement which said "I confess that I have contracted marriage contrary to the discipline, for which I am sorry, and I trust that Friends will pass it by and continue me in membership so long as my conduct shall render me worthy." Each signed the statement, but crossing out the words "for which I am sorry." My father probably made matters worse by twisting the meaning of that part of the statement, saying he was not sorry that he had married Mary, and never expected to be (and he never was.)

But with that clause ~~omitted~~ ^{omitted} his "confession" was not satisfactory, and out he had to go. ¶The women were more considerate, and retained my mother in membership, but she did not know it, and with my father joined another denomination. I am glad that they were both members of Friends again before I "discovered America", so that I am a birthright Friend, as well as a Friend continuing in the Quaker fold "by convictionment.")

In yet another way we made a form of our formlessness, a ritual of our lack of ritual. Because a time of silence was found so helpful in promoting communion with God and in securing His leadership in the meeting for worship, silence became the sine qua non of the Friends meeting. It is to be feared that in at least some places it became an end in itself. There is not a doubt in my mind that the over-emphasis on silence has at times stifled spiritual utterance that would have blessed both speaker and hearer. This is not ~~intended~~ ^{intended} as any disparagement of silence, living silence, in the meeting for worship. But silence for its own sake, silence as a ritual, should have no place in a Friends meeting for worship. (If any one is inclined to question this statement, he should be ready to say, "Silence for its own sake, silence as a ritual should have a place in a Friends meeting for worship.")

How happy we should have been if we could have maintained the spirit of these peculiarities, even if the letter did not retain its old meaning. If only we could have maintained simplicity and decency in our dress -- the disappearance of the plain bonnet and broad hat should not have been followed by extravagant expenditure, either for long skirts that swept the sidewalks and picture hats that swept the sky or for French

bathing suits or feminine garb scanty at both ends. When we abandoned "thou, thy and thee," it would ^{have} been well if we had always retained our directness and honesty of speech and our refusal to ~~toady~~ ^{toady} to those in high position, however they may have come to that lofty eminence. Whatever may have been the advantages of the pastoral system, or the meeting in which a hundred are eager to speak or sing or pray or have other vocal service, we should never have lost, as we have in some places, our realization of the value of silence nor our practice of it when the Spirit would lead us for a time to "Be still and know that I am God." And it would be well for us today if the prospect of the establishment of a new home received as much thought and care as in the early days of our society, whether by the same "machinery" or not. The best way to handle the divorce evil, the problems of the broken home which is so prolific a cause of juvenile delinquency, is to prevent it. We smile at the aphorism, "The chief cause of divorce is marriage", but it ought to be almost axiomatic that the most frequent cause for divorce is the wrong kind of marriage.

The changes which had largely to do with our outward practices were of minor importance compared with the most disastrous change of all. In the second century of Quakerism Friends to a large degree lost their evangelistic fervor, their missionary zeal. Quakerism became too largely an esoteric fraternity, a closed corporation, a mutual admiration society. Friends met, sat in silence, spoke as they felt moved to speak, which was not often nor fluently. They lived clean and honest lives before the world -- and made much profit from their honesty and fair dealing. But no longer were the leaders a flame of fire

to spread the gospel of a relation with God, without priest or ritual, that would transform the human heart and empower the vilest sinner to become a son of God and live a sinless life. And presently, instead of being united and active in spreading the Kingdom of God among those who had not accepted the King, we were quarreling among ourselves as to what the King said, what He meant by what He said, what He really was, how He revealed Himself to man, and other problems of theology, as well as matters of church discipline.

When the so-called Hicksite separation occurred, it had two outstanding bases. One was definitely theological -- the Philadelphia elders did not believe in the teachings of Elias Hicks and his associates. The other was ecclesiastical -- the Philadelphia elders insisted that they had a right to prevent under their jurisdiction the presentation of teachings which they believed to be false, while Elias Hicks and his associates held that they had a right to present what they believed to be true, with no one having the right to prevent it anywhere. When the open break occurred, some seceded from the main body because they believed in Hicks's theology, some because they accepted his ideas concerning liberty. Some remained in the main body because they were in harmony with the theological position of the Philadelphia elders, some because they believed in a measure of ecclesiastical authority and held that the sort of liberty on which Hicks insisted was license and would lead to ecclesiastical anarchy.

The so-called Wilburite separation was on different grounds, and while taking a smaller number from the main body of Friends may have been even more harmful in removing many whom we could

less afford to lose.

Controversy and quietism, and Quakerism had traveled lamentably far from its origins, when the Revival Movement, which affected so large a proportion of Christendom, affected the society of Friends, or at least a large part of it, very deeply.

