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but by which they are moved and renewed and through which they know how to prepare against the further dangers they are still to meet.

But there is also the meeting, the building of new community, the solidarity with those persecuted, those desperately alienated, who need a sanctuary in which they can lay down their heads for a while and need not be afraid. And we need them, for they know about the alienating forces that penetrated their lives, that were inflicted upon them by our society, our culture, our morals, our “religion.” When these persecuted ones come to us, let us hope they cannot say: “Man, man, why hast thou forsaken us?”

The God of Peace:
The Root of Radical Pacifism

HUGH S. BARBOUR

What His Kingdom is: The power, the glory and compass of it is not comprehended with mortal understanding,... His sufferings are free for love’s sake, that he may bear the infirmities of the creation; which does in no way take from his power, who is equal to the Father, but does manifest his power to be unlimited, in that he beareth all things. His dominion he has amongst the heathen, and there is no place where he is not. But his kingdom in this world in which he chiefly delights to walk and make himself known is in the hearts of such as have believed in him,... He leads them by gentle movings of his Spirit out of all their own ways and wills,... and guides them into the will of the Father.

James Nayler: The Lamb’s War

Our Quaker peace testimony is in crucial need of updating. We know this whenever we look honestly and carefully at the world around us. Other men too expect Friends to come up with answers for Viet Nam and Israel, for the talks in Helsinki, Paris and Peking, as well as for personal pacifism. Do we have such answers? Our personal pride is involved in our peace testimony. It is our best-known social witness, and it was the model for the forming of others: it was the first which Quakers reached by a new consensus, rather than by just reaffirming quite instinctively kindred parts of their puritan or anabaptist inheritance. Friends refused to fight, despite community pressure, in the French and Indian War and the American Revolution; their stand remained characteristic of Friends even in the Civil War and two World
Wars when increasing numbers of born Quakers accepted the national standard instead. In each of these wars, leading Friends chose imprisonment rather than fight. Yet now it all seems past history: some young Friends join SDS or SNCC more eagerly now than when these groups were non-violent. Many more would like to be pacifists, as they face the Viet Nam war, but don't know on what to base their stand.

It is not only in the black ghetto or Southeast Asia that a C. O.'s stand may seem too simple. Some Friends have made intuitive ethical decisions which seem in retrospect wiser than the arguments they provided. Our lives may speak; our words don't probe. Even though Friends were among the first to reject both slavery and the Viet Nam war, are we now able to show others how we knew? Most of us saw in 1945 that it was not justified to kill a quarter of a million Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even if it saved the lives of a quarter of a million American soldiers and as many Japanese who would otherwise have fallen in an allied invasion of Japan. It was not simply a question of the wrongness of killing (if some had to die either way); deeper issues were involved than body-counts, or even than the balancing of Japanese against American lives. Yet most of us find it hard to put into words the special evil of these acts of impersonal atomic destruction.

It helps our clarity to make distinctions about the kinds or spheres of ethics involved. We are talking about concrete decisions here, not about the logic of ethical philosophy nor the universal bases of good and evil in general. We are also not stressing purely evaluative judgments of specific good and bad things. For instance a doctor may sympathize with a sick man's pain — or may not. He may have beliefs about death. But these are clearly distinct from what choices he must make about whether to operate. Generals are not always blind to the horrors of war when they order an attack. Nonetheless, evaluations and actions do interact: our evaluation of social revolution in general and a specific black movement in detail will shape our actual responses to a black militant.

We also must ask each time who is deciding. The Quaker peace testimony has traditionally been (a) a matter of individual decisions in face of war or the draft; and (b) a stand of the Quaker community collectively over against society; sometimes also (c) a platform or national policy we have urged upon non-Quakers. Friends have always assumed that these three levels of decisions go together: we resist Christians like Reinhold Niebuhr on the one side or the Mennonites on the other, who want to authorize the state to make decisions opposite to those proper for individuals.

