Lecture 1938

William Penn

The Divine-Human Society

Howard H. Brinton

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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.

Divine-Human Society

I
Human Interest Shifts

Three centuries ago the problems which stirred men's souls were religious problems. Today it is social problems which preoccupy mankind. This change in the direction of attention from the religious to the social is the most important and significant revolution in the Western world. It marks a shift from the endeavor to create a divine-human community to the effort to organize a secular society.

Three centuries ago Europe was devastated by religious wars. Now it is threatened with equal devastation by wars of ideologies concerning the structure of society. In seventeenth century England a public debate between a Quaker and a Puritan would attract an excited crowd. Today a religious debate is quite outside the area of popular concern. But let anyone attack or defend Communism, Fascism, Capitalism, Socialism, or any other social creed and he will find himself the center of excited emotion. There was a time when religious conservatives persecuted religious radicals with the same feelings of fear with which modern social conservatives persecute social radicals. The Quakers were in their early day religious radicals. Their persecutors were convinced that the foundation of religion was threatened by them, just as modern conservatives fear that the foundation of society is threatened by Socialists. In the England of Cromwell a man could move from the extreme right to the extreme left by beginning with Roman or English

Catholicism and allying himself in tum with the Presbyterians, Independents (Congregationalists), Baptists, Quakers, and ending perhaps among the Ranters who were the anarchists of that day. Now a man can take a similar course from right to left by starting with Fascism and passing through conservative Capitalism, liberal Democracy and the various degrees of Socialism to Communism.

The shift of concern from religious to social questions has been the result of a slow process which attained momentum during the Italian Renaissance. The discovery of the literature of the Greco-Roman world shocked and awakened the mediaeval mind. During the late period of Greek culture, the era which became known through the revival of learning, the human individual stood out as of supreme importance. He trusted his reason. He asserted his self-sufficiency against nature, society, the gods. But even the wisest humanists did not perceive that ancient culture had been different in its springtime and that it ceased to cohere after it became centered in human reason and human power. To them history appeared to have witnessed a decline since the great days of Greece and Rome. Mediaeval men were not free individuals. Each was an organic part of a feudal system, an all-embracing church, or an autonomous city. When scholars learned that man had once been free they realized that he could be free again. Through a rapid widening of the mental horizon, due as much to the discovery of the new world as to the discovery of the old, men became self-conscious. They awakened as children awaken when they become aware of themselves as separate individuals and declare their independence of parental control. The Middle Ages in which

man had looked toward the realm above and had neglected this world, now seemed dark and barbarous. Man looked at himself and at the world around him and the light of freedom and power once more began to shine within his soul. The rediscovery of man was followed by the rediscovery of nature. Galileo and his great successors beheld earth and sky through secular eyes and modern science began.

The story of the emancipation of the human spirit from its mediaeval pattern has often been rehearsed, but we are now beginning to view this shift of emphasis in a new light. The achievement of individuality and freedom seemed not so long ago to be an unmixed gain. Today we question whether something value able may not have been lost. May not our Western system be wrecked as the ancient world was wrecked? In the great age of Renaissance and Reformation man freed himself from a medievalism in which he had few rights as a separate being. For a time he reveled in freedom, but all the while he was unconsciously drawing on spiritual capital stored up by the earlier community life. Now, in this twentieth century, that capital has been exhausted. The free individual finds himself lonely, frightened, nervous. He seeks the shelter of a spiritual home. But modern man has strayed too far. His old abode has fallen into ruin. Frantically he tries to build a new one. There are a multitude of plans for a new social order in which man shall again find peace and feel himself secure. But something is mysteriously lacking in all these plans. We seek for the missing element. No one knows precisely what it is or where to find it. Once a man had a home for both body and spirit. Now he can only find a house or hotel for the body. He is fearful and dissatisfied.

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Even his body does not feel safe unless he turns his house into a fortress. When that is done the dearly won freedom is gone. The fortress has become a prison.

Can we achieve today both security and freedom? Can we build a home for both body and spirit? That is the persistent question. Perhaps there is no other answer than that which came from Christianity to the Greco-Roman culture crumbling in spite of able administrators who endeavored in vain to save it. Their technique relied on violence. The Pax Romana was a truce. Modern governments are endeavoring to save us by force today, but salvation may come, as it came before, not from political or social mechanisms but from a divine-human society like that of the early Christians, a community which may slowly develop through ages ahead, whose seeds are already sprouting in the fertile fields of life.

II
The Fall of Man

We must proceed with our diagnosis of the ills of civilization before prescribing a remedy.

Man is able to fix his attention on the superhuman, the human, or the sub-human. These three different directions of attention define the three main stages in the long process of human emancipation from medievalism, stages which considerably overlap. In the middle ages man looked upward toward the superhuman. Religious problems were then by far the most important. In the Renaissance he began to look at himself and the shift initiated humanism. Its greatest fulfillment was reached in the rationalistic eighteenth century

and its spirit continued well on into the nineteenth, when man felt that to him all things were possible. He was above nature rather than of it, it was he who was its lord and master. Some philosophers even said that he was its creator. Bacon's dictum, "Knowledge is power," both expressed and inculcated the prevalent doctrine. Science existed to give man knowledge and tools by which to understand and conquer the universe. Progress was considered inevitable. Each day added something to the sum total of human knowledge and hence of human power.

Man's attention had slipped from the superhuman to the human. This very fact made possible a slip to the sub-human. Man looked below into nature and ignored not only divinity, but even humanity. The science of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has no place for God, and hence no place for man. If, as this science asserts, all things are governed by law, then man as a part of nature is himself so governed. The same scientific facts which eliminate God also eliminate man. Man freed himself from Church and ruler only to become controlled, as an animal, by appetites or, as a mechanism, by physical formulas. Looking down into nature man saw whence his body had emerged. He analyzed it as a complex of physical and chemical processes, descended ultimately from the simplest forms. Science gave him a world of processes, finally reduced to a swarm of atoms drifting in limitless space, forming chance configurations which dissolve and form again. Human society became equally meaningless. It too appeared to be a swarm made up of human entities drifting from place to

place, forming chance amorphous conglomerations which dissolved and formed again.

> *The sharp white terrible mirth of brute Nature*
> *Eyeless, careless, houseless, loveless,*
> *The mad forces of evil*
> *Rush to ruin without direction, they have cast off all*
> *restraints.*
>
> Tagore, *Manasi*.

Men became sub-human in practice as well as theory. The serf on a mediaeval manor was an organic though lowly part of a stable social group. His relation to the group was biological like that of the hand to the body. But modern industry has produced the mass man who is not an organic part of any social structure nor even a human individual, but rather a cog in a soulless machine with little opportunity for evolving into individuality or creativeness.

In a world which has thus become impersonalized not only have the religious virtues disappeared but also the human. Neither in modern business nor in modern war do we find the code of honor which was observed by gentlemen. War has become a matter of cold-blooded mass killing in which neither the killer nor his victim are more possessed of heroism and honor than the soulless machines they use. "Mechanized warfare" is not only descriptive of the machines used, but of the men who use them. When man fixed his attention on the sub-human he became sub-human for where one's heart is, there is his treasure also.

The doctrine of the Fall of Man is not an outworn myth. Like all great religious myths, it embodies perennial truth. We may adopt it to illustrate the shift in emphasis from the eternal to the temporal, from the spiritual to the material, from the other-worldly to the this-worldly. In the Middle Ages man looked upward toward the transcendent for salvation; in the humanistic period he looked horizontally at his fellows or internally upon himself. Now he looks downward into nature and shudders at what he sees. Is not our trouble today due to the direction of our gaze? As the muckraker in Pilgrims' Progress could not see the golden crown above his head because he was intent upon his raking, so modern man, looking only downward, is tempted to think that the whole world, including himself, is made of muck.

The account of the Fall in Genesis was written about the middle of the ninth century before Christ at a time when the old organic social structure of Israel was beginning to disintegrate owing to the development of commerce. In Samaria and Jerusalem there were great bazaars for trade with Egypt and Babylon. Iron had come and horses and big ships. Many men had emancipated themselves from tribal community life based on agriculture. Amos and the later prophets tell us that the rich were growing richer and the poor, poorer. The old blood brotherhood was for gotten. Man was driven out of the Eden of an interrelated, interdependent community life because he had eaten of the tree of knowledge. He had listened, not to a superhuman, but to a subhuman voice. He had become a self-conscious, self-seeking individual.

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"The world was all before them where to choose." Horses and chariots and ships were at his command, but sometimes Adam's descendant looked back toward the flaming sword which guarded the garden where he had once been innocent and happy. He could not re-enter. He had discovered his nakedness, but perhaps he could plant a new garden where an ashamed, self-conscious individual could be at home. It was then that the prophets told the sons of Abraham that a better society would come as the gift of God provided they would leave off listening to the subhuman counsels of the serpent and hearken to the superhuman voice. The Holy Community of Israel, created after the exile, lasted for half a millennium. It was not as glorious as that which Ezekiel and the second Isaiah had prophesied, but in a measure it satisfied both body and spirit. It was, to a certain degree, a divine-human society. It had two foci, the law and the temple, and two rulers, the civil governor and the chief priest.

In our day we have many prophets who plan an ideal society. Unlike Ezekiel, they do not suggest building a temple in the midst. Their planned society is not a Holy Experiment like that of William Penn's Pennsylvania. Their garden contains the tree of knowledge, but not the tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

III
Suggested Remedies
Let us now review three or four other diagnoses before we suggest a treatment.

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The psychologist C. G. Jung finds that to many of his patients the world simply does not make sense. We can extend this dictum and say that for innumerable persons today life does not make sense. Life has lost its meaning because no one knows what the goal of life is. This was not true in the ages of Faith. It was not true even as recently as the generation of our great grand-parents. Man's first objective was to save his soul according to God's plan of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures. That was a convincing goal. The man of today has no such supreme objective. He thinks he knows his origin, but not his destiny. Science has taught him to look at the past and present, but not at the future. Modern science is genetic. It tells us how things develop, but not why. Only religion can do that, but the man of today is not religious. His interests are secular.

In *The Diary of a Country Priest*, Georges Bernanos describes in fictional form the same condition. "The world," he says, "is eaten up by boredom. To perceive this needs a little preliminary thought. You can't see it all at once. It's like dust. You go along and never notice it. You breathe it in. You eat and drink it. It's sifted so fine it doesn't even grit your teeth. I wonder if man has ever before experienced this contagion, this leprosy of boredom; an aborted despair, a shameful form of despair in some way like the fermentation of a Christianity in decay."[1]

Oswald Spengler accounts for the same predicament by saying that Western Culture is growing old and is suffering from that disease of late maturity commonly called civilization. Other cultures have passed through a similar stage before their final stagnation. In the springtime of every

great culture, religion is synonymous with cultural creativeness and man through the integrating power of religion lives in a closely knit community which satisfies his needs. But as the culture grows older the integrating power of religion grows less and the disintegrating power of the intellect becomes predominant. Individualism and intellectualism destroy the inherent values of the old community. Efforts to restore religion result only in the poor substitute of "religiosity." Society makes a last desperate effort to hold together through Caesarism, the power of the dictator. Stagnation follows and history ceases.

In Toynbee's philosophy of history there is the doctrine of challenge and response, withdrawal and return. Toynbee does not predict that we shall or shall not make the needed response to our present difficulties.

Marx, inheriting the messianic consciousness of Judaism, predicts the coming of a perfect society through the inherent economic laws which govern history. Believing that the mechanical processes of economic life are the only realities, he foresees humanity eventually reduced to a mass uniformity. Capitalism will be destroyed by the forces within it. As in physics the second law of thermodynamics predicts a time when nothing will happen because all energy will have become equally distributed and incapable of doing work, so history, according to Karl Marx, will cease to be concerned with events when all men are on the same economic level and all are equally embedded in a material economic structure. Marx would build a house for the body, but not a home for the spirit. He is convinced that there is no spirit.

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Another type of diagnostician approaches the social problem from the psychological angle, holding that the chaos in the world today is but a picture and result of chaos in the human heart. As the cause is psychological, the remedy must be psychological. The awakened self-conscious part of our personality has become detached from its life-giving roots. These roots penetrate the great dreamlike unconscious part where ancient memories of the race lie hidden, memories of a time when man was not a lonely, self-conscious individual. Since the conscious and unconscious have drifted apart, the soul of modern man is cleft in twain. He is neurotic and chaotic. It is the business of the psychologist to use his skill in uniting these severed fragments into an integrated whole.

