



Lecture 1962

William Penn

*Freedom  
to  
Love*

*Albert Bigelow*

# William Penn Lecture 1962

## Freedom to Love

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

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## Freedom to Love

It used to be an old country custom on Sunday afternoon to “walk the boundaries.” The weekdays were taken up working on the many parts that made up the farm. Sunday was a day of rest. Earthly things were not abandoned or ignored, just rested. It was a day of freedom from the details and cares of routine. It was a holy day and in it life was seen wholly, as a whole.

Sunday morning was free from distraction. The family, the farm family, on Sunday morning created the freedom to love God. It was an opportunity to join in and share the life and power that lay beyond the beauty and tragedy of existence in the wonder and mystery of things sensed. It was not an escape from life; rather it was an extension of life—a deeper involvement in life, a wholesomeness of life.

This Sunday worship was not an analysis. It did not judge; neither approve nor condemn, and so it was free to love equally the good and the bad. With choiceless awareness it was free to observe truth, which is what is. What is existence, as it exists from moment to moment. Life and death, scarcity and plenty, sowing-growing-harvest, rest and toil, love and sorrow, man and woman, man and child, man and God. And all of this was truth. It was unity. And so worship was synthesis, balance, harmony, proportion; becoming whole, integrated; being joined to God and to one another.

This kind of worship, this experience of holiness, is a transforming liberation. Its joy cannot be contained. Its compassion aches for all suffering. It is clear, sure and bold. It is humble and keenly aware that it is the anonymous servant of ennobling power. It loves all things separately and in unity; and, in loving all, loves God.

This kind of inspired worship, of course, is nothing less than the creation of the kingdom of heaven. Its heavenly vision transforms, and so gives meaning and purpose to all life. The values of the kingdom of heaven are the values of daily life because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of heaven having been revealed—truth, God, love— must be expressed. There is a compulsion, a divine command, to “publish truth” and to act love.

And so our holy family, after dinner, go out to walk the boundaries. As they have, in the morning, encompassed some of the truth about themselves; now their eyes are opened to encompass the truth about their way of life.

Let us, then, on this Sunday afternoon, walk the boundaries of our lives and our way of life. Let us leave our mythical farm family behind, but let us preserve the spirit. All life was not like that, is not, and probably will not be.

## *1*

In a spasmodic and fragmentary way, you and I have experienced the ultimate reality of that myth. We share that fundamental vision with every human. However diverse and fragile the sense of this myth, it is our common bond. It is

the wondrous, mystical amalgam that joins together the cells of the body of life. It is why we share each glory and each guilt. It is why we cannot bear the pain of the divisions that separate us and find it necessary to deny each other and wall off our perversity. But those are only our rituals; the reality is one. God is one, and we are one.

Which of us has not experienced the freedom to love in infinitely diverse forms. Sometimes a quiet measured assurance, sometimes a wild, wanton spirit of adventure, sometimes a reckless righteousness. We have been joined to the Lord and one another in countless ways and places. The miracle occurs sitting in a chair alone, walking a city street, on the vast ocean wilderness, in the midst of a busy conference. It can never be contrived, for it is not of the mind. Meeting—worship—is spontaneous. It is the instantaneous and eternal now.

And how inclusive it is. It knows no barriers of time, space, or opinion. When the meeting gathers it gathers all. The holy up-rushing spirit of our meeting is the same kingdom of heaven that the Catholic experiences in the mass or the Zen Buddhist in satori. The kingdom of heaven does not require a “religious” framework of rules and rites. Friends have long known this. It is apparent that only too often the religious framework becomes a barrier closing off access to the heavenly meeting. Man is the temple, and said Gandhi, “The key to the temple is kindness.” Kindness, now, connotes “of one kind”, “alike”, as well as the quality of solicitous consideration.

The “key” of loving kindness may be the key to the whole business of life. We shall consider that key later on. Right now we have to examine a very difficult area. And that is the business of translating the Holy Spirit into action.

## 2

“Faith without works is dead”, said Friend John. Too often we create a duality which does not exist. It is false emphasis that creates the duality and that abstract structure in turn generates arbitrary divisions. Overemphasis on “religion” channels off our spiritual energy to accumulate in a stagnant pool. Overemphasis on action becomes an uncontrolled flood. On the one hand, overemphasis has negated action and on the other hand overemphasis has negated spirit. In both cases spiritual direction and spiritual control have been lost. The autonomy of the spirit being lost, another authority arises to take control. That authority is the authority of the mind, is it not?

The authority of the mind is the authority of measure and plan. The mind is an accumulating machine. Its extraordinary powers exist to serve the spirit and its purpose is to carry out, to execute, to put into practice, the creative values generated by the authority of the spirit. The spirit is lord and master and it is the spirit in each of us—“that of God in every man”—which must remain in charge, in control. Our actions are meant to spring first from the heart, and then to be ennobled with reason.

The mind, being by nature acquisitive and accumulative, becomes defensive if it is permitted to usurp authority. The

mind is a tool and deals with what was or may be, never with what is. The mind is not fitted to make policy, to create values, to determine principles; for the function of the mind is a storehouse of experience, which is the past, and the projection of experience, which is the future. Therefore the mind cannot comprehend the present, which is what is; the truth.

The mind does not work in matters of spirit and principle but in plans, patterns, theory. Working in plans the mind is absorbed in results, effects, achievements, and success. For this reason the mind also is absorbed in failure and with loss of accumulation and possessions—material, mental, or psychological. Reward and punishment become controlling obsessions. This, then, is the source of fear, which is always of loss.