I: THE LIMITS OF THE OLD QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

The first issue, then, on which our peace testimony is challenged often turns out to hinge on the level of decision involved. The personal C. O. stand (about which I am as convinced myself now as 30 years ago) is less important today — except to those decreasing numbers facing the draft — than other ultimate issues. The nuclear arms race may never give most of us a personal choice about bearing arms or killing. The life-and-death decision may have to be made for us by a split-second computer, confirmed by a president's push-button. The small previous decisions which the survivors may find to have been crucial are probably those which even the New York Times will never document. We may never know if Friends might make some such choices more wisely. They might have been more alert, with more love or nerve than our actual negotiators in Helsinki, Vienna or Peking, under unforgiving pressure from the Russians and Chinese, with a billion lives on the line. Yet the basic decisions of nations will be shaped by what is possible for their peoples to live with; in our case the limit is set by the ethical responses of all Americans to dangers. We are living by a balance of terror where peace is kept because each great nation knows that the others have power to destroy it; whole populations in western Europe and America must live with this knowledge, as is true only of rulers elsewhere. We will go through even more frightening years as our peoples fully face this, and risk additional nakedness as we gear down the nuclear threat. We Friends may be as tempted to escape this reality through instant disarmament as the army professionals are tempted by the ABM. At best disarmament means unemployment, at worst total vulnerability. If Friends are to share a vision of how to live with trust, we need more
than raw courage, self-sacrifice, willingness to die. A new kind of radicalism about life itself is needed, like that of the pacifist. A new broader scope of response is also needed in collective life, a wider historical and social perspective is asked of Friends, so that we can learn with a whole nation how to live under such fears.

Here appears a second major challenge to our peace testimony, the challenge to non-violence as a social strategy. The American blacks and Chicanos, not to mention the Israelis and Arab Fedayeen, are skeptical when we preach non-violence to them. They say they tried it and it didn’t work. We must concede that movements of non-violence do not always coincide with the times of awakening of an oppressed people, as happened under Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez. Violence, fear and terror are highly visible, and often achieve dramatic results. We see the cost and evil among those results. The militant sees how well violence has worked against himself, and also the subtler forms of oppression (in an isolated culture, lower castes can be frozen into submission for thousands of years). Though it may be better to talk of the oppression or the “violation” done by the “establishment,” rather than about its “violence” (except where police force is used), the injury by the establishment is evident.

Admittedly historical data also partially vindicate the kind of conservative who says that rebels justify overt violence whenever their anger or bitterness spill over. The volcanic heat of anger against injustice hardens into the hatred which assumes that “violence is the only language the other side can understand.” Indeed this is just what has been told us by both Israelis and Arabs, both Nazis and Communists. This outlook leads Americans, too, to dehumanize the enemy: “slants,” “gooks,” “Japs,” “Huns,” “Damyankees,” or whomever it may be.

The black militants and the SDS, then, have not taught us that violence justifies violence, or that it works better than non-violence (indeed in their own cases it clearly has not, only we are too quick to remind them of that). The violent do teach us that there are other evils as bad as violence, injustice being one. Even pacifist saints like Thomas Merton refuse to separate non-violence from social revolution. The Black Panther or Palestinian terrorist would rather die fighting than live as he has done. He sets us down in our places as paternalists and patchers-over. Have we an answer that is not merely individualistic?

Justice is also no absolute. When Jews and Arabs accuse us of “wanting them to love each other like Christians,” we recognize the danger of cultural relativism, both in justice and in our peace testimony. Relativism is not a new problem: absolutist standards of ethics based upon the Bible have been fading for a long time. We keep finding new shocks, as when black students ask us what kinds of academic cheating are really wrong, and not just white men’s middle-class conventions. Yet even the rebel against non-violence expects to reach us with his appeal for justice as an objective, a non-relative possibility. Whether because of the draft’s endlessness or cultural change, we are more aware than ever before of the proportion of C.O.’s wrestling with the seeming subjectiveness and relativism of conscience, and of the need to reassure them of the validity of conscience as a way to truth.

Yet a third challenge to our peace testimony emerges at this point, which undercuts all levels of Christian decision, and even the roots of radical ethics we looked for underneath all of them. We sense the self-righteousness in what some “resisters” say about their own consciences, and the charge is thrown against us by the black who regards even our reawakened sense of justice as paternalist conscience-salving. In a real sense, the younger generation of white Americans rediscovered original sin in relation to the race problem. Even our efforts towards justice, we find, are made as whites with white attitudes (or if black, with black ones). Whether it means for us innate guilt or shame or pride, we cannot escape our race merely by wishing it were not part of us.

Fear of self-righteousness may underlie the would-be C.O.’s hesitancy as much as does his awareness of relativism. He may have read Reinhold Niebuhr’s attacks on bourgeois self-righteousness and on the Quakers’ pride in ethical purity. The hesitant young Friend may recognize the danger in the resistance movement as well as in the establishment. Diana
Oughton, who blew herself up in her Washington Square bomb workshop, has become a symbol of those young people who seek to escape from bourgeois guilt into total involvement, total commitment, total self-surrender, and thereby claim in reverse just that pretended innocence and absolutism which they rightly condemn in the establishment. The terrible passivity of the present student generation may be also a sensitivity to the practical and moral limits of rebellion. Yet if inaction leads to disaster, the self-righteously “detached” may be as guilty as any of us.