Self-centered individualism has developed through a long process until now society is on the verge of destruction by violence. Man is not normally violent. He has evolved to supremacy over the beasts because of superior sensitivity and awareness through which he feels unity with his fellows. But with civilization came the overdevelopment of the tool-using aspect of consciousness, through which man gains control of the physical world. The specialization of that aspect of consciousness which seeks mastery over nature results in acute self-consciousness and the sinking into the subconscious of that part of man's mind by which he intuitively appreciates his unity with other men. Nations and races which have lost the primitive human sensitivity and have become specialized in violence have been short lived. Militarism is a fatal disease. India may have appeared at one time to present an exception, but here a psychological technique was developed through which the specialized, self-

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conscious part of the mind was integrated with the sensitive, subconscious part. Unless we today can discover a similar method which can heal the fissure in our souls, society cannot be held together.

Such theories regarding the causes of our present social ills contain suggestive diagnostic elements but they do not offer as effectual a remedy as we need. Our culture, according to Spengler, is growing old and losing its vitality, but the situation is not so hopeless as he thought. It is always possible that a new culture may be born from the body of the old. We are, as Marx observes, gradually becoming the servants of a machine-like social order which recognizes no class nor individual distinctions. Even so, the result need not be an unrelieved mechanical mass-mindedness. Man has needs which are not economic. He can still look up to heaven as well as down to Hell. It is true, as some psychologists say, that our clear self-conscious mind has become dominant and detached from the brooding creative subconscious world of mystery and dread in which we recognize the unity of life. These thinkers are right in asserting that the disintegration of society is largely due to the disintegration of the individual, but they fall short of the truth if they maintain that the remedy is purely psychological. Psychology as such does not attempt to go beyond what is subjective though the psychologist as a philosopher or theologian can and often does go further. That super-individual world through which man and society will be saved does not exist in the psyche alone. It transcends both the conscious and the unconscious. Unless we recognize this world as a real, objective existence, transcendent as well as immanent, both individual and

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universal, inspiring awe and worship, it will not integrate individual souls and social groups.

The paradoxical, but ultimately significant point in all this analysis is the fact that when man looked up toward heaven he achieved a closely knit society on this earth and when he looked down toward earth he became less able to do so. In other words the social and psychological problem is not solved by social and psychological forces alone, but by something which transcends them. When man was primarily interested in otherworldly religious problems his this-world society was more thoroughly interwoven in communal patterns than it is today. The social life of the Middle Ages was a group life centering in Church and Castle. Unjust and oppressive as it often was, it met at least one fundamental human need; isolated individuals who faced the world alone were rare. Today our centers of population have become chance collections of lonely individuals drifting about with little interdependence except that which is imposed by civil law.

In such a situation a powerful nationalism appears to most people to be the only remedy. Modern nationalism provides a new loyalty in lieu of vanished devotions. A dictatorship is nationalism carried toward its logical extreme and even the most democratic states become dictatorial in time of war. Communism claims to be international but is actually an extreme form of nationalism since the state is the only employer. But the state is too large and too strongly based on violence both towards its own citizens and toward other nations to satisfy the deepest human needs.

It is so large that it cannot be the chief means through which man senses his interdependence with his fellows. In metropolitan areas the individual is almost anonymous. Even one's next-door neighbor may be ignorant of one's troubles. Impersonal statistical agencies of government may intervene to help, but these can be appealed to only when a man is utterly destitute of resources of his own.

That nations are organized on a basis of violence is well illustrated in a passage from *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* by H. G. Wells:[2]

"These present governments of ours are like automats," says Camelford, "they were evolved originally as fighting competitive things and they do not seem able to work any other way. They prepare for war and they prepare War. It is like the instinctive hunting of a pet cat. However much you feed the beast it still kills birds. It is made so. And they are made so. Until you destroy or efface them that is what they will do."

Both Robert Barclay and Isaac Penington, two of the most important 17th century Quaker writers, declared that the state was sub-Christian and could not be expected to act in a Christian way, but, as Penn showed in his Holy Experiment, a state can be Christian.

A state is a mechanical collection of individuals organized by external laws. There are few inner bonds to cause populations to cohere if those laws are not enforced. National dictators and governments are compelled to hold their people together not only by threats of force within but

by fear of a common foe without. Nationalism looks sidewise and downward, not upward. But society is not saved by something within it; it is saved by something above it. This is the testimony of history. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

It is often said that our difficulty in creating a satisfying human society is due to a social lag. Natural sciences, according to this view, have developed faster than social sciences. Man has learned to control nature but he has not learned to control himself. His very scientific successes leave millions in dire need while they endow a few with super-abundance. Some have even advocated a moratorium on the natural sciences until the social sciences can catch up. Since mechanical engineers have achieved such success in controlling nature, why not give social engineers an opportunity to achieve a similar control of society?

I believe this suggestion is inadequate and that no kind of economic or social planning can be sufficient to save us. Planning will doubtless remedy some social sores, but it cannot cure the disease at its source. Primitive man has no conscious knowledge of scientific sociology, but, whatever his limitations, he is better able than many today to live a happy community life. A social reformer is better off with scientific knowledge than he is without it, but he needs something which no amount of knowledge can give him to weld communities into effective units. Without religion as its soul, society becomes a mechanism, not a living, growing power. The mechanical engineer can "reform" nature only in so far as he is above nature, looking down on it from a higher level. A successful engineer must be more than a

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mechanical expert. He must be human and realize the human needs to which his works minister. From the point of view of a naturalist a wilderness is as good as cultivated land, but this may not be true from a wider human point of view. A medical man, in so far as he is merely a scientist, finds disease as natural and far more interesting than health, but because he is also a man he looks down on disease from a higher level and judges it for its harmful effects on mankind. In the same way our social ills must be judged and cured from a higher level than the human plane. As the sub-human is reformed by the human so must the human be reformed by the super-human. The oldest and perhaps the only message of religion is that the temporal can be saved by the eternal, for the temporal without the eternal is incomplete and meaningless. The cure for the fall of man is the rise of man. "As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive." We must rise from dependence on the sub-human to dependence on the divine. We shall all be made alive in Christ, the divine-human Being, in so far as we share in His victory.

IV
The Remedy in Terms of the Individual

How shall we thus be made alive and share this victory?

We have examined answers of a secular type. We shall now consider answers of a religious type. These answers can be divided into two categories: the individualistic and the social.

The individualistic religious answer holds that society is saved by saving the individuals within it. A saved society is a collection of saved individuals. Every religion and every

religious sect has its own theory regarding the nature and method of individual salvation, but there is fairly general agreement that the one fatal sin is self-centeredness and the one way to salvation is to close the gap between the isolated self and the divine. Salvation is the surrender of the "own will" to the Divine Will (as maintained by Judaism, Christianity, Islam), or salvation is the merging of the isolated individual self into the Divine Self (as taught by certain forms of Hinduism), or salvation is the annihilation of the illusion of the separate self (as held by some forms of Buddhism). Sin is estrangement from God whether He be conceived of as personal, impersonal, super-personal, or the object of an indescribable experience of the One Reality, and salvation is attained by overcoming this estrangement by meditation, prayer and worship.

The chasm between man and God is closed by man's self-surrender and self-effacement. He who gives all to God and holds nothing back is saved, but he will not be thereby the poorer. Indeed he is infinitely richer because God's will and power have become his will and power.

There is an essential and all-important element of truth in this doctrine which in some form or other lies at the heart of every great religion. Society becomes disintegrated because it is made up of self-centered individuals. Should those individuals become wholly unselfish by self-surrender to that which transcends the human, a new society would inevitably be born. God's rule on earth will come when His rule is established in every human heart.

But even this doctrine, true as it is, does not represent the whole truth. Certainly it is not the whole truth of Christianity though the greatest saints and mystics of Christianity have often followed a lonely path. Hinduism and Buddhism provide for individual enlightenment. Man may begin his heavenly pilgrimage in company with others, but he must finish the journey alone. To quote an ancient Hindu book, he must at the end "wander alone like a rhinoceros." The Buddha said, "Alone man is as Brahma; in twos men dwell as the lesser gods, in threes they are as a village. More than this is a mob." The higher religions of the East have taught the virtues of pity and compassion. They have enabled individual man to endure misfortune and inadequate social conditions by showing him a way to peace and calm within his own soul. This is no mean service and there is no doubt that the West could profit by knowing more of such a cure. The Yogis or the Zen Buddhists show a way toward the attainment of inner peace which would be useful to many today.

Several serious difficulties can be detected in the individual answer to our problem. A collection of individuals, however fully each one may be reformed within, will tend to produce an individualistic form of society.

As we are often told by social psychologists, society molds the individual even more than the individual molds society. We must not undertake to begin with the individual exclusively nor with society exclusively, but with both. By changing individuals we can modify society and by changing society we can alter the individual. A religion that is purely individualistic lacks a needed element. It tends to preach

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escape and often acts very usefully as a tranquilizer rather than a source of action. The missing element is the conception of a Church and of the Communion of the Saints. The Christian ideal of the Church as a unit which may include persons of every race or nation is the social as contrasted with the individual solution to our problem.

But on the whole the Orient is more group-minded than the Occident because of family loyalty and its extension of loyalty to the ruler. Although these ties are weakening because of the influence of Western culture they are still important. Also the concept of the Bodhisattva in Northern Buddhism should be mentioned. According to this doctrine the individual postpones enlightenment to help others.

V
The Remedy in Terms of the Group

Christianity has never been an exclusively individual religion concerned only with a vertical relation between man and God, though Protestantism in its more rigorous forms has theoretically tended in this direction. On the whole Christianity has borne as explicit a message regarding the horizontal relation between man and man as it has borne regarding the vertical relation between man and God. The curve of the true Christian life has been plotted by constant reference both to the vertical God-ward axis and to the horizontal man-ward axis. Jesus said as much about inter-human relations as about divine-human relations. He epitomized his religion in the two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He came to combine the eternal and the

temporal, the otherworldly and this-worldly, the divine and the human, in short, to achieve the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Christianity has consistently taught the surrender of the self to the transcendent God who is above all human comprehension. It has taught the surrender of the self to God incarnate in comprehensible human form. To the philosopher, this appears to be illogical and inconsistent. God cannot logically be both eternal and temporal, incomprehensible and comprehensible, illimitable and limited, divine and human. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" is a philosophical impossibility. But Christianity gains immeasurably by not being tied to logic, for logic always conforms to that which is. It reveals a fixed and changeless reality. To be logical is to be complete, finished. Life is illogical, unfinished, growing. Logic conforms to the world; life, at least in some degree, compels the world to become conformed to it. Christianity is illogical in attempting to exist both in eternity and in time, both in the universal and the particular. This is its strength. Christianity creates a super-logic as it grows. It is in the world but not of it; it is perfect and unperfected at once; being in the imperfect world, it yet partakes of the world that ought to be.

One of the earliest and most characteristic Christian doctrines was that which described the Church as the mystical body of Christ, a continuation of the incarnation. What the first Christians had lost when their Leader departed they found again in the Divine Presence which inspired the love and fellowship of the Christian community. Some theologians called the Church, rather than the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Trinity. Christian communities were,

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from the beginning, divine-human societies inspired by the risen Christ. The early Christian was not saved as an individual, but as an integral part of a church which was a colony of the Kingdom of God on earth. Paul compared the Christian community to the human body, each part with a different function but all united by a single soul, the Holy Spirit which inspired the group.

In these small but growing communities far more was shared than religious ideas and rituals.

> *"The Church offered its own fellowship based on a charity (agape or religious love) which meant the fullest kind of mutual support and assistance moral and material…. In that age when the old civil and tribal loyalties had failed there was a pathetic craving for a corporate life more intimate and real than the soul-less imperial system could provide. Countless voluntary associations rose to meet it. We cannot but conclude that the Christian Church did so more satisfactorily than most."[3]*

The Christian Church was a complete society exercising more than religious functions. It was not an association created by man from below but it was a mystical whole created by God from above. As such it represented a progressive realization of the kind of society which Jesus had come to establish on this earth. Each congregation was a miniature of the whole.

