

Carl Heath *speaks*

Carl Heath (1869-1950) was an outstanding Christian pacifist, and ambassador-at-large for the Society of Friends, a man with a vision of the world community and the spirit and skill to help others to work toward that goal.

He was born in Epsom, Surrey, England, and had a varied education in Paris, London and Brussels. On a visit to Sweden to study educational methods, he met Effie Holden, who later became his wife and life-long helpmate. As a young man he spent a year helping Canon Barnett at Toynbee Hall—the pioneer social settlement house in London. He taught in various schools, served as tutor to the children of Sir Sydney Olivier and John A. Hobson, and was on the staff of St. Dunstan's College. His personal friendships included leading members of the Fabian Society and J. Ramsay MacDonald, later Prime Minister.

In 1909 Carl Heath became Secretary of the National Peace Council, with which he was actively associated for the rest of his life. During World War I he became a Friend and his concern for "Quaker Embassies" led to the establishment of many Quaker Centers. In 1919 he became secretary of the Friends Council for International Service, and later of the Friends Service Council. He was the first chairman of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. In his later years he wrote and spoke much on world affairs; his special concern was for a peaceful settlement between Great Britain and India. As a Quaker statesman he speaks to us still.

ON GOD AND MEN . . .

"God, we are told, is spirit, and although we cannot exactly define spirit, we can feel God and realize him in those ultimate values that belong to his nature, the beautiful, the true, the righteous, the strong, the intelligent. Personality . . . is that which grows by an interpenetration of spirits one with another. But the characteristics of personality which express the highest values come by the penetration of the divine spirit and from the qualities of that spirit,—the beautiful, the true, the righteous, the strong, the intelligent. And these are qualities that, as we have increasing sense of them, bind us together in the bundle of life, for their source is one for all men. A person is a person by virtue of the qualities he has from God, and all persons are God-derived. . . . Therein is established a community—God and the souls of men."

"Now if a man is drawn to love the splendors of life, the beauties, and the truths and harmonies and the great nobilities, he is, whatever he elects to call it, loving God. Where God is there lies love. He may be dead to this, he often enough largely is. But there come times of awakening, of spiritual liberation and of what religion calls conversion when he turns again to the great conceptions, and, as Blake would express it, his humanity awakes, and he knows that he is conscious in his own soul of the divine life."

"God is the same God in all mystical experience."

ON JESUS AND MEN . . .

"The outstanding characteristic of Jesus is his overwhelming sense of the nature of God, its intimacy, its guidance, its burning reality; and of his oneness with it. This Son of man is wholly God-centered, wholly wrapped in this sense of a loving reality, and wholly certain that this life of life is in all and through all, from man to beast, from the falling sparrow to the lily of the valley. And that marks his path of action and the nature of his appeal to men."

"Was Christ's revelation of the way of love in life foolishness, and is the way of dominance and power to be preferred? That indeed is a problem the world is always raising. Jesus at any rate for himself had no doubt. He accepted the way of incarnate suffering love in full and complete self-identification. That is why unintelligently often, and yet again with deep intelligence, Christians worship him."

"To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to sit at his feet as a learner about God. Being penetrated by his personality our hearts burn within us. All the realities of penitence and forgiveness, all the over-mastering powers of love flow from the realized presence of that personality. And thereby we are made whole as he liberates the life of God in our souls. Grace upon grace, says the Evangelist. He begets the response. That is the secret of Jesus and of his power over men."

ON OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY . . .

"The one solid fact of European life is its ultimate worship of power. Its real God has always been the Power-God rather than the God of the Cross; its ideal Man the warrior rather than the suffering servant . . . too often the hybrid nature of the Christian Church has meant that the main searcher after the Power-God has been the Church itself. The characters of Mars, of Odin, and of Thor, . . . have been mixed up in the mind of the Church with that of the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ."

ON SOCIAL SIN . . .

"The idea has become current that the right and only ground for resistance to conscription, and for exemption therefrom, must lie in an individual objection in conscience, *i. e.*, in a sense of *personal sin*. There is plenty of corporate political thinking of sorts, but no idea of a social conscience on this matter, of a sense that opposition is not merely to a wrong done to the individual person, but to a wrong done to the community, *a sin of the State*."

"That lack of any sense of social sin comes from a Protestant failure to see the *wholeness* of life. . . . This lack of corporate conscience has been the cause of at least 12,000,000 men being sacrificed in the last few years, and has brought this Christendom to such sins as obliteration bombing and the Hiroshima massacre. Thus we seek to be Christians as individuals, but in world-life our devotions are still given to Woden and to Thor."