Now, a plan demands conformity. Conformity requires control. Conformity does not tolerate differences. Conformity does not create one from many, it makes many conform to one. Inevitably, conformity requires force (however respectably it may be clothed) to enforce conformity with the plan. Plan becomes more important than purpose. Principles are lost in pattern. Reality is obscured in ritual.

So it is clear that primacy of plan is static. But reality, what is, is ever-changing, dynamic. Therefore the plan is out of touch with reality—false, a lie. That is why it requires force. “Force,” said Emerson, “Is a lie made practical.”

This is the way that the mind usurps authority; becomes the master and not the servant; and ends by dominating the spirit.

Is this not one source of much of our confusion and incoherence? Is not this reversal of roles a basic part of the contradiction of our lives. To put it simply, and perhaps to clear up any confusion I have created here, is this not the distortion and degeneration indicated by early Friends' use of the single word "notional."

### 3

"And many were convinced!" How often that phrase appears in the records of early Friends. It is clear that conviction was not a final result. It was not a matter of solving a difficult mental problem and it was not a matter of emotional "Coming-to-Jesus." It was not a decision to join the Quaker "Church." It was an on-going process. Friends didn't join up, sign up, and become "card-carrying" Quakers. Indeed, for many years, there was no formal membership or felt need for it. Friends were convinced again and again. They were convinced of the presence and power of the Lord. They were convinced in the root-sense of the word. They were "overcome" of the Lord, they were "conquered" by the Holy Spirit. They were dominated by the authority of the Lord. The absolute was not an abstraction, varied and notional, it was a reality. The source of life and each individual life force were fused together into one and under one.

Listen to Francis Howgill again. "The Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement, and great admiration,

insomuch that we often said one unto another, with great joy of heart, ‘What? Is the kingdom of God come to be with men?’”

The God of this kingdom was no motherly old man who, in the words of the cynic, “Will let me alone in this world and take care of me in the next.” Here was no avenging Jehovah with rigid codes of behaviour punishments or rewards. Here was no effeminate, Nordic “Son”, in flowing robes and flowing tresses to act as a sponge for daily follies and to swear to your heavenly security-clearance. This was no operator who would fix it for you if you were “justified” in lying, cheating, and killing. Here was no urbane equivocator of shifting, convenient values to suit expediency. Here was no “Power of Positive Thinking”, a license to profess without practice. Here least of all, was no hierarchy, remote superiority, soulless institution and rigid organization to determine and enforce official theory and policy. Finally, here was no pious, sweet, sentimental withdrawal or illusionary escape from the life of the times.

Early Friends were very much “involved in mankind.” They were the exact focus of the problems of their time. At that moment and at that place in history the meaning of the historical strivings of mankind was distilled into its essence. That essence was the Quaker witness—the essential, central problem of that time was freedom of religion, freedom of worship.

When Friends gathered silently to worship they simultaneously faced the realities of the age.

Their simple silence was indeed the “Shout of a King.” Their message was clear and its truth was simple. The testimony of Friends could not be ignored because it “answered that of God in every man.” It was instantly recognized as the prophetic truth, the perennial truth, the (unconscious) truth that passes all understanding. All men understood it and immediately recognized its daring import and revolutionary implications. The truth was more truth than most men were prepared to bear.

What was that truth?

*Man can be an instrument of God.*

*Man is not unless he is willing to be a man. To be a man is to be autonomous. To be autonomous is to be one's own authority. To be one's own authority is to be free to love.*

*The purpose and power of love is to join in unity, tolerance, and harmony with nature, man and God.*

*Freedom begins with freedom. Freedom is not an end, but a means. Freedom is the means to love.*

But men shrewdly recognized that this truth would bring about a radical change in their lives and so they quickly rejected it. The power establishment of the time, contriving as it customarily did (behind the pious sham and shame of its “Christianity”), instantly perceived the revolutionary nature of the testimony. Church and State reacted swiftly and savagely to discredit, destroy, and punish this threat to power.

But Friends quietly refused to resist this evil. We will suffer the evil you do us, they said, and we do not deny that evil exists and must be overcome. But they said, evil is not overcome with evil; to resist evil with evil is to drag ourselves down to the worst in both of us, to make as both inhuman. And that, they said, is to “miss the mark” (although probably few of them knew that the Greek word translated in the King James Version as “sin” is literally translated as “miss the mark”).

What Friends were saying was an eloquent simplification and recapitulation of the religious ferment which had been brewing for more than a century. If you were free to think, and most men were (inside themselves and outside the ceremonial dance of conformity), you could give silent assent to what Quakers were saying. There was something elemental and right in the idea of a “Do-it-yourself” religion.

But there was more to it than that. If you could question religion, you could question anything. Even the need for and existence of God! And men were doing just that. There was that Italian who had even questioned the relation of the earth and sun and stars and planets.

If a man could be free from the authority of the Church, then he could also be free from the authority of the State! A recurring dream of a divine social order in this way took a daring leap forward. Now emerged the repressed image of a just and equitable society, based on the rights and created by the power of every man. This was heady and dangerous stuff; as Galileo was to the heavens so was this to the earth. This was not reform. This was revolution.

So most men gave quick mental assent, and even verbal assent, to the new ideas. And then went out and did precisely what they had been doing all their lives. The new ideas brought superficial changes in men's lives. Some of them used the new ideas to create beneficial changes for other lives. But most of them saw the new concept of liberty only as license, and looked to new ideas only to see how they could benefit from them.