Each was also both mystical and prophetic, mystical through its sense of union with God, or Christ or the Spirit and

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prophetic in its sense of mission and service to the world around it.

In the history of Christianity there have been two distinct conceptions of the Christian Church as a religious society. According to one view the Church is a group of individuals organized for the purpose of preaching, of hearing the Word and of administering and receiving the sacraments. The Word is 're'-vealed in the Scriptures and there is no means of adding to them for God has ceased to speak to men. According to the other conception, the Church is a divine-human society inspired by the Spirit of God which exists in it as a soul exists in a body. In such a society there are no individuals, there are members of a whole which is more than the arithmetical sum of its parts. As the immanence of God in human life is expressed in and through the Church, new truth can come to the Church from God. The Church is a living and growing organism. It is an incipient form of the social order which is to be. It is in the world but not of it.

These two conceptions of the nature of the Church: the one in a way tending toward the mechanical and the other toward the organic, are not derived from theological doctrines but from the actual practice and attitudes of church members and attenders. To the average Christian of today the Church is simply an institution among other institutions of the world around it. It is either organized to provide for religious services or it is, to a few, a type of integrated society held together by the Holy Spirit, set in the midst of a different kind of society which is held together by secular law. There is always a mixture of the two conceptions with primary emphasis on one or the other. Theologically speaking there

are at least three types of Christian Churches, the Catholic or Episcopal type, the classical Protestant and the so-called free or congregational churches. All are in some sense divine-human societies though usually the human, institutional and ecclesiastical element is more evident than the indwelling Spirit which men are unwilling to trust in practice though in theory they believe in its guidance. The practices and doctrines which separate these churches from one another: the ministry and sacraments, open or closed communion, the apostolic succession, the means for maintaining continuity, bishops, church government, infant or adult baptism, the possibility of salvation outside the Church; are elements which the Society of Friends, for example, would consider peripheral as compared to the mystical bonds of unity within the group.

The Catholic Church is both mystical and institutional. It is mystical in its belief in the Divine Presence in the Mass, and in its desired union with the saints, with Christ the Head of the Church and His Mother. It is institutional and authoritarian in its requirement of unquestioning belief in its doctrines and in the priestly power to impart grace through the sacraments.

Classical Protestantism (Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Reformed Churches) is based on the saving power of The Word which is Christ, the Bible, the Sacraments and preaching from the pulpit. The true Church exists "where the Word is rightly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered." Protestantism is authoritarian in the sense that the Bible is the absolute and completed source of authority.

Salvation is achieved through faith and trust in its message, not through so-called good works.

The Free Churches differ in various degrees from classical Protestantism. For Congregationalists, Methodists, Disciples, Baptists, Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers and others the visible Church is theoretically a community gathered by the Spirit. They emphasize religious experience and lay less stress on ritual and doctrine. But as they grow larger they become more institutional, liturgical, ecclesiastical. The free flexible fellowship of believers gradually comes to approximate the classic Protestant type. Instead of being congregations gathered by the Spirit they are gathered by organized methods, in some instances not unlike those used in business.

The Society of Friends can be classed as an extreme type of "free church," so extreme that in its early days it was persecuted as being un-Christian, anarchistic and a menace to social conventions. It did not classify itself as Protestant for it felt that the Protestantism of the 17th century, after having come close to dependence on spiritual guidance and revelation had reverted in many ways to the Catholicism out of which it came, particularly in respect to domination by the clergy and prearrangement of public worship, also intolerance and persecution of those who disagreed with it. But in one way Quakerism was closer to Catholicism than to Protestantism for it believed in the possibility of the realization of the Divine Presence in the midst of the congregation and in salvation by union with a Divine Reality rather than by acceptance through faith in the Divine Word in the Holy Book. The Quakers believed the true Church

existed wherever the Inward Light, the Christ Within was obeyed. Since they could not claim to be perfect in their obedience they called themselves a society rather than a Church. They carried further than any other free church the belief in a group gathered by the Spirit as the goal of congregational worship. Everything else, including the outward sacraments and a professional clergy, was deemed superfluous. Theirs was to a high degree a divine-human society, divine because nothing could be admitted into collective religious exercises except that which was believed to be directly and immediately inspired by the Spirit, and human because such divine-human encounters resulted usually in some concern for human welfare either within the worshiping group or beyond it. Since a Quaker Meeting seeks to be made up of those who follow the Light Within each individual, it might at first appear that an extreme form of Protestant individualism would result, but as we shall see the opposite was the case. The Quakers have attempted to build up an integrated organic religious group which is neither Catholic nor Protestant.[4]

For the Protestant the parts form the whole, for the Catholic the whole forms the parts, for the Quaker the whole and the parts are reciprocally active in forming each other. Protestant theory is akin to the interpretations of science. Catholic theory is based upon Platonic philosophy in which the Universal is more real than the particular. To the Quaker a religious society is an organism in which parts and whole are reciprocally means and end.

When America was settled, the Quaker colonists existed as a huge non-violent wedge between the Protestant North and

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the Anglo-Catholic and Catholic South. If the Quakers had increased instead of decreased they might have been instrumental in bringing these two extremes together in a way similar to that in which they had integrated the two attitudes in their own religious theory. They might even have prevented a civil war which in many respects was a continuation of the old cleavage between Roundhead and Cavalier. Due to conditions of the time, the tide of Puritan individualism was rising. This tide eventually engulfed Quakers and Anglo-Catholics.

Primitive Quakerism claimed to be "primitive Christianity revived" and such it was in so far as it succeeded in forming worshiping groups organically united by living ties. It had some resemblance to earlier mystical communities such as the Montanists, Cathari, Waldenses, Beghards and Beguines, Friends of God, Brethren of the Common Life, and Anabaptists. The antecedents[5] of Quakerism are older than Protestantism. They date from the pre-individualistic era of European history. For Quakers a religious society is the incarnation of a pattern and way of life in a community inspired as a single whole by the Spirit of Christ. The Quakers spoke of Christ as their only bishop and placed human authority in no individual human being but only in the group. Such a community is not limited but, in theory at least, it aims to be universal. The Society of Friends, in so far as it is a vital part of Christendom, seeks to generate and express religious and moral forces in order that they may prevail in a greater Christian society. It differed radically from Protestantism in believing that the Light of Christ

shines in every human heart, though sometimes very dimly, sowing everywhere the seeds of a divine-human society.

The Quaker religious community is dependent on both divine-human relations and inter-human relations. Robert Barclay, its first theologian, puts the two together when he speaks of "this inward life" as "that cement whereby we are joined as to the Lord, so to one another."[6] There was, in the early Quaker society, an extraordinary degree of mutuality. William Caton writes in the first Quaker journal to be published,

> *'"We were willing to sympathize and bear with one another, to be helpful one unto another and in true and tender love to watch over one another."[7]*

John Banks writes,

> *Oh, the comfort and divine consolation we were made partakers of in those days and, in the inward sense and feeling of the Lord's power and presence with us, we enjoyed one another and were near and dear to one another?[8]*

Such passages which describe joy in one another in the same sentence with joy in the Lord could be multiplied. In the uniting power of the Spirit self-centeredness ceased to exist. If an individual spoke in a meeting for worship he was an instrument of the Lord speaking to and for the group. The Quakers have never encouraged confession of individual experiences except in writing.

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The eighteenth century was an unpropitious time for the growth of this type of religious community life. Individualism was rapidly increasing. It was held in check only by the power of the state. As we have already shown, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the great eras first of humanistic rationalism and finally of scientific atomism. A closely integrated community appeared to make impossible the freedom which men were winning and prizing. In the midst of these forces the Society of Friends made faithful efforts to maintain its integrity as a closely knit community. A peculiar form of speech, dress, and behavior created an external bond which strengthened the inner tie. Disownments for non-conformity to increasingly specific rules and precedents were frequent. The Society in the nineteenth century decreased in numbers and power, though it did not cease to produce saintly and beautiful lives.

Two influences from outside disrupted and almost destroyed this cultural unity. They were eighteenth century rationalism and nineteenth century evangelical revivalism. By the inroads of rationalism the tie to historic Christianity was weakened and the Inward Light came to be interpreted by some as reason at its highest and truest. Under the impact of rationalism the sense of mystery, awe and dread, characteristic of true worship, vanished. Rationalism is analytic and therefore disintegrating. External bonds for the religious group were developed after inner bonds had given way.

The evangelical revival which first surged from English Wesleyanism to many Christian sects and several areas of Quakerism, with its confessions of sin and its characteristic

type of conversion, brought into parts of the Society a more individualistic type of religion. Many meetings in the latter part of the nineteenth century no longer functioned as religiously integrated organisms. They tended to be held together by such innovations as a declaration of faith, a preconceived order of service and professional pastoral care.

It is true that rationalism[9] and evangelicalism can be found in early Quakerism, but here they exist in such degrees as to have become integrated aspects of a greater whole. Rationalism emphasizes horizontal inter-human relations and tends to neglect that which is transcendent and super-human. Evangelicalism emphasizes the vertical relation between man and the transcendent God. These two elements need not be separated. They are capable of fusion into a single divine-human whole. Because in the nineteenth century Quakerism did not succeed in combining the two tendencies, it split into factions which stressed extreme forms of one element or the other or avoided both by retiring into pure inwardness.

The Society of Friends has preserved in two ways the formulation of its original ideal. In the first place this ideal is set forth in full in the writings of faithful diarists, second it is in many areas traditionally practiced in types of procedure which embody the early hope. These procedures sometimes come very near to realizing that divine-human society of the first Christian century and the first Quaker century.

We have now before us two types of theory of the nature of the ideal social order: the religious ideal which is based upon the concept of a Church, and the secular ideal based on such ideologies as Fascism, Communism, Nationalism, Socialism,

Democracy. This religious ideal in turn presents two varieties, the Church as a divine-human organism inspired by a Spirit within and growing in truth, and the Church as a collection of individuals held together by ecclesiastical authorities. The first type of church is (with certain reservations) represented by the Catholic and the Quaker attempts to create a society ministering to all human needs, spiritual, psychological, and economic. The second type is represented (also with marked reservations) by early Protestantism and to a lesser degree by modern Protestantism which posits the belief that the Kingdom of Heaven is impossible in this world and must be postponed either to the next world or to the Second Advent. The Church, according to this conception, must bear witness to the truth once revealed in Scripture and administer the sacraments. It will leave inter-human relations to the civil authority which operates, not under the law of God which is love, but under the law of man which in extremity resorts to force.

This categorical statement is oversimplified but it illustrates an important difference between the Quaker conception of an ideal society and other conceptions. It will be our next effort to observe how this Quaker theory has actually been put into practice.

VI
The Religious Type of Social Unit
We have seen how man's center of interest came down from the super-human to the human and from the human to the sub-human. As it sank the disintegration of society increased. We have also considered a number of proposed

remedies for this disintegration. In practice these have not proved adequate. Perhaps the remedy is to be found in again elevating our attention to the super-human and through that elevation achieving a reintegration. But the answer is not so simple as that. We have noted that in various periods and sections of the Christian Church, particularly in early Protestant forms, man's attention was centered upon the super-human without the achievement of any such social result. Catholicism attempted to save society by establishing a Church which aimed to be the Kingdom of God on earth, but Protestantism, holding to the doctrine of a sinful world, a doctrine which has reappeared in modern thought in an even more uncompromising form than in early Protestantism, does not believe that a perfect human society is possible here and now. As a result Protestantism has followed the Old Testament ethic especially in its attitude toward war. It has postponed non-violence and the Kingdom of God until the apocalypse or at least until a hereafter.

Quakerism, like Catholicism, believes it possible to found a real colony of the Divine Kingdom on this earth, a community in which the New Testament ethic of turning the other cheek can prevail, but, unlike Catholicism, Quaker doctrine does not confine this divine colony to religious specialists and particular places such as monastic precincts protected from the evil world.

To understand the Quaker conception we must differentiate between three distinct types of collectives. Let us name them the mechanical, the biological-organic and the religious-organic. No one of the three exists without some measure of the others whether consciously recognized or not.

