

Advance Readings for
“The Blessed Community in the Epistle of James”
FGC 2006

The time of my commitment to the house of correction being very near out, and there being many new soldiers raised, the commissioners would have made me captain over them; and the soldiers cried, they would have none but me. So the keeper of the house of correction was commanded to bring me before the commissioners and soldiers in the market place; where they offered me that preferment, as they called it, asking me, if I would not take up arms for the commonwealth against Charles Stuart? I told them I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lusts, according to James's doctrine; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars. Yet they courted me to accept of their offer, and thought I did but compliment <with> them. But I told them I was come into the covenant of peace, which was before wars and strifes were.

They said, they offered it in love and kindness to me, because of my virtue; and such like flattering words they used. But I told them, if that was their love and kindness, I trampled it under my feet. Then their rage got up, and they said, "Take him away, jailer, and put him into the dungeon amongst the rogues and felons". So I was put into a lousy stinking place, without any bed, amongst thirty felons, where I was kept almost half a year...

The Journal of George Fox

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Introduction

I am hoping that at least a few of you, in selecting a workshop to attend at FGC, were torn between my workshop and one on John Woolman. Because if you were, I offer good news: this workshop is both.

While it might be going too far to say that my reading of James is eccentric, it is certainly fair to say that it is peculiarly Quaker, and peculiarly influenced by my love for and involvement with Woolman. In particular, I view James through a specific set of Woolmanite lenses; that is, I latch on to a small set of themes in James which were of vital importance to Woolman. Those themes are:

1. Universal love and impartial justice
2. The gospel ministry (which in James manifests as a concern for listening and speaking)
3. Gospel order
4. The right relationship of the Christian with the world
5. War and its causes.

The number of topics, you'll note, is precisely the number of times we'll meet at FGC. One might guess, then, that the list will fall into place quite neatly as the topics for our sessions. However, two considerations have made me decide otherwise. Firstly, we Friends (or at any rate, those of us who are clear on the Peace Testimony) talk a good deal about war and peace, and I have some doubts that I can make a very significant new contribution in that area. Secondly, the fourth topic, the right relationship of the Christian to the world, is perhaps the primary theme of both James and Woolman. It undergirds all the others. It is itself undergirt by the nature of God and God's work with us. And, according to both James and Woolman, it is not only the foundation without which the rest of our values crumble, but is also, due to human weakness, the most vulnerable point in the whole edifice—the world will always be coaxing, cajoling, coercing us to do things in its way rather than God's. My own experience accords strongly with this view. These considerations play out in my choosing to devote more than one session to this theme, so that it plays a major role in both our first and fifth sessions.

The resulting sequence of sessions (and it differs a bit from that given in my workshop description) is this:

1. Invasion and Inversion (on our relationships to God and world)
2. The Family of God (on the view that justice is universal or it isn't justice)
3. On Hearing and Speaking (with emphasis on the gospel ministry of early Friends)
4. Gospel Order
5. The Church in the World.

This booklet is a set of readings arranged by session. At the start of each section, I've given a brief explanation of how, in my view, the readings relate to the epistle of James. I don't, however, believe that I have made these relationships entirely clear, or wish to; I hope that will take place in our actual sessions at FGC.

However, war is too dreadful and too much with us to leave alone entirely, and so a few readings on that subject are given in an appendix to this booklet. We may or may not find time to discuss them in our sessions.

I am eager to meet with you all and to explore God's way with us. With each of us. With all of us.

Max Hansen

Session 1: Invasion and Inversion

In preparation for the workshop, I hope that at minimum you will read the Epistle of James a few times, preferably in multiple translations, and in the original Greek if you are so gifted.

In addition, please read Jesus' so-called Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7 of Matthew.

This section of the booklet discusses two matters we'll cover in our first session: how to read James, and James' main theme of Christ's inversion of worldly values.

How James May Be Read

Our handling of James will not be scholarly. I am not the person who could offer that kind of workshop; I lack the qualifications. Having read a couple of commentaries, I can with great assurance say this: there is a great diversity of theories, among scholars, concerning not only who James is, but just what he is up to in this letter. I will not go into any great detail here, but will fasten on a single aspect of that diversity: the question of whether James' Epistle is a random collection of sayings or a single, integrated statement.

