

Reflecting on Unity and Diversity (activity c)

27.24 Rejection of creed is not inconsistent with being possessed by a living belief. We have no creed in science, but we are not lukewarm in our beliefs. The belief is not that all the knowledge of the universe that we hold so enthusiastically will survive in the letter; but a sureness that we are on the road. If our so-called facts are changing shadows, they are shadows cast by the light of constant truth. So too in religion we are repelled by that confident theological doctrine which has settled for all generations just how the spiritual world is worked; but we need not turn aside from the measure of light that comes into our experience showing us a Way through the unseen world. Religion for the conscientious seeker is not all a matter of doubt and self-questionings. There is a kind of sureness which is very different from cocksureness.

Arthur S Eddington, 1929

27.25 The Quaker objection to credal statements is not to beliefs as such but to the use of an officially sanctioned selection of them to impose a uniformity in things where the gospel proclaims freedom. 'Credo' is the Latin for 'I believe'. The meaning of the word is debased if you confine it to an act of the will giving intellectual assent to articles of faith. It is much better translated as 'I commit myself to...' in the sense that one is prepared to take the full consequences of the beliefs one has adopted. One adopts not so much a set of propositions as the discipline of working out in one's life and experience the consequences of the truth one has espoused. The value of the beliefs lies solely in their outworking. This I take to be the heart of the original Quaker message.

John Punshon, 1978

27.26 This is the truth which we know and try to live ... that every person is capable of response to the divine Spirit; that this Spirit, or Light, or God reaches out to each one directly and freely; that if we follow the leadings of this Spirit faithfully we are led out of sin into unity with the divine will; that this unity leads us into love of and care for all humankind, who are our kin; that what the Spirit shows us is living truth which cannot be fettered by words.

Janet Scott, 1980