

ACT TRUTH

SERVE THE CREATION

by

Hugh Barbour



SHREWSBURY LECTURE

“Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God.” GEORGE FOX

9

THE SHREWSBURY LECTURES

In preparation for the tercentenary, in 1972, of George Fox's visit to America and to Shrewsbury Meeting an annual Shrewsbury Lecture is given on some basic aspect of Quakerism. A particular phase of the special emphasis which Quakerism gives to the Christian message is presented.

Number 1 - **Jesus and Judaism and The Emphasis of Jesus** by Henry J. Cadbury, member of the committee who prepared the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Number 2 - **The Religion of the Quaker Journalist**, as disclosed in the literature of spiritual autobiography, by Howard H. Brinton, Director Emeritus of Pendle Hill, an adult center for religious and social study.

Number 3 - **The Christian Mission**, the heart of evangelical faith and its relevance for those of other points of view, by Everett L. Cattell, President, World Evangelical Fellowship.

Number 4 - **Religionless Christianity of George Fox**, lifeless manmade religion replaced by obedience to the living God, by Lewis Benson, Sometime Lecturer, Woodbrooke, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.

Number 5 - **Weeds Among the Wheat**, A Quaker approach to Christian relevance, by Arthur O. Roberts, member of the Administrative Council, Association of Evangelical Friends.

Number 6 - **The Prophets and Their Message** by J. Calvin Keene, chairman of the Department of Religion at St. Lawrence University, Canton, N. Y.

(continued on back cover)

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PREFACE

Hugh Barbour sees three aspects to the effort to make Quaker ethics “a strong and clear guide for us today:” (1) The deep problems and conflicts our generation faces require us to underwrite programs related to the traditional ‘Testimonies,’ and to the services of relief and reconciliation for which Friends are particularly known. (2) But we are no longer isolated from these conflicts. They enter our very homes and families. We require help, ourselves, for our daily work and the decisions we must make. (3) Both of these approaches must also be compatible with basic ideas on how to solve worldwide problems.

Our effort is complicated by the loss of personal identity which so many feel; and the general ethical confusion and despair. We know what is wrong; but the bases of long-term ethical living and reform are absent, or unclear because of plural standards. There have been Quaker efforts to merge existentialist insights with Christian love in an alert and open encounter between persons. In these, Quaker readiness to interpret warm feeling as applied love is a serious limitation, especially in the face of the hatred and anger which may be our own most spontaneous response.

Late in the 17th c. when Friends gave up the idea that they would ever “sweep the world,” they began to live by two ethics at once. The ‘Testimonies’ became standards by which they ordered their own lives. But in realizing that there was little hope of winning others to their view, they brought a different ethic to bear on issues where they hoped to affect the outside world.

For the last 100 years, Quaker distinctiveness has been disappearing. None-the-less the Quaker in business or politics, who may be uncertain of the religious reasons, still feels tension with the standards he encounters when he attempts to put Truth into action.

Hugh Barbour takes a fresh look at what was behind the ‘Testimonies’ and the way in which they supplanted intellectual and objective views of Truth with a dynamic ‘righteousness.’ He considers the development of ‘common conscience’ from individual insights and the fundamental preoccupation with motivation. In a dialogic relationship with psychological views of the inner struggle to discern Truth, spiritual insights can lead to a less ambiguous understanding of the will of God in a particular situation.

The complex balancing and calculating that are involved in finding justice; or in arriving at sociologically or legally correct solutions to questions like abortion or birth control, seem to leave little room for Inward Light. Yet ‘intuition’ even on a purely intellectual level, cannot be ignored as a potential source of moral decisions. What is more, “original grace” can still provide the ability to trust and act despite tensions and ambiguity. And, above all, the ability to recognize the same evils within ourselves that exist in others can put us on a creative common footing.

Such insights can lead to the justice; and decent housing, clothing and food which are preliminary in ministering to mankind; that ministry however must not stop with the Creation, but end in the Kingdom. In tending the seed of Christ in every man, we do so in humility, and in the faith that God still has the world in his hands. Yet we respond to “his call to restore radically that

part of it which is set before us. In opening ourselves to his power, we are trusting the outcome also to him.”

Dean Freiday

HUGH BARBOUR

Hugh Barbour has taught Religion at Earlham College since 1953, concentrating mainly on Church history and the Asian religions. He began his teaching at Earlham after a New England pastorate, a Syracuse chaplaincy, and the teaching of Bible at Wellesley.

Previously, and following studies at Harvard College and Union Seminary, he obtained a doctorate at Yale Divinity School under the Congregationalist-and-Quaker Church historian Roland Bainton. A decade after his Ph.D. thesis was accepted, it was expanded and published in book form as *QUAKERS IN PURITAN ENGLAND* (Yale Publications in Religion No.8, 1964).

A second book applies “programmed learning” to Old Testament textual study. Hugh Barbour is currently collaborating with Arthur Roberts (another Shrewsbury Lecturer) on an anthology of early Quaker religious and theological contributions.

He, his Finnish wife, Sirkka, and their children are members of Clear Creek Meeting in Richmond, Indiana. His parents were both Presbyterian. His father, George Barbour, who is also a Scotsman, is a Dean of the University of Cincinnati and worked ten years on Peking Man in China with Teilhard de Chardin.

ACT TRUTH

Serve The Creation

by

HUGH BARBOUR

Speak Truth, Act Truth, doing justly and uprightly in all your Actions, ... in all your ... Words, in all your Dealings, Buyings, Sellings, Changings and Commerce with people ... In this you answer the Light of Christ in everyone, and are a blessing to the Lord God, and to your Generation you are serviceable ... Living in Christ Jesus and speaking the Truth as it is in him in all things, your Life and your Words are a Terror to all that Speak not Truth ... and act not truly and righteously.

George Fox: THE LINE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (1661), pp. 5, 8.