On first glance, the evidence seems greatly to favor the first hypothesis, that this epistle is simply a collection of more or less unrelated sayings. Consider, for example, how James hops from subject to subject in the first chapter alone. Some scholars, however, while fully admitting that this chapter is something of an olio, explain it as an *epitome*, a precis or summary of what will follow. Here, for example, is one such scheme:

Verses in Ch. 1	Theme	Later treatment of theme
2-4 & 12	Endurance Of Testing	5:7-11
5-7	The prayer of faith	5:13-18
9-10	Reversal of the Fortunes of Rich, Poor	2:1-7 & 4:13 – 5:6
12-18	Wicked Desires Vs. God's Gift	3:13-4:10
19-20	The Use of the Tongue	3:1-12
22-27	The Need of Acting Out Our Religious Convictions	2:14-26

I find this scheme moderately useful. However, I believe that chapter one not only introduces the themes of the rest of the letter, but does so with more coherence than it is sometimes given credit for. I arrive at such a mostly-coherent reading through two methods: the recognition of parentheses, and the addition of logical conjunctions. Neither method qualifies as advanced scholarship, but both can be very helpful in understanding biblical texts, especially the epistles.

Parenthetical Parsing

The first method is parenthetical parsing. Simply put, this is a reading of the text with an eye to where there might be a logical parenthesis, a side-trip of some sort, where there is no punctuation, no bracket or brace or curvy parenthesis, to tell us so. I believe these abound in NT writing, and our understanding can be greatly helped by recognizing it when it happens.

Here is how I do parenthetical parsing:

1. Find portions of a single document (an epistle, for example) that seem to bear on the same subject or treat the same theme.
2. With regard to these pieces, consider in order the following hypotheses:
 - They are contextually unrelated. That is, the same subject or theme may have arisen again in an entirely new context, so that, which one passage may shed light on another, they cannot be regarded as being parts of a single argument.
 - They are parts of a single argument.
 - One is a precursor or recapitulation of the other. An example is the very theory I have just used, which says that James ch. 1 is a summary of the letter to follow. An instance of a theme in chapter 1, and another instance of the same theme later, are not parts of the same argument; rather, the instance in chapter 1 is just a precursor of the later, fuller treatment.
3. If it seems likely that the treatments are parts of a single argument, identify those passages between them that seem to be digressions. Regarding these passages, consider these hypotheses:
 - The inner passage is truly a digression. Writers of epistles sometimes allow themselves these.
 - The inner passage is an expansion of a key portion of the argument. You are about to see that in my parsing of an argument from I Corinthians.
 - The inner passage presents so much material, not directly relevant to the main argument, that it must be viewed as standing alone, and includes markers suggesting that the author is starting a new section, such as a fresh greeting to the readers. This invalidates the hypothesis that the outer passages are parts of a single argument.

It can help to lay out your scripture text on your own paper, with the parenthetical sections you've identified clearly marked, as I've done here:

A Parenthesized Parsing of James 1:2-27

I believe James 1:2-27 is a unified discourse on the Christian's training under God. There are long parentheses which need to be viewed as parentheses. To make reading easier, I have used the following notation:

- Verse numbers are in braces { }

- I have used both parenthesis marks and indentation to segregate sections that I believe are parenthetical. That is, they are to some degree asides from the main thread of the argument. In addition to using () pairs, I have indented parenthetical sections by ½", and I have indented a parenthesis-within-a-parenthesis by 1".
- I have also amplified; that is, I have inserted words and clauses which I believe make the logical connections that James had in mind. These insertions are marked by brackets [].

By indenting the parenthetical asides, I have created a document whose main thread can be read simply by reading the unindented lines while ignoring the indented parentheses. Then one can go back and read the chapter *with* the parenthetical parts, with greater understanding of what James is doing. Having once seen the main logical thread alone, it will be easier to keep it in mind even while the text does a bit of wandering from it.

[Begin parenthesized text of James 1]

{2,3} Rejoice when you are tested – it is part of how you’ll learn patience.

(({4}[Remember I want you to] let patience be perfected.

(({5-8} If [you think you can’t be perfected because] you lack wisdom, just ask God for wisdom. He gives what we ask for, never scolding us for asking. But ask with real faith that doesn’t waver. If you waver, you’re like a wave tossed on the ocean; then there’s no point in asking – God won’t give. You’re someone whose mind is in two places [with God and with the world], and you’ll be unstable in all you do.))

{9,10a} Thus, while it is all right for the [person once] poor [, who has been tried by that poverty,] to boast of how God has freed him from it and brought him through that trial, for the rich man his boast should be not of the riches, but of some other humbling [by which he is tried].

(({10b, 11} because he knows that both he and his riches are passing things. [In either case it is through the testing that one is blessed.]

{12} The blessing in being tested is this: the crown of life is offered to those who endure.