Nevertheless they probably sensed that they had fallen short, that they had been disobedient to the “the heavenly vision.” And even if they appeared to avoid this discomforting knowledge—or “uneasy conscience” by another name—it walked with them like a small pebble in a shoe. And perhaps the violence of their outward rejection of the Quakers reflected the need, the urgent need, to exclude what in their hearts of hearts they knew they should have been. The ideas, the words, of the Quakers could be dismissed, confronted, ridiculed, and reasoned away. The lives of the Quakers though “preached” so that no one could avoid the message, and said that those who have seen the target and aim elsewhere have missed the mark. To miss the mark, to fall from the grace of enlightenment, is inescapably to contrive your own punishment. And that punishment is fear, doubt, confinement in indecision and inaction; death—spiritual death.

#### 4

“Action is eloquence”, Shakespeare had said, half a century before, “for the eyes of the ignorant are more learned than their ears.” Friends’ lives preached because they had reduced

their principles to practice. They could not be ignored because their actions were eloquent and living witness to the prophetic testimony. Their lives exemplified all the difficult, “embarrassing”, “impractical” parts of the scriptures.

Behold, the kingdom of God was within them. The kingdom of heaven was at hand. They had no need of rules and rubrics; they lived the Sermon on the Mount. They did not lie, or cheat, or kill. They did not equivocate; their “Yea” was “Yea” and their “Nay” was “Nay.” Their kingdom of God was not “This” or “That”, its arrival was not to be calculated; for it was here, now. They did not lay up for themselves treasures on earth, but were quick to share their possessions or to give the benefit of doubt in case of disagreement. They did love their enemies. They were ridiculed, jailed, maimed and mutilated, kicked, beaten, stoned, exiled, whipped, starved, frozen, tortured, despised, cheated, and robbed. Still they loved their enemies and they were not afraid. No man and no thing could intimidate them. They responded with love. Nothing could separate them from the love of God and they were free to love all men—the children of God, each with “that of God” in him. They radiated the strength of God, the power of God; their inner light shone forth as the light of God. Even though their bodies were confined in dungeons, they were free. Said Anne Audland—“This is indeed a place of joy, and my soul doth rejoice in the Lord. I continue a prisoner in Banbury, but I witness freedom in the Lord.” Three centuries later, Gandhi, one of like spiritual stature, said, “No man loses his freedom, save through his own weakness.”

“Faith does not permit of telling, it has to be lived and then it is self-propagating.” Consequently they were little concerned with the results of their actions. They lived in the present. They had an obsession to be Christians and therefore were not preoccupied with how to become Christians.

This concern with the undertaking rather than the outcome was well put a hundred years later by John Woolman, “— looking less at the effects of my labour, than at the pure motion and reality of the concern, as it arises from heavenly love.” And, too, by Gandhi, “It is not the effects of our acts which must concern us, but their propriety.”

This was, perhaps, the most difficult part of Friends testimony. It still is. And the reason is that it seems to be an affront to man’s power and capacity to plan his course of action. It says that the means shape the ends and says that action precedes idea.

Action precedes idea?

This seems, at first, like an inversion of reality and therefore an incoherent statement. It flies in the face of our “scientific” thinking and customary assumptions.

Some of you may have already rejected it. But, however difficult, it is important to our overall comprehension, so let us see if we can, freely, examine it.

Ideas, as we are considering them here, are concerned with ends. If I am concerned with an end, the action that follows must serve that end. The strength of my desire to achieve

that end determines the means to effect that end. One of two things is going to happen. Either the idea is going to produce effective means, or the idea is going to be frustrated.

Let us take an example, one which may have some familiarity. Suppose that my family and I have been coming late to meeting for worship. I am always ready on time and waiting, but my dear wife and children don't seem able to begin preparations soon enough. I don't think I'm going to be eldred quite yet, and there's been no reproach in a quick observing glance or two from the facing benches. No reproach either from those few that recompose themselves in the body of the Meeting after we have made our guilty entrance. I've spoken the truth lovingly to the family. It's clear that I shall have to speak more plainly. I do. My teenage daughter rebels! She flatly refuses to go to "that stupid old meeting" any more. Besides none of her friends have to get up and go to church; all of them always sleep all Sunday morning—except for skiing weekends.

If I insist on putting my idea into action, the idea will obviously dominate the action. My family, and indirectly the meeting, are now caught in a trap, are no longer free, are what is ineptly described as "victims of circumstance." The remedy has become worse than the illness.

Let us take another example. Remember the first time you fell in love? Did you have the idea to fall in love? Did you think yourself into love? Did the idea come first or did the act come first? Of course the act did. "Love was the first motion."

Remember what a release it was? Never had you been bound so closely to anything, yet never had you felt so free. The “mind-forged Manacles” were struck off. And remember, too, how free you were to love everything and everyone. You had quite overcome the question of free will. Can there be any doubt that when you first fell in love that action preceded idea?

Several months ago I was lunching alone in Horn and Hardhart’s Restaurant. The restaurant was crowded and two strangers asked if they could share my table. We struck up a conversation. Soon, puzzled perhaps by my corrupted Boston accent, they asked me where I came from. Can you imagine their astonishment and even their alarm if I had replied, “I come from the Lord!”

Lord!”

You recognize this, of course, as George Fox’s response to a similar query. It contained his ringing conviction that the “Power of the Lord was over all.” But I feel that it also contained the act of love, spontaneous, pure, and natural. Like the trusting gift of a little child, it opened a way for the relationship to flower in love and understanding. The response to the challenge of the old Yorkshire man was unrehearsed; not contrived, nor cautious. It was not guarded or defensive. It immediately established a climate of confidence and trust. Confidence that since both men were manifestations of God and therefore the kingdom of God was at hand, all would be well because the results were in God’s hands.

