



Lecture 1921

William Penn

*Hidden
from the
Prudent*

Paul Jones

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by
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The name of William Penn has been chosen because he was a Great Adventurer, who in fellowship with his friends started in his youth on the holy experiment of endeavoring “to live out the laws of Christ in every thought, and word, and deed,” that these might become the laws and habits of the State.

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Hidden From the Prudent

In the latter part of January, 1915, I visited for the first time the Ute Indian Reservation in the northeastern part of Utah and drove with the missionary to Ouray, where the older Indians were gathered for the monthly issue of rations by the Government. That evening in the log store, with some fifty or sixty Indians gathered around the stove on boxes or seated on the counters under the flickering light of the lanterns hanging from the roof, we spoke of God's love for men.

The next morning we found one of our church families in a log hut, gathered about a letter which they had just received from their boy who was at a Government School in California. When we had read the letter, the father of the family, Albert Cesspouch, a man of about forty-five, blind from trachoma, which affects so many of the Indians, stood up and drawing his blanket around him held up his hand to signify that he was going to speak.

With the natural dignity of the Indian, he commenced to talk in the Ute tongue, his daughter Rosita interpreting for him. First he thanked us for the words we had spoken the night before and then went on to speak of something which had been on his mind since the previous summer. It seems that there had been a flag-raising at the agency headquarters, and moving pictures had been taken of the Indians as they revered the flag. He had been thinking about it during those months. "It means," he said, "that they want to take our young men away to fight. It is not right. The young men should not fight." Then putting his hand in his pocket he

drew out a little silver cross that had been given him some years before when he had been confirmed, and holding it up as if his sightless eyes could see it he said, "That's good. That means that men should not fight, but live as brothers."

We explained to him that he had misunderstood the significance of the flag-raising, but who shall say that that Indian, uncultured, poverty stricken, diseased and ignorant by all our civilized standards, had not come nearer to an understanding of the heart of the Christian gospel than the majority of his sophisticated white brothers?

Perhaps, after all, Christ's message is a simpler thing than we have supposed. One can go into a theological library today and find stacks and stacks of volumes on religion, ethics, theology, casuistry, exegesis, philosophy, the Bible, ecclesiastical history, mysticism, apologetics, metaphysics and a dozen other subjects, all designed to illuminate, define and expound the realities that Jesus taught; but somehow they seem worthless when we note the clear grasp of the inner truth that the simple Indian had achieved without their help. We have tended to conceive of truth as something to be studied and apprehended intellectually rather than something to be lived. We need the reminder of that old prayer which begins, "Almighty God, who showest to them that are in error the light of thy truth to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness." Truth for the sake of right living, not truth for the truth's sake or truth for God's sake, is the divine valuation. The wisdom and patient study of the ages have gone into the search for the knowledge of God and His will, but to what purpose is it, when today as ever the

mysteries of the kingdom are revealed to the hearts of the child-like?

Do not misunderstand me. Ignorance is no more a virtue than is wisdom. We must not forget the speaker at a church conference who began a tirade against the universities and education, expressing thankfulness that he had never been corrupted by contact with a college. After he had proceeded a few minutes, the chairman interrupted with the question:

“Do I understand that the speaker is thankful for his ignorance?”

“Well, yes,” was the answer, “you may put it that way.”

“Well, all I have to say,” said the chairman, in gentle tones—
“all I have to say is that he has much to be thankful for.”
Both ignorance and wisdom may be bars to the understanding of God’s will. It is a question of the heart.

Suppose we put the problem to ourselves in the form of questions which will bring out some of the current conceptions of religion. Is religion a form of belief? Is it a form of experience? Is it the corporate life in an institution? Is it a relationship to God? They all lead us to speculation and to abstractions. Or if we ask similarly does religion depend on knowledge, on emotion, on sacramental connection with God, or on mystical detachment from the world, again we are led to try to find religion off by itself, where it may be weighed and measured and nurtured as if in a vacuum. They are interesting questions, but the only answer I have for them is that they suggest in no way the

gracious words that came from the lips of Jesus, speaking to the hearts of babes.