{13-15} And don’t start thinking it’s God who tempts and tests you. No, it is your own desire, prompted by the world which distracts you [with offers of false gifts]. Pursuing those desires is the way of death.

(({16} Do not be misled, brothers/sisters)

{17-18} It is the perfect gifts, given in a perfect way, that come from the unchanging father. From him, through his word, we are given the gift of life, and are made the early harvest of the life he gives.

{19,20} [Then, since it is a *word* that gives us life,] let us listen more than we talk, and not be angry [which clouds our listening]. Our anger neither makes nor even *allows* God’s work to be done.

{21} So put aside all evil, and choose meekness [,the state of mind in which you can] receive the implanted, soul-saving word.

{22} But hearing is not enough; *do* the word, or else you’ve just fooled yourself.

(({23-25} Hearing only is like a quick glance in a mirror; it teaches you very little. But if you gaze into the law of life, and stand still in its revealings, it will command actions which, when you do them, will bring blessings to you.)

{26} If anyone believes he is connected to God¹, but has an unruly tongue and pursues the desires [which keep us from doing God's will, which tempt us and lead us toward death], the "tie to God" is no such thing; it's worthless.

{27} A true tie to God will result in this: caring for those in need, and steering clear of the world's distractions.

[End of James' text].

¹ In "connection to God" and "tie to God," I have used an etymological expansion of the word *religion*, which appears in most English translations. The root of *religion* is the root of *ligation*, the act of tying, and of *ligature*, the cord which binds. Etymologically speaking, *religion* then is our tie or connection to God. I can't do this without noting that etymologies should not be confused with meanings. *Religion* in actual, modern usage means an array of things, some of them entirely at odds with the Gospel, as Barth points out eagerly and at length. I take the liberty of this etymological trick because I believe the result is in line with James' intention.

Invasion and Inversion

I am going to use another and more extreme example of parenthesized parsing as our introduction to the main theme of session 1, that of Invasion and Inversion.

In I Corinthians, after a customarily long greeting, Paul begins in 1:10 to deal with an urgent problem in the Corinthian church, that of factionalism. I find this to be a beautiful and terribly important message, but I also find that it can be a bit hard to grasp because, between its beginning at 1:10 and its conclusion in 3:23, Paul goes off on a rather long journey. It is as if Marco Polo had come back from years away, met a friend, and took up the same conversation they'd been having when he took a fancy to get up from the table for a minute and check out China.

So long is Paul's parenthesis that it can mask a key fact: that it is in no way unrelated to the central argument against the forming of factions and parties. Let's take a look at the text. First, let me be clear that the first parenthesis I identify is the one about the foolishness of God's wisdom. It begins in the very middle of a verse, at the colon in this rendering of 1:17:

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

With "not with wisdom of words" we are off, it seems, across the street or to Asia or the moon. But I suggest that it is only the length of the journey that confuses us. Paul takes another jaunt at the start of chapter 2; after talking in somewhat abstract terms about divine versus human wisdom, Paul brings it home to the Corinthian Christians by talking about their own experience of conversion when he was with them. All of chapter 2 is a motherlode of early Quaker understandings of ministry, of the Holy Spirit, of discernment. But it is also a distraction, especially to a generation raised on television, from the argument in which it is embedded.

To help provide some clarity about what Paul is doing, I offer a parenthesized parsing in which I omit the deepest side-trip within a side-trip: all of chapter two. But note that it *is* a nested parenthesis, a side trip within the aside about human and divine wisdom. By leaving it out, and also by omitting a few other asides, I believe I have delivered the main argument Paul is making in these three chapters. You decide:

I Corinthians

Chapter 1:

¹⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. ¹²Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. ¹³Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ¹⁵Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. ¹⁶And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. ¹⁷For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. ¹⁸For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing

the understanding of the prudent. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence. ³⁰ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ³¹ That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Chapter 3:

⁴For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? ⁵ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? ⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. ⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. ⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. ¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. ²⁰ And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. ²¹ Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; ²² Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; ²³ And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

What I hope I have done is to lay bare that Paul's discussion of human versus divine wisdom, while it begets a long journey, is also crucial to his argument about factionalism. Simply put,

Worldly wisdom is always the wisdom of cliques and factions. That is why God sent Jesus the Messiah: to turn that wisdom on its head, to destroy all cliques and factions and to make of all humanity one family, under the one loving parent who created it. The Gospel is an invasion and an inversion and it must always be so.

And there it is. It's in big bold letters because it is the foundational theme of our week together. And this is because I believe it is the foundational theme of the Epistle of James, and of John Woolman's life and work.