The problem here is bottomless. Quakers may indeed be among the more self-righteous of humans. Yet we too belong to the generation which can never be guiltless again. The first World War taught this to Europeans as nations, just as Marx taught them it as classes, and Freud did as individuals. Now America as a whole is facing a similar problem about the Viet Nam war. Guilt may first focus on individual Americans at Mylai; later, on all who are to blame for the heroin-hooked GI’s or napalmed children. The mere fact of the war directly involves even more of us, yet here too specific individuals can be charged and should be. But as in defeat Americans start to reproach each other, we may have even worse to go through. What may happen in Saigon and Taipei afterward will leave none of us guilt-free. If we can avoid unloading our own guilt onto each other, perhaps at the end of our humiliation we Americans can rejoin the human race and recognize our own limits, as the Germans, British and French have had to do in the past thirty years. Even as Quakers we cannot duck out, but if we have learned to claim our heritage as forgiven sinners from Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we can accept whatever kinds of humbling bring us back to the grace and forgiveness of God.

The judgment against self-righteousness may seem to undercut all forms of Quaker peace testimony. Yet as Friends we also remember George Fox’s warning against pleading for sin. The hunger for perfection of a Diana Oughton should awake echoes in Friends, though we are likely to recognize the possibility to be even farther off, and more inward, than did Fox. At least, the world’s desperate crisis demands more of us than men have ever achieved before. How do we keep the goal of perfection and the consistency of pacifists, without being absolutists about scripture or conscience, and without pride?

We are thus driven into deeper philosophical questions. How can we say “yes” to every person and every part of life, yet also “no” to what is but should not be so? When do we say “yes” and when “no” to death and suffering? How do we say the world is one, lawful and good, and still keep a fulcrum on which to balance a radical ethic?

Some Friends may have no such problems. They can keep with an undivided mind their reverence for the sheer authority of the Ten Commandments and of conscience. Others will face the draft board with nothing more than an intuitive “Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise.” And they may need to be reassured that the intuition of men is a valid way to truth, even in the arts and sciences.

Once we have been challenged by basic problems, however, many of us will not be satisfied unless we can reach toward a clearer way to see moral problems, a new basis for our peace testimony. Most Christian pacifists have been absolutists, usually out of a strict or literal obedience to Jesus’ recorded teachings and examples; if not, then out of refusal to violate the absolute sanctity of human life. Indeed it is a little discouraging to find so little new said for these positions in the last 35 years. While many of us may now find it hard to absolutize biblical commands or principles, because of the limits of human language and understanding, we’d like to keep and extend, not abolish, the binding and universal spirit of these approaches. That some deeper or broader basis is needed, however, seems clear from our discussions of the limits of the C. O. stand.

II: AN ETHIC OF RESPONSE

Our starting point can be the ethical response of act or attention we make to the call of God we find in each moment. This is the clearly common bond between several convincing recent writers on Christian ethics: Richard Niebuhr’s ethic of response and the responsible self, Paul Lehmann’s call to “con-
textual ethics," and Rudolf Bultmann's existential ethics of the ever-present moment of decision and response to God's word. Gordon Kaufman attempts to make contextual response the basis even of Mennonite ethics by showing God's own actions in Christ as part of our context. These views have similarities too with what is called "situation ethics." For all these men, right and wrong depend in part on the immediate moment and situation, and the right action cannot be defined in advance. The key difference among them is that "situation" is sometimes defined just in terms of a human relationship to be met with acts of love, putting all the emphasis on the free choice and action of the individual: he loves, he sees, he acts. The contextual or response perspectives stress our own meeting with God in each encounter with men, and our own dependence on present and past events we see as his acts. This response to God in each moment assumes, as Martin Luther says, that we can treat each choice or job or human relationship as a problem or task set by God, as "given" by his will. Calvin's ethic includes this view — he calls it Providence — coupled with strong law conceptions and a certainty that God will use and overrule for his own purposes whatever we do.

Behind both Luther and Calvin stand Augustine and Paul: if one watches how all of these men try to view their journeys and hardships, their inner crises and even their disappointments, in a spirit of constant prayer and wonder, one sees how magnificent this perspective can be.

Yet none of these men were pacifists. All have been called social conservatives. Thus I can justify a "contextual" basis for a peace testimony only by interlocking it with the future-oriented, kingdom-centered thought of the European "theology of hope" today. I hope to show how these two perspectives meet also in what Jesus understood about the kingdom of God. This may also show their kinship with early Quaker outlooks, particularly those re-emphasized today by Canby Jones and Rob Tucker under the symbol of "the Lamb's War."

