



MEDITATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

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Preface

In the early days of Quakerism, Friends kept *Journals* or spiritual diaries. Although intended for themselves, many of them were subsequently published and have been helpful to others throughout the three centuries of Quakerism.

In the hustle and bustle of life today few Friends keep such spiritual account books. But perhaps there are other forms, better suited to our times, which can be helpful. One such method may be the personal meditation, written intermittently rather than regularly.

The meditations in this booklet represent such a spiritual diary. They represent the aspirations rather than the accomplishments of one Friend. But there is certainly a need in the lives of each of us for recording our aspirations.

These meditations have been written in many parts of the world and in many strange places, including airports and the great out-of-doors, with rocks or logs for a desk. They are arranged here in chronological order, with the exact dates missing on some of the earlier ones.

A few of these meditations have appeared in Quaker papers and I wish to thank the editors of *The American Friend* and the *Friends Journal* for permission to use the ones they have printed.

It is my hope that these meditations may be helpful to Friends and friends of friends in individual, family, and group worship.

LEONARD S. KENWORTHY

New York City
January, 1959

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Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Today I had the rare privilege of sharing intimately in the spiritual life of a person who has just come out of a concentration camp.

This afternoon I spoke to a group of Friends in Chemnitz on "Sources of Spiritual Power", mentioning music as one of them. When I referred briefly to Whittier's Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, the face of one Friend lit up and her eyes seemed to gleam. Seldom have I seen such an expression on the face of anyone.

In her home this evening, I told this Friend that I had noticed the expression on her face and wondered if it would be too personal a question if I asked if that hymn had some special significance to her. To this she replied, "Yes, those words have meant MUCH to me. I learned them first at Woodbrooke years ago and I used them each morning during my time in concentration camp as my morning prayer for strength and guidance." And after a pause, she repeated the phrase slowly and significantly, "Yes, those words mean MUCH to me."

Imagine sitting in a concentration camp, not knowing whether you would ever leave that spot alive, and you can catch a little of the meaning of the prayer:

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Chemnitz, Germany
April, 1941

More Blessed to Receive Than to Give

For more than an hour one morning recently I sat and listened to a mother pour out her soul about her daughter's plight as a Jewess under the Nuremburg laws promulgated by Hitler. I was really of no help to her unless it was by lending an understanding ear or serving as a sounding board or wailing wall.

Yet she was extremely grateful and offered a small sum of money to me for our work in the Quakerburo. Adhering to the letter of the law, I refused her contribution, saying that we could not accept money for our services. They were free to those in need.

But a little later she saw the collection box in the Meeting Room and dropped her money into it, I was told by my secretary.

Today I have been reading the story of the woman who anointed Jesus' head and feet with oil and it dawned on me why he permitted her to do this, despite the objections of his disciples. He had learned a lesson I had not learned . . . that it is sometimes more blessed to receive than to give.

*Help us, Our Father, to give freely, graciously, lovingly.
But help us also to learn to receive freely, humbly, lovingly.*

Berlin, Germany
May, 1941

Christ at the Head of Meeting

What a moving experience to worship in the Meeting House at Jordan as I did today. We are not supposed to feel that one place is more sacred than others, but it is difficult not to feel that this is a very special place. This is as near to a Quaker shrine as we have,—our little Quaker Mecca.

As I sat in Meeting, I recalled the picture painted by Penrose of a Meeting for Worship at Jordan, with the men on one side and the women on the other. The sun is streaming through the latticed windows and as the light reaches the aisle between the men's and women's sides, it seems to focus on the figure of Christ, standing in the middle of the Meeting. It is appropriately called "The Presence in the Midst."

As I thought about this picture, I decided that if I were to try to express this same thought in my own way, I would picture Christ on the facing bench, sitting at the head of Meeting, His head bowed, His eyes closed in prayer.

That is what we claim as Friends—that our Meetings are held under His leadership, that He is "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." Yes, He is there, each Sunday in the midst of us, possibly at the head of Meeting. And how often we forget that all-important fact.

We thank Thee that Thou art above us, behind us, around us, in us. Help us to be aware of Thy Presence and to be sensitive to this wonderful, joyous fact. Amen.

