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Front Matter -- Quaker Religious Thought, no. 6

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QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Volume III, Number 2

Autumn 1961

Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

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Additional copies of this and previous issues can be obtained from Edward A. Manice, 379 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn., at the prices listed on the back cover.

Persons wishing to have their names added to the Quaker Theological Discussion Group can do so by sending \$2.00, and those sympathetic to this endeavor are invited to make contributions to it in any amount. These will be gratefully received.

Editorial

The past score of years has witnessed a remarkable development of interest in the meaning and significance of history as it is related to us today. For generations the western world, absorbed by its great discoveries and the power they had given it, had placed its greatest emphasis upon the individual and his present day, disregarding or paying little attention to the experiences of the past. But in recent years we have discovered our need for interpreting our own day and experiences, and out of this need we have once more been willing to turn to the past, questioning how it is to be understood and its wisdom made available. This is no merely theoretical topic, of interest only to scholars, but is of the utmost importance. The lostness of our day, cut off as it has been from our past, and the disasters which threaten us both nationally and individually are factors faced by every thinking person. We discover that the present cannot be understood in terms of the present alone, hence we turn toward the past with high expectation that it may have help to offer us. For the Society of Friends this interest raises the question of what our Quaker-Christian past holds of judgment, wisdom, and inspiration.

It was out of this concern with the meaning and value of history that the second Barnesville Conference of the *Quaker Theological Discussion Group* was held on July 1 to 4 at Barnesville, Ohio. Representatives of ten Yearly Meetings were in attendance, to hear papers and to participate in discussion on the general topic of "Quakerism in the Context of History." Three of these papers form the content of this issue of *Quaker Religious Thought*; the remaining two will appear in the Spring 1962 issue. In the publication of these articles we are for the first time departing from what has been the policy of this magazine. Previously each major article was accompanied by criticisms from the pens of several Friends. We feel that this temporary change of policy is justified by the fact that each of these

articles underwent the fire of criticism at the time of its reading and by the editor, and since each was rewritten in view of these comments it does contain in its present form the benefits of group thinking.

The serious reader will find in these papers much wisdom and much to ponder upon. Everyone knows that the past cannot be taken over wholesale and made into the present—for better or worse we *are* persons of the latter half of the twentieth century, not of the seventeenth and even less of the first. On the other hand, we have arisen from the past and our foundations are laid in it. How, then, are we to draw from it its deepest meanings and values and allow it to speak its message? These questions are of great interest to us all; to them the authors have directed their best thought.

J. C. K.