Session 2: The Family of God

In the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus calls us to be perfect (Mt. 5:48), he means something rather different from what most of us are going to imagine. Quakerism began as a perfectionistic path, and I believe it should still be so. But the freedom from sin which is implied in Quaker perfectionism is not what Jesus is getting at here on the Mount. Here, *perfect* means simply impartial, as he makes clear in 5:45:

that ye may be called the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

The Epistle of James resembles wisdom literature. It is highly directive, and its instructions are given rather forcefully. It is perhaps less clever than Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Penn's aphoristic writings, but it has its similarities. But in comparing James with other ancient wisdom literature, one thematic difference becomes glaring: wisdom literature tends to focus strongly on the family, on familial duties and intra-familial relations. This theme even creeps into 1 Peter, which otherwise has much in common with James.

In James there is no talk of a son's duties towards a father. This is because for James there is only One Father, and we are all sons (and daughters). If we were to ask Job Scott, he'd tell us that James, while never mentioning the role of wife, is not neglecting it, because he is teaching us one and all, male and female, the duty we have toward our One Espoused Husband.

Simply put, in James there is one family, and it's all of us. If partiality is what will drive us from God's eternal wisdom into perishing human wisdom, John Woolman got the message clearly, as witness the next two readings.

Two Excerpts from "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends"

Henry Joel Cadbury

Journal of Negro History, 21, 151-213. (1936)

I:

William Boen (or Bowen) was born near Rancocas, New Jersey, about 1735. Under the influence of John Woolman he became interested in Friends and attended their meetings. He arranged at the age of twenty-eight to secure his freedom at thirty and was therefore anxious to marry a free colored woman employed at Chesterfield to whom he was engaged, named Dinah or "Dido." Though they were not Friends they wished to be married by Friends' ceremony, and John Woolman arranged a Friends' meeting for that purpose in the house of the bride's employer. The marriage certificate is preserved with the signatures of both the Quaker and the Negro witnesses. About the same time William Bowen applied for membership in the Society of Friends. In spite of his other qualifications he was long refused, apparently on account of his color. Not until 1814 was he at last admitted a member. He died on June 12th, 1824, in the ninetieth year of his age. The testimony to him issued by Mount Holly Monthly Meeting, of which he was a member, speaks highly of his humility and Christian character. Various stories are told of his conscientiousness against the use of the "plural language" instead of "thou," and "thee," against the use of slave grown articles and even of refusing to accept payment for some wood that he had sold when he learned that his customer was a "hireling minister." If the same William Bowen is meant, we are told that in 1811 he was living in Philadelphia and that his wife died that year, after which he went to the country to board.

The following passage in the Journal of Thomas Shillitoe, who visited Mt. Holly in 1828, almost certainly refers to William Bowen and is of interest as showing the disappointment felt by John Woolman in the refusal of membership and his anticipation of divine punishment therefore. Evidently Shillitoe shared both feelings. He writes:

John Woolman, who was a member of this monthly meeting, a Friend informed me, had a sight of this dwindling that has now taken place, as the consequence of the conduct of the them members of the meeting, in the case of a man of colour of good character, who had long attended Friends' meetings and who had applied to the monthly meeting of Mount Holly to be received into membership with Friends. When his case was before the meeting, it appeared from the report of those appointed to visit him, he was fully convinced of the principles which our religious society hold, and his walking among men was in full unison thereunto, yet his being a man of colour was urged against his being received. When a minute was made objecting on these grounds, to his request granted, John Woolman stood up, saying, it appeared to be his duty to declare, that because of this partiality now manifested by this monthly meeting, in the case last concluded upon, a sense was given him that this monthly meeting would dwindle and become reduced again."

Similar in spirit though quite different in detail is another story of John Woolman, not I think previously published, but again referring probably to William Bowen. It was reported in 1839 by Sarah M. Grimke on the authority of "Joseph Whitall, a valuable minister of Woodbury, New Jersey" (1771 - 1847):

In Mount Holly meeting, N.J. a committee was appointed to bring forward the names of person suitable for Elders. They met several times, but could not fix on anyone; and at length reported so to the meeting. J. Woolman was on the committee I think, but whether he was or not, he told them there was an elder in that meeting and that he ought to be acknowledged, for he was the only one prepared for that high and holy office, viz. the black man who sat behind the door. But they preferred going without an Elder, to having a coloured one.