Jordan, England
August, 1946

Cathedral Windows

Today I visited Rheims Cathedral. Many of the magnificent windows have been restored to their original places, but a few were still lying on the floor where passers-by could examine them closely. Seen in this way, the windows were not beautiful. They were merely tiny bits of glass, unevenly cut, and held together by molten lead, unevenly poured. At close range they seemed to have little pattern or design.

Yet there is a pattern to them and when the sun can shine through them again, they will reveal the artist's purpose as well as his artistry.

Perhaps the days of a year or the years of our lives are a little like those cathedral windows. Individually they are not especially significant. But when there is a pattern for all of them and the sun is permitted to shine through, they reveal an overall design and can be beautiful.

And perhaps the molten lead that binds them together is our prayer and worship.

Similarly one can think of the members of a Meeting as representing the tiny bits of jagged glass. Individually they are not too significant, but when bound together by molten lead and fitted into a grand design, they can mean much.

Help us, Our Father, to recognize the importance of a grand design and to act upon that realization. Help us to value the place of prayer and worship in our individual lives and in the life of our Meeting that we may be a group rather than a mere collection of individuals.

Paris, France
May, 1947

A Moment's Glimpse of Truth

The clouds have hidden the majestic mountain peak of the Matterhorn for days. But this morning the sunlight broke their resistance and the grandeur and greatness of that jagged peak was revealed. Then in a few minutes the clouds took over again and enveloped the mountain.

For only a few minutes it was visible—yet it will remain in my mind as long as I live. It was one of those memorable experiences which come so seldom to us. Yet how long they stay with us and how much they enrich our lives.

There are moments like that in our spiritual lives, too,—times when the sun breaks through the clouds and the truth is revealed to us—stark, rugged, beautiful to behold.

Then the clouds gather round again and we return to our daily round of duties, inspired, refreshed, uplifted, glad that there have been those few moments of revelation, these glimpses of the ultimate.

We thank Thee for the lifting of the clouds, for the moments when we have glimpsed Thee. Help us to carry those moments in our memories throughout the long periods when the peaks cannot be seen. Help us to realize and remember that Thou art there—always. Amen.

Zermatt, Switzerland
Easter, 1948

Flowers at the Foot of the Matterhorn

Today I was deeply moved by the sight of the majestic Matterhorn. Certainly it is one of the most striking and impressive sights I have ever seen. I reveled in its beauty, its magnificence, its grandeur.

But as I sat on the grass and thought about this thrilling sight, my eyes suddenly turned to the scores of spring flowers all around me on the ground. Tiny as they were, unimpressive as they seemed when compared to the mountain peak, I realized that here was beauty, too, and much closer to me than the Matterhorn.

How easy it is to see the big event and to forget the little ones. How much easier it is to be impressed with something far away than something close at home. How often we look at the prominent person and forget the inconspicuous people close by. Yet each has its place, each has its message, each has its different kind of beauty.

We are thankful, oh God, for the Matterhorns in our lives—and for the tiny flowers. We are thankful for the experiences at a distance and for the less spectacular ones close at home. We are thankful for the great men and women and for those whose greatness is less striking but nevertheless just as real.

Zermatt, Switzerland
Easter, 1948

Arrested Development in Prayer

"We suffer, in fact, from arrested development in prayer." These words in Herman's book on *Creative Prayer* did not have to be printed in bold-faced type. They fairly leaped at me from the page. They spoke to my condition and perhaps to the condition of many modern Friends.

Brought up in an age of reason where everything must be proved scientifically, we are afraid of the process of "letting go." Humility is a dated word and faith a questionable concept. So we either doubt the power of prayer or dismiss it as something which is not for us.

As a result we suffer individually and collectively from arrested development in prayer. And in many of our Meetings for Worship prayer is a rare occurrence, especially vocal prayer. Actually Quakers ought to be the world's experts in this area of the spiritual life, for our Meetings for Worship on the basis of silence are in reality periods of social prayer. One of the great areas for growth as a Society is in the cultivation of the life of prayer, individually and as a group.

We are pygmies in prayer, Father. Help us to become giants. Amen.

Brooklyn, New York
March, 1950

Putting Yourself Into People

"It is people that count. You want to put yourself into people. They touch other people; these others still, and so you go on working forever." That is what Alice Freeman Palmer said to her husband when he urged her to build a monument by writing books.