It is possible to describe this "ethic of response" in relation to those modern trends in sociology and psychology where the essence of man is seen as the organic wholeness of his response to all that is in and around him. Some sociologists would emphasize how much our responses are affected by the social communities, languages, and special interests or mind-sets we come out of. Some philosophers, by contrast, emphasize (as Martin Buber does) the uniquely person-to-person nature of "I-Thou relationships," in contrast to all "It" responses where I manipulate things or people for my own ends. Again, Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr emphasized the economic and social structures present in all our human relationships. There is no need to choose between these emphases within an ethic of response: all these depict parts of the actual context we respond to. Indeed, I would go farther, and weave into our context-pattern two more factors often used independently as starting-points for ethics: first, the sense of duty or obligation, which need never be cut off from our actual capacity to meet people's needs, from our actual responsibility; second, our ethics should never leave out responses to beauty, to goodness and to joy. These may be the true heart of the instant situation, as they are for the artist, or on the other hand we may bring these highlights into grim immediate contexts from the totality of the world as we know it. Clearly I am assuming our response is that of whole persons, where emotion and understanding and intellectual planning are never divorced.

This "ethic of response," then, is likely to emphasize love not as a self-sufficient human capacity (as the "situationist" is tempted to do) but as the spontaneity of man's response to other men's love and to God's goodness to us. We love because he first loved us: when you have said this, you then dare to say "love God and do as you will," with Augustine, because loving men follows unsought from gratitude to God. There is thus hope that this ethic of response can bypass the jungle of self-righteousness. We will never fully know if our response to a person or situation was the right one. Even if it was, the next new moment will demand equal awareness, and perhaps a different response. When we find afterward that we did in fact act responsively or lovingly toward someone, it is often a surprise: we did not think of it at the time; it was a kind of miracle, like self-forgetfulness.
An ethic of response can usually avoid both too great individualism and too little concern for justice. Justice must enter into the situation for the sake of love for the victim; to respond to each man in his situation is inevitably complex. This was really what the Niebuhr brothers both said, in their detailed books about labor relations, international political conflicts, and American history: they never despised love, but the ethic of response begins with the facts of human need. By their concern to respond alertly, the Niebulsers were in practice often more open-eyed than their Quaker opponents.

An ethic of response can usually avoid relativism. By asking us to act in terms of “what is actually going on,” it has a built-in “truth-element.” Natural law is not of itself an absolute commandment, but it points to the fact that among the “givens” which God lays before us are the structures and orderliness of nature. It is possible to be very detailed indeed about economic and political systems and how they affect our efforts to apply love in human encounter. Human and physical nature are not uniform or timeless; situations change, but the changes can be measured and predicted. People differ but each person can be known increasingly thoroughly.

The limits our human insight places upon fully truthful response to God, people and situations cannot ever fully be outflanked. Abstract formulations, however precise our science, are human summations. Even a direct message of the Spirit in Hebrew or English, however rich those languages are, cannot be absolute revelation, for words are not absolute. By seeing our limits, we can respect them and even partially transcend them, as for instance we learn from Marx or Freud some of our biases and blindnesses. How far can we push this? A mathematician expects to discipline his mind until the forms of its response correspond in impressive ways with the ungraspable forms or patterns that seem to underlie the universe. But in human relationships the depth and pervasiveness of self-deception and pride take us right into the thought-world of the Bible and early Quakerism.

Not simply Friends, then, but all Christians, witness to the power of evil to pervert our responses: pride, anger and hatred lead not only to evil actions but to inability to see truthfully what we respond to in any action. The original sin about which Paul and Calvin spoke had little to do with whether men are inherently “good” or “bad”: these men saw the pervasiveness with which every part of our thinking, seeing and doing is distorted and permeated by self-centeredness. Early Friends did not disagree here. They complimented no-one, considered no man righteous until he had sat, as they had done, for months and years unravelling all his ethical thoughts and acts under the searchlight of the Inner Light. In this purging Friends had quaked, not only in mass meetings but still more in small silent ones or alone.

