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Two Worlds

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Among the curious tales of insane persons with which I was entertained in my youth was one of a man who called himself an Octagon. To my father, who met him in a routine visit that he paid as director to an asylum, the patient explained that he had a front side and a back side, a top side and a bottom side, an inside and an outside, a right side and a left side. That makes eight sides or an octagon.

We have it on gospel authority that possessed persons often tell the truth. Without encouraging the cult of abnormal psychology I may therefore use Mr. Octagon as text for some comments on the duality of existence. Life seems to present us with pairs of opposites – not only four pairs but many. These alternatives, not always in the same dimension, produce upon the sanest of us a sense of multiplicity of personality, which is not easy to resolve. Long before men talked of dual personality, or schizophrenia, or used the other jargon of philosophy and psychology, they talked of being possessed with devils, with seven devils at one time, or even with a legion of devils – enough individual demons to inspire to suicide two thousand swine. There is in fact no reason to limit these pairs of opposites to a total of eight, You can add any extra independent sides you please. Any polygon will do. A dodecahedron or any higher category of many-sidedness would be equally appropriate. Perhaps the scientists have a name for it. Certainly complexity ought to spell one kind of psychopathic complex. In the light of my story I'll call it "the polygon complex."

This multiplicity of our nature creates problems. The problems are often occupational. From the time the boy begins to wonder whether he wants to grow up to drive a fire engine or whether he would rather be an inventor, from the time the girl is distraught between the ambition of being a Hollywood star, or of becoming the domestic mother of a large number of babies including at least one pair of twins – yes, from childhood on we have decisions to make whose dual appeal reflects the variety of our inner nature. Every decision seems to close the door to an attractive alternative with the finality of the day of judgment. Our polygonous – not to say polygamous – nature is confronted with only a monogamous possibility. We have to choose, and

> How happy could I be with either,
> Were t' other dear charmer away.

The necessity for choice – let us say between two jobs – ought to be welcomed, but it tends to worry us. For one reason it worries us because we are used to thinking of choices in terms of right and wrong, and many practical alternatives present themselves in which the most conscientious examination of our motives cannot rapidly lead to a decision on any clear moral grounds. We may quite falsely let ourselves rationalize the more attractive as the more righteous course,. or we may morbidly proceed on the basis that the more distasteful an opening the more unselfish and praiseworthy would be our acceptance of it. I can remember the relief that came to me once in such a quandary when a wise older friend suggested that sometimes one is confronted with two alternatives, either of which would be entirely right. In spite of this evident truth, the haunting feeling that some obscure moral preference is to be sought for in many of the most secular choices of life is not easily banished.

Notes:

1. I. Bernard Cohen, "Benjamin Franklin as Scientist and Citizen," *The American Scholar,* xii. 1943, pp. 474, 475, 481.
2. Robert Southey to C. W. Williams Wynn, Esq. Dec. 3, 1807. Selections from *the Letters of Robert Southey*, edited by J. W. Worter, 1856, ii, 31.
3. Address before the American Federation of Labor at Buffalo, Nov. 12, 1917. *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* 1924, vol. i, p. *439.*
4. G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, i, 389.
5. *The Spectator,* October 15, 1943, p. 354.
6. *The History of Primitive Christianity*. Eng. Trans. 1937, p. 502 f.
7. The title of a very helpful book by Henry Churchill King (Macmillan, 1908).
8. C. J. Cadoux, *Christian Pacifism Re-examined,* 1940, p. 14.
9. A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, 1917, p. 16.
10. John Wesley, *Works* (3rd American edition), i, p. 211, and frequently elsewhere to the same effect.

double. I doubt if there is any easy formula. But I commend to us the effort. At every crisis of his life, it has been said, Jesus showed that he knew that we belong, as Kant says, to two worlds. God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven. With reference to many alternatives we still seem to hear him saying: "These ye ought to have done and not to have left the other undone." Life is no simpler in our day than it was in his. If I may return to my lunatic friend Mr. Octagon I might summarize our task as finding bifocals for bilateral amphibious bipeds.