One need not go into the mistakes and excesses of that era. My first pastorate was in a quarterly meeting where a night session was once held in a cemetery in an effort, unsuccessful, to raise the dead. Excesses there were, follies there were, spiritual acts of violence were committed, families were broken up quite as definitely as had been done by the separations. But the borders of the Kingdom of God and of Quakerism, or at least of Quakerdom, were greatly extended. New yearly meetings were established clear across the continent, the pastoral system was adopted, or perhaps more accurately one might say it grew up like Topsy. As time passed the Five Years Meeting came into being, foreign missions were revived and foreign mission organizations sprang up. The American Friends Service Committee was formed, and now we see the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the Wider Quaker Fellowship, the Friends of Friends, independent meetings, in some cases consolidating two or three groups into one and in other places, as in the national capital, consolidating two meetings into three.

That there is at present a great movement in ^{the} direction of the bringing together of the various groups that have grown out of the work of George Fox and his associates nobody can doubt. But this movement is being opposed by different groups and on different grounds.

To some extent this is a movement in the direction of the Quaker period of quietism, with its emphasis on the silent meeting (or at least the so-called "meeting on the basis of silence" in which there is often too much basis and too little silence.) Of course some meetings have never abandoned the old form. There are Friends meetings today which one could attend for a year and not hear a discourse ten minutes long (unless some Western Friend appeared as a visitor and talked ten minutes too long); places where one could worship at every meeting for years and not hear a note of music unless some irreverent, un-Quakerly bird should sing the praises of its Creator outside an open window and profane the holy silence otherwise broken only by the din of streetcars, the shriek of fire and ambulance sirens, the shouts of newsboys, the curses of angry truck drivers whose vehicles have crashed together, the roar of airplanes above and of subways below.

These "meetings on the basis of silence" are like heaven in at least one particular -- "there was silence in heaven by the space of half an hour." Sometimes it must be confessed *that* they do not closely resemble heaven in some other particulars. And on the opposite extreme there are other meetings, commoner west of the Alleghanies than east and some uncharitable and brutally honest Friends might say still commoner west of the Rockies, where if God wished to speak He would have to interrupt somebody, for some speaking is going on all the time, the leader insisting on vocal activity constantly. (One cannot refrain, in some of these meetings, from the remembrance of the expression current in England, "If a man has nothing to say, he should avoid giving vocal evidence of the fact", and that

word of Ira C. Johnson, of blessed memory, "If you work the pump too hard you are likely to get mostly mud.")

Quakers have always been intensely individualistic, a centrifugal force which has tended to tear us apart; and we have preserved whatever unity has been ours only by our recognition of the fact that God may often give better guidance to a group who are seeking His will than to a single individual, even though he may be as eager to know God's will as anyone in the group. But this centripetal force has not been sufficient or not sufficiently used to prevent disintegration in the past; and today there has revived or there still persists the tendency to illustrate the old nursery rhyme about the "three geese in a flock",

"One flew east,

One flew west,

One flew over the cuckoo's nest",

(The words "geese" and "cuckoo" are in the nursery rhyme, and they are not interjected by the speaker.)

Perhaps one can say that there are two main elements, one does not like to say factions, in present day American Quakerdom. On the one hand are those who emphasize evangelism; on the other hand those who emphasize social service. With the former group is generally associated a conservative theology, often "Fundamentalism" with a capital letter and quotation marks, the pastoral system, and association with other like-minded Christians, an association often so close that it is hard to tell a Friend from a Nazarene, a Free Methodist or a member of the Apostolic Holiness group. Associated with those who emphasize social service one often finds the "meeting on the basis of silence",

a more liberal theology, opposition to the pastoral system, and association with those who approach the Friend-by attitude on some of our Quaker testimonies, notably the one on peace. These are not hard and fast lines of division, and there is much overlapping, but in general I believe the analysis is reasonably accurate.

It is not easy to be sure of all that early Friends would have held essential. Even in the first generation of Quakerism, with its members bound together by hardship, persecution and devotion to common tasks, there were some marked differences. It is still less easy to trace accurately and fairly the progress or retrogression of those who call themselves Friends from George Fox's time till today. We are too close to our own time to see ourselves and the Society of Friends clearly. And without more prophetic insight than this speaker ever hopes to possess, no definite prediction should be at all attempted. But if Patrick Henry was right and we can judge the future by the past, one may be justified in seeking to look at some of the possibilities.

And one can say without fear that the future is as bright as the promises of God if we are willing with all our hearts to seek and to do His will. It would be better to express hopes, desires, aspirations, than to make predictions.

And first, let us abandon everything that is essentially un-Christian. If confession is good for the soul, let us confess that we have, sometimes and in some places, yielded to temptations to emotions and practices which discredit our Christian profession.

There is always the danger of spiritual and denominational pride. From being hated and despised, we have in recent decades

been in danger of falling under the woe pronounced "when all men shall speak well of you." There could hardly be a more effective cure for this than a closer look at ourselves than outsiders can well take.