His words were not of theological abstractions, however true or illuminating. He declared not the “must” of arbitrary authority nor the “ought” of impersonal law; but rather revealed in simple story or expression the things which were true to the world of men in which He lived, the harmonies which unite, the relationships which grow, the truths which were self-convincing.

John Drinkwater’s Trojan soldier says it to his comrade:

“Capys, it is so little that is needed
For righteousness; we are so truly made,
If only to our making we were true.”

In the days before we began to question the generally accepted standards, a judge always stood for the epitome of wisdom, and it is worth noting that the recognized function of a judge is to consider all questions in the light of the precedents of the past. That fact sufficiently explains the difference in receptivity to a new and liberating truth on the part of the wise and prudent as compared with babes unhampered by a judicial attitude or a collection of time-honored shibboleths.

Is it possible for us sufficiently to divest ourselves of our inherited and acquired prejudices, our theology, our thought-forms and the accepted standards of conduct, to enter into an appreciation of the experience of those to whom the words and presence of Jesus came as a new experience? It is

doubtful whether we can very thoroughly, and yet I would ask you to make that attempt, that we may together examine anew the revealing simplicity of the message which Jesus brought to His generation nineteen hundred years ago, a message which is still valid in spite of all the checks and distortions which we have placed upon it.

What were the salient features of Jesus' message and ministry which found such a welcome acceptance in the hearts of plain, ordinary men and women? What were those truths so simple that the ignorant and uncultured could understand them, yet so potent that once they began to ferment their possessors became known as men who had turned the world upside down? I think we can put them down under two heads which will include the heart of the matter.

The first is simply that this is God's world in which we are living. That sounds like the barest sort of platitude, but have patience. There is more in it than appears at first glance.

Certainly it is the basis of Jesus' message. From His references to the lilies on the Galilean hillsides and the sparrows on the housetops to His discussion of the whole range of human affairs, Jesus was at pains to point out that there was no detail which was outside of God's care and concern. The assurance of St. Paul that all things work together for good to them that love God is the emphasis on such a characterization of the world as finds its culmination in Jesus' confident assertion, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect." It is a world in which men can live up to their best.

Did you ever think what a terrible irony it would have been if Jesus had said that just to encourage us, knowing that it could never be true? We are tolerant of the unconscious cruelty of the small boy who teases a dog by holding a bone just out of his reach, encouraging him to jump for it, because we know that he will finally give it to him. It is unthinkable that Jesus could have used words of such deep significance in such a cruelly careless way. It is God's universe in which moral purpose has a definite standing and a more than ordinary strength.

Professor Rauschenbusch has said it in these words: "If love is the fundamental quality of God, it must be part of the constitution of humanity." The simple-hearted have in all ages sensed the import of this truth, for it has to them opened up great vistas of the possibilities of life, possibilities contemptuously discredited by the wise men of their time who base their calculations on human weakness rather than on human potentiality.

Your realist prides himself upon keeping his feet upon the ground. He will go no farther than he can see, and he sees truly enough the evil and imperfection in the world. He notes the weakness and failures of the best intentioned, takes cognizance of the low motives that so often dominate, and bases his conclusions on them. He spurns the idealistic twaddle of those who, he says, are guided by their hopes rather than by ordinary good sense, and fancies himself a practical man. He expects little and gets that.

The Christian realist, however, sees the possibilities in the evil and weak of mankind. He recognizes elements of virtue

and courage and honor that are waiting to be called out, sets himself to elicit them and bases his conclusions on those very real facts. He is just as practical as the other, but with this difference—he expects more and gets it.

When Jesus called the impulsive, eager Simon a rock, the hard-headed must have smiled and later remarked, “I told you so,” when Peter broke under his first test; but Jesus’ judgment was the truer after all. So with Mary Magdalene and Zacheus, Jesus saw in them what they might be and demonstrated that this is a world where the best has a chance. “Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp,” is Browning’s rebuke to the merely prudent.