Within this same area we meet demands for two quite different ways of spending our free time. We have a duty to society, but society exists in concentric rings about us, and furthermore there are different ways in which it may be served. Family, church, neighborhood, state, humanity, all make claims upon our loyalty – and loyalty to one seems at least to rob the others of some of our attention, even if there is no actual conflict. The reality of such conflict cannot be denied. No man can serve two masters, and yet the incompatibility can be overpressed. The solution at least in some cases is not "either...or" but "both... and" and if not both at the same time, at least both alternatively. The much discussed and disputed verse of the gospels seems to say, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's *and* unto God the things that are Gods." It would often be easier to quote and to imitate the "either-or" solutions. I am not sure we ought to. I recall the remark of the wife of a very active man of affairs. She said, "At any rate his private life is above reproach, because he hasn't any." I think he ought to have had some, even at the risks involved both for his wife and for his reputation.

The difficult choices are well illustrated by a recent article on that distinguished Philadelphian, Benjamin Franklin, from which I quote or summarize:

> Our first truly great scientist is also one of our most significant political and diplomatic figures. Benjamin, Franklin combined within his person the "poor boy who made good," the public servant and social organizer, the political leader and the scientist...
>
> The usual portrayal of Franklin presents him as a political figure who, in his spare time, dabbled in science. His own century, on the other hand, considered him a scientist who had entered the

arena of international politics, and many of his contemporaries wrote to him beseeching him to give up the illusory career of international diplomacy and domestic politics in order to return to the more "useful" career of scientific investigator.

Franklin took the opposite view. According to his credo

> the needs of the community are always greater than the needs of any single individual, be he scientist or any other kind of citizen. In time of national or civic emergency the pursuit of pure science (the search after knowledge for its own sake), however interesting it may be, is but another cultural luxury to be given its "due weight" and no more.

For five years he was able to devote himself to science and he became a leading if not the leading scientist of his age. This was his love and first choice, which he could abandon only with regret. The political duties which soon called him away never really to return militated against his own preference and the public's appraisal.

> But in his own mind, this famous savant was citizen first and scientist second. The needs of the community were always paramount. But this much is certain, that by becoming a full and actively participating member of society, he thereby became the more complete man. By fulfilling his social obligation, as he saw it, he thereby achieved his full stature as a human being.[1]

The more versatile the person, and the more wide his outlook, the more difficult these choices or these combinations become. No one wants to be narrow minded

In the spiritual world too we are pressed by amphibian necessities, or I may say rather that we are by nature amphibians who have to live in two worlds, We belong to the past as well as to the present, to the present as well as to the future. We have more than one loyalty, more than one aptitude, more than one responsibility. This all produces the keenest tension and inner conflict and uncertainty until we have learned the fact and have by nature or by artifice adjusted ourselves to it. Perhaps we have scarcely learned the unity of the geographical physical world and of one humanity upon it. Even when we do there are other dimensions. Just as patriotism is not enough and nationalism is not enough in "one world," so even global thinking is not enough in two worlds. Margaret Fuller once remarked that she accepted the universe. We recognize that paradoxically it is a "pluralistic universe" and that in accepting it the recognition of its multiple character is essential to our understanding and to any peace of mind. Looked at from several angles we are commuters between two poles, denizens of two spheres, destined to live where double areas cross one another and overlap. It is in all these overlappings that I use the term two worlds, and insist that if we ignore either alternative we do it to our peril.

> But let the frame of things disjoint,
> Both the worlds suffer.

So Shakespeare. "And what," asked Jesus, "shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Much is said today about integration, of which I am highly sceptical. Integrating can be done on the lowest levels and for the most futile ends, as total war is teaching us. In the area of growth tension is necessary, just as there is no locomotion possible without friction, no climbing without gravitation. I wish I could suggest a simple device for living

general purposes. I met the other day a man who had a third pair of glasses especially for shaving. The mirror, he said, doubled the distance from his eye to his beard so that ordinary reading glasses would not do. To keep changing glasses is too much trouble and so the oculist finally persuades us to use spectacles with two and sometimes three lenses in them. They have their inconvenience but most of us at last succumb to them. We recognize the double demands made upon our eyes and we deliberately supplement nature's way of accepting both.

The same is true of our spiritual vision. We need to see life steadily and see it whole. But the whole has parts. There is need for a Christian order that will perfect the relations of classes and races and nations. There is also the need next door and the need within. Socially we need to be equipped with both a telescope and a microscope. It would be nice to have new eyes for invisibles. At least we can aspire to have a bifocal capacity for the twofold spheres of human perspective.