I: TO OUR GENERATION

I am concerned, as Fox was, to speak to Friends about the world and our role in it. Can Quaker ethics be a strong and clear guide for us today? We no longer honestly expect to win men by our life-styles. Quaker honesty is no longer a Terror—it may just seem square! There is no norm or pattern of righteous life to which we can recall all men's consciences by our words and conduct. The world, of course, admires and copies Quaker relief and reconciliation programs. Yet that approach no longer provides answers for others, or indeed for ourselves, in the face of black revolt, or even that of our own children. A usable ethic, for a generation as deep in problems and conflicts as ours, must underwrite Quaker testimonies and service programs. It must also help us in our daily work and decisions. But thirdly, along with these, it must be compatible with our basic ideas on how to solve world-wide social problems. Friends have seldom handled well all three tasks at once: all three tempt us to one-sided approaches.

Nevertheless all nations, and Friends as well, find this a time of deep ethical confusion. There is despair about politics, war, and society; often also about population and pollution. This despair is reflected (but also intensified) by a loss of personal identity. For most young folk, vocations, marriage and family, and the home community pose permanent problems of purpose. And they are not (for them) parts of the answer, when they ask "who am I?" Many men are close to purposelessness, to nihilism. And the visible by-products in drug addiction, casual violence, and impersonal sex, are frightening - and seem to get worse! Art and literature have been drawn in, to become either wild escapes or cries of protest. We can unite in anger against cynicism in the White House or injustice to blacks: we know keenly what is wrong; but the bases of long-term ethical living or reform are less clear.

This is an age of ethical adventure as well as gloom. Later, we will look back on this past decade of Martin Luther King, Joan Baez, the Phoenix voyages, the Vietnamese monks and the

American nuns, as we now look back to Gandhi and George Fox. We have no new Gandhi. But, as in Fox's day, the number and variety of self-starting ethical pioneers, from Pope John to Victor Chavez, add up to a healthier pattern. Even if a New Swarthmoor is less unique or new than it feels, such ventures are authentic, they act truth.

Plural standards, though an old and familiar problem, actually confuse us as much as a lack of standards. Even as Friends, what shall we say about drugs and alcohol among youth? Or about tribalism in Africa, or marriageless families in the ghetto? A black student plagiarized a term paper for me. Yes, she knew our rules, but she had never done one any other way. How far do I impose my standards on her? A Christian Arab student asked me whether he should return to his family in a feudal culture, or become an American. How far does our respect for Asian cultures go? We would agree here on the necessity for measuring each man's integrity and honesty in relation to his own conscience and culture. It would just be sentimentality to meet a Russian Marxist or an African on any other basis. Are we also relativists about hatred? For certain peoples like the Cambodians and Israelis, part of their culture has been hatred for neighbor nations. They are brothers to them in blood only. Whenever we work for reconciliation, we will seem to some people involved (whether Marxists, Asians, or American blacks), to be imposing our own liberal values, in effect to be "telling the Jews and Arabs to act more Christian."

Clearly Quakers rarely aim at formal conversion to Christianity or at imposing legalistically a Christian code of conduct. The universality and flexibility of Christian love is one reason we believe in it for our own faith. In fact, some powerful recent statements of Christian ethics by Douglas Steere, Carol Murphy, Richard Ullmann and Roger Wilson¹ have merged the approach of Christian love with existentialist insights: They urge personal involvement, encounter between persons, and the alert wide-angle openness of living immediately in the NOW. Much of what I need to say, they said better. This ethic of personal immediacy is widespread in our culture, and is a religious morality. It sees, as Thomas Merton says, that "in holy ways there is never so much must ... in holy walks there is never an order, never burden²"

But there are two important limitations: first, that the ethic of "the I-Thou relationship," meeting each individual person as "a new and incommunicably tender life, wounded in every breath,³" does precisely assume love and lack of fear. Where at the deepest level it meets hatred, as we cannot deny between Jew and Arab, love must lead to suffering (as indeed Ullmann says). And, as Roger Wilson wrote, hatred and anger may be our own most spontaneous response. In the long run we must receive love to give love: (fortunately we do, from God and men). The second temptation is to confuse love with warm feeling. This is "the heresy that sensation is the measure of life," which Carol Murphy calls "the hippy-heresy." And it is easy for Friends, too, in trying to avoid intellectualism, to slide into sentimentalism.

Hence we need to look again at early Friends' basic ethical vision. It is this that I want to explore and bring up to date, rather than to study specific Testimonies. Beforehand, though, we need to notice an issue for early Friends which we skirted around in discussing our own problems: the relation between Quaker ethics and society as a whole. Early Friends believed for the first twenty years that theirs was a movement of the Spirit of God which would complete the six-

teen centuries of Christian history and would reach all men, to transform or judge them. As we shall see, it was a very basic change of heart that was expected, and from it all changes of personal, social and political life were expected to flow.⁴ What we call the Testimonies about dress, titles, speech and behavior were demonstrations. They showed men to what the Spirit led, and thereby where non-Quakers stood. Terror and shock were indeed involved: they were intended to transform other men, not just notify them of Truth, (just as Quaker words were). They pointed to the central message which Quakers “published”.

After the twenty-five years of persecution under the Clarendon Code of Restoration England, it became clear that Quakerism was not destroyed, but also that it was not going to sweep the world. Testimonies became now the standards that a Quaker lived because he personally felt them right. But he no longer expected to win others thereby. The name Truth became indeed a Friends’ nickname for their peculiar way of life, in place of Quakerism. It was at this point, in the 1680’s, that William Penn, supported by other world-minded Friends like Billing, Barclay, and Bellers, instead of simply turning their lives inward into the Society of Friends, showed Quakers how to take responsibility for specific, limited reforms to which they could hope to persuade the nation as a whole. A venture similarly shared with non-Friends was the building of American colonies. Another, a century later, was the Quaker anti-slavery campaign. So although Friends have never been a “sect”, they have at times lived by two ethics at once. There is the absolute standard we try to keep in our own community and private life, - and call Truth, - and there are also the areas and issues on which we expect to affect the outside world.

I suggested in the opening sentences that for the last 100 years Quakerism has really lived in a third stage. The worldliness of Friends and the radical ethical awareness of many non-Friends no longer leaves us any superiority or sense of difference,⁵ (although pride fades slowly). Does it still make sense to talk about a Quaker ethic distinct from humanism? Yet we still tend to distinguish radical ethics in general from the standards we expect, say, from a congressman or corporation president. We still feel tension whenever we try to formulate a political policy or survive in business. Can we find a unified life by going back to Friends’ early tradition about truth? Early Friends spoke little about justice, and less about love. But they said a great deal about judgement and about the Spirit’s leading. (On which of these issues should we copy them?) It was their Testimonies, however, that were identified with “acting truth”, and we need to see what they meant.