Have you noted how Jesus drove home His point that the possibilities for good in the world and in men and women were of supreme importance? He was not content to leave it as a general proposition. By parable and precept again and again He made it clear, not merely that the possibilities were here, but that they were God’s major interest. By them we are judged.

The practical men who knew that the temple bills had to be paid knew that money was money, but Jesus rated the widow’s tiny offering above them all. The one wandering sheep was more precious than the ninety-nine. The perfect young man who had kept all the commandments, no doubt the joy of his mother and the pride of his community, and also the substantial pillar of the church who had done everything that was required, were not to be compared with the social outcast who had failed but had the grace to admit it. There was hope for him.

Taking the will for the deed, the sincere intention for the achievement, or the yearning of the heart for the practical accomplishment, is subversive of all our standards of conduct. No business could be run on the basis of paying men in accordance with their readiness to work, irrespective of the service rendered, as is the case in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. But God seems to be able to run the universe on that basis. No wonder the common people heard Jesus gladly.

Of course the corollary, or rather the premise, of that is that God has faith in us and loves and forgives. That is why He can use such an extraordinary way of estimating worth. He believes in us, believes that we are better than we know ourselves to be, for our knowledge seldom goes to the roots of our being. He can be patient while we are still stumbling through the shallows of existence. Ye know not what spirit ye are of, was Christ's word to those who had not yet caught God's vision of the world.

The one who gets that thought in all its bearings, that this is God's world from the beginning to the end, in all its implications, knows that no effort is ever lost, whatever the apparent outcome. He knows that a real brotherhood is possible, however broken present relationships may be. He knows that God's will cannot permanently be thwarted, however man's futility may interfere. He knows that God and nature, religion and science, truth and experience must eventually meet in one common focus, however separated they may appear. He will echo Maud Royden's fine words: "I am convinced that what I can see others can see—and

nothing will persuade me that the world is not ready for an ideal for which I am ready.”

There is one further bearing of this central thought, and that is that the divine is everywhere about us—that we are never far from God. If we can serve Him in our fellows, we can meet Him in our fellows. Richard Swain tells of going home one afternoon and finding his children, Philip, eight years old, and Esther, two years younger, playing together. The latter was standing under the electric light, with both arms raised as high as she could stretch them over her head. Seeing her dramatic position, and the unusual look on her face, he remained silent, knowing that something was coming. With intense feeling she said:

“Oh, Philip! of course we could kiss God!” To which Philip replied:

“Oh, you couldn’t kiss God. He is a spirit. Why, God is in you—and in me.”

Still standing in her dramatic position, with the light shining full on her face, she began lowering her arms slowly, and as her expression of comprehension deepened she said:

“Oh, well, then, Philip, if God is in you and in me, if we were to kiss each other we would kiss God.”

“Yes, that is right, you would,” was his response. Then she said:

“Let us kiss God.” He arose promptly, and the children, throwing their arms tightly around each other, kissed God. They had grasped a fundamental idea and interpreted it in their own sweet way.

When we can see the divine all about us in our fellows and live in a constant sense of it, many of the difficulties which people raise against the full participation in the Christian way will quickly fade. One will more readily see the necessity of relinquishing the way of warfare and following methods which will call forth the response of that divine element. The industrial problem will be taken from the realm of conflicting economic elements and be approached as a family affair, in which no group will be willing to tolerate a system which works hardships on other members of the family.

It is little wonder that the plain people of Galilee and Judea received the various angles of that message with a ready gladness. That this was God’s world about which He cared and in which men were His children and could live as such, was immediately a liberating idea. It freed them from the tyranny of the current ecclesiastical establishment; it eliminated the significance of the Roman yoke. What mattered it what the emperor or governor did? They stood or fell by God’s judgment. It killed the envy of the rich or privileged, for did not they have just as much worth before their common Father? And they found not just a nation but a world of brothers.