Yes, early Friends sensed that each man was a temple of God and that the key to that temple was kindness—loving kindness. They sensed that the letter, notions, ideas, beliefs, soon quenched the spirit. Then divisions, dissensions, and defensiveness arose and soon intolerance, force, and violence killed the spirit. They held close to the spontaneous center of the spirit. The spirit impelled them as it freed them to act with the means of the spirit, which is love. How right Gandhi's words would have sounded to them, "It is not only necessary to renounce the fruits of our actions, it is necessary to relinquish them." William Penn summed up in words what he and his friends were saying by their acts," "A good end cannot sanctify evil means: nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it." They did what they said and that is why they spoke as one having authority; their values were clear, real, living. They had earned the right to speak.

How were they free to love? How did they tap the source of that power of love? "To know that the Lord is at work, you have to be at work with the Lord", says Elfrida Vipont Foulds of these early Friends. Was it not that they put the Lord first, that the love of God, the worship of God, and the work of God was the constant and principle business of their lives? The object of life for the Society of Friends, then, was refusion with the Spirit.

## PART II

Having considered some of our eternal values, let us “walk the boundaries” of our daily existence. The eternal values will give us a point of reference for our existing values. Consequently we will not look out on the circumstances of our lives in an entirely objective way. Anyway, the dispassionate, “objective” view is often dull and lackluster. On the other hand, bias can be equally dull if it produces a labored wallowing to reach a foregone conclusion.

Again, it’s a question of emphasis. What is emphasized depends on the value or worth given to it. For example, Winston Churchill wrote an historical account of seventeenth century England without mention of the Religious Society of Friends. (I’ve always considered him a rather overrated personage anyway.) In short, we shall be looking at our existing lives with the “single eye.” It will be an admitted bias but for that reason, I hope, not a smug and proud one; but a fair one. Let us consider it as a pair of binoculars which enable us to perceive more clearly the important parts of the whole.

“It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” So said Charles Dickens about the French Revolution. We live in an age of revolution too — whether we know it or not, and whether we like it or not. Never has there been such a revolution. It is far beyond our sheltered comprehension to perceive the radical nature of the change. Who would be so smug as to claim psychological understanding of the significance of our revolution? The poet has called it “The

Age of Anxiety.” And who, even in the surfeit of plenty that surrounds us, can deny the pervading apprehension, and sense of approaching calamity and impending doom.

The Seven Wonders of the World would not even be noticed among the Wonders of our World of Science. Through science and our fantastic technical knowledge we have extended our senses so that almost any scientific concept is realizable. I do not now propose to examine the wonders of our scientific revolution. It is revolution enough that the essential benefits of this scientific revolution mean that no man, no woman, and no child need any longer suffer from hunger, unrelieved ill health, meaningful opportunity for his special talents, and consequently hope.

Scientific communication is instantaneous. Recording, measuring, computing (technical “thinking”) have fundamentally changed the storing, availability, and application of scientific knowledge. Man’s unique power of conscious communication has been radically extended. The implications and possibilities of scientific communication to augment understanding and unity among men are now enormous.

The waving tentacles and nervous antennae of man’s technique and knowledge reach through the sea to its bed, through the earth to its core, and through the skies to its zenith, and out, out, out— to infinity.

Man has also extended his insatiable scientific inquisitiveness into the infinity of his own nature. What man knows about the miracle of himself he now realizes is as

small as the surface of an iceberg is to the unseen nine-tenths hidden in the depths. Into this vast unknown, man now sets forth, confident that he will find the explanation, meaning, and purpose of himself. He intends to find out why he can control nature and, perhaps, why he cannot control himself. He may even find out why he is confident that he will find out.

At this moment in history man has developed his extraordinary technical knowledge so that he is at the point of the technical creation of life itself, and thus, eventually, the creation of himself outside of himself. And, at this moment in history, man has developed his scientific power so that he is at the point of extinguishing all life. At this moment in history, man has failed to develop his powers of integrity, balance, wholeness. Man has left himself out. He can put man into space; but he has not yet learned to put space into man.

What is the most important thing in this room to each of us? We are a little shy to admit it, but it is ourselves, isn't it? It's our personality. It's the feeling that just because we exist the world is a different place. And therefore each of us has meaning; a contribution to make the world a better place. I am convinced that this power of personality is a very evident and elemental truth. Hold a tiny baby in your hand and feel the power of its unique, special, precious personality. Reflect on the power of personality to overcome intolerable adversity by the exercise of that personality. Note the resurgent power of personality to recover from despair, disease, and dereliction of its humanity through the assertion of that wounded personality.

The enduring values, the eternal truths, the prophetic standards that the saints and sages have pointed out to us, and that we clearly sense in our own hearts, are concerned with the preservation of personality and the power of personality, are they not? The blessed community is created by personality; personality integrated in the unified, harmonious power of all personalities. You will have life, and have it abundantly, to the degree that your personality is free to grow, to flower, and to bear fruit. But not unless your personality is united to the Lord and to others. You cannot do it alone. You cannot do it without man. You cannot do it without God.

You remember the story of the golden calf.

Now for me the significance of the story lies in the symbolism of the calf. It was called a “calf”, I think, in the sense of a small bull. The bull was called Molloch. And Molloch, the bull, was a symbol for power.

You see the parallel with our situation. Here we are, just freed from the bondage and insecurity of daily existence (Egypt) and we fall down and worship the golden calf — though perhaps we would better substitute a golden Cadillac. We have created the abundant life — without values. We are freed, but know not what to do with that freedom.