Like other boys, I was once intrigued with another dual feature of life which I may call its amphibiousness. We humans can navigate on land, and also after a fashion in or on water. Other creatures can run faster, many others can swim better. As for flying, we unfeathered bipeds are about the only ones that have no wings. In locomotion as in vision we supplement nature by artifice. Long before I ever saw Europe I worked out a plan to traverse it with a kit that would involve both a folding bicycle and a folding boat. I planned to canoe through the canals with my pack and bicycle in my boat and then to cycle along the roads with pack and folded canoe on my back. Today I suppose the day-dreaming boy adds for variety a baby helicopter. Less playfully men talk today of amphibian machines, grim tanks that swim, or boats that fly.

but no one wants to fritter away life because of dilettante playing with a great variety of interests. If the specialist is defined as knowing more and more about less and less, his opposite must be defined as knowing less and less about more and more. Yet we are aware of persons who have somehow succeeded with no more than twenty-four hours a day at their disposal in enriching their own lives and the lives of others by a wide and well selected variety of interests and services. I am impressed with how much of the best flavor of life some persons can sandwich into the interstices of bread-winning. There is a lot of self-pity and sense of frustration due to the sheer inability of persons to live by a principle of *both...and* instead of *either...or;* while others, not without strict discipline, can live creatively in more than one aspect of their lives without seeming to rob Peter to pay Paul.

One of the great assets of Quakerism, in so many of its most significant features, is its amateur status. Neither in worship nor in social service are we professionals, whatever other professions we may have. We bring to bear our expert knowledge whatever it may be, but we can only continue our characteristic contribution by our capacity to combine with diverse and highly competent individual specialized skills, other generous and intelligent avocational sympathies. A friend of mine commiserates the professional clergyman because he is doomed to be a perpetual amateur in a world of experts who can therefore scarcely respect him. In Quakerism we demand no professional minister. We are like William Saroyan who is modestly put down in *Who's Who* as "an amateur Christian."

Even in the field of religion itself the problem of opposites is still with us. I may express my conviction that here also the treatment of opposites is not to be mainly settled by any one-sided selection.

And God fulfills himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

There is for example the perennial problem of reason versus emotion in religion. I suppose this will continue to bother adolescents for many generations to come. The educational process tends to apply the test of reason. If a certain religious view does not seem to meet that test it is set down to mere emotion and so rejected. The other side, namely, the protagonists of feeling, are either convinced of the rationality of emotion or else they glorify its unreason. They gladly admit their ignorance, or they claim intuitive knowledge. They are as suspicious of cold reason as their opponents are suspicious of mere whim or superstition. So the battle goes on within the young and among them. On the one hand there is the demand for complete emotional surrender of the reason for the act of faith. This almost amounts to a cult of irrationality. On the other there is an equally stringent scepticism which almost deities reason and looks askance at any enthusiasm as mere emotion.

The history of this conflict is long and rather consistent. One recalls Plato's figure of man as a charioteer, whose ill-matched and rather unmanageable steeds are the passions and the reason. The problem has a continuous history in Christianity long before the present modernist-fundamentalist phase. An ancient and learned preacher, to whom a listener somewhat chidingly remarked, "God hath no need of human learning," gave the reply, "Still less hath he need of human ignorance." My philosophic friends tell me that we are now living in a period of obscurantism and we may expect to see more praise of the irrational before we get over it. We are also living in a time of deep and ill considered prejudice against emotion. We do well to recognize and to beware of this extreme. Even the rationalist must know the

service which is necessary, the world needs what the telephone company calls "person-to-person" service.

The would-be reformer is also a person. His inner individual religion should not be supplemented by a purely social religion; still less should his ardent social ideals be allowed to obscure his own need for personal piety and integrity. How can we minister to the cure of souls if our souls are sick, or to the mental ills of a distracted world if we are not mature, well adjusted, real persons? They will surely say to us this proverb, "Physician, heal thyself." In spite of striking examples of social pioneering in our history, the Society of Friends has transmitted to us mainly the resources of solid inner piety. If we are living on this inheritance without renewing it, we are prodigal sons. We shall find that if this peters out our social service will become salt without savour.