II: QUAKER RIGHTEOUSNESS

“That righteousness which God accepts is but one, which is his own... All who will know true obedience must first know a measure of God’s Spirit in the Light of Jesus, ... and by the moving of his Spirit in the Light, the Truth is seen, and the obedience that is in Christ.”⁶

The immediacy of being led moment by moment by the Light in daily detail has often been stressed as the heart of early Quaker life. There was never a Law or Value which Friends could have and hold, so as to do, or BE good. Nevertheless they described what the Light showed them as truth. Like Gandhi and the Gospel of John, they spoke of acting truth and doing the truth,

rather than of true ideas or doctrines. As the Wilkinson-Story conflict shows, there was always a polarity between consistency in action and the immediacy by which individual acts were led. Here, openness to obey was the touchstone. Nevertheless, for all early Friends there was objective truth in the claim that “thee and thou” were correct grammar to a single person. There was truthfulness in their refusal to call a stranger “my Lord.” And there was even deeper honesty in setting a fair price on an object for sale, and sticking to it without bargaining.

COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE and the Sense of the Meeting were involved in much discovery of moral reality.⁷ After a generation, therefore, it was assumed that all persons open to the Light would be led to the common conscience of the Quakers. Fox, Nayler and Penington liked to talk about each man receiving the Light “in his measure,” and about being led continually into further truth: and indeed Quaker testimonies like pacifism and rejection of slavery unfolded step by step. Yet they demanded absolute obedience to the least measure of truth. And they assumed that it would lead men into unity, not individuality.

QUAKER TRUTH REMAINED PERSONAL and relative to each individual, because it was inward truth. The Light shows men their inward states, they said. Though one can generalize about men, and indeed share together in this self-discovering, it is a first-person, immediate process, if it is true self-awareness at all. Early Quaker Journals combine astonishingly a repeated sense of new discovery with almost uniform phrases and symbols. This was not self-affirmation or “self-actualization”. As Lewis Benson has shown, the Light shines INTO men, not out from us, and shows us what I am, what you are. It is not part of us. “That of God in every man” is “the witness of God” within the hearer, which responds to the Light directly or to truth presented by another man. Man’s goodness is not the issue, but rather his ability to recognize truth and light.⁸ Early Friends did indeed talk about the Seed - more rarely the spark - which grew up within men in response to the Light: but this was the Seed from which grew the “new man,” Christ reborn in us, after the death of the “old Adam” and the conquest of “the Seed of the Serpent.”

THE RESISTANCE OF THE PROUD SELF, as early Friends knew well, was fierce. Sitting together under the Light in silent Meeting, or walking the midnight fields alone, they saw how one area of life after another had truly sprung from self-will whether it was good deeds or worship or even their acceptance of Christ’s atonement. They struggled with this, quaking, for many months. This was the ultimate struggle: the evil that Friends saw in social superiority and luxury was not mainly the inequality or even the injustice involved. Instead, it was the underlying pride and self-esteem which made titles and handsome dress evil. No human action against these evils, in fact, no human action of any kind, was of any use unless it was led by the Light. Each man must wait, and “abide in that which judgeth. Do not labour to get peace,” they were warned. Gradually the Spirit would conquer within, would begin to lead as well as judge. Through this ultimate conquest the Lamb’s War continued. This is why Friends found love misleading:

This love of God consists of Reproofs, Judgement and Condemnation against all that defiles the Creation and against the Creature which yields to that Pollution; and this is pure love to the Soul that deals faithfully with it in declaring its condition.⁹

Inward Truth, however painful, is the essence of love.

In our time we may feel that there was too much self-crushing in the early Quaker view, that God's word is not always "No". Friends needed to learn more from Luther's vision that God loves and accepts us as we are, so that we dare to be human. But early Quakers distrusted such talk as "pleading for sin." They took truth and justice too seriously to be blind to compromise or its usual motives. The Quaker effort, characteristically, to "be fully clear" may lead to private and collective self-righteousness, but it is a witness to the "totalitarian claim" of truth.

TRUTH-TALK is out of favor with philosophers (except the existentialists) and is tricky at the best of times.¹⁰ It is easier to discuss the truth of scientific propositions than of self-knowledge. But even the skeptics' challenge and the scientists' limits to the truth of any statement presuppose man's ability for greater truthfulness. Look at some examples:

- The scientist wants to make clear the limits of method and subject matter BEYOND which a statement does not hold: within these limits he tries to describe precise probabilities, including probability of error.
- The semantic philosopher wants to know the purpose of function of a statement as we make it, so that the receiver can find it a true communication.
- The Marxist shows how our relation to society limits what we can see of truth, or even want to see; the Freudian studies how our family and our personal experience as infants create areas of self-deception and fear.
- Gandhi preached that rigorous control of all physical desires and satisfactions was a necessary step to clarity about moral truth. Just as a clean test-tube is crucial in a laboratory, so self-cleansing is needed to know oneself and other men truly.
- Early Friends saw the gap between knowing truth and doing it, and struck at the barriers of self-will as well as self-esteem.

Yet each of these view-points rests on a deep faith that men can in part know truth: we can really operate in the strange world of atoms and space (as we frequently show); we can really share other men's knowledge and experience; we can really rise in part above class or psychological perspectives; we can really respond to the Light. We are always caught, of course, between our limits in human and personal history, and our partial gift for transcending these in that we know these limits. This is what makes all our truth-talk so ambiguous and inward truth is doubly inexact.

THE ALL-OUT ATTACK UPON THE EGO which drove Quakers to refuse hat-honor and titles of respect, would not let them leave any man in peace, even in his chosen form of worship, let alone in his sports and amusements. (We ask: when is direct assault the way to free a man from ego; when is it merely psychological aggression?). Yet the basic attack was against self-righteousness, by which all Quakers, not least Quaker Presidents, still endlessly justify ourselves.