My second point is, I suppose, in a sense, but a development of the first one; but it has such significance that it deserves

separate emphasis. It is that this is man's world, as well as God's, or we might say, because it is God's. Because it is God's world, it is the scene of great possibilities for the individual man and for the whole social group. The best is possible at any moment and for every person, and God sees us in the light of what we may be. The bargain idea of religion as expressed by Jacob—if you will look after me and keep me then you can be my God and I will give my worship—is forever swept aside in the conception that God has made this a world where man can come to his best, and that when man responds to that vision and tries to live in the light of it, he is rendering the only service God cares about.

The additional thought which brings the first one to completion is that this world of those great possibilities is put in man's keeping: it is for him to create the realities which potentially exist. It is man's world, for, as St. Paul says, we are God's fellow-workers.

It is unnecessary to detail the expressions Jesus used to bring home to His hearers the understanding that it was for them to make real what was only potential. The thought is expressed in the large in the conception of the kingdom which was to be progressively realized. He announced it as at hand, outlined its characteristics as a new brotherly set of relationships and then told them how to bring it about.

He was not one to open before them a fool's paradise. He recognized the evil, weakness and brutality in the world summed up in the fact that men generally were living on quite a different basis from that which He set forth. His was not the advice to shut their eyes to the actual situation and

pretend that it was what they would like to have it. Many have thought that that was His message; but to give such a word is no more like Him than the supposition that He meant to encourage them to attempt what was impossible.

No, He admitted the evil that was present, that tended to obscure the possibilities which were also there, and told them how they could overcome and transform that evil and make real the good which had been overlain. Forgiveness and love were the transforming powers which were to accomplish it. He put a creative instrument in their hands, the full possibilities of which we have not yet discovered.

Malcolm Sparkes has said: "Love treats every man as if he were the friend he ought to be." That is not a gospel of pretense, for there is a compelling power in love that brings reactions often quite unsuspected. Most people, in their reasoning, ignore the fact that this human nature that we speak of has its two sides; that which responds to base motives and impulses and that which responds to the higher, and that it is for us to choose which we shall appeal to. It has been said that there is no average human nature any more than there is average organ music. What comes from the pipes of the organ depends upon the hand which touches the keys, whether it is a series of divine harmonies or just a jumble of discords.

The opposite conception has been put in these clear-cut words by Herbert Adams Gibbons in a recent magazine, in speaking of the wisdom of Americans adopting a policy of disarmament:

“Their country cannot afford to change from a wolf into a sheep unless a simultaneous change takes place in the others of the pack. Probably the change will never come, for the simple reason that none will consent to risk being eaten by being a little ahead of the other wolves.”

Such a point of view entirely ignores the reality of human reactions. The Golden Rule is much more than an arbitrary obligation: it is an expression of the fundamental truth that men react to the stimulus that is applied. It may be true that a hungry pack of wolves will not discriminate between a loving Christian and an angry heathen who is at their mercy; but the case is entirely different when a group of evil-minded men encounter a person radiating a spirit of love and good will as contrasted with one who shows hatred, antagonism or fear. Their reactions will be quite different to those two persons, even though no absolute guarantee of immunity goes with the former.

A few years ago a certain clothing manufacturer, when invited to make an address on “What Is Wrong With Christianity?” sat down to consider the matter. Before he got through he decided that he had no right to criticize until he had tried it out and that it was up to him to make the attempt. Examining his business in that light he found that he was paying some women as low as four dollars a week. He immediately tripled their wages and the others in proportion, announcing that he was going to run his business on the basis of the Golden Rule. He expected, as he said, to go bankrupt in two or three months; but felt that it was better to go out of business that way than to continue and prosper on an un-Christian basis. But when the three months was up, he found

that instead of being bankrupt the firm had made larger profits than ever before, for the people had responded in similar vein, and working with a very different spirit, had produced a much larger output.

It wouldn't do, on the basis of his principle, to take the larger profits that had come from the increased efforts of his workers, so he arranged to divide the profits among them in accordance with what they were receiving. Again the reaction came, this time in the form of a petition from the highest-paid workers saying that it was not fair for them to receive so large a proportion of the profits, in addition to their wages, and asking that the profits be divided equally among all who had worked the same length of time. They, too, reacted to the spirit in which they were approached, and so the thing has gone on with many subsequent developments and a complete change of spirit in the relations inside the factory and with the public.

