



Viewing Points

Quakerism and other faiths

Advices & queries

5. Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the Bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the ways of God. As you learn from others, can you in turn give freely from what you have gained? While respecting the experiences and opinions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have found and what you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to a greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.
6. Do you work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship.
7. Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?

Quaker faith & practice

- 27.01 The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.

William Penn, 1693

- 27.03 Can we settle the question, 'Is the Society of Friends Christian or not?' In the historical sense the answer is Yes: but that does not preclude the possibility that we may now be called to a new and wider perception of the Truth. We have the witness of the Society itself, as well as the example of Jesus, against turning yesterday's inspiration into today's dogma. Today's world-wide knowledge of people and their religions does present a challenge which our universalists are right to try to meet – just as our Christians are right to remind us that the insights of the past must not lightly be thrown away. It may be valuable to live for a while in the tension between the universal and the specific; and if so, there may be a special vocation here through which our Society (with its tradition of respect for the divine Seed in everyone) can minister to the church at large. Or it may be that a synthesis is possible, once we can agree on what is essential to being a Christian.

John Lampen, 1985

- 27.07 *Henry T Hodgkin (1877–1933) played a leading part in the Friends Foreign Mission Association and the Student Christian Movement, and in founding the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He worked as a missionary in China and came to appreciate the validity of other witnesses to God than the Christian one.*

By processes too numerous and diverse even to summarise, I have reached a position which may be stated in a general way somewhat like this: 'I believe that God's best for another may be so different from my experience and way of living as to be actually impossible to me. I recognise [a change] to have taken place in myself, from a certain assumption that mine was really the better way, to a very complete recognition that there is no one better way, and that God needs all kinds of people and ways of living through which to manifest himself in the world.'

This has seemed to carry with it two conclusions which greatly affect conduct. One is that I really find myself wanting to learn from people whom I previously would have regarded as fit objects for my 'missionary zeal'. To discover another way in which God is operating – along lines it may be distasteful or dangerous to me – is a large part of the fun of living. The second direction in which conduct is influenced is the deliberate attempt to share the life and interests of others who are not in my circle ... [for] in such sharing I can most deeply understand the other's life and through that reach, maybe, fresh truths about God.

1933

- 27.10 Remember Jesus' answer to the woman of Samaria: 'Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father... God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in Truth.' In the depth of meditation, in the gathered meeting we rise above all limitations. Gone are the concepts of Quakerism and Vedanta. Gone are the ideas of being a Christian or a Hindu. All these concepts are valid on their own level. They have their place, but they are transcended when we merge our minds in Spirit. I believe this is what Jesus and all the other World Teachers wanted us ultimately to do.

Swami Tripurananda (Jonathan Carter), 1979