The “First Publishers” attacks did often break through the shell of the ego and the self-images of the super-ego: it did release new powers from within a person as well as from beyond. It created people who were more whole, not less so, usually more able to accept all their impulses and able to act upon more of them than in their pre-Quaker life. The struggles beneath the Light were quite like those a proud man goes through in Zen or Psychotherapy; and perhaps they are NOT needed by everyone. Yet Friends’ insight still seems right that each man has within him an ability to recognize Truth and to respond:

If thou findest something in thee, that in all these Wordly delights cries Vanity ... nor can conform to this World, nor take pleasure in Wickedness, that cannot plead for Sin, but cries woe to thee because of thy Wickedness; ... if thou find that in thee, that cannot take delight in decking the outside with Pride, ... nor bow to any but God alone: ... if such a Seed thou find in thee, though it be the least of all Seeds in thee, yet that is the Seed of the Kingdom, to which the Promise is.¹¹

Does our Christian faith, or our human faith, extend so far: knowing the dangers of nuclear war, do we dare to trust to human awareness and wisdom to solve problems like disarmament, racial conflict and population control? Knowing our capacity for self-deception, do we dare to trust like Milton that truth will always vanquish falsehood in an open encounter? No, if we trust in a debate of ideas or in the brilliance of negotiators. Yet we must affirm that the universe is tragic but not absurd, that man CAN really know the world and purify his knowledge and act on it. Since we may fail, and will probably suffer, and surely die, it is by Christ’s love that we dare to love truth. Early Friends never asked clearly how they were so sure that the spirit of truth is the Spirit of Christ: their experience that it transformed and empowered them was probably basic — and unchallenged assumptions about God’s creator-role. We may need to ask again, as early Friends did not, how the life and loving death and victory of Jesus in Palestine frees us now to be truthful.

III: BE SERVICEABLE TO THE CREATION

We need to use precision, nonetheless, in studying the practical implications of an ethic of inner and outward truthfulness.

1. It is first and essentially AN ETHIC ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, since all truth has to do with the relationships between our ideas, words and actions and the realities beyond ourselves. Speech is only one such relationship, and honesty only part of truthfulness (Johannes Hamel asks in East Germany what real truthfulness is when asked about friends by the police).¹² Thus this is AN ETHIC OF RESPONSE to people and to actual situations, rather than obedience to laws, codes or even values, whose truthfulness is only second-hand.

2. This DIRECT RESPONSE TO PEOPLE explains the seemingly immediate, even casual simplicity of much Quaker service. Clarence Pickett could say of the American Friends Service Committee that “the daily shaping of events has made virtually inevitable most of the decisions

that have been taken.¹³” Early Friends protested the wastefulness of luxury, not on abstract grounds of justice or simplicity, but because “blind men and cripples, lame people and fatherless children make a noise up and down the streets.¹⁴” The sensitivity to each person in his inner uniqueness, to which Carol Murphy and Roger Wilson call us, is thus a form of truthfulness. Even “Quaker relief is essentially service to persons by persons.¹⁵” Hence ordinary planning or fore-ordering which ignores the freedom and creativity of the men we serve and work with, is no true response. “It is impossible ... just to feed people.”¹⁶

3. THE PHYSICAL SITUATION of a person: — his body, his needs, his place amid other individuals and in society, are nevertheless part of the truth about him. It is fun to love another person without regard to his being a Russian or a Hindu or an American Black: but then is it the real person we are loving? It is fun also to find a concrete need we can meet merely by throwing ourselves into the situation: but the physical setting may be as complex as a human personality. Each culture, for instance, has its own life, and in foreign countries “highly trained social workers are notoriously bad at recognizing the delicacy of the social pattern ... better work is done by untrained volunteers of good sense and imagination who are prepared to learn the hard way.¹⁷” “Holy simplicity must remain relevant to the tragic complexities of life.¹⁸”

Early Friends admittedly, were often surprisingly indifferent to physical needs: they were tough to a degree we would think heroic, and endured incredibly difficult voyages and prisons. But of course they expected the Spirit to overcome all problems. Two set out across France with a message to the King of Savoy. They knew no French, but “despaired not of the gift of tongues;¹⁹” unhappily they nearly starved en route. Fox and Nayler expected to heal the sick and even to prescribe drugs by the leading of the Spirit. Yet it was the same confidence in God’s power over the world that freed Friends to speak constantly within it.

Be serviceable unto God and to the Creation in your generation ... With his Wisdom ye may order, rule and govern all things which be under your hands (which God hath given you), ... all the Creatures that ye have under you, and all Exchangings, Merchandizing, Husbandry ... With this Wisdom you do good unto all, ... and there you are serviceable in your Generation, labouring in the thing that is good, which doth not spoil, nor destroy, nor waste the Creation upon lusts.²⁰

Thus arose the Quaker sense of vocation in daily work (which was by no means as individualistic and self-centered as Max Weber and others supposed). Quaker wholeheartedness in science and industry also grew out of a religious concern, “that we may do our part to maintain the fabric of the world.²¹” Richard Ullmann defines this Quaker sense of responsibility as “doing God’s will as it is revealed in the structure of Being.²²”

4. At this point the structures of JUSTICE BETWEEN MEN and groups must be discussed. Early Friends, like modern radicals, protested mainly at specific cruelties as unjust, and often assumed that what was just was intuitively obvious. As vindication from oppression, justice is love applied. Without “total surrender of self, and spiritual rebirth, love is a vague theoretical

sympathy,” even as “justice is indispensable”²³ as the first step to meet our neighbors’ real needs. We may need stirring up, to go even this far, when others have claims against us.