Here again the answer is not "either...or" but "both...and." Religion can be exclusively social or exclusively personal. Professor Whitehead has given his well-known definition, "Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness." "Religion is solitariness," he repeats, "and if you are never solitary you are never religious. Collective enthusiasms, revivals, institutions, churches, rituals, bibles, codes of behaviour, are the wrappings of religion, its passing forms."[9] But John Wesley says with equal assurance: "Christianity is essentially a social religion, and to turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it."[10]

Among the inventions attributed to Benjamin Franklin are what we call today bifocal glasses. I may therefore use as illustration of our philosophic problem the scientific device of bifocals. We know the human eye has remarkable ability to change its focus; it can see across a room as well as across a field. When the eye gets old and requires glasses it requires one set of glasses for reading and another set for

In the ethical sphere the conflict of standards between individual and group morality has long been evident. "If we should do for ourselves what we are doing for Italy," said Cavour, "we should be the greatest knaves." Long before Reinhold Niebuhr attempted to justify the distinction of "Moral Man and Immoral Society," a contemporary of Paul wrote in prayer (2 Esdras 3:36):

> Individual men mayst thou find who have kept
> thy commandments,
> But nations thou dost not find.

Now our Christian and Quaker heritage has added to personal religion a demand for social religion. This means love of neighbor as oneself. It also means a concern for social institutions and standards. The problem of pacifism, says a recent writer,

> "arises from the Christian's sense of responsibility for his fellow men. In his well-known book, 'Ecce Homo,' Sir J. R. Seeley rightly observed regarding the advent of the early Church, "Henceforth it became the duty of every man gravely to consider the condition of the world around him."[8]

This social concern is a conspicuous feature of modern Quakerism. Its historic roots are instructive, its manifestations are widely known today. The burden of the world's suffering is indeed laid upon us, and we are unequal to the tasks.

Unfortunately even absorption in the tasks of relief and social reform raises the characteristic problems of an antithesis and synthesis. The needy and wayward are individuals rather than wholesale groups and one must not fail to see the trees for the wood. Besides the wholesale

limitations of his cool reason; the world in which he lives illustrates the power of ideas, yes, but of ideas implemented for better or for worse with fanatical devotion. He must somewhat wistfully consider whether abstract reason may not somehow find fruitfulness in a more dynamic expression – at least of the will. Instead of a blind self-surrender to a religion whose so-called simple gospel is in reality the intellectual systematization, by no means simple or obvious, of another age, the rational and sensible man can find a power no less moving and controlling in an intellectually respectable modern knowledge and interpretation.

The choice between these two aspects of life is, I must insist, not the choice between God and the devil, but a dichotomy inherent in the dual makeup of personality. The enrichment both of the intellect and of the emotional sensitivity is a not incompatible pair of objectives. The terms I have used are neither scientific nor complete but they will probably be understood. The problem at least will be recognized, and many variations will be suggested and many classical symbols and illustrations will be recalled. The kind of synthesis is not unlike that which Tennyson recommends:

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before,
>
> But vaster.

The answer is not found by choosing exclusively either reason or emotion. In connection with our Quaker peace position I am amused to place side by side the criticism of two individuals, who recognized that the springs of such a position should be both emotional and rational. When England was threatened by Napoleon, Robert Southey wrote:

"My views of religion approach very nearly to Quakerism.... If it was not for Bonaparte, I should have little hesitation in declaring that it is the true system of the Gospel; that is, my reason is convinced, but I wanted to have the invasion over before I allow it to be so."[2] You can cancel this out by the words of Woodrow Wilson: "What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists but their stupidity. My heart is with them but my mind has a contempt for them."[3] There are many of us who believe that mind and heart can both endorse a policy which is less likely to fail than Wilson's policy of "force without stint or limit."