Perhaps the two are not incompatible. Perhaps one can reach more people by writing books or meeting large groups. But if one wants to really affect people, it cannot be done best in the mass. It has to be done in individual contacts, usually over a long period of time.

All of us have these God-given opportunities to affect the lives of others, whether we are parents or school teachers or ministers or social workers or office workers or executives or farmers or shop keepers. How important it is for us to remember that "It is *people* that count."

For sensitivity to the needs of others we pray to Thee, oh God. Help us to have wisdom in the everyday contacts we maintain and to help others to grow in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and with men. Amen.

Brooklyn, New York
November, 1951

You Are God's Farm

One of my friends once showed me her Bible and in the margins I noticed an occasional question mark. These, she told me, were pencilled alongside passages which she did not now understand. When she had gained further insight into the meaning of such passages, she erased the pencil marks.

I thought of her the other day when I gained a new understanding of a passage which had often baffled me. In the Authorized Version the Bible says, "... ye are God's husbandry. . . ." To me that meant next to nothing.

But in the Goodspeed translation of 1st Corinthians 3:9 it reads, "... you are God's farm. . . ." That I could understand. The translator had caught the original idea and phrased it in modern terms. And I wondered what kind of farm I had. I wondered if I really knew what it would yield. I wondered if I was cultivating it properly. I wondered if there were new seeds or new tools I should be using. I wondered how abundant my crop would be.

Oh Thou Great Farmer, send our roots rain. Help us to stretch out to Thee as the Great Sun. Help us to be good spiritual farmers, wise religious cultivators. Help us to yield bountiful crops on our little farms. Amen.

Brooklyn, New York
September, 1952

The Channels of Universal Love

During the past three days I have seen “miracles” wrought by water when it is channelled and sent out to nourish the parched earth in what has long been a vast desert.

Yet, had the same amount of water been sprinkled over a larger area, nothing would have happened. It was *channeling* that accomplished the miracle.

Then I thought of John Woolman’s terse and provocative comment—“To turn all we possess into channels of universal love becomes the business of our lives.”

How easy it is for us to become involved in so many worthy concerns that we dissipate our energy, sprinkling the spiritual desert rather than irrigating it.

How important it is to learn to *channel* our energies into a few important tasks. And how terribly difficult that is!

Help us, Father, to develop our spiritual priorities. Help us to channel our concerns. Help us to turn all we possess into the channels of universal love for that is the business of our lives.

Thal Project, Pakistan
August, 1954

Adoration

This morning five of us visited the famous Indian market at Chicicatanango in Guatemala, with hundreds of people selling the wares they had brought many miles on their backs. Then we entered the Catholic Church, passing by the incense swingers on the steps outside.

The interior of the church was bare except for a small altar and it was almost grim in appearance. But on the floor of the church were hundreds of thin yellow and white candles brought by the worshippers, covering the stone floor like a huge rug. These candles were placed on the floor with reverence and awe and lit as an act of worship.

Here and there were individuals saying their prayers aloud. Some of them were very intense, as if really talking aloud to God. It was an impressive sight and a moving and humbling experience, for here was adoration and praise, simplicity and sincerity.

I wondered as I stood there how many visitors to Friends Meetings would be equally impressed with the intensity of our worship, the ardor of our adoration, the humility of our approach to God. Would they leave our places of worship with the same impression that I had gained at Chicicatanango—that worship was really going on here?

We seek Thy Presence, oh God. We bow before Thy Greatness and Thy Goodness. Help us to restore to our lives the intensity of worship, the humbleness of spirit, the ardor and adoration which we have just seen and sensed.

Chicicatanango, Guatemala
July, 1955

My Boat and Thy Ocean

Imagine going out to sea in those boats. That was my thought today as I saw the tiny vessels in which the Brazilian fishermen sail. Made from burned out logs and equipped with primitive sails these are the boats which the fishermen use to ply their trade. Sometimes the men are gone for days, sailing many miles out into the Atlantic. Often they are caught in dangerous winds or turbulent waves. Sometimes they lose their lives at sea.

As I was thinking about their courage, I remembered the short prayer of the Breton fishermen, "Help me, oh God, my boat is so tiny and Thy ocean so wide." And I think that I began to understand how they must have felt when they framed that prayer.