Where complex social groups are involved, especially wherever they conflict, we may not achieve much more than justice. Careful justice at least balances claims and cuts down injuries, and may be the best single response we can make to a whole network of people involved simultaneously. We must leave this territory to the sophisticated ethicists: Reinhold Niebuhr, William Temple, Paul Ramsey, and our own Konrad Braun. Ethics tends to treat groups only in terms of their interests and physical needs. They are made up of humans too, as we know with American blacks. Even between groups justice is not enough. But it may be, as a first approximation, true response. Justice by law intends to be, as Disraeli said, “truth in action”²⁴ between people. A Quaker like Curtis Bok can add that the justice given through law is no absolute: it is more the art of helping men to see the truth about each other, than a way either to reach or to apply abstract truth.²⁵ Thus radical resistance movements are always partly right to attack the whole system as unjust: but then we need to create other ways to see and deal with persons within social networks. Sociology and psychology can help us to understand people more clearly; we also need more precise tools like law for guiding the dynamics of human inter-action.

5. COMPLEX RESPONSES are inevitable: the response of a trial judge or a clinical psychologist to a hard case is likely to be as complex and subtle as the person and situation he deals with. Hence the moral choices he makes in his work, if he even thinks of them as moral, are at best choices between tints of gray. Our Quaker passion for truth and “clearness” sometimes is upset by this: we like to make clear-cut decisions in our personal responses to war, race and vocation. How do we achieve the same kind of absolute commitment in decisions involving the nation, the government, or in industry or public health, which include within each option hundreds of by-products and side-effects, and which may affect millions of men, each differently. Many can only be measured by probabilities for instance birth control, abortion, disarmament, and economic aid. Yet these are the crucial decisions for our lifetime: any choice which increases by five percent the chance of life or fulfillment for half a billion people is as vital (at least in physical terms) as all the 20,000,000 victims fed by a century of Quaker relief. (Big national decisions, admittedly, are in fact built on previous decisions growing out of thousands of lives: but this makes our role no easier).

On mass issues, Quakers have often confused absolute obedience to truth where we see it with applying absolute rules or standards, such as the sacredness of human life, which do not do justice to the problems like abortion. We do at times achieve instinctive maturity. There is a certain drug which annually kills 300 women in America alone, and sends 40,000 to hospitals with embolisms. Yet Quakers have never protested at its public sale: it is the birth control pill, and we know well that the death rates otherwise, from abortion or even from natural childbirth, would be at least ten times higher. We also know that the problems of abortion spring from the meaning of marriage and parenthood for the persons involved, and the roots of this challenge us deeply. Justice and law, and also skilled sociology and psychology, are needed, and yet are only first steps in true helping. “I would be true”, but must find out how.

6. INNER LEADING may seem to have been lost in all such complex balancing and calculating: what becomes of the basic Quaker witness of simplicity, that righteousness comes only by direct obedience to God, or by complete surrender to conscience?

Though a direct leading from God may be an experience few of us can certify, we dare not rule out such clear guidance, and must wait for it earnestly. The “miracle experience” of an irrational leading which later events justify, or the impulse of two men independently to say the same words out of the silence of Meeting, happens often enough to be exciting. Yet Friends have known, ever since Nayler’s disastrous “Palm Sunday Pageant” into Bristol in 1656 that God’s leading and human impulse were easily confused. From the beginning they had known that consciences as such are relative. Nevertheless until then they had been content with Fox’s early assurance that whatever impulse was not clearly evil, and whatever came as a shock to one’s own will, might be treated as God’s leading. Thereafter arose the narrower tests by conformity to past leadings of the Spirit as witnessed in Scripture and Quaker tradition, and the negative use of the Sense of the Meeting. Friends were thus restrained from extravagant acts and from either needless affront or easy escape in a time of persecution. But freedom and creativity were hurt, as if God could not lead new men in new ways.²⁶

Nowadays we prefer to see the tension of inner motives in terms of conflicting subconscious drives, rather than as a polarity of God’s will and our own. But thereby we know that even in a clear-cut choice, the motives in each direction may be mixed. Early Friends distinguished those men who had reached clarity in knowing the leadings of the Light, from those who were “tender” but still “in the mixture.” But can we be so clear? We must probably expect God to work at least as much through as against the inner workings of our minds (even though I don’t assume, like Jung, some universal collective of archetypes, which we all share in our unconscious minds and find by dreams and intuitive symbols). We know that at best we only learn to distinguish truth by stages: early Friends knew this too. After many dramatic episodes in his conviction, Stephen Crisp felt he had finally arrived.

But the enemy of my soul ... taking notice how willing I was to obey the Lord, strove to get into the seat of God, ... and to lead me into something that was like the service of God; and many sore conflicts did I meet withal before I was able in all things to distinguish between the workings of the true spirit and power, from that which was but (self-will) transformed, ... And upon a time, as I was waiting upon the Lord, his word arose in me, and commanded me to forsake and part with my dear wife and children, father and mother, and to go and bear witness to his name in Scotland, to that high professing nation. But when that came to pass, I found all enemies were not slain indeed, for the strugglings, reasonings, and disputings against the command of God ... How I would have pleaded my own inability, the care of my family, my service in that particular Meeting ... After many days and weeks by myself, I thought best to speak of it to some of the faithful elders and ministers of this everlasting Gospel, not knowing but they might discourage me, and something there was (in me) that hoped it, but contrarily they encouraged me ... to be faithful. So then I gave up, and acquainted my dear wife therewith, which began me

a new exercise ... The winter drew nigh, and something would have deferred it till next summer; but the Lord showed me it must not by my time, but his time. Then I would have gone by sea, but the Lord withstood me (so I went overland).²⁷

Crisp at most points identified the unwelcome and unexpected as God's will. We know his experience, but long for his final certainty. Often we will never know whether a clear impulse came from God or from within ourselves, or both.

Yet we dare not ignore the voice of intuition, even if it is purely human. We all know the sudden flash of release when the answer bursts out, for a problem we had forgotten we were thinking about. Within our minds unconscious processes combine and interlock normal external experiences and rationally based ideas. The answer may emerge in a dream, like Kekule's benzene ring or Coleridge's XANADU, in an explosive moment like Archimedes' "eureka" or Newton's response to the falling apple, or in a discourse which "tells itself" to us, unsought. The product itself may be the answer to a personal problem, a scientific law or highly technical formula like Henri Poincare's equations, or the complete "gestalt" of a symphony or poem; George Bernard Shaw would include the saints' voices dictating strategy to Joan of Arc.²⁸ We must treat intuition with respect; even the feminine version is a genuine way to truth. An experienced doctor's intuition that what looks like a simple case is actually a rare disease, when confirmed by lab reports, has saved many patients lives.