The task of creating the realities of the divine order which is entrusted to men rests constantly upon the primary fact that this is God's world, where possibilities of brotherhood and co-operation exist. The recognition of that world is an act of faith from which the creative process starts.

Another employer, instead of complaining about his shiftless workers who do not know how to spend intelligently the wages they receive, carried on a campaign of education for a period before a large division of profits was to be made to them, and on checking up the disposition they made of their share, accounted for practically one hundred per cent in savings, stock investments, property and improvements.

You hear about the ignorant foreigners who are working at our trades. Recently I tested out a large group in regard to their ability to speak languages and found a great many who could speak three or four and a considerable number who could speak five, six and seven. With my one language and no productive trade I concluded that I was in no position to use that contemptuous epithet.

There is also much loose talk about the subnormal brutes in our penitentiaries. Thomas Mott Osborne, believing in the possibilities even in such men, proceeded to call forth those possibilities by trusting the men and making an appeal to their manhood. Dangerous, foolish, immoral were the comments which were made upon the enterprise; but it worked, and he has in the process fitted those men to return to a decent common life with their fellows.

Herbert Gray has said: "I remember the time when I supposed that Jesus loved all men simply because He believed it to be His duty, and whether or no He found in them anything to be loved. The idea was, of course, grotesquely foolish. God himself could not love what is essentially unlovable. No! Jesus loved men and women because He could always find in them something worthy to be loved—some possibility, at the worst, which was a fit object even for divine love. He could detect in each instance that which justified the declaration that man was made in the image of God."

There is very little use in arguing questions of the elimination of war, the reorganization of industrial relations, new methods of dealing with criminals, school technique, or

the foundations of political government with those who are unable to detect in men elements of worth which can be counted upon. The basis on which such people take their stand is so far removed from that of those who see this world of human relationships as a field for the operation of the creative spirit that only misunderstanding is apt to result from such discussions.

When one has not that understanding of human relationships, then domination, coercion, suppression, restraint are the logical methods which must be employed in all those fields when men and women do not evince a desire to co-operate in the common life. The protection of the interests of the right-minded must take precedence over the indulgence in sentimentality. When we are strong enough we'll talk disarmament. Knock the brute down first and argue with him afterward. Without discipline you can't have education. No government can allow its citizens to talk against it. These are sentiments which we hear again and again. They proceed quite reasonably from a different but false conception of human nature.

It is useless to try to meet such reasoning and prove it false, as long as we leave unchallenged the basis from which it proceeds. There is where the work has to be done. There is where there is a call for a new evangel today, to reveal to men that same simple message that Jesus proclaimed so long ago, that this is God's world and that we can bring to development the good that lies everywhere about us in men. When we have done that we can discuss these problems in terms of understanding. Until we have done it, we are merely beating the air.

We in the modern world need, above many things, a new understanding of forgiveness. In spite of much that has been written by our really great Christian thinkers who have been blessed with the child-like heart, and in spite of the experience of the many who have tried it out, forgiveness is still regarded by the great multitude as a somewhat difficult Christian duty. It is the response which we have to make when one who has wronged us comes repentant. Instead of exacting our rights, we must generously call the debt off, although as we have heard lately, these are some things which it would really be un-Christian to forgive.

But as Dr. Nash reminds us: "If man sinned against, draws back into his innocence and waits until the offender comes to himself, he abandons his little world to the devil. . . . Forgiveness alone makes a full repentance possible." And Herbert Gray carries the thought still farther when he says: "The secret of Christ's demand is in the fact that forgiveness is the only ultimately successful way of overcoming evil. . . . It ends evil because it wins the evildoer. It gets at the root of evil and undermines the spirit which produces strife. It saves the sinner because it makes its appeal to the good that is in him and calls it into life."

Those who say that we must forgive our enemies, but that of course it would be immoral to do so while they are still unrepentant, are as far from understanding Christ's principle as a certain churchman, whom I once heard say that he had no hope of our ever achieving Christian unity, but that he was still praying for it. So far from being the dutiful response to an attitude of repentance, it is rather the creative power

which brings out the latent possibilities which have been obscured by sin and evil.