Confronted with the problems of our day at home and abroad, we can certainly understand their simple but powerful prayer, for we seem at times so small and so insignificant in the face of the overwhelming forces at work in our world. Yes, we, too, must launch our boats and sail over uncharted seas.

Help us, our Pilot, to build sturdy, sea-faring vessels for these times. Help us to plan our voyage of life carefully. Help us to rig our ships wisely and well. Give us faith and courage in the face of adversity. Our boats are so tiny and Thy ocean so wide.

Recife, Brazil
August, 1955

Triumph Over Tragedy

How much personal tragedy there is all around us!

The son of a friend is born blind. The daughter of another friend turns out to be an imbecile. The elderly mother of a close relative burns to death in their home. A promising nephew is killed in an automobile accident. A professional colleague dies of shock treatment in a mental hospital. Another colleague and old friend dies shortly after he has overcome his alcoholism.

People face such tragedies in so many ways, some of them growing, maturing, deepening through such awful experiences. Sometimes it is a change of scene that helps. Sometimes it is the thoughtfulness of friends that tides people over their difficulties. Sometimes it is time that heals. Sometimes it is prayer that pulls people through. Often release and help come when individuals cease their search for rational explanations of such events.

Occasionally there is real triumph through such tragedies as people dig deep to find resources within themselves, within their families and friends, within their religion, that they had never tapped before.

Help us, Father, to face our own tragedies and the tragedies of those we know and love as realistically and calmly as possible. Help us to accept and act upon them as wisely as we can. Help us to dig deep to the sources of spiritual power that we know intellectually are there but emotionally have not found. In the name of Him whose tragic death brought triumph. Amen.

Brooklyn, New York
December 6, 1956

The Aim of Life

What is the purpose of life? What is the aim of our existence? Why are we here?

How often I have thought of this central question as I have struggled to make important decisions, to choose the right course, to set the proper goals, and to find the right means to achieve them.

One never gets the answer from someone else, but stimulating ideas can come from books, sermons, biographies, plays, poetry, and conversations. The two statements which have meant the most to me are from William James and from John Woolman.

James says that "The aim of life is to spend it for something which will outlast it." And I doubt if he would quarrel with us if we inserted the word "worthwhile" after the word "something."

Woolman says, "To turn all we possess into the channels of universal love becomes the business of our lives."

How satisfying these two statements are as to goals. But how difficult to translate them into action.

We seek Thy help, Father, in finding meaning, purpose, and significance in our lives. Help us to set our goals high, yet within reach. Help us to make wise choices as to the means to achieve these ends. In the name of Him whose life was full of worthy ends and worthwhile means. Amen.

Brooklyn, New York
May, 1957

Meeting Houses

For years most of us have been going to a Meeting House regularly—or intermittently. Yet I wonder how many of us have ever thought how appropriate the name is for these places of worship?

We call them Meeting Houses rather than churches. But what does that term mean? What does it signify?

Perhaps it is a Meeting House because it is there that we meet ourselves spiritually stripped, in moments when we can really face ourselves with all our strengths and with all our weaknesses.

Perhaps it is a Meeting House because it is there that we meet our friends and fellow seekers and are strengthened by the fact that we are not alone in our desire to grow in wisdom and faith and understanding and love.

Perhaps it is a Meeting House above all because it is there that we meet the Great Creator, the Great Truth, the Great Disturber, the Great Healer and in periods of meditation and adoration and search and discovery we approach nearer to what He would have us be.

Yes, that term which we have used so often that it seems threadbare, is full of meaning, full of significance, full of importance to us.

We thank Thee, our Father, for our Meeting Houses. Help us to face ourselves realistically there. Help us to gain courage and fellowship and companionship and strength there. Help us to find Thee and understand Thee better there. Help us to make our Meeting Houses real houses of Thy Spirit. Amen.

State College, Pennsylvania
July, 1957

Playing on the Black and White Keys

Today I visited Achimoto College outside Accra, where so many of today's leaders of Ghana were educated. Over the entrance to the main building I saw the shield which the great Ghanaian educator, James Aggrey, designed.