The difference between Friends and Luther or Niebuhr or even Freud is not in the starting evaluation of men but in the expectation. Luther and Niebuhr were sensitive to how our awareness of our limits and distortions temp us to despair and drives us into worse sins. Their answer was a kind of realism not far from pessimism. The Niebuhr brothers saw the terror by which Hitler and Stalin ruled; but their answers were military restraint upon Germany and Russia plus the self-restraint and humility America needed. Fox never stopped there. He and Nayler, Penington and Penn (not just Barclay) said as violent things as John Calvin about the evil in all men. They complained that Calvinist preachers were too optimistic about how easily God would accept human sin. Early Quakers were harsher on self-will than were the predestinarians. Friends escaped pessimism because they had seen what the power of God could do. As dramatically and totally as the Spirit had changed their own lives, they said, the Spirit could reach any man. Within each man was placed the Seed of the Spirit, a capacity to respond. Hence Fox wrote to the Pope, the Sultan, and the Emperor of China. These were not convinced, but many others were.

More than the mere possibility of man’s response in a new way was involved. Early Friends expected the power of the Spirit, which had led the Quaker movement to sweep through England and the American colonies, to transform the world soon after. Friends believed that God himself meant to make the whole world into his kingdom and lead all men to live as Quakers did. Friends were the “wave of the future.”
Contextual ethics, Richard Niebuhr said, must include within the present context of men's decisions what God has done in the past, and what he is doing, as part of our “field of vision.” But what God will do creates an ethic of faith and hope even more than of love. We need to remind ourselves constantly of what God does and has done in Christ, to show us his love and forgiveness. Yet this makes Christ curious, timeless, undynamic, unless we can say more.

III: THE ETHIC OF THE FUTURE
A new movement of theology has arisen in Europe called the “theology of hope,” led by men like Jurgen Moltmann, Johannes Metz and Wolfhart Pannenberg. These men see the connections between the genuine newness of the future and the reality of freedom in the present. Hope is not simply for personal afterlife or for human history, but is a distinctive response to the universe as a whole. These men see God himself not as the ruler of the present age, but as the eternal creator of what is still to be. An ethic is based on this: man too is given the power to make the future and to prepare himself for it; once again the kingdom of God provides the norms for ethics. This theology is heady stuff; it is meant as a Christian answer to Marxism's deterministic hope and the new dreams of the developing nations: “The God who is our future and who creates anew man's future... shows himself as the God who gives us in Jesus Christ the opportunity to build the future, to make all things new, and to rise above our own sinful history.”

There remains a deeply paradoxical tension between the present and the future, which may be made clearer by noticing three ways this relationship can be oversimplified.

For some theologians the future is no more than fulfilment of what now is. Metz, for instance, assumes that Catholic dogma will hold true for all future ages. Within the Christian tradition there have been upholders of this view since biblical times. John's Gospel sees eternal life as already begun: Christ has already given new life and all the answers. Even if “the world passes away” and it is indeed “the last hour” (I John 2:17, 18) Christ is already “the Way, the Truth and the Life,” and neither a return of Christ nor a day of judgment will bring much new for the believer. All “process philosophers” share this danger of simply unfolding the known process into future years: notice the curiously conservative theology even of Whitehead. The most kindling and inclusive such figure, Teilhard de Chardin, sees the ultimate goal of both evolution and history as an “omega point” where all men by “Christification” will become one and all like Christ; yet Teilhard never took seriously enough the patterns of evil and the newness that a world without evil would show. The ethic of such a view asks us to affirm the future reign of present good.

Over against the future as fulfilment, men like Moltmann hold up the future as totally open, unknown, unknowable. Even the historical Jesus, our anchor for hope in past experience, becomes our model because he was totally open to what God might do beyond any man's imagination: “Of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32). So for Moltmann “the Christian expectation is directed to no other than Christ who has come, but it expects something new from him, something that has not yet happened so far.”

This viewpoint too can be found in the New Testament, especially in Mark: “You do not know the power of God: when they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry; they are like the angels in heaven” (12:25). (As “hard sayings” and as they leave the future solely in God's hands, these from Mark have good claim to be words of Jesus himself.) Moltmann tries hard to maintain the reality of both present and future and the tension between them, yet we must ask if such a hope gives enough meaning or guidance in the present. An ethic of openness is as much captive to the future as an ethic of obedience is to the present. How can we give body to the future in our hopeful actions, if it is to be totally different, totally unrelated and unknown? Death has these features of total "otherness," and we trust it only because we trust the life or the living God whom we have known. Sartre comes close to the directionless openness of total freedom — except as a politician. Pannenberg, when he tries to overcome this duality, seems at times to make the present and all history a dependency of the future:
“God is God only in the manner that the future has power over the present.”