It is the basis of what might be called the divine process of getting even. A group of boys were playing ball one time, and one of the number in a spirit of exasperation threw the ball into a swamp, where it was lost. The owner of the ball came in to his uncle fuming and declaring that he was going to get even. "What are you going to do about it?" asked his uncle. "How are you going to get even?"

"Oh, I'll fix him. We won't let him play on the team," said the boy.

"It was a rather dirty trick, wasn't it? Sort of a low-down thing to do?" continued the uncle.

"It certainly was, but I'll get even."

"You might say, then," said the uncle, "that he was like the swampy mire that he threw the ball into, compared with the firm, high ground where you were playing?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you are going to get even," concluded the uncle, "you'll either have to go down into the mire with him or get him up on to the clean, hard ground with you. Think it over."

The next day, when his uncle asked him how he had made out, the boy replied: "You know I thought about what you said, about getting even, so I told him we wanted him to

pitch for us; and he not only played a dandy game, but he said he would get me a new ball.” The boy had found the divine way of getting even.

I am not concerned to apply this principle to the many corporate and social evils of our time; for if only I can succeed in making clear how true and how vital it is as a key to human relationships, and how central it was in Jesus’ teaching, its wider application can safely be left to you. Creative love is the healing spirit most needed in the world today.

If, in presenting those aspects of Jesus’ message which reached the hearts of the simple with a vitalizing power, giving them a new grip on life and a sense of at-homeness in God’s world, I have conveyed the impression that here is a safe and easy way out of life’s difficulties, I have failed in my task. Because a view of the world is true and because a method of approach is the only ultimately successful one, it by no means follows that it is always a safe method for the individual. Indeed Jesus abundantly reminded His followers that they need not expect less of opposition, antagonism and persecution than He Himself had received. The following of the way of love would make for division and strife even in that place where it would be hardest to see it arise—in one’s own home. It could not be expected that evil corporately and socially entrenched would always give way before the power of redemptive love glowing in the life of one individual. It might mean that the lives and labors of many would have to be spent to the utmost before love would achieve its victory.

It is indeed in the light of such a possibility that the social character of the gospel is doubly emphasized. The kingdom has a meaning only when we realize that far beyond the individual triumphs for love that may be achieved, there is a field that can be won only by the corporate faithfulness to the ideal of the group. The individual may lose by all the worldly standards, and his life may seem an ineffectual protest or gesture, but it is the type of losing in which the soul is found and which sooner or later wins out for the group over the entrenched evil of ages.

In a decade in which, following a more imperfect, yes, even a sadly futile ideal, millions of men have been content to give their lives, we have no cause to feel that men will not be ready to pay the price. They are even too ready to sell themselves for that which is worthless. If they but knew, to adapt our Lord's words, if they but knew the things that belong unto their peace, but now they are hid from their eyes!

But why is it, we are sometimes tempted to ask, that the way of love stirs up strife and bitterness? Does not that outcome of some of our endeavors argue a failure on our part to express the healing spirit? It may be that, of course; but is it not generally because that method is essentially an appeal to conscience, and a conscience stirred, but not completely won, drives its possessor to an extreme of reaction? It was no accident that some of our leading Christian ministers were the most bitter detractors of conscientious objectors during the war. The very existence of the latter was a continual challenge to the consciences of those ministers. They had to maintain their different attitude the more vehemently. As

some of our friends remind us, love is not a mushy thing, and it sometimes has to inflict pain.

The world is growing old in its sophistication. The developments in scientific research, during the last century especially, have led many to feel that in the ever-growing complexity of the life of the universe and in the ever-widening reaches of our knowledge there is, each decade, less and less place for God in the world and less and less occasion to pay attention to the words of a half-mythical Syrian teacher. But out of that very sophistication has come the reaction that is leading many to question the whole interlocking system of philosophy, science, industry and politics that sums up the universe in terms of material things. It is time, they say, that we began to cut loose from the machine and get down to the human heart that is the one vital thing in the world:

“Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not crowns and thrones, but men!”