II:

That the objection of Friends to recognition of Negroes was neither recent nor confined to Philadelphia is shown by a nearly contemporary writer, probably Nathan Kite. Speaking of Moses Brown of Rhode Island and of his desire to give Negroes equality with whites, he cites three instances among Friends of prejudice against them. The first is the story of a colored man, a member of a meeting in New England, whose gift in the ministry the leaders of his meeting refused to recognize. He declared, "You will not receive my testimony, then I am authorized to tell you that no testimony bearer shall arise amongst you while the present heads of your meeting are living." This prophecy of the colored man was strictly fulfilled.² The second instance is told as follows:

About forty years ago [i.e., about 1810] James Alford, a colored man of clean life and blameless conversation, made application to a meeting not far distant from Philadelphia, to be received into membership. One of the members of that meeting strongly influenced by the prejudice of colour, was very much opposed to such a request being granted. Whilst the case was undecided, he met James Alford, and commenced a conversation with him. He told James that the doctrines of the Society of Friends called for perfection; and then with contempt and bitterness, added, "What does thee know of perfection, James?" In the true spirit of Christian humility, James made in his answer, a beautiful confession of the Quaker doctrine on that subject. "I cannot say much of perfection - but I think I have been convinced of that, which if faithfully followed will lead to perfection."

[Third instance omitted.]

² Neither the name of the Negro member nor the name of his meeting nor the date is given. But the story is told of a visit in Philadelphia by Micajah Collins, who said he was the first minister after the prediction was fulfilled. According to the minute of Salem Monthly Meeting about Collins (Memorials of Deceased Friends of New England Yearly Meeting, Providence, 1841, 50ff.) he was born in 1764, lived at Lynn, Massachusetts, was called to the ministry in his twenty-seventh year, visited the Middle States for the last time in 1824-5, and died in 1827. The incident had therefore occurred about 1750. This makes the unnamed Negro a much earlier case of membership in the Society of Friends than any other that I know of or mention below. A memorandum recently published (Weld-Grimke Letters 1934, p. 829), written by Sarah M., Grimke in 1840 tells the story in much the same way, mentions the meeting as Lynn, the time as "80 or 90 years ago," and the period of "famine of the word of the Lord" as "50 years." But there may be some inaccuracy in a strict calculation of this sort. Micajah Collins himself testified in 1822 that he had been an "acknowledged minister of society nearly twenty years." (Trial of Benjamin Shaw, John Alley, Junior, etc. for Riots. Salem, 1822, p. 24.) [Footnote from the original article.]

*From John Woolman's A Plea for the Poor or
A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich*

Chapter Seven

“This kind goeth not out but by prayer” [Mt. 11:21].

In our care for our children, should we give way to partiality in things relating to what may be when we are gone, yet after death we cannot look at partiality with pleasure. If by our wealth we make them great without a full persuasion that we could not bestow it better, and thus give them power to deal hardly with others more virtuous than they, it can, after death, give us no more satisfaction than if by this treasure we had raised these others above our own and given them power to oppress ours.

Did a man possess as much good land as would well suffice twenty industrious, frugal people, and expect that he was lawful heir to it and intend to give this great estate to his children, but found on a research into the title that one half this estate was the undoubted property of a number of poor orphans who, as to virtue and understanding, to him appeared as hopeful as his own children—this discovery would give him an opportunity to consider whether he was attached to any interest distinct from the interest of those children. Some of us have estates sufficient for our children and for as many more to live upon did they all employ their time in useful business and live in that plainness consistent with the character of true disciples of Christ, and have no reason to believe that our children after us will apply them to benevolent purposes more than some poor children who we are acquainted with would, if they had them; and yet, did we believe that after our decease these estates would go equally between our children and an equal number of these poor children, it would be likely to give us uneasiness. This may show to a thoughtful person that to be redeemed from all the remains of selfishness, to have a universal regard to our fellow creatures, and love them as our Heavenly Father loves them, we must constantly attend to the influence of his Spirit.

When our hearts are enlarged to contemplate the nature of this divine love, we behold it harmonious; but if we attentively consider that moving of selfishness which would make us uneasy at the apprehension of that which is in itself reasonable, and which being separated from all previous conceptions and expectations will appear so, we may see an inconsistency in it, for the subject of such uneasiness is in future, and would not affect our children till we were removed into that state of being where there is no possibility of our taking delight in any thing contrary to the pure principle of universal love.

As that natural desire of superiority in us, being given way to, extends to such our favourites whom we expect will succeed us, and as the grasping after wealth and power for them adds greatly to the burdens of the poor and increaseth the evil of covetousness in this age, I have often desired in secret that in looking toward posterity we may remember the purity of that rest which is prepared for the Lord's people, the impossibility of our taking pleasure in any thing distinguishable from universal righteousness, and how vain and weak a thing it is to give wealth and power to such who appear unlikely to apply it to a general good when we are gone.