Between a future that merely fulfills the present and one which totally negates it, stands a vision which simply reverses it. At first glance it may look radical. In the future age, the suffering righteous will be rewarded, and see the punishment of the wicked. When “the revolution” comes, the poor will rule. This tradition has its New Testament representative too, in that other John who wrote the Book of Revelation to portray Christ as the triumphant Lamb who will reverse the powers of the world. Yet often the ethic which results merely combines hatred of the present with patience until God or history will achieve the overturning. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day believed that if all Israel kept the Law of God for a single day, the Messiah would come. Patience may hold firm up to the doors of Auschwitz, but if this ethic does lead to revolt, it is likely merely to transfer old power to new hands. One tragedy of this position is that it foreordains what God must do to restore justice: it is thus simply a highly polarized version of the fulfillment hope.

We must ask whether Friends can do any better at relating the present and future. Early Friends tended to regard the power of the Spirit as already demonstrably present, but the forms it would create in the future as unknowable. Friends said that Christ has come, but kept a sense of openness and mystery about his kingdom. They accepted the puritan belief that the saints were to rule, yet Friends were the only Commonwealh group who did not claim to know how they would do it. But their only guard against identifying the future as fulfillment of the present dream was to stress the “otherness” of the power of the Spirit, its opposition to all human desires and pride, all libertine enthusiasm, and to stress the new way as suffering: “No Cross, No Crown.” In this situation Friends often slipped near the edge of defining the future in terms of rejection of self — a man-made antithesis like the shallower or more self-righteous revolutionary ethic of the future as simple reversal of present power.

When we do try, however, to point out the concrete present or future acts of God, Christ, or the Spirit, we find ourselves back in ambiguity. Though early Friends saw this hiddenness and mystery of the present power of God, and spoke of it as Jesus did, using as central terms for these issues “faith” and “the Spirit,” their ideas and experiences are not enough guidelines for our own “testing of spirists.” We turn back then to what Jesus showed about the present and future kingdom.

IV: JESUS AND THE KINGDOM

We must first recognize that most Israelites in Jesus’ day (all but the Hellenized peasants and Sadducees) expected the kingdom of God in some form. The intensity of their hope made their age unique. They expected God to conquer evil soon and completely, in one or all of evil’s most visible forms. At least three of these forms of evil corresponded to visions of the kind of kingdom God would thus bring. The Davidic kingdom would be the overthrowing of evil in the form of human oppression, in the all too visible form of the Roman Empire. To overthrow Rome a human Messiah might suffice, if God and Israel both supported him fully. Many candidates for the role arose among the Zealots, and during the Jewish revolts of 70 and 135 A.D. even the Pharisees hailed their leaders in Messianic terms. Another Jewish party saw evil in more basically earthly terms, and expected a new heaven and a new earth where famine and death would disappear and every vine and wheat-stalk produce miracle crops. Such a kingdom might need no Messiah: God’s power and angels could do it. Finally, some Jews went farther and saw the earthly powers of evil themselves as supernatural. Armageddon would be fought in heaven, and “the principalities and powers of the darkness of this age,” along with evil men, would be cast into hell by an angelic “Son of Man.” Dostoevski seems right (in the “Grand Inquisitor” chapter of The Brothers Karamazov) in interpreting Jesus’ own three temptations at the start of his ministry as his rejection of these three models for the kingdom of God. In rejecting them, Jesus says that it is God’s kingdom, and he must bring it in his own way, in his own time. Not even Jesus will force his hand.

This kind of insight, along with the awareness of God’s present power, seems to underlie all the Gospel accounts. Geth-
The sense of God's present power in Jesus, which is combined so awkwardly in the Gospels with the hiddenness of the kingdom, is also a clue to a wider understanding of both. All three models of Jewish hope, though constructed out of present realities, were put wholly into the future. Man's role, except as the Zealots saw it, was to wait in righteous patience. It was God's indifference to present evil that made any Jew who did not live by the future into a gentle cynic. Such was Ecclesiastes, for whom "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, but time and chance happen to them all" (9:11), and "this is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that one fate comes to all" (11:3). This preacher would be startled that today's folk singers rejoice at the way all things "turn, turn, turn," and that "there is a time for all things under the sun." For Ecclesiastes, "the sun rises and the sun goes down" but "all are from the dust and all turn to dust again" (2:20, 2:1, 1:5). Jesus saw the same facts: the Tower of Siloam fell on the just and the unjust alike, and Pilate killed good men along with bad (Luke 13:1-4). Jesus too ascribed this indiscriminateness to God, who "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). But Jesus calls this perfection, and the ethical result is to ask his disciples to love their enemies and thus "be perfect" as God is (5:48).