“If God is dead”, said Dostoevesky, “anything is allowed.” If we have not killed God, who can deny that, as a nation, we have abandoned him. And how true today are Emerson’s words, “Things are in the saddle and are now riding man.” Another transcendentalist, perhaps the greater prophet, said,

“There is no odor so bad as that which rises from goodness tainted!”

We cannot bear the pain of facing the facts. We deny, evade, avoid them. We shield ourselves from the facts with thick veils of self-deceit. But it does not work; the bitter pain persists. We know that we have betrayed the power of personality to fall down and worship the impersonality of power. We have abandoned the kingdom of heaven, which is at hand and within us, for the kingdom of having and its promises which delude us.

And yet we are discontent. We are deeply discontent, divinely discontent. God will not die, will not be mocked, and will not be denied. However painful it is to face reality, it is death to be out of touch with reality.

## ***I***

Let us look then at three manifestations, in our social order, of the revolution of our times. They are: (1) the population explosion, (2) the divisions among men, and (3) war.

The population explosion is concerned very much with numbers, but it is important to remember that each number is just as precious and necessary a personality as you yourself.

Thomas Malthus's famous theory was that food increases arithmetically while population increases geometrically. Malthus made a forecast through five generations and predicted sixteen times as many humans but only five times as much food. Or, put another way, only about one third as

much food for each human being. According to his theory, Malthus was well justified in predicting disaster.

For a time, Malthus's theory was contradicted by actual developments. Now, however, while the Malthus theory is not infallible, it does appear to indicate the actual course of coming events.

We can see why when we look at the population rate increase in a world in which two thirds of the people go to bed hungry every night. The population is relentlessly growing like this:

- Every three Seconds (One Second Two Seconds Three Seconds) 5 new mouths — the size of the average American family—are added to the population of the earth.
- Every Minute 100 new mouths are added to the population of the earth.
- Every Hour 6,000 new mouths are added to the population of the earth.
- Every Day 145,000 new mouths are added to the population of the earth.
- Every Year more than 50 million new mouths are added to the population of the earth.
- The population of the earth will double in 40 years. It is now 3 billion. By the year 2000 it will be 6 billion. By the year 2040, the population of the earth will have quadrupled, will then be 12 billion.
- But huge segments of the earth's present population, mostly underprivileged, with the exception of the United States, are growing much faster than that.

- The populations of the United States, Mexico, Central, and much of South America will double in 25 years.
- In another generation (33 years) the U. S. population will equal the present population of India; 400 million.
- One quarter of the world is now Chinese. In another generation, half the world will be Chinese.

Malthus saw that population and food supply could not be considered separately. The utmost scientific ingenuity, put into effect now with all the vigor and priority we could summon would not, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, postpone the reckoning for more than two generations. Under the best of circumstances, they predict that the earth will not be able to support its population after 2025.

Another development must not escape our notice. More than a third of the people of the world now live close to starvation. Their calorie intake is about one third of ours. Their protein intake about one tenth. Our life expectancy is about 70 years. Theirs about half of that. The opposite numbers of many people in this room are already dead. Now these deprived humans want to live better and want to live longer. Let's see what happens if we give them 20 years more life, double their calories, and bring their protein up to one quarter of ours. The stark and inescapable reality of this improvement is this. Though their numbers will double in the next generation, they will not need twice as much food as today; they will need 4 times as much!

At this point two comments are necessary:

- (1) The United States of America now spends one million, seven hundred thousand dollars every day to store nine billion dollars' worth of surplus food.
- (2) The United States of America proposes to spend twenty billion dollars in an intense effort to put a man on the moon — by 1970.

The basic facts of the population explosion and consequent food shortages, inevitably produce inequalities in the social order. Inequality of things, even the basic necessities to sustain life, generates inequalities and divisions among mankind. Rich and poor, hungry and well-fed, literate and illiterate, sick and healthy. It is apparent that the divisions are widening almost in proportion to the population explosion. The rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer.

It has been said that nothing is so expensive as poverty. The struggle for existence absorbs all resources. Poverty is a trap. To increase the number of people entrapped is only to compound the problem.

Freedom, in the political, material, and social sense, is not possible unless there is a surplus above basic wants. And in our revolutionary time that means a number of things. First, basic needs must be rationed when they are in short supply. They must be controlled by force, and that means by government force. Second, there are no adequate resources to cure the ill health and create the technical knowledge for self-improvement. Third, capital for self-development

shrinks as population expands. Fourth, despair and apathy prevail. Fifth, frustration leads to violent extremity.

To understand the contrast between our way of life and that of most of the people of the world takes a large order of what Dorothy Hutchinson calls “imaginative identification.”

- Annual income per capita in the U. S. averages more than \$2,000.
- Annual income per capita for most of the people of the world is less than \$100.
- The average American spends about \$275 a year on the arms race—almost three times most men’s annual income.
- The average American spends about \$55 a year on alcoholic beverages—more than half the average annual income of most men.
- The average American spends less than \$1.50 per year on the peace race—the average family in India must feed itself on about 25¢ a day.
- More than one third of the people of the world cannot expect ever to see a doctor or a dentist; to complete more than two years of school, if they overcome illiteracy at all; to ever get out of debt; to avoid exploitation by landlord and employer; or to have any private property beyond daily clothes, food utensils, and a few personal trinkets.

Color is a superficial difference among men. (Most of us here become darker in the summer and lighter in the winter) Two thirds of the world are “colored.” The historical fact is that a few whites have depressed, deprived, and degraded

whole nations and continents of colored peoples. It has been a process of exploitation of natural resources and of humans. At best it has been a patronizing benevolence, at worst, barbaric inhumanity. It has been, and is, invariably undergirded with force and violence. This pattern of prejudice, inequality, and undervaluation extends beyond the color and racial lines. We have only to look to Cuba.