The shield is a part of a piano keyboard with a few white keys and a few black keys. It refers to the statement of this eminent African educator, who said, "You can play some tunes on the white keys and some tunes on the black keys, but for perfect harmony you need both the black and the white keys."

How much we need to learn that simple yet profound lesson in the United States. How much the people of Kenya and South Africa and other parts of the world need to learn that basic lesson in human relations.

Then I wondered what tremendous human resources could be discovered and developed in Africa if we took to heart this statement of Aggrey's. Just think of the lost talents of potential Marian Andersons, of potential Walter Whites, of potential Ralph Bunches, and of potential George Washington Carvers that could be developed IF we learned to play on both the white and the black keys in society today.

Free us, oh God, from the disease of prejudice. Help us to quit mouthing pat words about brotherhood and to act upon our beliefs. Help us to appreciate our similarities and to cherish many of our differences. In the name of Him who came to share with us all a life of brotherhood and love. Amen.

Accra, Ghana
October 19, 1957

An Ocean of Darkness and an Ocean of Light

In one of the most powerful entries in his *Journal*, George Fox describes his vision of "an ocean of darkness and death" and "an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness." His greatness as a spiritual leader was that he saw both of those oceans, one of evil and one of good. And the latter was "on top," "triumphant," "over all," in the phraseology which he so often used.

Part of our weakness as individuals and as a Religious Society of Friends today is that we do not see *both* oceans. Some Friends see solely or primarily the evil in the world and are oblivious to the good. Others tend to see the good will and kindness, ignoring or minimizing the evil forces at work constantly, powerfully. As a result we have only partial vision.

What a tremendous vision we would have if we, like George Fox, could see both the good and the evil. What a powerful message we would have for the world if we could see the good and the evil in man. Seeing both would give us near perfect vision. This is the state we should earnestly seek.

Our Father, we are sometimes so overwhelmed by the ocean of evil around us that we tend to forget the goodness and beauty and love about us and in us. Or we are so anxious to view the world as a friendly place that we become blind to the evil and hatred and sin about us and in us. Help us to gain a proper perspective, seeing both the ocean of darkness and the ocean of light that can and does flow over it. Amen.

Dar Es Salaam, Tanganyika
November 7, 1957

In Christ There Is No East or West

Today was Christmas and what a memorable one it was. This morning I worshipped with Kaimosi Friends, with over 500 persons present, many of them standing throughout the three-hour service.

Before the service started, they asked me to speak and I agreed to do so late in the program. So, while the singing and speaking and choral speaking of verses from the Bible were going on, I tried to settle into a period of silent worship from which a message might come. This is the message which seemed to me "right" for the group:

"It is a thrilling experience to worship with you here today, so far from home on Christmas Day. Yet, in a sense it does not seem strange, for all my life I have read and heard about you, so this is the fulfillment of a life-long dream. As we have worshipped together, I have been thinking about God's difficult task in deciding upon a gift to mankind. Whom should He send? Where should He send Him. He did not decide to send a white man. He did not send a yellow man. He did not even send a black man. He sent a brown man—something in between us all. He did not send Him to America. He did not send Him to Asia. He did not even send Him to Africa. He sent Him to the Middle East—between us all. On Christmas Day we celebrate God's great gift to mankind, in whom there is neither east or west, south or north, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide world."

Then, together, we sang prayerfully the words of that hymn:

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North!
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide Earth.

Kaimosi, Kenya
December 25, 1957

The Rocks of Palestine

Yesterday and today I have been visiting the sacred shrines of Bethlehem, Bethany, and Jerusalem. I have been in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, walked in the Garden of Gethsemane, trudged along the Via Dolorosa, and stood at the tomb of Jesus. All these have been memorable experiences.

But somehow they have been disturbing experiences, too, for many of the sacred spots of this part of the world can scarcely be seen because of the number of alms boxes, the predominance of altars and candles, and the other trappings and tinsel of so-called religion.

I know that these are attempts to express adoration and praise. But they hide the historic spots of joy and suffering and agony and triumph in the life of Jesus. The rocks in the cave in Bethlehem, the stones in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the huge boulders from which the Tomb was carved are scarcely visible.

Maybe that is what is wrong with our Christianity today. We have gilded over its simplicity and its profundity. We have hidden its original meaning with outward symbols. Scarcely a trace of its original intent and purpose are noticeable. We have hidden the great rocks on which it was founded.