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The mechanical is the type of collective most characteristic of our present age. Nationalism is based on the concept of a mechanical collective held together by law-enforcing agencies. Perhaps the typical mechanical collective today is a corporation or an industrial organization, though practically all modern groups of mass-minded men, such as cities, fraternal organizations, service clubs, labor unions and the like, in varying degrees, belong to this type. The mechanical collective unites men externally through a single interest which is only a small part of their total personality. This may be a common geographical position, a common job, a common class, a common business or professional interest, or even a common color of shirt or a common sex. Such collectives do not go very deep. Some are easily broken up. Nations are held together by a variety of mutual interests such as inheritance from common races or cultures, the bond of a common history, geographical propinquity. The fear of a common foe may play its part. In fraternal organizations men are united by acquaintance or friendship on the human level. In industrial organizations they are united on the subhuman level through common economic interests. Only in religion (and not always there) can men be actually united on the superhuman level and if the Church is to generate a genuinely integrated society it must include human and subhuman as well as superhuman levels. Men cannot be really united if large areas of life and interest are ignored. History shows that the superhuman is a genuine human interest of the first order. Without it, such mass collections of men as are peculiarly characteristic of the present time seem as little united as potatoes in a bushel basket.

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The second type of collective, the biologic-organic, is the most ancient form of human unit. It is formed in the early stages of every culture. The family is its principal modern survivor. And the forces of disintegration are today at work within the family. Primitive societies originate by a biological process. Tribes are simply large families. The religion which holds these societies together is largely a biological religion. Primitive religions invariably stress the worship of the reproductive powers of nature. The Baal ritual of ancient Canaan was a worship of the productivity of the field which Baal, the husband, had married and made fertile. Around the Mediterranean shores the most ancient of goddesses was the Earth Mother, sign and symbol of the productivity of the land. This Earth Mother had a child, a son or daughter, who died when vegetation ceased, and was resurrected when the crops came again. The Madonna and Child, venerated through the Christian centuries, perpetuated this ancient biological religion. This symbol of life gained general acceptance when our culture was young, growing and organic.

The tribal society presents a paradoxical combination of freedom and interdependence. There is an unconscious acceptance of the pattern of the society and each member feels a high degree of spontaneity as he acts within the limits of this structure. There appears to be little authority imposed, the chief or head man serving as a focus for the tribal mind. This may be called tribal mysticism for each member of the tribe has an intuitional, irrational apprehension of the cultural pattern and his place in it. He also has a mystical sense of his union with nature.

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The collectivism of the Middle Ages grew up under the visible forms of the feudal system and the universal Church. These were essentially biologic-organic. A serf lived a plant-like existence on the land of which he was conceived to be a part. Throughout the Western World there was a dream-like acquiescence in the will of the community.

As in all biological organisms there was in mediaeval society a sharp differentiation of function among the various parts, but, as is also true in such organisms, there was small opportunity for change of function. Freedom there was, but it was not a "freedom from" such as we have today, but a "freedom in" the whole in which the part found its destiny fulfilled. The lowliest servant found some joy in the success and luxury of his overlord, and the nobleman, though he used the serf for his own purposes, used him not as a tool to be thrown aside when outworn, but as a part of a social unit of which he himself was a more important part. As the brain is more important than the foot, but each is in need of the other, so the lord is more important than the serf, but each has need of the other.

Religion was one of the most important of the integrating elements. In the parish church both noble and serf foregathered. They worshipped the same God in the same way. It is exceedingly difficult for us today, with our highly individualized self-conscious minds, to understand and appreciate such a society. The best illustration of a biological-organic collective is the now vanished Chinese patriarchal family where sometimes as many as four generations, in a unit comprising several hundred persons, lived a communal life. Ancestor worship was the religious

tie which held the clan together, and ancestor worship is the veneration of biological continuity.

The third type of collective we have called the religious-organic. This is the only kind of organic community possible in a civilization which has outgrown the biological-organic. The modern causes of disintegration have already been cited. Essentially the condition is this: a highly individualized "self" becomes inflated and detached from its roots in the subconscious where man retains his racial memories of that biologic-organic life which he lived before he became an individual. The result is a cleft within the soul resulting in tensions, loneliness and neurosis. Jacob Boehme sums up this condition with the words, "Lucifer is a will at war with itself." Externally the condition is due to many causes such as commerce and industry which tear men away from their roots in the land and send them, detached and lonely, drifting about the earth. With the coming of self-consciousness, intellectual processes emerge which question old traditions. Symbols lose their internal meaning and come to appear "unreasonable" and "unscientific." The result is scepticism and pessimism. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Life loses its significance, and man sinks to the level of a brute and tries to find in the life of sense what he once found in religion.

Because he is now an awakened, self-conscious, scientifically-minded individual, he cannot return to the old biological-organic type of collective. The German nation under Hitler attempted to do this very thing, with a return to "blood and soil," its affectation of tribal consciousness, and a

worship of outworn symbols. For this process to be genuine now appears impossible.

There is no drug that can produce the old dream-like biological collective. German philosophy, science, commerce, all combined to make such a thing absurd. All over the world men are using the same machines in the same way. Everywhere there is a network of communications which establish a cosmopolitan mind to which the tribal mind is hardly comprehensible. Hard won personal freedom must be retained and we must devise the kind of social unit which will preserve it. Such a social unit appeared in principle, though not wholly in fact, in early Christianity and early Quakerism, both of which originated in eras of individualism. These units did not go back to the biological, but forward to the religious type of collective.

We cannot recapture the biological tie because self-conscious individuality has developed too far. We cannot even sink to the sensual type of life without being uneasily conscious of our sensuality and so being at least in this respect above it. The self has definitely emerged and we would not suppress it. Our pains and troubles, as the Buddha told men long ago, are due to endeavors to satisfy the self, which will not be satisfied, for the more it has the more it wants. The way out is not to annihilate this self, but to make it an organic selfless part of a larger whole of life. In the present advanced stage of personal development we must choose, if we are to have a workable human society, between some degree of authoritarianism, which puts the self in chains, or a religious-organic type of society which enables

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the self to reach fulfillment in that which transcends the self
and its world.

If we consider, not the biological and nature religions, but
the mature, ethical religions, we find that most of them first
appeared about the sixth century before Christ. They arose in
Asia under the leadership of Buddha, Mahavira, the authors
of the Upanishads, Confucius, Lao Tse, Jeremiah, and the
first Greek philosophers. Their objective is to eliminate or
suppress this "self" which appeared like a great shadow in
the sunlight of human happiness. For a variety of reasons this
"self" seems to have become too obtrusive about this time in
history all over the world. Early Christianity and Early
Quakerism likewise, at considerably later periods, also seek
to humble this "self." In the three hundred or so Quaker
autobiographies which have appeared in print there is
generally, near the outset, a description of the conflict by
which the self is finally mastered through surrender of the
human will to the divine will.[10] Finally the Quaker journalist,
perhaps after years of struggle, became God-centered instead
of self-centered. This solved his conflict. But for the Quaker
it was never a purely individual matter. Surrender enabled
him to take his place as an organic part of a religious society.
"Conversion" was interpreted in social as well as in
individual terms. Here the Quaker mystic differs essentially
from the Hindu and the Buddhist mystic who treads a lonely
path.

To put the matter figuratively, as the human soul transcends
the cells of the body and yet integrates them into a single
biological whole, so the Divine, transcending these separate,
self-conscious human atoms, integrates them into a social
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unit. Such a society is like the biological in being united from within by a power other than violence, but it is different from the biological in being a voluntary association based on a higher degree of freedom and welcoming any who can fit into it. The ties which bind it are both vertical ties which are developed in worship of the transcendent God, and horizontal ties, developed by friendship and love of man and through him of God imminent in the world. This love is not so much eros, possessive love, as it is agape, a spiritual, super-sensual love directed both to God and man.

Here the miracle of creation is forever being wrought anew as at creation's dawn the divine Spirit entered into chaos and produced cosmos. The new society will come, not by a mechanical organization of chaotic elements, but by God breathing into this chaotic body of dust His breath of life.

Such a process will take time. Mechanisms are made quickly. Organisms develop slowly. We find ourselves in a desperate hurry. Yet unless human collectives devote themselves to a long, slow process of growth, there will be no salvation for society.

VII
Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business

We are now prepared to go further in the consideration of methods by which a religious-organic type of social unit operates. To do this I shall take the Society of Friends as a specific example because it is a real although not a supremely successful attempt to create such a society. That the Quakers have fallen short of their high ideals is obvious.

In this respect they do not differ from other religious groups. All have fallen short; all are honestly striving. The inherited literature of the Society of Friends and that of contemporary Quakerism offer not a few examples of approximate success. Quakerism is here analyzed as representing a type of solution not fully worked out anywhere, just as communism can be discussed as a type of solution, although there are as yet no purely communistic societies.

The Society of Friends, as now organized, provides for two types of collective, one a "meeting for worship" and the other a "meeting for business." In addition there are sometimes other less important types of gatherings such as lectures or teaching meetings and discussion or study groups. These four types represent four degrees of pre-arrangement. The meeting for worship is entirely unprogrammed, the business meeting somewhat more programmed, the discussion or study group is still more so, and the lecture is entirely so. Provision is made in this way for several types of need, and for various degrees of progress in the spiritual life. The lecture and discussion groups may be concerned with religious subjects, but they are not centered in actual felt religious experience in the same sense as are the other two.

The meeting for worship and the meeting for business are based on essentially the same principles, and either may pass over almost imperceptibly into the other. Yet there are some important differences. We have said that three main directions of our attention are possible, that which is directed toward the superhuman, that which is directed toward the human, and that which is directed toward the sub-human. Of this three-dimensional outlook we shall ignore the third, for,

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although a religious society should and does welcome consideration of scientific developments, it is irrelevant to discuss them here. The superhuman and the human we shall consider as the two main axes of reference in determining spiritual progress. In the meeting for worship the curve is plotted by reference to the divine-human axis, and in the meeting for business by reference to the inter-human axis. Both are needed in varying degrees in both types of meeting, for either axis alone would be indeterminate and meaningless. In the meeting for worship, therefore, the religious is dominant and the social subordinate, and in the meeting for business the reverse is the case. Neither can be detached from the other any more than the meaning of a language can be detached from its grammatical form, although either may be made an object of attention.

The unifying power of worship lies at the basis of the business meeting, for, according to the Quaker principles of procedure, the meeting cannot act without unity. Many religious faiths have known that through silent waiting and meditation basic unity is discoverable. As Plotinus said,

> *"If we are in unity with the Spirit we are in unity with each other and so we are all one. When on the other hand we carry our view outside of the principle on which we depend, we lose consciousness of our unity and become like a number of faces which are turned outwards, though inwardly they are attached to one head. But if one of us (like one of these faces) would turn round either by his own effort or the aid of Athene, he would behold at once God, himself and the whole, but soon he would find there was no boundary he could fix*

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*for his separate self. He would, therefore, cease to draw
lines of division between himself and the universe; and
he would attain to the absolute whole, not by going
forward to another place, but by abiding in that principle
on which the whole universe is based."[11]*

The great mystics of the East have likewise discovered in
their meditation the unity of all Life and in that have
renounced self-will. As the writer of the Isa Upanishad says,

*"He is within the Universe. Whoever beholds
All living creatures as in Him, and Him
The Universal Spirit, as in all,
Henceforth regards no creature with contempt."*

Or, as the Bhagavad Gita, the New Testament of Hinduism,
puts it,

*"He who thus vows his soul to the supreme soul, sees the
Life-Soul resident in all things living, and all living
things in that Life-Soul contained."*

But unity is not a thing which is simply discovered, though
the knowledge that in one sense it is already there, is an
important element in its achievement. Because of the "Light
which lighteth every man" a meeting for worship is, in the
inner depths, already in unity. Yet unity is also something to
be attained, for inner unity must be realized in order that it
may be made operative in the group. Unity is therefore not
only a gift, but a task, a costly thing which is sometimes
obtained only at great sacrifice. The Christian, unlike the
Hindu or the Platonist, is more likely to think of unity as a
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task of duty enjoined, rather than as a gift. As a gift we find unity negatively by subtracting our selfishness which stands in its way; as a task or duty we find unity positively by a process of integration of all our partial points of view. Both positive and negative are necessary.