Private American enterprise established feudal domains within that independent country. The people of that country found the indignity and deprivation of their condition intolerable. This was, of course, only partially caused by foreign enterprise. Anyway they revolted. The American institutions then turned to their democratic government to come to the defense of their feudal estates.

There is no way to overstate the significance of “colonialism” and “imperialism” to those who have suffered under it. An enlightened Englishman, a contemporary of Elizabeth Fry, later Governor of Madras, said 135 years ago, “Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence and often with great cruelty, but none has treated them with so much scorn as we; none has stigmatized the whole people as unworthy of trust, as incapable of honesty, and as fit to be employed only when we cannot do without them. It seems to be not only ungenerous, but unpolitic, to debase the character of a people fallen under our domination.”

We must be fully aware that inequality demeans and degenerates human values so that they corrupt the entire social order. Who can deny, for example, that the Congress

of the United States is corrupted and controlled by a small group of southern segregationists?

The world revolution, like our American Revolution, is very much concerned with equality. It remains to be seen whether the means to that social order of equality are to be violent or non-violent.

## 2

We come now to the problem of war.

The revolutionary change in methods of warfare has made warfare universal and catastrophic. One of the great, pre-nuclear war experts, a master of strategy, said, "War is the extension of politics by other means." War could then be limited and controlled as a part of overall policy. War did not control policy. There was no such thing as "unconditional surrender" there was room for reasonable compromise after victory and defeat. Victory was still possible. War was fought by the young and strong, the innocent and weak were protected. Most important of all, war was under control in that it was a part of general policy only to be adopted as a last extremity. But war now dominates and controls policy; politics is now the extension of war by any means.

Yet, despite deep human suspicion and resistance to change, it is increasingly evident that war is unthinkable. However, that operational reality is still submerged by the archaic ritual that war is noble, honorable, and right. The truth is that no nation can any longer say to its citizens. "We can defend you by force of arms."

And yet war dominates our lives, denies the hopes of mankind, and debases the human spirit. ‘No monstrous warfare states stand poised; committed to a policy of “deterrence” that now threatens, and will increasingly make certain, continental destruction. The warning time is down to 15 minutes.

War is now immoral. War now means death to millions of innocent women and children as well as to men who are not under arms. It means death, suffering, and mutilation by germs, fire, chemicals, explosions, starvation, disease, and irradiation. It means death and distortion by mutation. War is already going on; at this moment we are contaminating the very seed of man. Therefore war today is not only against the body but against the soul. Who makes war against the soul makes war against God, does he not?

Is there, indeed, any form of warfare that is not now permitted to governments? Eichmann, the servant of a warfare state, efficiently organized the murder of 6,000,000 humans. Each of the Polaris submarines that you and I own, will efficiently murder 60,000,000 humans.

So, finally, war is immoral for us because we consent to it, cooperate with it, collaborate with it, contribute to it. It is not just some soulless, inhuman institution that is already undertaking these atrocities. It is our government and we are responsible.

“The true horror”, says Kathleen Lonsdale, “is not that anyone would ever use the bomb against us; but that we would ever think of using it against anyone.”

As citizens of a democracy and as men of conscience can each of us, personally, evade the question; “How much of an Eichmann am I?”

War is stupid, unreasonable, and impractical because it is self-destructive. War now destroys the people and material it is designed to defend. Furthermore, war and the threat of war is now destroying the values it would defend.

No man is so foolish as seriously to predict that democracy can survive a nuclear war. Any citizen of this country would ignore at his peril the warning of General Eisenhower in his farewell speech as President. Here was one of the most famous generals the world will ever know, admitting that he had been unable to control the industrial-military complex of our warfare state. We have seriously to ask if our emphasis on warfare as the primary solution of our problems is not reducing us to the very thing we fear. Let those who would trust the military, whose profession is honestly described as “hired assassin”, look now at France and Algeria, or at the Wehrmacht Generals who so recently and so willingly carried out Hitler’s atrocities.

Our monstrous and massive preparations for war are ineffective against communism. We spend more than 5 million dollars on war every hour. That is \$1,500 every second, relentlessly, second after second. But to make five million dollars more in scale, let’s see what we could buy with it. Five million dollars will buy a 200 bed hospital, completely equipped. We have now spent half a trillion dollars, five hundred billion dollars, preparing for war to defend us against communism. In terms of useful articles

that's five hundred thousand, half a million, 200 bed hospitals!

We haven't got the hospitals and we haven't stopped communism. It has continued to expand.

If our warfare state has not yet destroyed our form of government, its corruption is destroying the individuals who are the basis of that government.

War has always been inhuman. And so human beings have had to adjust their natures to war. Self-deceit, hypocrisy, delusion are tools we use to accommodate ourselves to the inhumanities of war. That is to say, we can only tolerate war by developing a split personality. We feel impotent because we have made ourselves impotent. The situation seems out of control because we have taken ourselves out of the driver's seat. We are in a bind.

We are not just in a single bind; we are in a double bind. The falseness that we have used to detach ourselves from reality is a malignant force. Its corruption rapidly contaminates our personality. Our self-deceit denies the evil that we condone and, at the same time, quenches the spirit that would do good. Self-deceit is self-defeat, for it obliterates our values.