Help us, oh God, to dig deep down to the rocks on which our faith was founded. Help us to clear away the tinsel and the gilt that we may get down to bed rock.

Jerusalem, Jordan
February 15, 1958

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Yes, there he was, just as the Bible stories had pictured him—a shepherd with his sheep, alone on the mountain side in the midst of grey limestone rocks and jagged cliffs, where the sheep could be lost or hurt except for his watchful eye. And in the valley below there was a stream and green pastures.

The psalmist was speaking in the simple, everyday language of a pastoral country and a sheep-herding people. And his figure of speech for the Lord was full of meaning to the people of his day.

But what similar figure can one use for an industrial society, for an air age, for a people who live largely in cities and towns? Is the Lord my foreman? That hardly seems right. Is He my pilot? That does not seem to satisfy. Is He my psychiatrist to whom I pour out my troubles? That does not seem to hit the mark. Is He my closest friend, with whom I can share everything or almost everything? That comes closer to the truth, but it is not a good explanation of our relationship.

I pondered for a long time—and finally returned to the words of the psalmist of ancient Galilee—"The Lord is my shepherd." The words are still true whether we live in a pastoral, agricultural country or an urban, industrialized society. Why should I try to improve on the description of the psalmist? He has phrased it far more significantly and far more beautifully than I can hope to do.

O Lord, Thou art our Shepherd. Lead us beside the still waters, restore our souls, lead us in the paths of righteousness. Be Thou with us, comfort us, guide us, that goodness and mercy may be with us always and that we may live forever in the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, Jordan
February 16, 1958

Bearers of Good Tidings

"How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings." That was the text of the only sermon my father ever preached which I thought was silly. As a boy I could not understand why he had selected such a theme as "beautiful feet" when his judgment was usually so sound and his texts so apt.

Yet that text has remained with me all these years, perhaps because it was so bizarre and baffling.

Today as I watched from my hotel room in Amman, Jordan, the tiny figures of people walking on the crest of the hill many yards above me and possibly a half mile away, I began to realize what the writer in the Old Testament meant. For as he, too, sat in this rugged, rocky land, he could see afar off the feet of the messenger approaching, clad no doubt in sandals and a long robe.

Somehow he must have sensed by the sway of the body and the lilt of the feet that the message he was bringing this time was not one of drought or locusts or robbers or invading armies, but "good tidings." And how welcome they must have been.

The feet of that messenger were "beautiful" because they brought good news.

We thank Thee, oh God, for all kinds of messages of good tidings from family, from friends, from fellow seekers, and from others. Help us, too, to be bearers of good tidings, of good news. Amen.

Amman, Jordan
February 17, 1958

Who Is Behind You?

On the wall of one of the lounges in a hotel in New Delhi is a striking picture of Nehru. In the picture he is seated, with his legs crossed and his head resting on his hand as if in deep thought. On his head is the tiny, simple cotton cap of the Gandhi movement.

Behind him stands Gandhi, with a tiny oil lamp in his left hand.

It is a beautiful piece of symbolism, even if only partially true, for Nehru has veered fairly far from some of the basic tenets of Gandhi.

I have been back several times during my stay in New Delhi to look at that picture, not because it was beautiful, but because it was provocative. If my picture were painted or your portrait were hung, I have wondered whom the artist would paint in the background. Would it be a single person or possibly a group of persons? Who are the people who have meant most to me—to you? Who are the men and women—and children—who have influenced us most? To whom have we looked for guidance, for strength, for inspiration?

And as I thought of many persons, I raised a prayer of gratitude that my path had crossed theirs.

We are grateful, oh God, for the many people who have helped us along the pathway of life. We are grateful for our parents and for members of our family, for our teachers, for our friends, for persons who have written books and composed music, planted flowers, or painted pictures which have helped us. We are glad, now, for those who have chided us in a spirit of lovingkindness. And we are grateful for the great figures of history who have inspired us. Above all we are thankful for Jesus as the full revelation of God to us. For all these who have meant so much to us we raise a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

New Delhi
March 14, 1958

I Salute the Good in You

When two persons meet in any part of South Asia, each of them places his two hands together in front of his face and bows slightly to the other. This is the Buddhist form of greeting and it is probably the most gracious greeting anywhere in the world, for it means "I salute the good in you."