As an achievement unity is created, a new thing, the joint work of God and man. The Chinese, unlike the Hindus, take a positive attitude. In the Tao Teh Ching, the great scripture of Chinese Taoism, we are told that God

> *"Blunts the sharp points*
> *Sets in order the tangles*
> *Attempers the light*
> *Brings the atoms together."*

Similarly, according to Christianity, God is at work to bring His world together and create cosmos out of chaos.

> *"God has revealed to us the mystery of His will,*
> *according to the good pleasure which he has purposed in*
> *Himself, that in His ordering of the fullness of the times*
> *he might reunite all things in Christ, things which are in*
> *heaven and things which are in earth, even in Him."[12]*

Christ is the Logos, the creative principle of order in the Universe. As such He is the Holy Wisdom of the Old Testament who was present at creation and guided God's hand in His work.[13]

That the One Life unites men from within is a doctrine which often appears in the writing of Friends. While William

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Leddra lay chained in an open prison in winter, waiting for the death which was to come to him on Boston Common, he wrote,

> *"As the flowing of the ocean doth fill every creek and branch thereof and then retires again towards its own being and fulness and leaves a savour behind it; so doth the life and virtue of God flow into every one of your hearts, whom he hath made partakers of His Divine nature."[14]*

Unity is not the same as uniformity. Unity is spiritual and inward; uniformity is material and external. Isaac Penington, one of the clearest thinkers among the first Quakers, writes,

> *"for the fleshly part (the wise, reasoning part of man) by fleshly ways and means to strive to bring about a fleshly uniformity, which ensnares and overbears the tender conscience, this is not lovely, nor spiritual, nor Christian. And the apostle who exhorts Christians to be of one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together sweetly so far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them.*
>
> *He that hath, to him shall be given. And the intent and work of the ministry (with the several ministrations of it) is to bring into the unity as persons are able to follow and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to destroy the faith, and the true unity and at best can introduce but a fleshly appearance of unity in such a form of worship and godliness as eats out the power....*

He that is … in obedience to that Light which shines from His Spirit into the heart of every believer hath a taste of the one heart and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices (which is of God) can make a breach in the true unity…. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly also at length, as the light grows in everyone, and as every one grows into the light; but this must be patiently waited for from the hand of God…."[15]

In this uniting power of God we find the main difference between a divine-human society and a purely secular type of social organization. The negative result of religious experience is the annihilation of self-centeredness. The positive result is the unification of the group by the Divine Power which enters it from above as an integrating factor. The group becomes more than the sum of its parts and this More is not created by the individuals in the group, but is a gift of grace from God, a real gift of Himself. God does not appear in the group as one person among others but rather as uniting the group from above on a super-personal level of existence.

This is the Christian doctrine of the Divine Kingdom on this earth. The Hindu and the Buddhist search, through silent meditation, to find a higher than individual type of consciousness in which they can realize the unity of all life, but, lacking the Christian emphasis, they interpret this experience in individual and other-worldly terms. The result, therefore, is pity and compassion towards all sentient beings, human and subhuman, but not the creation of integrated social units.

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Because of the unifying power of silent worship, the meeting for business usually follows immediately after a meeting for worship. If this arrangement is not convenient, the meeting for business begins with a period of worship. Sometimes during the conduct of business the meeting is unable to arrive at a decision as a unit. The business meeting then resolves itself into a silent period of worship after which a basis for united action is not infrequently discovered. It is as if a group of persons were lost and there were many varying counsels as to the way to the goal and much rushing about. Finally they decide that the quickest way to go forward is to stop on the journey and climb a mountain. From the vantage ground of this height the true way is discovered and the group is in agreement. So in worship the group is united because it is lifted to a higher level of insight in which a greater area of Truth becomes known. This figure might be carried further. As all paths to the mountain top converge at the summit, so those who climb toward God come nearer to one another as they come nearer to Him.

A silent, expectant worship is not only a source of unity but a source of power. The meeting not only discovers the truth but obtains energy and courage to go forward and act upon it. This doctrine is almost incomprehensible to our modern era in which the major emphasis is on action. Yet the social worker, the reformer, the person of action in general, must learn that the stream of time flows out of a source which is timeless and that the stream of activity will run dry unless it is fed by an eternal spring. It is a typical saying that "the wheel turns round because the axle is at rest." Our lives

move on because there is within us an enduring center of calm.

The doctrine of the Inward Light, as held by the Society of Friends, is associated with unity and power because it is thought of in social rather than in individual terms. Like many other Quaker journalists, Sarah Hunt writes of her desire "to know the cementing power of His life-giving presence to bind the soul in unison with living members of that body with which I am associated in religious fellowship and communion."[16]

VIII
The Quaker Method of Conducting a Business Meeting

By considering the actual procedure of a Quaker business meeting, we can understand something of the principles on which a Divine-human society, such as we are now considering, is based. This type of procedure could be adapted to all social undertakings with alterations appropriate to different circumstances. Just as in a democratic or fascist state all the parts operate on the same democratic or fascist principles with minor variations, so in a social unit operating on the Quaker principle all the parts should act according to the same principle with variations depending on circumstances.

The Quaker meeting acts as a unit. No vote is taken. If a minority expresses opposition to a line of action advocated by a majority, action becomes impossible. The only necessary official is a "clerk" whose business it is to record

the "sense of the meeting," in other words, the decision which is reached.

The clerk "gathers the sense of the meeting" by listening to those who speak for or against some measure which he or someone else has laid before the meeting. Whenever discussion indicates that the meeting is reaching a state of unity, the clerk prepares a "minute" which, when approved by the meeting, states the decision at which it has arrived. On routine matters very little and sometimes no discussion is necessary, but on other matters it may be a long time, perhaps years, before the meeting can arrive at a condition of unity. When someone states an opinion to which others agree, they signify their agreement by such words as "I approve," "I agree," "So do I," and other like expressions. Sometimes the situation is such that silence gives consent.

The clerk is not a presiding officer in the usual sense; he is a recording officer. Recognition from him is not necessary to gain the floor. If the Quaker method is not working successfully, the clerk may temporarily become a moderator, but this does not often occur. If important business is unfinished, or if it must be finished by a certain time, or if more than one subject is being discussed at a time, the clerk reminds the meeting of this fact. It is part of his duty to see that business moves at a reasonable rate of speed, but he should not prod the meeting to a faster pace than it can comfortably take and maintain at the same time a desirable degree of unity. That "Cooperation is the thief of time" is more than just a misquotation of a familiar proverb.

The clerk should be a person who is sensitive to the feelings of others and able to submerge his own feelings. If he expresses his opinions on the business which is before the meeting, he must not do it in his capacity as clerk. Much of the success of the Quaker method will depend on his character and qualifications.

"Charles Spurgeon, after attending London Yearly Meeting a few years before he died, remarked something like this:

> *'It is the most solemn and deliberate body in transaction of its business that I have ever been permitted to attend. Its decisions are arrived at more harmoniously and with less discussion and friction than I have ever witnessed in other religious organizations.'*

It must be admitted that it required a spiritually minded clerk, one who could sink himself out of sight and get the judgment of others rather than his own."[17]

If the clerk finds a marked difference of judgment on a matter which cannot be postponed until unity is attained, the business can be referred to a small committee with power to act. If the minority is small it may consent to having its opinion disregarded. Chronic objectors or persons whose opinions are of little weight are occasionally ignored if the necessity for action is immediate. Such difficulties, however, are of rarer occurrence than a person unfamiliar with this method would suppose. Sometimes, when the meeting cannot come to a decision, it will sit for a time in silent worship and then find that someone is able to suggest a course of action which will satisfy everyone. If the

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significance of such silent waiting is fully grasped, the principles at the basis of the Quaker method will be understood. In an interesting dialogue entitled, "A Brief Examination of Liberty Spiritual,[18] William Penn expresses the gist of the matter in this way:

> *"… what if I do not presently see that service in a thing that the rest of my brethren agree in? In this case, what is my duty and theirs? Answer. It is thy duty to wait upon God in silence and patience, out of all fleshly consultations; and as thou abidest in the simplicity of truth, thou wilt receive an understanding with the rest of thy brethren about the thing doubted."*

The method is definitely a religious method. It will not fully succeed on the secular level, though examples can be cited of secular bodies which approximate these principles. The Congress of the United States, for example, often reaches decisions on matters which require unanimous consent.

Any kind of business which concerns the relations between individuals in the group, or the group and the world around it, can come before the business meeting. Routine matters are submitted by the clerk or some standing committee. Other matters are brought forward as the "concern" of an individual or of a committee. Such "concerns" often have to do with ways of carrying forward the principal testimonies of the Society of Friends such as "peace," "social justice," "temperance," "better race relations," "education," and the like. The decisions of a meeting are put into effect by committees or individuals, either named from the floor or suggested by a nominating committee. In some cases a

meeting secretary aids with executive as well as with purely scribal matters.

The Quaker system of Church government operates on the basis of the affiliation of small groups. The basic unit is the Monthly Meeting. Historically this unit may itself have been formed by the aggregation of several "Preparative Meetings." In America "Preparative Meetings" are now almost extinct, although they still flourish in England. Several Monthly Meetings meet together four times a year as a Quarterly Meeting, and several Quarterly Meetings meet together once a year as a Yearly Meeting. The relations between these three types of meeting are defined in the various editions of the book of "Faith and Practice."

The Monthly Meeting has oversight of matters which concern individuals such as marriages, funerals, the keeping of records, relief of the poor, violation of fundamental testimonies, aid for members traveling in the ministry, support or disapproval of individual concerns, etc. It has the power of determining the character of its constituency by accepting or rejecting applications for membership. The Monthly Meeting is the unit, the cell out of which the whole body is built, and Monthly Meetings differ considerably in their interests and type of membership. Theoretically an applicant for membership may select the meeting with which he is most likely to be in unity, provided he is so situated as to be able to attend it. A few meetings make special provision for absent members. This does not fully accord with the Quaker principle, for, theoretically, absent members should themselves become nuclei of new meetings in outlying places. As new, independent meetings, which in
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their initial stages are unrecognized by established meetings, are often not in a position to give membership in the Society of Friends, the retention of membership elsewhere seems at present inevitable.

The Quaker method of conducting business works best in small groups of about fifty. Opinions vary considerably, however, on either side of this estimate. Persons well-grounded in the method find it resultful in groups of any size. Obviously the meeting will be better able to act as a unit if its members are not only well acquainted with each other, but if they also have a real affection for one another. The meeting can become as much of a genuine unit, economically, socially, and in every other way, as its members desire. A meeting might seek to attain almost to the degree of interdependence found in a large patriarchal family, but since the unity is religious and social rather than biological, different principles would prevail.

The main argument for the practicability of such a type of procedure is that it has worked successfully in the Society of Friends for more than three hundred years. Even in those areas of the Society in which the original Quaker type of meeting for worship has been discontinued, the Quaker meeting for business is retained.

Needless to say it sometimes occurs that persons in the meeting are unable to rise above their personal limitations sufficiently to make the method work successfully. In the history of the Society of Friends there have been times of special cleavage into opposing factions when the method worked with difficulty or not at all. For example, the Society

of Friends in America split during the nineteenth century into several "branches" because certain Yearly Meetings could not attain unity and were not willing to wait for it. In England the same divergence in emphasis appeared but British Friends were willing to wait for unity. The divisions in America occurred when spiritual life was low, and the mystical and evangelical wings failed to become synthesized. The mystical type of religion is inwardly directed, and the evangelical type outwardly directed. Each needs the other. The mystics emphasized the Inward Christ and Inward Word, and the evangelicals the Christ of history and the Word of Scripture. The result was disunity, whereas a full application of the Quaker method could have resulted in a higher synthesis. In England each side modified the other, while in America, as a result of separation, each side drove the other to extremes. In the twentieth century movements toward unity prevail.

The method of acting as a unit and never taking a vote may seem impracticable at first sight, but there are many reasons which make it desirable. In the first place, there is no coercion of a minority by a majority; a decision leaves no resentment nor any feeling that some have been overridden or ignored. The meeting as a whole is behind the action taken, and the result receives more complete support.

In the second place, parliamentary procedure assumes that the majority is right, but everyone knows that the minority is often right. This is especially likely to be the case when some new line of action is proposed. The first response of many people to new ideas is negative. If a vote is not taken, ample time is given to the minority to convince the majority.