As Christians, all we possess are the gifts of God. Now in distributing it to others we act as his steward, and it becomes our station to act agreeable to that divine wisdom which he gracious gives to his servants. If the steward of a great family, from a selfish attachment to particulars, takes that with which he is entrusted and bestows it lavishly on some to the injury of

others and to the damage of him who employs him, he disunites himself and becomes unworthy of that office.

The true felicity of man in this life, and that which is to come, is in being inwardly united to the fountain of universal love and bliss. When we provide for posterity and make settlements which will not take effect till after we are centered in another state of being, if we therein act contrary to universal love and righteousness, such conduct must arise from a false, selfish pleasure in directing a thing to be done wrong, in which it will be impossible for us to take pleasure at the time when our directions are put in execution. For if we, after such settlement and when too late for an alteration, attain to that purified state which our Redeemer prayed his Father that his people might attain to—of being united to the Father and the Son—a sincere repentance for all things done in a will separate from universal love must precede this inward sanctification; and though in such depth of repentance and reconciliation all sins are forgiven and sorrows removed, that our misdeeds heretofore done could no longer afflict us, yet our partial determinations in favour of such whom we loved in a selfish love could not afford us any pleasure. And if after such selfish settlement our wills continue to stand in opposition to the fountain of universal light and love, there will be an impassable gulf between the soul and true felicity, nor can anything heretofore done in this separate will afford us pleasure.

Session 3: Hearing and Teaching

How much does James say about the ministry? He never uses the word once. But...

I believe James has much to say about ministry, or at least about ministry as understood by Friends. I believe this is the case because the Epistle of James (like virtually all of scripture) informed that understanding as Quakerism was formed.

There is abundant literature about Quaker ministry, and I'm glad such literature is becoming more popular. I offer here only two readings to give some flavor of the classic Quaker understanding, after reading which I hope you will read James chapter 3 in the following way:

- First, let me suggest that “those who in peace sow righteousness” (3:18) is a very apt description of the classic Quaker minister.
- Read vs. 1-6, then skip immediately to vs. 14-18.
- Then, go back and read the whole chapter.

Woolman on Ministry

[from chapter 1 of Woolman's Journal]

After a while, my former acquaintance gave over expecting me as one of their company, and I began to be known to some whose conversation was helpful to me. And now, as I had experienced the love of God, through Jesus Christ, to redeem me from many pollutions, and to be a succor to me through a sea of conflicts, with which no person was fully acquainted, and as my heart was often enlarged in this heavenly principle, I felt a tender compassion for the youth who remained entangled in snares like those which had entangled me. This love and tenderness increased, and my mind was strongly engaged for the good of my fellow- creatures.

I went to meetings in an awful frame of mind, and endeavored to be inwardly acquainted with the language of the true Shepherd. One day, being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up and said some words in a meeting; but not keeping close to the Divine opening, I said more than was required of me. Being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could not take satisfaction in anything. I remembered God, and was troubled, and in the depth of my distress he had pity upon me, and sent the Comforter. I then felt forgiveness for my offence; my mind became calm and quiet, and I was truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies. About six weeks after this, feeling the spring of Divine love opened, and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting, in which I found peace. Being thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and which taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to his flock.

From an inward purifying, and steadfast abiding under it springs a lively operative desire for the good of others. All the faithful are not called to the public ministry; but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various; but whenever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ, it is from the operation of his Spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them, and thus giving them a just sense of the conditions

of others. This truth was early fixed in my mind, and I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words from worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of the true gospel ministry.

Samual Bownas on Ministry

From *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister* (an early edition)

Introduction

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God. And if any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, &c. 1 Peter iv. 10,11.

Preface to the Reader

The intention of the AUTHOR, in this treatise, being chiefly to give instructions to such who are called into the work of the ministry, and to the elders of the church, how to conduct themselves in their care over them whilst young in the ministry, it is not thought fit to be made so generally public, as such tracts which are intended for a general benefit, which may in some degree concern all, and are of that universal nature, that every member of society ought to be acquainted with, in order for their government and practice; but as it is not the will of the all-wise disposer, who governs his house (which is his church) in wisdom, nor the order of his providence, to give the like gifts to all, but as the apostle speaks, He gave some, apostles; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;³ whom he appointed to the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints (or those in whom the work of the sanctification was begun) and the edification of the church.