Like any symbol, it can become a formality, a veneer, a custom without meaning. Probably many people in this part of the world do not even know what the greeting means. They do it because it is the custom of their country, the tradition of their forebears.

Even though we are not Buddhists and do not use this particular form of meeting people, the significance of this symbol can be full of meaning for us, too. As we greet the members of our family, our friends, our colleagues, and strangers, we, too, can strive to salute the good in them, to encourage them, to draw out the best in them. For there is something of God in each of them to be cherished, to be nurtured, to be loved.

Help us, oh God, to so cultivate the good in ourselves that we may be free to cultivate the good in others. Help us today and each day to salute the good in the persons we meet, no matter who they are or where they may be. In Thy name, Amen.

Moulmein, Burma
April 6, 1958

On Viewing the Ruins of Angkor Vat

Today was Sunday, and despite the terrific heat I visited the famous temple of Angkor Vat. It is a tremendous sight, covering many acres of land and dating back to the 12th century when the Europeans were fighting in the Crusades in the Middle East.

The buildings were built of stone and decorated with friezes with warriors, priests, lotus flowers and roses, and elephants, lions, and horses. Because Angkor Vat was constructed of stone, it is remarkably well preserved.

As I stood there and looked at this ancient temple of a great empire, I wondered if people would someday make trips like this to Washington, New York, Chicago, or San Francisco, to view the ruins of a civilization whose people were destroyed by their technical brilliance and their lack of astuteness in human relations on a global scale.

Help us, Father, to find the most effective ways in which we can help our country, our culture, our civilization to learn the ways of peace rather than the ways of war. Expand our knowledge, widen our sympathies, deepen our understanding, and heighten our intuition into the tiny role that we can play in this confused, chaotic period of world history. Amen.

Angkor Vat, Cambodia
April 20, 1958

Quakers Dare

My attention was arrested today by the headline in a national news magazine from the United States with the headline "Quakers Dare." I read with interest and admiration of the decision of four pacifists to sail "The Golden Rule" into the area of the Pacific where the tests of nuclear weapons is to take place, as their means of protesting such tests.

But as I read further into the article, I kept wondering about the heading, asking myself, "Do Quakers dare, or do just a few individual Friends dare?" Are we really a revolutionary society, a pioneering group, a courageous body? Or are we content with things as they are, hoping that someone else will dare and thus preserve our reputation for courage?

Then I thought of the powerful prayer of Tom Kelly which appears in his classic *Testament of Devotion*,—"Open Thou my life. Guide my thoughts where I dare not let them go. But Thou darest. Thy will be done."

Help us, Father, to be courageous, daring, revolutionary because we are impelled to go the Second Mile, to stretch ourselves to the utmost in building Thy Kingdom here on earth.

Saigon, Viet-Nam
April 22, 1958

For the Beauty of the Earth

It is spring and I have been viewing the lovely garden and pool of the Heian-Jingu shrine in Kyoto, with its white and red water lillies, clumps of purple, white, and yellow iris, and its azaleas massed in carefully "unplanned" groups, flanked by dwarf pines, maples, and other trees. God seems very close in a place like this.

It is summer and I pause beside the giant redwoods in California. How massive they are. How old. How beautiful. God seems to be here, too.

It is fall and some of us are holding a Meeting for Worship on the porch of an old Inn at Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, with our rocking chairs turned so that we can face the flaming foliage, the goldenrod, the asters, and the yellow pumpkins, as well as the shocks of corn. God seems ever so close here, too.

It is winter and I have just returned from a skiing trip high into the Alps, with nothing but sky and snow all around. God seemed to be here as in so many other places.

In times like these I pray the prayer of the hymn which says:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise.

Kyoto, Japan
May 24, 1958

Learning from All Kinds of Quakers

Gurneyites, Hicksites, and Wilburites. Five Year Meeting Friends, General Conference Friends, Evangelical Friends, and Independents. Birthright Friends, Convinced Friends, and Over-Convinced Friends. It makes one's head ache to try to understand or to explain the many Quaker groups, and one's heart ache to realize that such divisions exist.