Intuition, on the other hand, is not magic, as many detective stories try to prove. The sudden upsurge of excitement and joy which accompanies the "answer" may simply express the release of our emotions tied up in the problem, rather than the power of the Spirit or Apollo's Muses. We know enough about the fallibility of both conscience and reason to be little surprised when even outbursts of intuitive certainty turn out to be wrong. Checking is always needed. Sometimes we ourselves, by quiet reflecting, can become aware of the irrelevant forces behind some intense feeling of compulsion, and can then look again to find how much truth was also involved.

Perhaps, then, there is no sharp gap between our intuition of duty in a complex situation, and the highly complex conscious response we can also .. make to the same network of personal relationships, so long as our whole selves are involved. Thus the same Friends Service programs which seemed to Clarence Pickett self-evident, and to Rufus Jones the leading of the Light, seemed to a Red Cross official who watched them unique mainly for their "quick adaptability and hard common sense. They did the thing needed and did it with unusual intelligence."²⁹

IV: SEEING WITHIN

It is rightly assumed that Quaker ethics, if it has insights different from other men's, is more inward: but we find many interpretations of what this means, all relevant and irreconcilable:

- the Friend who draws a sharp contrast between inner leading by the Spirit and all human wisdom, though he keeps our minds and faith from shrinking, finds it hard to prove the dif-

ference without invoking the very faith he is asking of us. The non-rational character of the impulses or insights, as we saw, is not enough criterion.

- the Friend who focuses on a man's inner motivation, "what he believes is demanded of him from within, not by what outside him demands something"³⁰ seems convincing and yet conflicts with another Image of Friends as responding in simplicity to need, in self-giving and self-forgetting.

Friends do share a concern for PERSONAL INTEGRITY with believers in Zen and psychotherapy. Carol Murphy talks of a life based on "being behind doing." Ullmann says that "God's will for us is to find our true self."³¹ He interprets: the command to love is a command to BE — not just act — loving; so we must become what we potentially are, and are already in relation to God's love. This is true, but for most of us it is deceptive. We know the loved one more truly than our own love. Conscious integration, the ability to feel and simultaneously know one's own feeling without fear, does free us to respond totally to others. Yet, except for the very innocent, it comes for self-conscious men only after long disciplines of self-awareness and self-mastery, like the Zen master's.

What can we say, then, about SIMPLICITY: ultimately self-awareness and self-forgetfulness must merge; but for most of us, to become aware of simplicity is poison to it. What looks like inward simplicity may actually be what Ullmann calls "original grace," ability to trust and act despite tensions and ambiguity. Meantime it may be better for us to speak of our Quaker Testimony of Simplicity in its original sense, of outward simplification, eliminating whatever does not add to our service and response.

Yet QUAKER INWARDNESS does deepen our truthfulness and give it greater scope and creativity. Some things can be said about it without paradoxes:

- Since Fox's day, Friends have always been concerned with the inner personality of each man they meet. Fox's piercing eyes "tried men's states" and shook their pride, but often recognized their greatest needs.
- Recognition of who we are, what we really want, is part of what we need to know, as we live in actual human relationships needing to be seen truly. What we feel like doing from our own inner selves, and what the truth of the situation seems to call for, may not coincide, but are not fully acting truth until they do.
- The essential struggle with evil, Friends have always said, is within men. Evil prevents men's response (to God, said early Friends; to men, we would say today). Outward and inward evils, social injustices and personal motives, interact in both directions. Yet Fox attacked directly the point of crucial change, the ego, character, focus of personality. Hence the Lamb's War was always primarily inward. The crucial resistance too came from inner pride and self-defensiveness. Anger, hatred and violence were simply by-products.

- Hence Friends neither condoned nor were surprised by outward violence. Persecution and violence were simply pride's defense against the truth: — just as our psychoanalysts have rediscovered:

There is a great fight between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the World, in the two Seeds; ... this is well know in the heart, where the Birth is witnessed ... The Lord knows what bitter fights we have had with the Enemy in our own Hearts, before we could leave our ... paths of Darkness ... Then we meet with a night fight abroad in the World, the same Principle and Power in them fighting against us as did at first in ourselves.³²

The Enemy, having got power over the Will and Senses of Man ... will set them to war against the Creature, and destroy the Creation rather than that of his which defiles the Creature.³³

This was the basis of the QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY, which had so little to do with outward structures and strategies of society that it was 1660 before Friends denied the validity of a soldier's profession: Yet from the start the "publishers of truth" took no part in violence, calling it irrelevant. As late as Penn, Friends approved police forces for the restraint of violent men, but any assumption that the basic struggle of good against evil could be aided by force was to misunderstand totally the real conflict:

The Lamb comes not to destroy Mens Lives, nor the Work of God. But ... with the Spirit of Judgement and the Spirit of Burning will he plead with his Enemies; and having kindled the Fire and awakened the Creature, and broken their Peace and Rest in Sin, he waits in Patience to prevail to recover the Creature and slay the Enmity, by suffering all the Rage, and Envy, and evil Entreatings that the Evil Spirit that rules in the Creature can cast upon him, and he receives it all with Meekness, and pity to the Creature, returning Love for Hatred.³⁴

As violence was the weapon of evil, so suffering was the active weapon of good, to conquer pride. The strategy of suffering may conceal masochism, or moral jiu-jitsu to "heap coals of fire" upon sensitive enemy heads. But for early Friends their own way to victory had been through inward suffering, and it seemed self-evident that outward suffering in jails and beatings were part of the same process, though needless and misdirected, hence unjust.

THE ABILITY TO SEE WITHIN ONESELF AND OTHERS THE SAME EVILS is the clue to Quaker wisdom and disinterestedness. That Friends have ever been actually more responsive to strange individuals and cultures than other men are, is most doubtful. But Friends do not put themselves upon a footing alien to their hearers. The early Quaker still knew pride, in his own heart, and judged it in others as one who fought it too. The modern Quaker relief worker means to share the suffering and any guilt of those he serves: (this makes Quaker nervousness about working structurally WITHIN indigenous programs, such as European Church activities, doubly frustrating). The Quaker insight is thus in contrast both with modern liberals who can see nothing but the divine in every man, and from modern radicals who denounce the unjust and the estab-

ishment as if from a totally different planet. In sharing with other men in inner war and inner victory, radical love and radical judgment meet, and each supports the other.