Jesus told parables about this seeming indifference of God, as between good men and wicked: the wheat and weeds were to be let grow together, and the good and bad fish were to be hauled in in the same net (Matt. 13:24-30, 47-50, cf. also the Parable of the Sower). In some cases he tied this up with God's mercy to the undeserving, as with the workers in the vineyard who each received a day's wage whether they had worked one hour or twelve (Matt. 20:1-16). Naturally the Gospel writers interpreted such parables with a special eye on how God, in sending Jesus, had shown equal favor to the unrighteous gentiles as to the law-abiding Jews. But Jesus called all these parables of the kingdom. They must therefore have something to do with how God overcomes evil. The Prodigal Son parable shows how Jesus understood this: by impartiality between bad men and good, God shows the love that wins back the rebel
and the disobedient. These parables describe how God now works, but this is the context of the kingdom to which men's actions must respond. All Jesus' sayings about his mission to sinners, and about the disciples' duty to love the outcast, represent the same love that makes repentance and reconciliation possible. They do not praise mavericks and rough diamonds, nor are they conditional upon the prior repentance of the wicked. They are simply the way that trust and acceptance are restored. All that the Jews had seen as God's absence or hiddenness, then, Jesus saw as his presence and power, though cruelty and suffering remain a mystery.

From this starting-point we should also read all Jesus' sayings about the hiddenness of the kingdom and the signs of it. The Pharisees were looking for indubitable signs for a kingdom to come, and Jesus answered that "the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; for behold the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20-21). Yet he would turn about and say "Can you not understand the signs of the times?" and "he who has eyes to see, let him see," or "do you not yet understand?" The kingdom could only be seen by faith; it was hidden in the present world like yeast or buried seed. Men must watch for it and respond, as for the midnight bridegroom or for a thief in the night (Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:18, 17; Mark 13:34; Matt. 24:43). Among the events in which Jesus saw both the love and the power of God were the healings which occurred when men trusted God or Jesus, and he was furious when men credited these to Satan, though it needed faith too to see them as God's work. Sometimes he ascribed these to the Spirit, or to God's mercy, sometimes to God's power released through prayer: "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). This was the power of the kingdom itself. Yet even more often he identifies the healing with the faith of those who were healed (Matt. 12:28, 32; Mark 5:19, 9:29 and 5:34). Evidently men's response to the hidden power was itself an element of that power.

As we can see both in the darkness of Gethsemane and in Nayler's own way of describing the kingdom, there is a paradox in the present working of God's power. It depends on human responses that may not come across. The ethic which Jesus teaches is based not on what God has said or done, nor on what God will someday do, but on what he is now doing. Yet this ethic of response to "what is now going on" includes within the context of the present not only universally verifiable facts, but what faith sees God as doing. This is a strange factuality, like the logic of a mathematical equation which includes a term for the square root of minus one. One of the facts we are asked to respond to is the love of God which most men cannot see.

If this leap of faith is possible for us, the love of God works thereafter as an axiom which makes the rest of Jesus' ethic logical. We are to love our enemies because "we have no choice" but to see them as God does. We must forgive the brother seventy times seven because this is the way the bonds to him remain unbroken by which the power of God can be let loose. Forgiveness and love do not forbid (and may require) opposing the brother, but we have no claim on him or anyone, because God can claim it all. We are to forgive those who owe us even a small debt, because as "a matter of plain fact" (Matt. 18:28-35) — in relation to God — "we have been forgiven" $20,000,000, and we cannot ever live as if we had repaid it and were free to build an independent fortune. It seems a strange perspective, changing all our perceptions though not making either the new or the old views illusory: it is rather like being in love. In this perspective, the ethic of the kingdom is not an interim-ethic, justified by the fact that it need not be kept up for long, like Paul's attitude to marriage; nor is it a postponable ethic that will only be valid when the kingdom fully comes and all men return our love. It is simply the way God now works, our present context, and we can have no other standard.

V: QUAKER RADICALISM AND PEACE

For the Quaker pacifist, this ethic seems to mean that he does not have to prove that pacifism works, neither does he have to show literalistic obedience to a legalistic code of God's commands. It is proper to affirm, indeed it is all we can do, that we believe that this is the way of God's power in our
present age. Moreover, we do not have to prove our own consistency, since we rely on his consistency. This is his way of working. If we are driven into some desperate corner like those the militarists throw up at conscientious objectors, and cannot see any way out except to protect forcibly that assaulted grandmother or child, we do not need either to give up, or to assume there was no other way out.

A truth-element has always been part of Quaker ethics: in fact the commonest name for the early Quaker way of life was simply "Truth." It was "true" to man's nature to make no distinction between workingmen and nobles, slaves and free men. It was "true" grammar to say "thee" and "thou" and true to nature to ask a single price for each object sold.