Quakerism today is like a good sized plot of ground which has been divided among several sons and daughters, each inheriting a small section of the original plot. These strips are too small to cultivate profitably alone and yet we do not seem able to farm them cooperatively.

What a Society we would have if could work together, learning from each other, using the talents of each group. In such a Society we would all utilize the zeal, sacrificial and generous giving, and concern for spreading the Gospel of Evangelical Friends. We would all profit from the mission work, the concern for children and young people, the talents of many pastors, the network of colleges across the United States, and the broad base of membership in rural and small towns of Five Years Meeting Friends. And we would all gain from the highly educated, upper middle class membership of the General Conference and Independent Friends, with their emphasis upon worship on the basis of silence, and their interest in social service.

What a Society of Friends such a combination would make!

Help us, Father, to see the faults within our own groups as well as in other groups. Help us to build bridges between individuals and groups. Help us to strive for unity rather than uniformity. Amen.

Honolulu, Hawaii
May 29, 1958

Our Father

How many times each of us has uttered the short, simple introduction to the Lord's Prayer—"Our Father!" And yet how often have we stopped to consider what it means? Undoubtedly we have thought about the significance of the term, "Father," but have we thought about that tiny word, "Our?"

Yes, He is the Father of us all—and that means nearly three billion of us. He is Father to the yellow people, the brown people, the black people, and the red people as well as the whites.

He is Father of the 600 million Chinese, the 400 million Indians, the 200 million Russians, and millions of others, as well as Father of 175 million Americans.

He is Father of the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Moslems, the Shintoists, the Zoroastrians, and others, as well as of Christians.

He is Father of the socialists and the communists as well as the capitalists. And He is the Father of the relatively rich people of the earth as well as the great bulk of humanity who are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, illiterate, and ill.

How many of these can we include when we pray the phrase, "Our Father?"

Help us Our Father, to stretch our thinking, to widen our horizons, to develop sympathetic imagination so that we may enlarge the circle of those we include when we pray to Thee that powerful phrase, "Our Father."

Honolulu, Hawaii
May 30, 1958

"Rests" in Music and in Life

Tonight I sat for a long time on the beach at Waikiki—with the ocean framed by the limb of a Keawe tree and floodlit by the moon. Sound effects were furnished by the waves.

Here I found peace, quiet, and beauty—enjoyment for the eyes and ears, refreshment for the body and soul.

In our hectic, busy, strenuous lives we all need these moments of rest and relaxation and recreation—times to dream, to muse, to think. They are as essential to life as the tiny "rests" in the on-going rush of a symphony.

But they need not always be at the beach, in the mountains, or in some other special spot. That I learned best one Sunday afternoon in the home of the late Frances Burke, a wonderful New York Friend. We had been working frantically on a publication for a long time together when she suggested we stop and sit quietly together for a time in a little Quaker Meeting for the two of us. After a few minutes in old-fashioned rockers, with our feet propped on tiny stools, she told me how often she and her husband had done this in their lifetime together and how much it had meant to them. Yes, that was one secret of their radiant and dynamic lives. They had been able to play in the great symphony of life much better because they observed the "rests" as well as the notes.

For the moments of meditation and the periods of quiet in our busy lives, we give thanks. Help us, oh God, to retain some of this composure as we pass from task to task in our hurried and often frantic lives. Amen.

Honolulu, Hawaii
May 30, 1958

Spiritual Pebbles

In my travels in the United States and around the world, I have picked up a few pebbles and rocks as mementos of the places visited. A piece of petrified wood from the petrified forest in Arizona, a chip from the Parthenon which the Greek government gave me, an ordinary rock from Bethlehem in what is now Jordan, and a tiny fossil from the limestone bed of the creek in New London, Indiana, are among my prized possessions. Sometimes I like to take these pebbles and finger them and think of the places they come from.

In a similar way we all need a small collection of spiritual pebbles. These may include the verses of favorite hymns, some lines from poems which we love, prayers which give us strength, and brief quotations which challenge us.

It is good to have such pebbles for our individual and family worship and for our meditations in Meeting. The richer our collection of such pebbles, the richer our periods of meditation and worship.

Help us, Father, to take time to collect spiritual pebbles and to use them, in order that we may be enriched and in turn enrich others. Amen.

New London, Indiana
June 15, 1958