To such comes with new and convincing power that which has been hidden from the wise and prudent, the vision that this is still God’s world, in which, for all the learned data we have collected, there are still the almost untapped reservoirs of human possibilities awaiting not the test tubes of the scientist or formulas of the mathematician to bring them out, but merely the spirit of redemptive love as we have learned it in Jesus.

Richard Roberts has said it rather finely:

“The story of Jesus is ‘the instance of love without a limit,’ the love that will not let me go or give me up, that flings down party-walls and overleaps frontiers, flings wide the gate of friendship to the enemy, the impulse and the energy that creates the sovereign loveliness, the loveliness of a living society of men, purged of enmities and discords and hatreds, living out its manifold and abundant life in the unbroken harmony of unreserving fellowship.”

If we can have the humility to see that there lies the heart and glory of the world, we can be content to let the wise ones erect their houses of cards as they may, while within the tottering structure we build the eternal Kingdom of God. We can then greet the new day with Alfred Noyes:

“It is the Dawn! The Dawn! The nations
From East to West now hear a cry,—
Though all earth’s blood-red generations
By hate and slaughter climbed thus high,
Here—on this height—still to aspire,
One only path remains untrod,
One path of love and peace climbs higher.
Make straight that highway for our God.”

About the Author

Paul Jones (1880 – 1941) was the Episcopal Bishop of Utah (1916–1918), a socialist, and a prominent pacifist.

Like Bishop Spalding, Jones was a social activist and pacifist, especially after witnessing ill-treatment of miners and railroad workers, as well as discrimination against German immigrants in Salt Lake City. Bishop Jones' ministry continued to take him to many reservations of Native Americans, as well as among miner and railroad workers. He traveled many miles around the diocese visiting parishes by railroad, stagecoach, motorcar, horse and foot.

Because of Jones' outspoken opposition to World War I, particularly his declaration that "war is unchristian" in August 1917 which received wide press coverage after police raided pacifists meeting in Los Angeles, Jones was hauled before a special committee of the House of Bishops in St. Louis, Missouri by year's end. By year's end, Jones resigned his see.

In 1921, Philadelphia's Quakers invited Jones to address them. Jones helped the Fellowship of Reconciliation become international in 1919, and moved to New York and became its secretary for a decade.

In 1929, Jones accepted a position as chaplain and assistant professor of religion at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio and while there sometimes referred to himself as "Bishop to the Universe." He also became a director of the

National Consumers League and the League for Industrial Democracy. Rt. Rev. Jones continued to advocate for black civil rights, social reform and economic justice. Just before his death, Jones helped resettle Jews displaced by the Nazis and advocated a more understanding U.S. relationship with Japan.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Jones_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Jones_(bishop))

About the Lectures

The William Penn Lectures started as a ministry of the Young Friends' Movement of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In the beginning of the last century, "Young Friends" was the community of young adults from both the Hicksite and the Orthodox Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, which reunited in 1955. The Young Friends Movement began the lecture series "for the purpose of closer fellowship; for the strengthening by such association and the interchange of experience, of loyalty to the ideals of the Society of Friends; and for the preparation by such common ideals for more effective work through the Society of Friends for the growth of the Kingdom of God on Earth." The name of William Penn was chosen because the Young Friends Movement found Penn to be "a Great Adventurer, who in fellowship with his friends started in his youth on the holy experiment of endeavoring 'To live out the laws of Christ in every thought, and word, and deed; and that these might become the laws and habits of the State.'"

The first run of William Penn Lectures were given between 1916 and 1966, and are warmly remembered by Friends who attended them as occasions to look forward to for fellowship with our community, inspiration, and a challenge to live into our faith. The lectures were published by the Book Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has granted Pendle Hill and Quaker Heron Press permission to reproduce the lectures as free ebooks.

Although it was [announced](#) in 1960 that the series would be discontinued several lectures were published in the early '60s. It appears that the lectures given between 1923 and 1931 were never published. If we come upon manuscripts of these lectures, we hope to publish them in future.