V: THE CREATION AND THE KINGDOM

Friends are today not unique in seeing the inward change as the essential one, nor in insights about rage and violence. Shared experience and victory are characteristic of secular movements for inter-personal relationships, notably the sensitivity training groups, psychotherapy, and movements for international understanding. Their actual achievements and sense of inward victory put to shame what most Quakers can witness at the moment. About concrete aspects of ourselves and other men, they are our teachers now, and we need not despise them. What, then, can Friends offer that would add crucially to their way of working. Must we choose between identifying ourselves with inter-personal humanism and returning to the vocationalism of service to human need? I must go carefully here, since a Quaker does not want to make distinctions based on mere vocabulary; perhaps even to see uniqueness in Quakerism, let alone to live by it, is an act of faith.

A SENSE OF PURPOSE about the physical, as well as the human, universe, evident in words like “the Creation” in Fox’s writing, forms the most visible distinction. With it goes faith in the meaning of history. Early Friends assumed their movement had cosmic significance, that it was not only “primitive Christianity restored” but the climax of world history, insofar as “Christ had come to teach his people himself” after the millennium of apostasy.

Now the Marxists have the same sense of cosmos and history, though their dialectical materialism makes the outward world primary, and the inward world of ideas an “epiphenomenon”, mainly “ideology”. Since psychotherapy is inward, non-cosmic, non-historic, it has so far been entirely alien to Marxism. Yet a marriage is not impossible (not even rare in modern western Europe), and it often produces men we recognize as kindred spirits.

Clearly, though, a sense of cosmic history is harder to affirm now than in an age like the puritan revolution, the Russia of 1917 or China of 1948, when men could see the sweeping changes as world-wide victories of righteousness. In our day of nuclear threat and unlimited anxiety, it is only the maverick resurgent movements like black nationalism that expect world victory, or identify their own spiritual achievements with “soul” and “truth”. For a Christian to affirm that the world as a whole is “the creation” in God’s hands is an act of faith. To extend to the galaxies or even the planets our affirmation that the basic battle is within men, and the clue to cosmic history, is an even greater one.

WHAT IS IT THEN THAT CHRISTIAN FAITH “SEES”, in a world of visible suffering, peril, and physical immensity? Put in other terms, is there a special way or an area of truthfulness which Quakers or all Christians have, that others do not? The answer is usually given in terms of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Throughout Christian history, the interpretation of this vision has oscillated between seeing the Kingdom as a climactic future event which gives meaning to pre-

sent history, and as an eternal present reality, presented on earth in the life of Jesus but for most of us, to be experienced only after death. Sometimes, like Ullmann and Reinhold Niebuhr, modern men see both visions, and see ourselves as standing “between the times” of the Kingdom’s realization in Jesus and its fullness in the Day to come.

But from our early Quaker perspective of “seeing Truth”, what Jesus said about the Kingdom can be interpreted differently. It is here but hidden. “The Kingdom is come” or “is coming” (ENGIKEN is a much-argued Greek idiom): “There is no other sign than the sign of (the preaching of) the prophet Jonah”, but “blessed is he who has eyes to see.” “The Kingdom is like leaven” “hid”, it is like a net gathering good fish and bad. On the one hand God is described as already at work, overruling evil when Jesus casts out demons. Yet it is the very things which for Old Testament Jews like Ecclesiastes were signs of God’s indifference that Jesus takes for signs of God’s love: “he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust”: The Prodigal Son gets the same reward as his older brother, and the Laborers in the Vineyard get the same wage (a full day’s wage, admittedly) no matter how long they work. “This is an evil.” But Jesus says “be ye perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.” This is perfection? Yes, but only insofar as the Prodigal, or Matthew, or Paul of Tarsus learns from it what God’s love means; then the decisive victory over self-will, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency is won.

But of course in the world as a whole it is not won yet, after 2000 years, as in Jesus’ own day it was not won in Judas or Pilate. We are talking about a process, not a timeless reality; the process has crucial events like the Cross and the Resurrection (and perhaps Fox’s coming); but its overall direction is NOT evident to all as truth. Jesus, seeing the love of God in his impartiality, drew power from love and showed what he saw to others. He assured the sick that their own faith had healed them, and told his disciples: “greater works than these shall you do.” Apparently he hoped that the fullness of the Kingdom, which God would bring only in his own unknown time (Mark 13:33) could hardly be even one generation off (Matt. 10:23), since its power was already so overwhelming to those who saw it. Yet to a man who sees God’s “benign neglect” or “divine non-intervention”³⁵ not as freedom for man’s maturity, but as indifference to man’s suffering, there is no power involved. God is in eclipse or dead, and no future waits. Thus both faith and its lack justify themselves: from this fact Augustine and Calvin drew doctrines of predestination, and Luther taught that “faith is the gift of God.”

But Quakers have rejected predestination. Once attained, their vision that there is a seed of Christ in men which can respond to truth was able to prove itself by its fruits, just like Christ’s vision of the Kingdom of impartiality. How much its starting point, the trust that friends seldom even called love, owed to Christ as inward Spirit, how much to Jesus’ vision handed down within history, neither they nor we really know. The “fruits” of the Quaker vision include suffering, and often failure: whether some men fail to see the vision for this reason, or for “hardness of heart”, or by God’s plan, we had better leave a mystery. The early Quaker message was not proof but appeal: “turn to the Light: you can obey it.”

Thus in our day Friends need to go out again to call men to respond in personal truthfulness; to do so we need to take seriously the “truth-talk” of the man in the street, especially his hatred of hypocrisy, as a first step to his fuller self-opening. We need to overcome his fears of knowing himself and us and God. This is a strange process, whose results we sometimes see but never can measure. It is another strange war where we do not know if we are winning or losing. And every new day may reverse the whole story of world history. Fortunately we assume it is not we who ultimately need to win the Lamb’s War or build the Kingdom. In seeing the world as his Creation we are trusting it in his hands. We are obeying his call to restore radically that part of it which is set before us. In opening ourselves to his power, we are trusting the outcome also to him.