I am not denying that the pacifist has his own very difficult combinations to make. In our convictions and in our efforts to justify our case to others we find ourselves alternating between two quite different poles – the moral and the practical. There is no reason why both bases should not be sound. War may be not only immoral but irrational, not only irrational but futile, not only futile but immoral. When one argues on the moral ground one is attacked on the practical, and vice versa. Honesty may be also the best policy, but it makes a difference on which ground one commends it. So also with pacifism. We find it difficult to combine the two considerations without apparent alternative surrender of each. How can we remain true to the Quaker tradition of arguing from principles and not from consequences against a system whose dire consequences are so conspicuous to all who are not prejudiced by some great illusion? The self-evident folly of war and its equally self-evident ethical unjustifiability tend in our thought and speech not so much to corroborate one another but in a sense to cancel each other out. That is because we have not learned the technique of "both...and."

There are many other contrasts in our contemporary problems that illustrate the sense of dilemma in the thinking

used of an outlook quite as extreme as worldliness. Nor am I urging the attitude commonly described as "making the best of both worlds." Such a thing as the presence of God or of Christ, does not always come in the ways men expect it, and it sometimes is not recognized. Some expect it in a Friends' Meeting, some in a celebration of Mass or of the Lord's Supper. Sometimes it is made known in the simplest homely acts, as in the breaking of bread.

The problem for most of us is not to recognize the unseen but to forego seeing it and, like the men of the Bible, to endure as though we saw him that is invisible. If as a matter of experience neither intellectual certainty nor mystic insight is often ours to enjoy we must still carry on.

> Tasks in hours of insight willed
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

The parables of Jesus have as their frequent setting the behavior of servants left behind during the long and distant journey of the master. This motif of hope deferred, of what may reverently be called the absence of God, may well be true to the experience of both Jesus and his first followers – an authentic feature quite as much of our time as of theirs.

Another frequent cause of tension is what is most simply expressed as "the one *versus* the many." Particularly in an age of social concern we seem to be confronted with a choice between personal religion and social religion, and we can find excessive emphasis now upon one and now upon the other. Does the state exist for the individual or the individual for the state? If the former, what will prevent the individual from indifference to all social solidarity and responsibility? The democratic emphasis on personal freedom is only too often a cloak for irresponsible selfishness – "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost."

standard of what the best Friend should be – and by the same token we have discouraged those who temperamentally or by sheer honesty have to admit they are not mystics. Instead of recognizing the other media of divine grace, or the other and perhaps more useful channels of revelation and fortification, we have unconsciously set up an impression particularly in the young that some special immediate mystical and transcendent experience ought to be found by the really favored – a kind of pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Unless it is found they come to think of themselves as somehow defective if not positively guilty, and even if they find it they count the long intervals without it as so much loss. They are a good deal like those unhappy drudges I meet sometimes who have so little appreciation for their vocation and so much for their vacation that they describe fifty out of fifty-two weeks of the year as not living but merely existing. Though much of the morbidity and introspection of some earlier generations of Friends has happily been left behind, there is still great need of a healthy-minded emphasis on what in the title of William Littleboy's useful pamphlet is called "Quakerism for the Non-Mystic." We human beings make for one another strange bed-fellows, but I see no reason why we should try to settle our difficulties by the tactics of Procrustes, stretching out the short people and cutting off the long ones to fit the same bed.

> I am far from denying the existence of the
> unseen world,
> that true world within the world we see,
> Whereof our world is but the bounding shore.

I agree that the world we see tends to be "too much with us," and that "the seeming unreality of the spiritual life"[7] is an illusion which a little intelligent consideration can help to expel. Other-worldliness is a term that can be

of these days. Even from the most utilitarian side there is a difference of opinion as to whether a harsh peace or a soft peace would be more durable, while the moralist keeps playing with the somewhat irreconcilable concepts of justice and mercy. I need not remind you that on this level the Allied leaders are arrogating the office of God, but with none of the omniscience or prescience which normally is attributed to that office. Yet even if they could serve as divine agents I am not sure that the divine attributes would be found easily reconciled. The Jewish rabbis played upon the themes of God's justice and God's mercy and found the conflict between them logically insoluble, yet they insisted on both qualities. His policy is not "let justice be done, though the heavens fall." God's dilemma is thus stated, "If thou seekest justice, there will be no world here; if thou seekest a world, there will be no justice here," and it is said God "takes the string by both ends," that is, he chooses both alternatives.[4] I doubt whether Christian theologians have resolved the difficulties. Perhaps it is natural for mankind in making God in its own image to attribute to the godhead the same human kind of inner conflict.