ON RENASCENCE AND REFORMATION . . .

“Once again men are setting values on ways and means that will but bring a deep disappointment. A righteous society, they conceive, is the fruit of wise plans, rather than wise plans the fruit of awakened devotion to the righteous life. *Renascence* is forgotten. *Reconstruction* takes its place.

“Clearly, then, we need ‘a total and substantial reformation’.”

“By grace comes conviction of wrong, and by grace comes cleansing and healing and the power to seek the good effectively. Of all vital aids the spiritual community in society may bring to the social life and to the effective propaganda of the Kingdom, this redeeming and reconstructive grace is the greatest. By grace men and societies are saved, for grace is the power of God unto salvation and health.”

“Renascence lies in a conversion of the spirit with the mergence of a wholly fresh attitude of mind and soul, a changed conception of values. . . . The change has to happen right in the midst of the terrific struggle that belongs to this particular time-series in which our lives are cast. The vessel of life is not to start on a new voyage. It is to change its course right out in the wide ocean and in the teeth of the storm. It can only do this as it *feels* the clear need, and responds willingly to a fresh inspiration. Conversion and renascence ask for much more than intellectual assent. They demand, like faith, ‘an energy of the whole man’.”

ON CREATING THE NOBLE COMMUNITY . .

"We do not set aside the noble man as an impracticable dream. We are certain the vision is translatable. But we have yet to realize that the noble community is equally no dream."

"This City of God admits of no slums, spiritual, mental, or material, for the Town has been planned by an Architect whose purpose for men is full personality. The 'Strong Son of God, Immortal Love', who is at its heart, speaks to the muddleheadedness and the muddlemindedness of the age: Follow me! And what does He offer? Because He is a Happy Warrior He offers endurance and suffering and unending struggle and many wounds. He does not offer to young or old an easy life. But He offers adventure, and the most practical life of uses, the uses of noble things. And He offers the supreme thing: life given freely to a share in building together with God a new society for human beings, a *vita nuova*."

"The religious world, if it is going to count in the shaping of the new society . . . must make up its mind as to *whole* purpose. It is out for the integral life, touching all things human, from human existence to the whole circle of world affairs,—an integral life that alone can satisfy our modern need. Is this new society to bring freedom, life, personality, service, and friendship to *all* humans? . . . Is it to enthrone the man above the machine, and the spirit above the material? If so, then it claims the utmost devotion, intelligence, sacrifice, and courage. And its reward is to know the joy of a life lived in a Kingdom of uses, values, persons, friendship and God."

ON CITIZENS FOR THE NOBLE COMMUNITY . . .

"Conversion makes a man fit for the Kingdom of God. But it does not make him a citizen thereof. For that he needs a converted society. The converted society of converted citizens is the Realm of God, and ours is the joyful task to get on with the building."

"What then are we planning for the individual person in the New Order? Indeed what sort of a person do we want as the typical member of that society? The sort of person I want is one who, to begin with, has been made free of his own soul; who has become aware of himself as a being of great possibility; who . . . has been learning to appreciate his own high instincts for truth, for beauty, for the inner music of life; who has grown sensitive to the essential freedoms without which these all become dull and confused in himself and in others; who realises that his personalism and its sensed values are the measure and the resultant of right association with kindred free persons, and above all with what he knows as divine qualities, whatever he calls them, and his dependence thereon; with his feet on the ground but not planted in the ground, and his head in the high heavens anyhow. One who has entered into a comprehension of the Pauline synthesis of 'love accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception for testing things that differ.' Such an one I will trust not to become a loser of his personality or to let it wither and die in any mass-man slavery. I do not want super-men. They usually mean tyrants. I want these as normal men, the kind of men a democracy in the Mazzini sense produces—a democracy that is at once a community, a politics, and a faith."

ON GUIDEPOSTS TO A BETTER WORLD . . .

"I cannot think that anything is wanted so much today as truth. By that I do not mean opinion upon this or that question. But I mean the longing for the worship of the spirit of truth, the desire in men's minds not to accept prejudices without evidence, nor the mere statements of newspapers and politicians seeking power by appeals to popular passions."

"Many people regard friendship as a sort of final relationship they reserve for a very few. To these they will give the benefactions that are theirs to give. It would be a poor life for humanity if this were the nature of the divine charity. The world will never be a noble place whilst we get no further than this. What is wanted today is an intelligent application of friendship to human society. Such an application, standing on a spiritual foundation, would redeem life and bring into it a large nobility, a transforming social quality, a ready cooperation in new adventures to make great our personal and our social life and to rid this world of its dark and miserable ways."

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