A vote, however, sometimes delays desirable action indefinitely. Hence the Quaker method, instead of always proving slower, is sometimes quicker in producing the right result.

In the third place, neither the minority nor the majority may be right. A vote may decide between two courses of action both of which are wrong, but if the meeting waits until it can act as a unit, a third course of action may develop which represents the best elements in the other two or perhaps an entirely new element discovered through the interaction of the original two. The final result is not, or at least need not be, a compromise representing the greatest common divisor of the opinions of the members, nor need it be the arithmetical sum of the various opinions expressed. It may be something better which no individual or party could have arrived at alone.

In the fourth place, it is obvious that the opinions of individual members are not all of equal value as the voting method assumes. In gathering the sense of the meeting, more weight is given to the opinions of members who are wise and experienced in the particular subject before the meeting than to the views of those who are less so. If, for example, the subject is financial the financiers would have the most weight. The Quaker business meeting is, accordingly, aristocratic in the original meaning of that word as government by the "best" rather than by the average. The voting method also gives as much weight to those who have almost no convictions as to those who have strong convictions. In the Quaker method the stronger convictions usually have the greater weight.

In the fifth place, the Quaker method requires greater sensitivity, understanding and devotion on the part of the members for one another than does the voting method. Even the chronic objector and the eccentric must not only be endured, but loved and understood.

The necessity of loving and understanding difficult and stubborn minorities, instead of voting them down, results in a genuine spiritual education in some of the primary Christian virtues.

IX
The Quaker Business Meeting as a Peace Making Technique

The third item in the above list of reasons for the Quaker method is of peculiar interest and importance. Through the interaction and fertile cross-breeding of various points of view presented to a meeting, some new opinion may develop which is better and more inclusive than any of those originally presented. When this occurs the judgment of the meeting for business is formed, not as a result of voting, which is a mechanical collision of two forces in which the larger mass of individuals prevails, but by the gradual evolution of something new. This method is therefore creative, not in the mechanical sense of something made quickly by tools, but in the living sense in which something grows. According to the voting method, party A opposes party B, and since one or the other prevails the result cannot be higher than either A or B. But let time be given for growth in love and in mutual efforts for understanding. Out of the marriage of the two something new may emerge

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which is better than either alone. The result, C, is not therefore a compromise, nor an arithmetical sum, nor simply A or B alone, but a decision qualitatively different which may be better than either. No one person can see the whole truth. Only by a living union of many points of view can a larger whole of truth be grasped.

But, it may be asked, why is such a synthesis better? Might it not be worse than either A or B? This is possible, for either A or B might be right and the synthesis wrong, but it is more often true that both A and B are partly right and partly wrong, and the synthesis contains the best in each as well as something more. Every eye, however distorted its vision, sees something that is really there. "A child," says Max Müller, "is not a false man, but an incomplete man," and the views of both A and B may not be wholly false, but only incomplete. If each side has love and understanding of the other, the truth of one or the other will prevail or the view of each may be supplemented and transformed by the other provided enough time is allowed for such growth.

To insure that the synthesis is better than its constituent elements the group must submit to the drawing of that Divine Power in its midst which lifts it toward a higher level of life. There will be reference to the divine-human coordinate as well as the inter-human coordinate. The Life of God in the group is not only an integrating element—it is an elevating element. There is little virtue in unity alone. A rabbit is more completely integrated than a man, for the rabbit always knows what to do next but the man often hesitates, torn between contending inner forces. Yet it is possible that the man can be integrated on a much higher

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level of life than the rabbit. The meeting seeks, not just for unity, but for unity on the highest level to which it can attain. To accomplish this, God who is worshiped must not only be thought of as imminent. He also transcends the group, pulling it up toward that which is higher than the world around it.

The possibility of unity on a high level is based on the doctrine of the Inward Light, that divine fire which glows in every human heart. Man may or may not follow its guidance, but the Light is always there, always pleading to be followed. This fact gives the members of the group confidence in each other and respect for each other without which united action would be difficult. One member can always appeal to that in the other which will lead to the same divine Truth that he himself believes he sees. But in doing so he may find his own sense of leading corrected by the sense of leading of the others. The Light cannot be thought of in purely individual terms, for the individual is often incapable of discerning its leading correctly. It illumines the group as well as the individual. A Friend who has a concern to perform a certain service will submit his concern to the group and if they agree, he can be more sure than he was that he is following a right leading. Only in exceptional cases when his own leading is particularly strong and insistent will he disregard the leading of the group.

Speaking of the Quaker method, Arthur E. Morgan, says, in *The Long Road*, p. 68,

> *"If there is mutual confidence in the integrity and social purposes of everyone concerned, differences of capacity*

to contribute can be freely acknowledged, and constant effort will be made to enlarge the participation of all in the formulation and execution of policies."

This "mutual confidence" is the basis of a pacifists philosophy of life, and the Quaker meeting for business represents a distinctly pacifist type of social unit. To use force on a man is to treat him as a thing, as sub-human and as unworthy of respect or confidence. To appeal to his reason is to treat him as a man, but a man, if his feelings are particularly strong, always finds a reason for what he wants to do. To appeal to that which is divine within him is to appeal to an intuitive knowledge of truth and righteousness at the apex of his soul, and if this appeal is accompanied by love as well as by confidence it will rouse in him a corresponding love.

It may indeed be thought that some men are so near the brute that there is nothing in them which can be aroused by such methods, and therefore they must be dealt with entirely by force, but this assumption is probably wrong. The pacifist method will not always succeed, but it will go much further than force when it does succeed. Those who undertake it must be prepared to make sacrifices in case of failure. Similarly the Quaker business meeting does not always succeed. Other methods are surer of definite results of a certain kind. Those who undertake the peaceable method are often required to make serious sacrifices of time and to willingly undergo spiritual travail. But a high goal is none the less worthy because it is costly.

A Quaker business meeting is an exercise in pacifist technique and a training ground for workers in the pacifist cause. It is not only true that the Quakers have such a type of business meeting and meeting for worship because they are pacifists, it is partly true that they are pacifists because they have such meetings and are trained by them. In such a group, pacifism becomes much more than a negative philosophy applying only to the limited area of life involved in international war. Pacifism becomes a positive principle, a definite line of action directed towards creating a certain kind of society. It touches life at all points, for there are no inter-human relations to which it may not apply. It begins in the meeting for worship which produces peace in the human heart by integrating conflicting forces. It continues in the meeting for business which produces peace among conflicting forces in the group. It is now strengthened by these achievements and ready to go forth into the world. Because it has become ruler over a little it will become ruler over more. If a successful pacifist technique does no more than serve as an example it may accomplish much. The fact that it is successful in a certain limited area is a powerful argument for its efficacy elsewhere. In the East it is a familiar practice for a saint to attempt to change others by what he does to himself. Gandhi sought to reform his followers by fasting.

"In the West we hardly believe that what one man does by himself or to himself can have much bearing upon his effectiveness in economic reform. We conceive of historical forces so largely in secular and social terms, in terms of organizations, that it seems to us quite fantastic to read how,

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for example, Ninomiya Sontoku went off to a mountain shrine to fast and purify himself when the officials of the province he had been asked to reform sought graft and made his work impossible."[19]

The trouble with many pacifists today is that they have had experience with pacifism in theory, but not in practice and when a crisis comes they find they are not pacifists at all. Middleton Murry tells of his experience in establishing a Socialist colony in England.[20] He found that many professed Socialists were quite unprepared to live in a community of that type. They were products of the capitalist society in which their lives had been lived and could not suddenly change to something else. Not only were these Socialists temperamentally incapacitated to live in a socialist community, but they even advocated a revolution by violence, thus using the methods of one type of society to produce a different type of society. Middleton Murry's conclusion is that a new type of society, whether socialist or not, can only be brought in by methods which fit into that kind of society. If you want a fascist society use fascist methods, such as military organization; if you want a pacifist society use pacifist methods, such as a pacifist type of organization. The children of Mars are not angels of peace. They always bear a family likeness to their father.

This throws light on the amount of progress toward peace which can really be attained by peace education. Peace propaganda, especially when undertaken on a huge scale, may produce theoretical pacifists, but it is not qualified to produce pacifists who will in a crisis stand firm for their principles. Such converts can generally be reached as quickly
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by the same methods when they are used by militarists. But the militarist goes further than propaganda. He knows that he cannot make soldiers who will stand firm in a crisis unless he trains them for a long time in a militaristic way of thinking and behaving so that in battle they will act almost automatically. Militarism is built into the structure of their physical and mental habits. In the same way pacifism, to be successful, must be brought down from the realm of theory to the realm of practice and built into the structure of personality through action. The pacifist must be trained not negatively by making resolves not to do certain things such as joining an army, but positively by being part of a group which is organized according to a pacifist way of life.

Great ideas cannot be left in the air to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. They must be rooted and grounded in a way of life which is actually lived. Large scale peace propaganda may have an important temporary effect but it touches life at too few points. Peace must be won by becoming embodied in enduring structures of peace which are rooted and grounded in society. Such structures cannot be formed suddenly. Some persons will always be more appealed to by large temporary effects than by small permanent effects. Both kinds of effects are needed, but there must be at least a few who devote themselves to slow, long-range efforts, the results of which are not immediately apparent. It is easier to tear down the walls of Jericho by a blast of trumpets than to build new walls. A small meeting for worship and business, organized as an enduring center to radiate a pacifist way of life, will do more for the cause of peace in the long run than the conversion of huge crowds to

a theory. The small group will grow. The great crowd will diminish. Did not Christianity begin by the conversion of twelve men?

An effectual pacifist society is not merely a human society, it is a divine-human society. On the purely human rationalistic level pacifism seems absurd and impracticable to most persons. Richard Gregg in 'The Power of Non-Violence' shows that it is more rational and practical than many persons suppose, but it must be admitted that there are many cogent arguments against pacifism. Like genuine self-sacrifice, it is irrational as viewed from the humanistic level. On the divine level of life, however, a different tenor prevails. God never uses force. He exists above the world of contending forces to harmonize the whole. This is why His followers are bidden to turn the other cheek. The world of peace is not evident to our intellectual understanding which can only analyze, but there is a peace which passeth understanding.

X
The Quaker Meeting as a Type of Social Structure

To compare an organization of such minor historical importance as the Quaker Business Meeting with such huge social structures as feudalism, liberal democracy, fascism, and communism is in a way absurd. Yet value is not necessarily judged by size, in fact it can be argued that current social structures are liable to failure because of their size, since they bring about an outward conformity which corresponds to no inward change. The Quaker method represents a way according to which men can work together,

a way which has actually succeeded on a small scale. It can, of course, be criticized as a kind of social cement which is too ideal to be generally practicable. This criticism requires further consideration.

Primitive society has much in common with the Quaker method. It is an organic society in which the parts are held together in a living whole by religious as well as social forces.[21] The tribal unity is often symbolized by a totem which has religious as well as social significance. The tribal council is conducted without voting. It arrives at its decisions as a unit very much after the fashion of a Quaker meeting.

"In the councils of such people (as the Solomon Islanders) there is no voting or other means of taking the opinion of the body," writes W. H. R. Rivers in a study entitled *Instinct and the Subconscious*, p. 95.[22]

John Richardson describes in his *Journal*[23] a visit to William Penn at Pennsbury in Pennsylvania during which he observed the Indian councils. He found that, although no parliamentary rules were enforced, "they did not speak two at a time nor interfere in the least one with another that way in their councils." John Richardson continues: "My spirit was so easy" with them that "I did not feel that power of darkness to oppress me as I had done in many places among the people called Christians."

Primitive society, however, is a biological-organic society made up of pre-individuals, not a "religious-organic society made up of self-conscious individuals. This makes a vast difference in the ethical codes in force. A biological-organic

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society is united from within, but it is an enemy, or a potential enemy, of all other similar societies. Ancient Israel, for instance, united from within by the worship of Jehovah as a tribal deity, was at enmity with all the surrounding groups. In a distinctly religious organic society, a different code prevails. The members of the group have passed through the individual stage in which they have won their freedom from the older outworn biological ties. As individuals they have become citizens of the world. They have learned to revere all other individuals. The religious-organic society seeks to draw all men into it. It is at enmity with none for it recognizes everywhere the possibility and sometimes the actuality of a similar divine-human society.