Now as it was with the head, Christ, Jesus, so it is with his ministers, for no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God,⁴ as was Aaron, as saith the Apostle. And there advice, adapted to the states, trials, and temptations of such, who are under the preparation of the divine hand, to shun the dangers and mistakes, and surmount the difficulties which they may be liable to, who may have made farther progress in it, may be of great service to them; though to others, who are not called to this work, it may be in many respects as a book sealed. Which advice, is as an hand of help held forth, and is of service many times to the honest, but doubtful enquirer, who is like the traveler in an unknown path, often beset with many fears of losing his way; and as it is a kind office, and what calls for respect from all who stand in need of it, so it is a duty we owe, and what God is pleased to enjoin his servants and ministers to be found in the practice of, one towards another; and such was the case of our worthy ancient Friend the AUTHOR, who thought it his duty, having had great experience of that work, in a course of many years exercise, much labor and travel, both in his own country, and in foreign parts, to give some account of the steps god is pleased to lead his children in, whom he is

³ Ephes. 4:11

⁴ Heb. 5:4

*preparing for this great service, to point out where the enemy of the work of God, and our happiness, is lying in wait to mislead, beguile, and betray such who are not watchful; and altho' he hath not studied excellency of speech, nor the enticing words which man's wisdom teacheth, yet such who have had their eyes opened to discern the work of God, as also the mysterious transformations of our grand adversary, will have occasion to say, that it is in the demonstration of the spirit, having the true marks and evidence of that inspiration which giveth a right understanding in the things of God, and mysteries of his kingdom; for hereby it will appear, how necessary it is for men and women to experience the sanctification of the Spirit to precede, or go before, that they may be duly qualified to help and advise others; this being the order our Lord and master observeth in his advice to Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*⁵

Chapter 1.

That *sanctification* is a previous *qualification* for the reception of a *divine inspiration* to minister.

As the design of the following pages is to set in a true light the nature and necessity of an *inspired ministry*, and the advantages that we receive thereby, I shall, as introductory thereunto, briefly take notice of a qualification suitable the receiving of that inspiration, without which it is not reasonable to suppose any one to have it.

First, there must be a state of sanctification (in degree) known, by the spirit of judgement, and burning, before any can be proper objects to be receivers of this inspiring gift, that can only assist a minister, and make him instrumental of doing good to others: the tree must be good, e'er the fruit can be so; and right and true ministers are to be known by their fruits: This being granted, which I think can't be denied, then it follows, that none, without being thus qualified, can be called to the work of the ministry by a divine inspiration of the holy spirit; and therefore all vile and ungodly persons, while they continue in that natural and unregenerate state, are excluded from any part in this gift; and although some such may pretend, that either with their learning, or by their money, or both, they may have acquired, or made a purchase of orders for liberty to preach, and may on this foundation undertake to expose what they have to sale; but what they sell is no other than what they have bought, while in this unregenerate state, empty and vain, and cannot profit the hearers; for as saith the psalmist, *Unto the wicked, God saith,*⁶ *what has thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.* And let me say, that whosoever undertakes the work of the ministry, not being first reformed themselves, cannot fully expect to be inspired by divine wisdom, for the reforming of others by the word of truth; for she dwells in holy souls, and makes them Friends of God and prophets: Then it is reasonable to conclude, that all who live in *adultery, fornication, uncleanness,*⁷ *lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings,* and such like works of the flesh, are excluded from any inheritance in the kingdom of God, and consequently from having any part in that excellent inspiring gift of the ministry, so necessary to our assistance and direction in our way thither.

⁵ (Luke 22:32)