It also became clear to them that if war or slavery was wrong for one Friend, nothing in the situation would make it right for another. Consciences of men were not all fully awakened, and must be followed as far as Light was given, but conscience was not an end in itself.

The formation of the original Quaker peace testimony hinged on this issue of consistency and uniformity. The first Friends had never wanted to tie God's hands. When Mary Dyer and Humphrey Norton were told by Governor Endicott that they could go home free from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, provided they promised never to return, the Friends answered that they could never promise today what the Lord would command tomorrow. Back to jail they went, and when they did return to the attack they were hanged. Thus also when George Fox told the Derby magistrates in 1650 that he could not accept a captaincy in Cromwell's army because he "lived by the Spirit which took away the occasion of wars," he did not thereby create a peace testimony binding upon all Friends. Repeatedly, early Friends said that outward violence was irrelevant since the true struggle against evil must be fought within. Yet Penn and others approved all their lives the use of police restraint. When, in 1659, the puritan Commonwealth crumbled, for the sake of which so many lives had been given against royal dictatorship, and for which even many Quakers had in pre-conviction days been soldiers, all the gains for religious liberty and democracy were threatened. An appeal went out to the Friends from the tottering government for help against a possible royalist revolution: would the Quakers serve as commissioners of the militia? Some Friends like George Bishop were willing to serve. Fox for some weeks was literally sick with doubt, but finally saw that even in this deepest darkness Friends could not fight. The puritans did fall, and Quakers did go into 25 years of savage persecution under Charles II's government. Yet one reason why the prisons finally opened was that all England recognized what Friends had said since 1660, that the Spirit of God would never lead them to use the outward sword. They and their enemies could count on that, however stubborn the Friends' non-violent resistance, and no matter how much other puritans still hankered for the "good old cause" when the Lord had called them to be the army of the saints under Cromwell.

This question of uniformity or consistency, often confused with absolutism, was raised repeatedly in Quaker history. Many Quakers had opposed slavery, but John Woolman convinced them that this was a testimony they must all share. Always he labored to convince the conscience of each individual slave-owner, but in the end Friends saw it as an objective standard of "truth" and were ready to disown any Quaker slaveholder. Even on lesser matters like dress, gambling, and business ethics, Quakers were disowned who did not "live according to Truth."

We must also face the fact that early Friends and Gandhi, who all spoke of ethics in terms of truth, expected to be led in each main step by the Spirit of God, which might contradict custom and reason. At first sight the Quakers' inner voice also contradicts the outwardness of an ethic of response. To tackle the challenges involved: we must first repeat that inner intuition and response to outward reality are not as divorced as they seem, and that the same answers may often be truly presented by reason in one case and intuition in another. Second, we are hard pressed to distinguish wise human insight from the direct leading of God's voice. Both may often be involved in what we term "leadings" or "guidance." What is crucial, as both Fox and Gandhi made clear, is to purge away relentlessly those elements within ourselves which make truthfulness hard or impossible, the corrupting effects of our sub-
jectivity and disobedience and above all pride. Whether the goal is objectivity or religious awareness, the process is like the cleansing of laboratory equipment. Quaker attitudes to luxury were strikingly like Gandhi’s in being the austerity of the athlete or the stripping down of the life-saver. If Gandhi’s celibacy, Kierkegaard’s and Paul’s, seem unnatural, keep a sense of humor about the gimmicks by which you yourself get ready to respond to “the high calling.”

This does not mean that non-violence is a way that will be painless or by human views successful. The real barrier will be our own faith and hope in the situations which repulse or crush us, in face of our own death or the defeat of what we saw to be possible: then our own hope will fail, and still Jesus’ way would be ahead. If at other times we find that anyhow we are loved, by men and by God, that in spite of ourselves love has worked through us too, then the times when we could not push our own strength further may show us that a new power is at work. That does make free response, love and joy easier.

Meanwhile we are looking at the situation to which we need to respond, and perhaps it is a knife-carrying addict from the ghetto or a totally intolerant millowner or Wallaceite, and a new factor has been added to what we understand as the concrete situation. But when the possibility of love and reconciliation enters the situation the other elements remain in it too. Often one effect of the real vision of God’s love is a bit more intelligence and imagination about the hard and practical factors that must be dealt with. So most Quakers who have made the biggest ethical mark have not looked like radicals at all. Woolman did not look as radical as Garrison, nor Penn as Roger Williams. We need to think again about what really constitutes radicalism; and while it includes radical vulnerability, radical openness to new truth and new awareness, and radical obedience to what calls may be laid upon us, what else can we say? The root of our radicalism is not in ourselves, but beyond, in the way God works and will work.