Some of us are guilty of arrogance, intolerance, harsh and summary judgments, and this sort of thing is not confined to any group, geographical area or viewpoint. The devotee of the "meeting on the basis of silence" reads out of the real Quaker fold all "pastoral" Friends; the intensely "evangelical" Friend is ready to read out of genuine Quakerism the one who in his judgment places too strong an emphasis on social service; and so on. Let us have more charity for one another. "Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this, rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

But some of us have gone farther than mere intolerance and harsh judgment. Perhaps no one would admit it in theory, but in practice some of us have sometimes adopted the old Jesuitical idea that "the end justifies the means." I have seen, as you have, political wire-pulling and log-rolling in Quaker circles that would not have been a credit to Tammany Hall. And this in spite of the fact that we should know that God does not need the devil's means to accomplish divine ends. The Book has stated it clearly, "Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid." Political machinations will never bring us together. There is only one way in which that can truly be brought about, and that is for all of us to seek to draw near to Christ. If we are all near Him, we cannot be far from each other.

It seems to me that we should set for ourselves another

goal, the propagation and dissemination of those truths which have been revealed to us more clearly -- let us say it with humility and a keen sense of responsibility -- than to most Christians. No great truth is revealed to a man or to a group that that man or that group may retain it selfishly. If God has revealed truth to us, it is that we may give it to the rest of the world. "Freely ye have received; freely give."

Among these truths which we believe we have received is the truth that God is accessible without priest or ritual; the spiritual nature of man's relation with God; the spiritual nature of real baptism without the necessity of water; the spiritual reality of communion with God, without the necessity of the bread and the wine. We need not expect that the thousand Christians who use these outward elements to every Quaker who does not use them will abandon them speedily; but we can help them to emphasize the reality of which these outward elements are at best but aids and symbols.

Perhaps our most outstanding characteristic in the eyes of the rest of the world is our attitude in regard to peace and war. Here we are faced today with a grave and serious problem -- a problem which affects most directly our young men but should concern us all. With peace-time conscription now a fact, what shall the young Friend do? And what shall older Friends do to maintain our peace testimony and at the same time to maintain the right attitude of charity and helpfulness to those who do not draw the line just where we do?

First, there will be some of our young men who will go into combatant military service. In some cases this will be because we have failed to train them as we ought, but we should

not be too hasty in deciding that because our neighbor's son goes to war that neighbor has failed to train him aright. Jesus had to say to His closest followers, "Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" For the young man who has taken up the weapons of war let us maintain our loving interest, our attitude of helpfulness, our efforts to aid him in every way possible, while we deplore his choice, which must seem to us one that Jesus Christ would not have counseled if His will had been properly understood.

There will be others who will feel that they owe their country real service, that soldiers need care as well as others who are not doing God's will, and that they can and should minister to these soldiers in such matters as hospital service; and so they will register as conscientious objectors and go into non-combatant service. Is it too much to say that it is their consciences, not ours, that they should obey? Is it too much for them to expect that we shall respect their consciences, and maintain toward them as charitable an attitude as we should like for them to maintain toward us?

It is my guess that most of our Quaker young men will register, I should hope as conscientious objectors. In this they will feel that they are recognizing their obligation to the government under which they enjoy so many blessings, while at the same time they are bearing their Quaker peace testimony by refusing to participate in carnal warfare. There will probably be few of us who will be inclined to criticise this attitude.

But there will be a few. There are those, both younger and older, who hold that this very registration is part of the military system, a preliminary act toward war, and they cannot

take even that step, and so they must refuse to register. Personally I do not like the negative term "civil disobedience". Let us put it on a higher plane of obedience to a higher law of a higher government than any nation on earth. Well, the man who, "under divine compulsion", refused to register, is entitled to the fullest possible sympathy and the support of all of us who unite with the apostolic dictum, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Perhaps of all the needs of Quakerism today the greatest is that each of the two main elements adopt the outstanding characteristic of the other. "Not either -- or, but both -- and." "These things ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

The more evangelistic element of Friends need to remember that the second commandment, which Jesus declared was like the first, is "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." One of the most terrible of all Jesus' teachings is that of the final judgment when those who are turned away are rejected not because of outbreking sins but because they neglected to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and do other acts of "social service." Denouncing "the social gospel" is a favorite indoor sport of some Friends who would better spend their time in seeking to relieve the suffering of folks across the sea and folks nearer home. No mere social reforms are going to save the world; but the world will never be completely saved without social reforms; and whatever may be our social theories, those who are starving and freezing should have our help, whether next-door neighbors or those on the opposite side of the earth.

And there is another element of Friends who are commendably earnest and active in ministering to the physical, mental, and

social needs of humanity, but who neglect the definitely spiritual. I am not speaking of organizations but of Friends. There is nothing more basic in Christianity than Jesus' statement, "Ye must be born again." As we minister to the bodies and the minds and the social natures of our fellow men, let us not neglect the most vital element, the spiritual nature. Let us bring the sons of men to the place where they become sons of God.

How grateful we should be and how honored God would be if every man, woman and child called by the name of Friend should be deeply concerned and actively engaged in the relief of the suffering of many millions of mankind in these terrible days; in the promulgation of the truth that makes men free; in the transformation of human society into the Kingdom of God on earth; and in the transformation by the power of God of human souls into the Christ-like image of the sons of God. To every man, woman and child that we can reach, let us present that old truth newly revealed to George Fox, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."