But is not this too great an expectation? One can feel his unity with a group, but can anyone feel unity with mankind everywhere? In one sense he cannot. He can only feel such a tie with the group of which he is a part and whose members he knows intimately. The size of such a group may vary according to the degree of intimacy which is sought. Aristotle limited the Greek city state to 10,000 free men because he believed that in a larger group the members could not know enough about each other to act together. With the highest precedent, Gerald Heard limits to twelve a group which can sense its unity through silent meditation and so create an "intense social field." Quaker meetings have varied in size from two or three up to several hundred. It is probable that when a meeting exceeds fifty it should swarm and form another group. An organic type of society is made up of small cells. It grows like other organisms by cell division.

The cell, or any member of a larger organism composed of a collection of cells, is a part, but in another sense it is the whole, for in it the whole can, on occasion, find complete expression and interpretation. Through my hand, for instance, I can express the purpose of my whole body. A member, which is part of a larger being, is different from the same member when removed from it, for in the larger organism the part may function for the whole. In the same way a meeting for worship and business is in one sense a part, and in another sense the whole of humanity. "So meditate," say the Zen Buddhists, "as if this room were the whole universe." This is the true microcosm of the macrocosm. Of the early Christian Church it has been said that each group was "a body of men and women in which the unity of every part corresponds to, repeats, represents, and in fact is the unity of the whole."[24]

Humanity in miniature, this is the essence of the group and because of this quality the worshiper can, through the group, sense his unity with all men. By worshiping the God of all and not the god of the part, he discovers a bridge which crosses every gulf, however wide. If the solitary Yogi in India can claim that, through his lonely meditations, he senses his unity with all life, because all life is one, how much more can the member of a worshiping group sense this unity who finds it symbolized and actualized within "the enclosed community."

To say that the Quaker society grows by cell-division is not to overlook the work of individuals. An individual may become the nucleus of a new cell. This was often the way in which Quakerism spread in the American colonies.

"Whenever a prominent Friend migrated to a pioneer locality he carried his Quakerism with him as he did his household stuff, and his house was likely to become the center of a new Quaker church. The itinerant members in their travels found their way into the homes of these isolated Friends and on their arrival a meeting was sure to be appointed for the neighborhood, and if convincements were made, as generally happened, the circle would increase and become a meeting."[25]

Such itinerant ministers are a help, but they are not indispensable. Any group, worshiping about the household hearth, may expand into a meeting or group of meetings. There must be, however, at least one devoted person in it who has a gift for holding the group together and extending its membership. "Equipment for the work of the ministry in our meetings," says Arnold Rowntree, "means something more than equipment to speak, or than having participation in silent worship; it calls for a capacity to gather people together into a comprehensive fellowship."[26]

One great advantage of the Quaker type of religious society is that it can grow from the smallest beginnings. A type of public worship which requires professional personnel and equipment maintained by the group cannot begin its full activity until the unit has attained a certain size.

We have compared this type of society with other types but it may properly be objected that the Quaker meeting for worship and business does not necessarily produce a "society" in the sense in which the sociologist uses that word. It is simply a religious group. A complete society

would also include political activities, and, in a more comprehensive way than is true of the Quakers, a fully developed society would include the features of an economic group. Though this objection is justified, the Quaker meeting has the power to approximate a complete society, and its history exhibits various degrees of development along this line.

The earliest responsibility of the business meeting was the care of Friends who had lost property or liberty or both by persecution. The collection of funds for this purpose and the administration of relief in many forms developed an economic aspect from the beginning. Friends' meetings have always undertaken to care for their own poor. The education of children is also a common concern of the meeting as a whole, the cost of education being defrayed by the meeting if parents are unable to bear it. Friends are advised "not to go into business beyond their ability to manage," and when they do so their unpaid obligations are even today theoretically and sometimes actually assumed by the meeting. The meeting has often exercised care over the business methods of its members. In the early days Fox's *Line of Righteousness and Justice Stretched Out over All Merchants* was read once a year in all meetings. Such sharing of responsibility creates some degree of interdependence on the economic level.

There are few, if any, records of meetings engaged in common enterprises in the sphere of economic production or consumption, though there is nothing in the nature of the situation to prevent this. No doubt such an undertaking as cooperative buying might considerably increase the
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solidarity of a meeting and cause it to become a more complete social unit. Nothing brings religion down from heaven to earth more effectively than its permeation of the economic sphere. To do this it must go further than the creation of humanitarian or philanthropic attitudes. It must create an actual sharing in some degree, not only of the products but also of the responsibilities of economic enterprise. For this the modern family is too small a unit. It goes down too easily before an economic storm. Might not a religious society prove to be a unit large enough to give those who compose it a higher degree of security?

The Society of Friends has developed political interdependence only to a small degree. If a legal dispute arises between members the discipline provides that it be settled by the meeting and not by a court unless the meeting fails. The Society has repeatedly dealt with delinquents against the laws of the State as well as against its own rules.

In the early days of the Colony of Pennsylvania the Quakers came very near to being a political organization. They were in control for seventy-four years under William Penn's "Frame of Government" which was the most advanced constitution of its time. Although they went far in the Quaker direction, operating on the principles of "perfect democracy," "perfect religious liberty," "perfect fairness in dealing with aborigines and neighbors," "the absence of military provision for attack and defense," and the "abolition of oaths,"[27] they could not go the whole way in setting up a real Quaker form of society which would abolish the parliamentary and electorate type of procedure. In A Quaker Experiment in Government, Isaac Sharpless observes that if
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"all the inhabitants (had) been Friends and amenable to their discipline, very little civil government would have been needed in internal affairs. The work of the legislators might have been devoted mainly to questions involving titles, etc., to property, and courts of law would have been shorn of nearly all their criminal and much of their civil business, while sheriffs and policemen, jails and punishments might almost have been omitted as unnecessary." As it was, Friends had difficulty in going as far as they did go. They were not independent of English control, and after the first twenty-five years Friends formed a minority of the population. The English quarrels with France, the necessity of administering oaths, the unsympathetic character of the heirs of William Penn, along with other difficulties, finally induced them voluntarily to relinquish power. Isaac Sharpless goes on to say: "Here in Pennsylvania was a chance to make the Divine law and the human law one," and the Quakers went a considerable way towards accomplishing this end. Indeed, they went further in this direction than is generally supposed, for the historians of Pennsylvania have seldom examined the meeting records which minutely describe the operations of a government parallel to the civil government and acting according to the type of religious organization which we have described. This society within the State functioned with particular effectiveness in rural communities where the population was almost entirely Quaker and where all aspects of life centered in the meeting. In these communities of farmers there was a real divine-human society of the type we are considering, and the group was united by all types of interdependence—religious, political, and economic.

For such a community as this to grow in the midst of another type of society involves two different codes of procedure, one operating between members of the divine-human group, and another operating between its members and people outside. The members of the religious community would then have to decide what price to pay in terms of compromise or adjustment because of the necessity of living not only in the midst of, but to a large degree as a part of, another type of society. Quaker groups have always drawn a line somewhere beyond which they believed compromise impossible. Different groups have drawn it in different places. Because the early Friends would not worship according to law, nor pay tithes, nor take oaths, nor offer "hat honor" and other compliments, they were considered as outside the pale of decent society and persecuted with great severity. It is difficult for us to realize this today when the Society of Friends has become so respectable. A pertinent illustration occurs at the opening of Thomas Chalkley's Journal:

"When between eight and ten years of age," he writes, "my father and mother sent me to school in the suburbs of London; I went mostly by myself and many and various were the exercises I went through, by beatings and stonings along the streets, being distinguished to the people by the badge of plainness which my parents put upon me of what profession I was; divers telling me "it was no more sin to kill me than it was to kill a dog."

Quakers generally have agreed in declaring that they will not cooperate with the State in waging war and by this declaration they have consciously taken their stand as a type
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of society operating on different principles from that in which they are living.

The problem of compromise is an old one, and has been met by various religions and sects in various ways. The Hindu solves it by his theory of different obligations at different stages of life, reserving the "no compromise" stage until the last. He first brings up his children and engages in business according to the methods of this temporal world. When his children are able to support themselves he is at liberty to retire to the forest to live the life of a hermit or lonely ascetic atoning, by a final struggle for perfection, for the grim necessity of his earlier imperfect life. The first Christians for the most part expected the perfect society to come suddenly from heaven, and in their tiny divine-human societies they attempted to live their lives as nearly as they could according to the will of God revealed by Christ, believing that thus they would be prepared to enter His Kingdom when it came in glory. Those societies consciously stood over against the other type of society with which they were surrounded; the refusal to worship the Emperor was a formal and public declaration of independence.

The Roman Catholic Church meets the difficulty in a way which is typical of the kind of sharing of life and merit which is found in a pre-individualistic biological-organic society. Just as in an organism all of the members suffer if one of the members suffers, or all gain if one gains, so the whole social organism can share in the perfection of a part. The Church, accordingly, devotes a part of itself to an uncompromising attempt at perfection in the experience of its saints and martyrs and in the lives of those who respond

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to a religious vocation to live wholly apart from the world. By the excess merits of these, as well as by the merits of Christ, the lack of merit on the part of others is atoned for. These others go on engaging in the compromising business of life as best they can in an evil world. But they take comfort in the realization that their imperfection will be overcome in the more perfect whole, since all are one in the single communion of the Church, the divine-human body of the risen and ever-living Christ. Insofar as any society is still organic this theory has meaning and validity today.

The early Protestants saw no choice save to compromise and live as best they could in a world which obviously belonged largely to the devil. In such an evil world men had to use violence and an Old Testament code of ethics. But Christians, they believed, were saved from the evil to which they were subject in their natural depravity. By a great historical transaction—the death of Christ at a certain moment of time and in a certain historical place—redemption was achieved. Either by election of God or by accepting the fact of Christ's sacrifice through faith, man, they maintained, could become justified and perhaps also sanctified. Thus the people of God were prepared to enter a perfect society beyond the grave. Only in the celestial social order could the Sermon on the Mount become a practical code of ethics.

To the Quaker who feels himself to be a member of a religious-organic group, the problem of being in the Kingdom of God and in this world at the same time seems at first sight peculiarly difficult. He may, and often he does, accept some of the elements present in the other solutions of
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the problem just described. He can at least create one small social unit in which the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount prevails. From this he will go out and endeavor to create similar units elsewhere. To earn his living he must, perhaps, engage in practices inconsistent with the type of society which he is promoting, but he restricts these compromises as much as possible, following God's leading as best he can and feeling that God will not require of him more than his frail humanity can bear. Christ did not come to lay down new laws to take the place of the laws of Moses. The only law of the Kingdom is the law of liberty by which man discovers that God's will is his will. The Sermon on the Mount is not a law code, but a revelation of God's will, and new revelations are never found to be inconsistent with the spirit of the older ones. It is still debated whether or not the step was a wise one by which the Quakers withdrew from politics in Pennsylvania because they could not participate in the acts of government and remain consistent. The southern Quakers freed their slaves and many were compelled to emigrate to the West because they found themselves in an economic order to which they could not conform. Just how far each generation must go in attempting consistency must be decided by the individual and corporate sense of Divine Guidance. The Christian Church in all its great historical divisions has always been a true church insofar as it has stood over against the world and refused to conform to it.

XI
The God-Centered Universe

The most serious problems which are faced by the members of a divine-human society are concerned with inclusiveness

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and exclusiveness. Too much inclusiveness results in a spirit of compromise and too much exclusiveness in a spirit of aloofness. The one is too broadminded, the other too narrow-minded and it is not easy to find the middle road.

The problem of compromise, which has already been discussed, is insistent because the kind of society which we are proposing must be created by means congenial to its own nature. It must grow slowly and naturally and not add to itself elements which it cannot assimilate. It cannot be brought about suddenly by political or military methods. All living things, including living forms of society, begin with single cells and grow from these. If growth is overstimulated by artificial means, life is destroyed. Our new society can only begin like a grain of mustard seed. One may plant, another may water, but "God giveth the increase."

