Front Matter -- Quaker Religious Thought, no. 10

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Editorial

This issue of Quaker Religious Thought rounds out the first five years of existence of this unique venture in Quaker journalism. The 10 issues printed have covered a wide range of topics of theological interest to Friends and others and, one may hope, they have added not inconsiderably to the insights and range of interests of their readers.

The current issue brings to this periodical the mature thought of Douglas Steere concerning the underlying unity which he discerns beneath the diversities of Quakerism. Accompanying it is a paper read this past summer at the Barnesville Conference of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group. The hearers of this paper felt that its author had laid theological foundations for a Quaker view of service that are of great importance to the future of Quaker understandings and activities.

With this issue the editor turns over the work of the editorship of Quaker Religious Thought with its problems and many privileges to T. Canby Jones, associate professor of religion and philosophy at Wilmington College. He wishes to thank all those many persons who in numerous ways gave freely of their time and wisdom in the publication of this magazine, and to hope for the new editor a long and fruitful period of publication during which the value and influence of this work may spread widely throughout Quakerism, and far beyond its boundaries.

It was a matter of great sadness to those many who had come to know him in Great Britain, at the Cape May Conference, or elsewhere to learn of the death of Richard K. Ullman, British Friend. He spoke very acceptably at the round-table of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group at Cape May in 1962 and it was hoped that he might make available an article for publication in this paper. In him were combined in a rare way qualities of personality and intellect which are hardly to be spared in our Society.

The lead article in the Spring 1963 issue of Quaker Religious Thought was entitled "Quakers and the Sacraments," by Maurice A. Creasey. Readers of that paper will be interested in
the following paragraphs from Maurice Creasey, dated September 26, which he has given permission to quote, as an extension of the thesis he developed in the original piece. He writes:

If I were to write an article on this subject [Quakers and the Sacraments] now, I would give more space to setting out a positive statement of the grounds on which the non-observance of Sacraments might rightly be based by Friends. Further, I think I may have assumed too readily that, in advance of a much greater degree of ecumenical awareness than already exists among Friends, their use of some form of "sacramental" practice in connection with our traditional mode of worship would be of value to us or to others.

I have not in any way changed my view that we need to examine critically our inherited practice in this as in other matters; and my article was intended as a contribution to this end. I often recall the remark made by H. G. Wood to me in a private conversation about Friends' attitude to the Sacraments—"I'm sure we need to think again."

J. C. K.

Beyond Diversity to a Common Experience of God

DOUGLAS V. STEERE

I

In this our day we Friends face the ecumenical theme of how so diverse a body as the Society to which we belong can find a level of unity with which it can approach its mission in the world. I see this problem of diversity in three successively wider concentric circles. There is firstly the diversity within our own Quaker group, secondly the diversity between Quakerism and other Christian denominations, and thirdly the diversity between the interiorized Christian witness of the Quakers and that of the great world religions like Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

QUAKER DIVERSITIES THAT CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED

In both Africa and America there are wide differences between urban and rural meetings, and in America between the many meetings that have sprung up in university centers and those with a more diversified group of attenders. In fact, almost every one of the newer national Quaker groups bears some distinctive mark of the circumstances of its birth. Swedish Quakerism, brought into being by Dagne Thorvall, has drawn heavily on women social workers and teachers. Swiss Quakerism has been widely recruited from volunteers who have served in the workcamp movement founded by Pierre Ceresole and from the Christian Socialist followers of the late Pastor Ragaz who sought an enduring spiritual home. Present-day German Quakerism

This edited article was given in its original form as an address to the plenary session of the eighth meeting of the Friends World Committee held at Kaisani, Kenya, on August 28, 1961.