Throughout our social order, our values have been debased. The standards of our hospitals, schools, business, government at all levels deteriorate at an ominous rate. Our cities are vast, spreading, overlapping areas of cupidity and corruption. A few glittering centers—impersonal, repetitive formulas; status symbols of conditioned air, conditioned

music, and conditioned men—are juxtaposed to spreading, stinking slums—equally harsh and impersonal, equally repetitive formulas of lowered status; symbolic of conditioned crime, conditioned callousness, conditioned hate, and conditioned racial division.

Communications into and within our dehumanized cities are as uncontrolled, chaotic, and incoherent as the cities themselves.

And around each city is a rigid white ring, bristling with color prejudice, greedy despoilations of nature, and the “instant” slums of tomorrow.

It has been said that the buildings of man are monuments of what he really is. It appears that the structures of status are as cold and depersonalized as the Cold War. It appears that our buildings represent a disordered, disunited, disintegrating community—the damned community.

We walk with a nameless dread. Our self-deceit is the sound of our whistling against the dark that we sense closing in. We suspect that we are tolerating, even in our escapes from them, the things of hate. And experiencing the things of hate we are no longer able to experience love. We withdraw from the problems at home. We pass by on the other side of the problems abroad.

We have seen that war is inappropriate to a man who would call himself human. War is particularly inappropriate to citizens of a democracy.

Forced military conscription has been a national policy for more than twenty years. Conscription is a mockery of democracy. For conscription displays that the citizens of the democracy cannot be trusted to defend it without being forced to do so. We overlook the fact that conscription forces a man completely because it can and does force him to die, takes his life, without his voluntary consent. Conscription, then, enforces a power over the individual which is absolute.

It is an evasive quibble to say that the policy of conscription has been adopted by democratic legislative process. The very conscripts whose voluntary life-and-death choice is taken away by the conscription statutes are unable to vote on the policy. This is “conscription without representation.”

The military establishment is not a democratic organization. On the contrary it is an authoritarian hierarchy. Status divisions are enforced in a class system of upper class officers and lower class enlisted men. There is no equality of privilege or things in the military caste system; more importantly, no equality of inherent worth. Is it not a paradox that the “world’s greatest democracy” has created as its largest institution, public or private, a socialistic activity which is based on a caste system of inequality?

War depends on secrecy, deceit, lying, and spying. A policy of secrecy creates the chosen few who are permitted to know. War and military policy is a closed society. It is an inversion of democracy—an open society. Military policy permits no open, free discussion; no tolerance of differing points of view; no time to determine the facts and to weigh their relative importances; no consideration as to whether a

decision is required. There is no trust of the people, no trust of their inherent common sense, no trust in their power to reach a consensus. A policy of secrecy means a few who presume to know and to make decisions for the many. The warfare state is the master and not the servant of man.

Right now our country is at war. We, who are that country, are not consulted, not permitted to know to what degree we are involved, or to what degree and where we intend to become involved. We are excluded from the making of policy because we are not in on the secrets. Furthermore, the secrecy is often used as a screen to prevent examination, question, dissent.

It is clear that secrecy and democracy cannot long exist together. Secrecy is like a cancer in the democratic body. Its powerful poison distorts the very life-blood of democracy, and like a cancer, it feeds on its own corruption and is, I expect, always a terminal and fatal disease.

## PART III

Well, we've "walked the boundaries." The defects are apparent; erosion and waste. Artificial fertilizers may have produced quick results at first, but in the end only compounded and hastened the deterioration. We have not cooperated with nature. We have tried to force nature in unnatural ways. We have plowed and planted where only grassland and woodland should be.

Yet the inherent goodness of nature, the powerful forces of life, thrive when we trust nature. Our role, it seems, is to work in harmony with nature; to understand nature; to assist nature and not to use nature. The "traditional" ways have failed. They display the ultimate futility of trying to force and coerce nature. But, to give up tradition always involves risk and change. And there is no middle ground is there? Either we must embrace the vision of new, experimental ways or continue to accept the self-defeating ways of tradition.

"A traditional Quaker!" said Anne Wilson as she pointed at Samuel Bownas. The young man had been abruptly roused from sleep by the power of her preaching. The place was Briggflats Meeting in Yorkshire. The occasion was meeting for worship. The Society of Friends was not yet fifty years old.

The young woman continued, "Thou comest to meeting as thou went from it last time, and goes from it as thou came to

it, and art no better for it by coming; what wilt thou do in the end?"

The teen-age youth was mature enough not to resent the personal affront to his dignity. So he could hear the plain and direct words as he would have been unable to hear an ingratiating implication. Anne Wilson had been chosen to give him the gift of truth; to free him from the role of vicarious spectator, and thus to release him for the living experience of worship. He was convinced, and free now to live his religion.

Samuel Bownas had had a lack of conviction. His religion had been conventional, mere form; letter not spirit. Now his life was changed. And his lifelong concern and witness was for real depth of conviction.

Eric Baker, an English Friend, feels that nothing "can replace the force and authority of deep conviction." He feels that the Society of Friends has become an institution when it ought to be a movement. I would agree that we have become encumbered with institutionalism, formalism, and traditionalism. Yet I feel that once again we are becoming seekers rather than believers, and thus channels for the pure and living Spirit.

Do we not all sense this new enthusiasm? This is not the enthusiasm of a superficial, quick-results evangelism. It is enthusiasm in its root sense, meaning "to be possessed by a God."

I would distinguish “conviction” from “belief.” Belief is notional, separative, divisive, defensive. Conviction is expanding and inclusive. It lifts our eyes to a heavenly vision in which man’s ways will be bent to God’s ways. We yearn to lose our lives in it, give our particular gift of God to it. So strong is our feeling of complete identification with God and every man that we are compelled to express and share the enthusiasm. It has to be lived! Again, “Faith does not permit of telling, it has to be lived and then it is self-propagating.”