Though engaged in a long-range endeavor, we shall not withdraw our sympathy and support from others who seek good ends by quicker means, provided we believe that more good than harm results from the means. However excellent the objectives of military measures, these tactics result in more harm than good because of their violence. Violence changes the external but not the internal. It not only does not change the internal but it may make the inner man more opposed to the change desired and it may drive the spirit of opposition deeper into the soul, there to remain as an unconscious source of trouble and conflict. The American Civil War, though it abolished slavery, created other evils as yet unsolved. A hundred years before that war the Quakers freed their slaves, using the pacifist method and leaving behind less feeling of resentment.

Political measures are less violent than military measures, yet sometimes they result in harm. If reforms are pushed too rapidly by political means and without reasonable respect for the feelings of the opposition, they defeat their own purpose. A member of a divine-human society may sometimes feel it permissible to throw his influence on the side which seeks the good when he knows that the methods used are not the best fitted to bring about the desired results. As a member of a group which has learned to use other methods he must never cease by deed and word to point out this better way.

The problem of exclusiveness is quite as difficult as the problem of compromise. The more the members of a divine-human society succeed in creating a closely integrated social unit, the more difficult will it be for new members to come in. Outsiders will hesitate to intrude on a group which has developed a high degree of intimacy and interdependence. Such a social unit is in serious danger of sinking from the religious-organic type which is inclusive, to the biological-organic type which is exclusive. This is especially likely to take place after several generations of inter-marriage within a given group.

Something like this has already occurred to the Society of Friends after nine generations of intermarriage and inherited membership.[28] The Quaker group is theoretically inclusive and has never failed to welcome visitors and new members into its fellowship. In spite of this, a spirit of exclusiveness exists. This feeling has been accentuated by one of the richest and best products of the Society of Friends, a distinctive culture and behavior pattern with peculiar symbols which are, as in all cultures, incomprehensible to

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newcomers. This culture was not only a uniting influence, it also produced lives of exceptional saintliness and power. It has now become largely obsolete and in many respects it is almost as incomprehensible to modern Quakers as to others.

The disappearance of a distinctive culture within the Quaker society has increased the power of inclusiveness, but broad-mindedness too easily degenerates into shallow-mindedness. A ruined house can be entered anywhere. Easy tolerance is a sign of decadence and confusion and is quite as much to be deprecated as fanatical intolerance. W. E. Hocking says that

> *"An assumed uncondemning or wholly beaming attitude … becomes an affectation of the Godlike which departs more or less from the veritable and evokes a like departure in the addressee, robbing intercourse of reality and minimizing the meaning of all language."[29]*

Societies, like individuals, should have depth and definiteness of character. A distinct type of culture with its appropriate behavior pattern must be generated if a society is to have real value and meaning. Such patterns in a society are like habits and traits of character in an individual. They represent the conserved and organized past experience of the group and without them energy is lost in the necessity for continually making fresh starts. A divine-human society must have its conservatives to consolidate past gains into forms of procedure which are habitual. It must also include radicals to lead the advance into new regions of thought and experience.

Here we return by another path to the same problem with which we began, the disintegration of society and the cure for disintegration. Society has disintegrated into a collection of free atomic individuals and such individuals abhor behavior patterns as a restriction of freedom. To many persons today moral codes are relative to individual interest. Old patterns have disappeared and there is nothing to take their place except self-interest, a self-interest that often seeks in vain for enlightenment. Life loses its meaning because no code of procedure appears fundamentally better than any other code of procedure. The result is moral bewilderment and a vain search for guidance.

The best and most primitive remedy for moral anarchy is the creation of social units, in which codes of behavior are embedded as a part of their essential structure. In a closely knit society the members have as much interest in each other as they have in themselves. The individual ceases to be an individual, hence he ceases to have an individual code of ethics. He becomes group-centered instead of self-centered and adopts a pattern of behavior congenial to the group.

But this solution raises us only a little in the scale of social values. A moral code which is group-centered need not apply outside the group. This is essentially the case with nationalistic codes. They tend to become circumscribed as a group morality accompanied by a contrary type of behavior directed toward those outside the group. This is the old tribal ethics over again, but on a mechanical instead of an organic basis, for the unity is organized by law. It cannot prevail over the anarchy which persists between groups.

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This brings us again to the central thesis of this essay. The primary need today is for a society which will be God-centered, not group-centered, nor self-centered. A God-centered group is both inclusive and exclusive. Here we do not halt half way between these two attitudes, but find a higher synthesis of both. Loyalty to a group, whether it be a race, a nation, a family, or some other unit is a virtue of a high order, but it need not be accompanied by a spirit of exclusiveness nor of antagonism to other individuals or groups. Only in a society created by the Father of all can man retain, not only those values inherent in a small closely united group, but those values which alone become possible of realization in a universal brotherhood. This is something quite different from that which is attained by the indifferent and tolerant mind of the cosmopolite who thinks of humanity as an aggregation of human atoms arranged in collections of approximately equal value. For the member of a divine-human society the unity generated in his own particular group is more valuable than other types of unity, but it is possible for all and it is to a certain degree already in process of realization throughout humanity. God is imminent in every human heart to inspire and create that unity with Himself through which the pains and evils of selfishness are overcome. God is not only imminent, but also transcendent. And by His power and love, felt most intensely in the act of worship, both individual and group are lifted to a level of Life in which they can apprehend the unity of all Life.

An Oriental proverb says that it is easier to paint a dragon than a horse. This is true because no one knows what a dragon looks like. The kind of society we are picturing is not

quite like the dragon for it really existed in varying degrees in early Christianity and it has been embodied in various later religious societies. Our illustrations have been confined to Quakerism, but examples could have been found elsewhere.

Such societies represent a type of social organization which is not feudal, democratic, communistic, nor of any other type usually cited in political or sociological discussion. They are not human but divine-human in the sense that they are unified and guided by the power and love of God. For this very reason they are not describable in political, economic or sociological terms. God does not strive violently as one force among other forces, but integrates contending forces. God does not, like man, build mechanical structures with material tools, but inspires the growth of living forms through gentle and enduring processes of development. God begins at a point and works outward into larger and larger areas of life. He is in very truth God the Creator and when men turn from Him society decays and dissolves into a disorganized mass of atoms, just as a living body decays when the soul has left it. Around us we see society dissolving and men struggling to hold it together by external means. But the way of growth for living forms is open now as it has always been. The social germ plasm is eternal.

At the beginning of our study we traced how man's interest descended from the divine to the human level and from the human to the sub-human. As was said at the outset, the remedy for the fall of man is the rise of man. As man directs his attention to the highest he will rise toward the highest, out of the sub-human world of materialistic science and

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mass-mindedness through the human world of individual reason and self-centeredness up to the divine world where human freedom becomes consistent with the unity of all things in God.

This was the path once taken by the poet Dante. In his journey through Hell he found that the seat of Satan was at the center while God remained afar on the periphery of the universe. The further the poet looked from the center of the universe towards its circumference the less of imperfection and the more of perfection he beheld. This was the universe revealed by the senses and interpreted by the science of Aristotle. But as Dante proceeded up the ascent toward Heaven a complete and wonderful change was wrought. The whole order was reversed. He saw a "Point which radiated light." Around this Point of most intense Divine Power were a succession of concentric circles charged with less and less of this power, the further each was removed from the center.[30] The mortal asks his spiritual guide why, in the world of sense, Satan is at the center and God is present most intensely in the furthest crystalline sphere, while now God's power is strongest at the center and evil is most potent at the rim. The answer is vouchsafed that the order of excellence is the reverse of the order of appearance. In the world of science, which is the world of appearance, the universe seems centered in that which is evil. But Dante had now risen to a sphere that was above material science, an eminence from which he beheld the real world of spiritual forms. Here all is transformed. God is the radiating center.

This journey we too must take in order to recover the vision of the universe centered in God; for it is only in God that all
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can be united into a single living society. "When He, the Great Shepherd, shall appear," wrote Daniel Wheeler, "we may appear also and all be bound together in the 'Lord's bundle of life'."[31]

Notes

1. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1937, now in paperback. Doubleday and Company, 1954.

2. Doubleday Doran & Co., 1930.

3. C. H. Dodd in *Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge,* p. 432. Blackie and Son, 1929.

4. The World Council of Churches formed in 1948, after struggling for years in vain to bring the Churches closer together on such matters as Ministry and Sacraments has recently sought to attain unity in the earlier Pauline doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ and the living Christ as head of the Church. This may result, at least among theologians, in a more mystical rather than a more institutional concept of the "Church. Whether practice will conform to theory or not is not yet apparent.

5. I deliberately use the word "antecedents" rather than "ancestors," as the influence of these sects on Quakerism is problematical. However, I believe from contemporary evidence that there was some influence from the continent of Europe.

6. *Apology*, Prop. XI, Sec. VII.

7. Friends' Library, IX, p. 437.

8. *Journal*. Friends' Library, II, p. 9.

9. See H. G. Wood, "William Penn's Christian Quaker" in *Children of Light*, H. H. Brinton, ed. The Macmillan Co., 1938.

10. See H. H. Brinton, "Stages of Spiritual Development as Exemplified in Quaker Journals," in *Children of the Light*. The Macmillan Co., 1938

11. Plotinus *Enneads*, VI, 5. 7, translated by M. Loftus Hare in *Systems of Meditation in Religion*.

12. Ephesians, 19-10.

13. Proverbs, Chapter 8.

14. Budge, *Annals of the Early Friends*, p. 232.

15. Penington, "Some Misrepresentations of Me Concerning Church Government," *Works* (1863), IV, p. 373.

16. *Journal of Sarah Hunt*, p. 7.

17. *Autobiography* of Allen Jay, p. 42.

18. *Works*, 1771, p. 603.

19. T. Rowell, *Japan Christian Quarterly*, XII, No. 2.

20. J. Middleton Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, J. Cape; London, 1937.

21. This is the main thesis of Durkheim in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life.*

22. For an excellent account of tribal society see Dorothy Lee, *Freedom and Culture* Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959.

23. John Richardson, *Journal*, p. 133-135, Philadelphia, 1856.

24. Sir Edward Hoskyns, *The Riddle of the New Testament*. Harcourt Brace, and Co., p. 34.

25. R. M. Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, p. 291.

26. A. Rowntree, *Essay on Woodbrooke*.

27. This list is taken from *A Quaker Experiment in Government*, Isaac Sharpless, pp. 1, 2.

28. For an interesting commentary on the effects of family relationships in the Society of Friends see G. Heard, *Social Substance of Religion*, pp. 302-306.

29. W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 346.

30. *Paradise*. Canto XXVIII.

31. Daniel Wheeler's *Memoirs*, p. 72.

About the Author

Howard Brinton (1884-1973) taught at several Quaker institutions, including Woodbrooke – a model for Pendle Hill. He served as co-director of Pendle Hill from 1936-1950, with his wife, Anna Cox Brinton.

In 1936, the Brintons faced the contingencies of a pioneer school-community. Howard Brinton was often seen on his way to negotiate the latest crisis, pursued by his rabbit Tibbar and the family dog Nuto. Gerald Heard, a staff member, watched this peaceable kingdom on the march with delight and saw in it a practical illustration of the philosophy of survival by reconciliation.

After retiring in 1952, Howard and Anna worked in Japan and Europe for the American Friends Service Committee. After Anna's death in 1969, Howard married Yuki Takahashi, his Japanese secretary.

Howard Brinton wrote many Pendle Hill pamphlets and several books, including *Friends for Three Hundred Years*, a classic work of Quaker faith and history, republished as *Friends for Three Hundred and Fifty Years* with comments from the perspective of the Philadelphia Friends.

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.

In 2010, the Young Adult Friends of PYM revived the series, officially launching the second run of the William Penn Lectures in 2011. [The series was renamed](#) the *Seeking Faithfulness* series in 2016, as part of the Young Adult Friends of PYM's concern for dismantling racism within the yearly meeting and the wider society. It no longer felt rightly ordered to have a major event named after a slaveholder. The *[Seeking Faithfulness](#)* series is hosted by the Young Adult Friends for the benefit of the whole yearly meeting community, and invites a Friend to challenge us all to explore new ways to practice our Quaker faith. The Seeking Faithfulness series seeks to nourish our spiritual lives and call us to faithful witness in our communities and throughout the world.