But this adds a new aspect to “seeing truth” about our relation to our neighbor. We see him, well or badly, but in part as he is, aided by empathy and imagination and the precise resources of psychology and sociology. We also see ourselves and him as we are, projecting and distorting, but also appreciating the other man and his needs by what we know (or don’t know) of ourselves. But thirdly we now see him too in the light of the Kingdom, of the cosmic or religious dimension of his ability to respond in truth and love. All three ways of seeing interweave, and they affect each other. (So psychologists and philosophers also insist: but for us, the third way of seeing should be determinative).

This means that we do not want to see another man merely “objectively” but always with love and under the Light. In including in our understanding of how we “live truth” the awareness of our distortion, and love’s affirmation of men’s ability to respond, we renounce the possibility of being in a simple way truthful. We accept both specific untruthfulness in ourselves, and our permanent inability to be objective. But the ability to live like this opens for us a new way to be simple, to be truly what God has freed us to be. We can try to act truthfully WITHIN the creation, not beyond it, yet to Act Truth in all situations with all men.

NOTES

¹ Douglas Steere: ON BEING PRESENT WHERE YOU ARE (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 151, 1967) Carol Murphy: HOLY MORALITY (PH 169, 1970) Richard K. Ullmann: FRIENDS AND TRUTH (Fds. Home Servo Comm., 1955), and BETWEEN GOD AND HISTORY (London, Geo. Allen & Unwin, 1959); etc. Roger Wilson: RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION (PH 22) and chapter with same title in John Kavanaugh: THE QUAKER APPROACH (N.Y., G. Putman, 1958).

² Thomas Merton: THE GEOGRAPHY OF LOGRAIRE (New Directions, 1969) pp. 3, 4;

³ Holy Morality, p. 3.

⁴ Cf. my Quakers in Puritan England (Yale Press, 1964), Ch. 6.

⁵ A Harvard freshman answered a registration blank: Religious Preference: "Quaker if any."

⁶ James Nayler: HOW SIN IS STRENGTHENED AND HOW IT IS OVERCOME (1658), and in A COLLECTION OF SUNDRY BOOKS (Works) (1716), pp. 265,302.

⁷ Cf. Ullman: Ff1S. & TRUTH pp. 62-3 and Thomas Kelly on "the Gathered Meeting": also the experiences and reports of the "Working party on the future of Quakerism" at Pendle Hill, 1965-69.

⁸ Ullmann: IBID. p. 35; Barbour, pp. 139-40; Howard Brinton: FRIENDS FOR 300 YEARS (PH reprint), Ch. 2, etc.

⁹ Nayler: LOVE TO THE LOST (1656) in WORKS pp. 287-8.

¹⁰ Existentialists like Ullmann (IBID, Ch. 1), Karl Jaspers (Truth & Symbol), Martin Heidegger (VOM WESEN DER WAHRHEIT), etc., tend to intuit truth as an "all-encompassing" unitary reality behind all individual objects. Semantic and positivist philosophers and behaviorists (e.g. R. M. Martin, Willard V. Quine) approach truth in terms of the relationship of individual ideas and communication-units to people and objects, and refuse to discuss Truth as an abstraction.

¹¹ Nayler: IBID., p. 333.

¹² Cf. Johannes Hamel: CHRISTIAN IN EAST GERMANY (trans. C. West).

¹³ Clarence Pickett: FOR MORE THAN BREAD (Boston, Little Brown, 1953) p. xi.

¹⁴ Fox: WARNING TO ALL MERCHANTS (1659), p. 5.

¹⁵ Roger Wilson, in Kavanaugh: p. 27.

¹⁶ Pickett, p. 12.

¹⁷ Roger Wilson, IBID. p. 29.

¹⁸ Carol Murphy, p. 21.

¹⁹ EXTRACTS FROM STATE PAPERS RELATING TO FRIENDS, 1654-1672, ed. Norman Penney (London, Friends House, 1952), p. 24.

²⁰ Fox: LINE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, p. 3.

²¹ Robert L. Dickinson: FELLOWSHIP PRAYERS.

²² Ullmann: BETWEEN GOD & HISTORY, p. 101.

²³ Konrad Braun: JUSTICE AND THE LAW OF LOVE (Swarthmore Lecture, 1950), p. 21

²⁴ *ibid.* p. 22.

²⁵ Curtis Bok: *I TOO, NICODEMUS* (N.Y., Alfred Knopf, 1946), pp. 4B, 20B, etc.

²⁶ Cf. the discussion in Ullmann, *ibid.*, pp. 110-119.

²⁷ Stephen Crisp: *THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES (JOURNAL)*, (London, 1694) pp. 16-21.

²⁸ Cf. G. B. Shaw's preface to *SAINT JOAN*; Brewster Ghisellin: *THE CREATIVE PROCESS*; Henri Poincaré's chapter on "Mathematical Creation" in his *SCIENCE AND METHOD*, and recent studies by Arthur Koestler. That this is equally true of religious intuition is well argued by John Henry Newman in his *ESSAY IN AID OF A GRAMMAR OF ASSENT*. For parallels between intuitive discovery and Old Testament prophecy, see the appendix to my *READING AND UNDERSTANDING THE O.T.*

²⁹ Lt. Cnl. John Van Schaick, quoted in Marvin Weisbord: *SOME FORM OF PEACE* (N.Y., Viking, 1968), p. 24.

³⁰ Henry J. Cadbury, quoted in Ullmann: *IBID.* p. 82.

³¹ Carol Murphy, p. 20, Ullmann, *IBID.*, 125-6.

³² Isaac Penington: *CONCERNING PERSECUTION* (1661), p. 12.

³³ Nayler: *HOW SIN IS STRENGTHENED (WORKS)*, p. 363

³⁴ Nayler: *THE LAMB'S WAR* (1657) in *Works*, pp. 378-9.

³⁵ Christopher Fry: *THE DARK IS LIGHT ENOUGH*, a good embodiment of this vision.

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