An entertaining proposal of synthesis in this connexion comes from the pen of the brilliant English publicist, Phyllis Bottome; and it is especially interesting to us because she calls us Quakers by name. "What we need today in every country," she writes, "are a race I can only describe as Serpent-Doves. All countries possess doves, and the British Isles are particularly rich in them – such as our many Quakers and pacifists – people who go in for saving victims at any and every personal cost except that of fighting what produces victims. Serpent-doves fight those who make victims, and then try to cure their defeated antagonists of their fighting instincts."

Phyllis Bottome is writing about the education of defeated Germany. She admits that "we can teach the Germans nothing that we are not already practising." She evidently does not agree with her countryman Brandon Bracken that if we bomb Germany "a lot of people will come to believe that there is a good deal of soundness in the Quakers' religion." She professes to espouse the gospel injunction, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Of modern Christians she says : "Some are pure dove, and look – and often act – no farther than their own noses. Some are pure serpent, and their wisdom is not by itself enough to reach and release the broken hearted." She therefore recommends that we send to defeated Germany people who are both, though she adds: "The Quakers should, of course, go as usual because, although they are unfortunately pure dove, they are needed where there is such an overflow of victims. Besides, there is no humbug about them. They are *real* doves."[5]

A somewhat different contrast in religion is that between the active or executive and the contemplative. No doubt some of us are more inclined one way and some the other, though in our highly active and practical civilization the contemplative is rare and therefore rather at a premium. Here also I would urge mutual exchange and sympathy rather than rival claims. In that book of most remarkable human understanding, the Gospel of Luke, one finds the classic picture of these sister virtues in those two familiar spinsters, Mary and Martha. As with other temperamentally different housemates they fail to appreciate adequately each other's merits. Their failure need simply be cited for our present instruction. As they supplemented each other we all of us probably need supplementation from one side or the other.

duplicated. Nobody has pointed this out more clearly than one of his best modern interpreters, the Lutheran scholar, Johannes Weiss:

> In our religious development there is usually lacking any clear consciousness of the sharp point of change when we pass from despair to peace with God, from unhappiness to grace. For, differing from Paul and his Gentile Christians, we do not consciously step over from Judaism or heathenism to Christianity, or from enmity to God to peace with him. We grow up in the Church itself, in which God richly and fully forgives us our sins daily. We live from childhood in the sunshine of God's grace, which, for the Apostle, arose in deep night, like a light-giving star never seen before. We have therefore never had this great experience, which for Paul and his community was something of an additional pledge of justification, or a proof of their assured salvation.[6]

How much damage to the genuineness and variety of religion such expectations cause would be hard to calculate. What frustrations and misplaced effort men suffer by assuming that in things spiritual as in things temporal we must be forever "keeping up with the Joneses."

Our Quaker expectation of conformity has been different from the evangelical, but has had similar effects. It is the aspect of religion which for not more than a generation has been called among us "mystical," though it was set up as a yardstick in the Society long before it had that name. It is the expectation that in our truest and highest experience – however rare – each should have what he can call an experience of God. In our demand for veracity and spontaneity we have encouraged a somewhat stereotyped

religion, but from other types as well. What futile and painful agony is suffered by those who, being taught that true religion shows itself in one definite pattern, count themselves lost and hopeless sinners simply because temperamentally or from sheer honesty they cannot confess to the required experience. Professor James has described two kinds of persons as the once born and the twice born. The twice born are those who have had the definite critical conversion experience. The once born are those who slowly and from unsaintly beginnings have grown from grace to grace without cataclysmic overturnings. Professor James classifies even the founders of Quakerism in the once born category. Violent conversion, that carries with it the sense of terrible prior sinfulness, is not characteristic of Quakerism. Typical Friends are "seekers" who become in Cromwell's phrase "happy finders."

Though George Fox had his quest and though perhaps when a youth he sowed, as a modern writer puts it, his "Quaker oats," yet his writings, so voluminous in extent, reflect throughout, as his virulent critics later emphasized, no single reference to even a peccadillo. His "perfectionism," as it was called even then, was a scandal to his contemporaries, just as modern Quakerism – especially with its pacifism – is a scandal to the dogma of original sin (now called demonism) of Barthians. Yet there are few young Friends even today that have not met somewhere the evangelical demand to show reason why they should not be condemned for lacking an almost datable crisis of conversion.