This kind of living act is, as a Friend said of William Penn, “kindled vision compacted into glowing act.” This living and visible faith is what mankind has lost, the center of his despair, the blurred focus of his spiritual yearnings. Man suspects that organized, traditional religion is only another form of tyranny. Its myths and theological notions lack credibility and bore him. They are particularly meaningless to high school and college students. Formal, institutional religion is hypocritical. Most men, privately and honestly, scorn the Christian church for its cowardice, expediency, and betrayal of Jesus. Then too, most men are confined in a mental “institution” of their own making; an idolatry of the mind as omnipotent authority. They are “of little faith.”

But “a small group, fired with an unquenchable faith in their mission, can change the course of history.” That from the spiritual giant who did change the course of history, the most significant change for centuries. His “victory” was won without violence and bloodshed, in the face of violence and bloodshed. His “triumph” demanded triumphant new relationships, in the face of embittered relationships. It required reconciliation and produced better friendships.

The conviction, the faith, the sense of power and growth within us is a holy obligation. It is the principle business of our lives. Will we honor and cherish it, guard it, foster it, make it our primary loyalty? Will we take it from the perimeter of our daily lives and put it at the center of our being? We are free, at every instant, to begin. We are free, in this instant, to release the ultimate power; the power of the Lord, the power of truth, the power of love. We are free, in this instant, to love.

Let us, then, seek first the kingdom of heaven. Let us first identify ourselves with the wonders of God and of man. Let us recognize God in the commonplace of our daily lives. All else will then be added unto us.

Do we need a revived framework for religious expression? One less exclusively western, one that re-interprets and recreates a more universal freedom to experience the presence of God? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Do we need, together, to find the strength to stop paying taxes for ungodly, inhuman ways of killing? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we give sacrificial support—shall we suffer for the Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, our Monthly Meetings, our Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, and all aspects of our Society; so that they may be uplifted with power to extend their glorious deeds? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we experiment with and support daring demonstrations of the blessed community? “Holy experiments” to take us out of possessive pockets of protective “love” so that we shall be free to love universally? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we explore the radical new ideas of social order stemming from Tagore, Gandhi, Vinoba, and Jayakaprash Narayan? This “direct democracy” and Sarvodaya—the welfare of all—is akin to Quaker unity. Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we be a spiritual source of non-violence? — Avidly studying, learning, training, teaching, preaching, fervently living its healing ways? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we wipe out the big lie about freedom; that liberty is license and that freedom is getting? Shall we face the truth expressed by L’abbe Pierre that “Liberty is the means of love because freedom is only a means for voluntary participation in the human community?” Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we simplify and center our lives in the Spirit? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we find God by using the key of loving kindness to unlock the temple of man? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Shall we love and trust God in all men, considering the worst-behaved only as God in disguise, and not seek repose, “respectability”, and spiritually “safety” in exclusive, complacent islands of unreality? Seek first the kingdom of heaven; that shall be added.

Will our love for man and God be a trusting love, leaving them free from compulsion, threat, authority; leaving them free to love? Then, Oh then, is the kingdom of heaven at hand; and we, too, are free fully to love.

Are we not now, in this instant, empowered to do all these things and more? For the kingdom of heaven is at hand and within this meeting—Here—Now.

Who does not sense it, feel it? Now!

This is the freedom to love!

“The way to do is to be!”

## About the Author

Albert S. Bigelow (1 May 1906 – 6 October 1993) was a member of Stanford Meeting in New York Yearly Meeting. He has served as a Destroyer Captain, in the U. S. Navy during World War II, and as Housing Commissioner for Massachusetts. In his book “The Voyage of the Golden Rule”, Albert Bigelow describes the attempt to sail the boat as a protest into the Pacific nuclear bomb testing range. Albert Bigelow is well known for his witnessing to Friends’ beliefs and serves on boards of organizations who share our beliefs in the area of peace and social concerns.

Prior to his involvement in the peace movement, Bigelow served in the United States Navy during World War II, first as commander of a submarine chaser patrolling the Solomon Islands, and later as captain of the destroyer escort USS Dale W. Peterson On August 6, 1945, Bigelow was on the bridge of the Peterson as it sailed into Pearl Harbor, when he heard news of the explosion of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. He resigned from the US Naval Reserve a month before becoming eligible for his pension.

In 1948, Bigelow’s wife, Sylvia, joined the Religious Society of Friends. Bigelow joined in 1955. It was through the Society of Friends that Albert and Sylvia came to house two of the Hiroshima Maidens: young Japanese women, severely disfigured by the effects of the atomic bomb, who were brought to the United States to undergo plastic surgery in 1955. Bigelow was humbled by the experience, in particular

by his realization that the two young women "harbored no resentment against us or other Americans".

Bigelow became involved with the American Friends Service Committee in the mid-1950s, attempting to deliver a 17,411 signature petition, opposing atmospheric nuclear tests, to the White House via Maxwell M. Rabb, Cabinet Secretary. Repeated attempts to gain an appointment with Rabb were unsuccessful, leading Bigelow to conclude that other measures must be taken.

On August 6, 1957, on the 12th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, Bigelow and twelve other members of the newly formed Committee for Non-Violent Action were arrested when they attempted to enter the Camp Mercury nuclear test site in Nevada, as part of a nonviolent vigil against the testing. The following day, they returned and sat with their backs towards the site as the nuclear test took place.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Bigelow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Bigelow)

## 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.