This unfortunate demand for standardization of experience is not limited to Quakerism. Modern evangelism promotes the expectation of conversion and finds its assurance in that experience. The classic case of Saul of Tarsus; known to all Christians, has had its untoward influence. There is every reason why it need not be

Augustine wrote in his *City of God* (xix, 19):

> As to these three modes of life, the contemplative, the active, and the composite, although so long as a man's faith is preserved, he may choose any one of them without detriment to his eternal interests, yet he must never overlook the claims of truth and duty. No man has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own case the service due to his neighbor; nor has any man a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God.... And therefore holy leisure is longed for by the love of truth; but it is the necessity of love to undertake requisite business.

Another religious contrast – but an independent one – is between the old and the new. One sanction for truth or for action is its conformity with standards of the past. The accumulated wisdom and experience of the ages cannot lightly be ignored. "The old time religion" has on the face of it something to recommend it, and religion has almost inherently a quality of continuousness, not to say conservatism, that is an undoubted strength. This emphasis does not appear to outsiders the strong point of Quakerism. We sit so loose to the conventions of both church and state. The classic creeds, the time honored rituals, the established organizations of the standard Christianity are alien to us, or rather we to them. Our besetting sin, according to an acute churchman, is historic ingratitude.

There is however an opposite virtue that accompanies every vice. That virtue in our case is the reality of original experience. Not to be conformed to the past is less serious for those who are transformed by the renewing of their minds. Reality, freshness, spontaneity, even novelty, surely

still have something to recommend them. The secular advertisers know the worth of what is new. Fox was not the only early Friend who could say, "This I knew experimentally," that is, by experience. Because of this insistence on fresh reality the early Friends refused to recite the psalms of David, even in metre, because they might not themseives be in the same state in which David was.

Can the assets of both emphases be retained and the liabilities of both be avoided? I think they can. The Friends regarded their movement as primitive Christianity revived. They claimed to leap back to some sixteen centuries before. The fusion of old and new is much more characteristic than is often recognized either in innovating or in conservative religion and this is true of individuals as well as of groups.

If anyone ever thought he broke with the past it was the Apostle Paul. All that was formerly wrong to him was now right, every asset a new liability. "What things were gain to me these I counted loss... sheer rubbish." Even in contrast with the crucified Jesus he seemed to his contemporaries and to modern scholars the iconoclast – the founder of a new religion; and yet one of the most characteristic words of his letters is the phrase, "I received... I handed on." Tradition is the watermark of the most creative stages of religion. The gospel itself – the good news – contains the saying: "No man having drunk old wine straightway desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'" Another gospel saying knows the synthesis, for we read, "Every scribe that is made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is 1ike a householder that brings out of his treasury things both old and new." Judicious men and women in search for truth cannot afford to neglect either old or new.

The combination of old and new is, however, an undoubted cause of tension. Life is growth and growth is transition and when transition occurs unevenly there are

painful maladjustments. Not only in adolescent years are our spiritual lives growing. We mature unevenly – as children do – in social poise, in intelligence, in spiritual understanding. One or the other of the parts of us is more grown up than the others, or more backward.

This is as true of mankind collectively as it is individually. Society too is an exhibit of uneven development. The phenomena are familiar: civilization still mixed with barbarism; science used in the promotion of savagery; organization bent upon the recovery of primeval chaos; sub-Christian social standards among persons of the highest culture; childish international relations alongside of mature medical and psychiatric treatment of personal problems. To bring our backward parts abreast of our furthest progress, to straighten our line of advance, is the difficult but not too discouraging task before us. It is not a new task. Someone has suggested that Adam probably said to Eve as they left the Garden of Eden: "My dear, we are living in an age of transition." Mankind will continue in transition until paradise is regained. That fact accounts for the tensions that must be expected. In the meantime, like Matthew Arnold, we find ourselves

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to rest my head.

The history of religion and especially of religious controversy is strewn with the "either...or" approach. Since so much of the religious need is not for more religion but for better religion, the need for discrimination seems justified. Here again extremes are not necessary and the intolerance of demanding uniformity of experience is often a detriment. Those who insist that their experience must be the normative experience turn many away – not only from their type of