⁶ Ps. 1:16-17

⁷ Gal 5:19-21

Secondly I shall therefore say something of the qualification necessary to receiving of this excellent inspiring gift of the ministry; and in order to it, we ought first to examine our own hearts with care, praying in secret that God, by his spirit, will vouchsafe to direct us in a right search after truth; and hereby we shall find a law in our hearts that we have broken, and a spirit in our inward parts that we have rebelled against, and in our ignorance, being hurried in the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh, and vanities of this life, have overlook'd, tho' we have been followed by it, and it has strove with us: For the spirit worketh in us secretly, and we know what at the first what it is; but finding ourselves very uneasy, and in great trouble of mind, being under sorrow and heaviness, not rightly and coolly examining the reason, it is often mistaken to proceed from a natural cause, and so outward means are sought for to relieve from this uneasiness; some by taking their bottle with their companions, others diverting themselves with their sports and gaming, others again take medicines to help them against what they call melancholy; some one way, and some another, thus mistake, and make merry over the witness in them, and stiffen their necks against the reproof of instruction, which is the way to life; not minding the text, which says, *He that being often reprov'd,⁸ hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Thirdly, But tho' some are thus rebellious and careless, others take a better course, and strictly examining their words and actions, company and conversation, and finding it to be their great sorrow and burden, instead of endeavoring to get from under the load of trouble by sporting, gaming, drinking, phisic, or company, such rather, as the prophet said, *sit alone and keep silence,⁹ putting their mouth in the dust*, praying in secret, that God will assist them by his grace and good spirit, that the cause of this sorrow may be removed by an humble and sincere repentance of all their follies and sins, wherewith they have offended God, and that for time to come, they may, by the help of the spirit, and direction of that law in their hearts, which they had hitherto overlook'd and neglected, now lead a new life; *First*, by denying all ungodliness, and abstaining from every appearance of evil; [I Thes. 5:22] which must be done, e'er they can perfectly practice that which is right in the sight of God; for no man can be righteous and wicked at one time; we must first be brought out of the bondage of corruption under spiritual *Pharaoh and Egypt*, into the wilderness, e'er we can offer acceptably unto God: This state is figuratively called a *wilderness*, a way we have not trod in, showing thereby the necessity of depending on our guide, our spiritual *Moses*, that must go before and take care of our support: For in this wilderness state we have no food, no water, *viz.* no right refreshment, but what this our leader provides and administers to us: In this state we can neither pray, nor do any religious act, without the direction of our leader: So that we find the case is much altered with us to what it was in time past; for then we could pray, sing, preach, and perform other religious duties in our *own time*, feeding and satisfying ourselves therewith; but now we are brought into the wilderness, where there is neither ploughing, nor sowing; we can't now help ourselves by our own contrivance, and workings in our own wills, but here we must live a life of faith, wholly depending on him that will (if we faint not in our minds) bring us through to the heavenly *Canaan*: Thus we shall come in the Lord's time to experience the substance of those types and figures, under that legal dispensation, to be substantially and spiritually fulfilled in our own minds, by the operations of the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, the substance and foundation of all *True Religion* and *ministry* that is really profitable to the hearers.

⁸ Prov. 29:1

⁹ Lam. 2:28

Fourthly, this work of *preparation* by the spirit being thus begun, and carried on, is a shorter, or longer time in accomplishing, so as the parties thereby may be qualified to receive a divine inspiration to minister from to others, according to the will of him that calleth; and when it happeneth to be but a short time, between persons beginning to be serious and religious, and the time that they appear in the *Ministry*, (labouring according as they apprehend themselves to be called to that work for the good of others) it may happen, that some of their hearers, forming their judgment respecting the worthiness, or unworthiness of the parties so concerned, from their past conduct, while in so vile a state, may conclude, *How can such be fit to teach others, who themselves but the other day were guilty of such follies as are inconsistent with a true minister to touch with?*

Fifthly, Thus in some respect it was with that great apostle of the gentiles, viz. *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*. For we find, while he was in the very heat of persecuting the church, and breathing out threatenings against the brethren, so that they were afraid of him; as appears when *Ananias* was commanded of the Lord, during that peculiar visitation, which at that time he was under, to go to his assistance; *Ananias's answer was, I have heard by many of this man, (Saul) how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me.* Then *Ananias* went, having this special command to visit *Saul*. But it plainly appears, that this good man could not easily believe *Saul's* so sudden and short change, from an open opposer and persecutor of the faith, and faithful professors and followers of the son of God, to be an open professor and preacher of the same faith and doctrine with them he so persecuted: And as this was the case of *Saul*, it has been the case, in some degree, of others of later date; that is, their sudden change, from a vain conversation, to be preachers against it, hath so narrowed up their way in the minds of some of their hearers, that at the same time (some of them that have wish'd well to the cause of religion) supposing such preachers would be a means of stumbling to many, have therefore in a zeal that has been without true consideration and right judgment, not giving time for trial, whether what they have heard was *of God* or the *creature*, (as not minding *Gamaliel's* counsel) been for pulling them down before they could see whether they were right or wrong.

To prevent this *rash* judging, it is needful, that the hearers be careful to judge nothing before its time, but let every such person have the opportunity to make full proof of their ministry, that it may appear, whether what they do in the way of ministering, be of God or of themselves: If it be right, it will be self-evident, and carry with it that which in time will give satisfaction to those who have doubted of the ministry of such persons, and their hearts will be fill'd with charity towards them.

Sixthly, Now if we consider the thing right, this *rash* judging is very dangerous and hurtful, greatly tending to the discouraging of young ministers; for this censorious and critical temper is a great block in the way, and may hinder some from coming forth in that gift, tho' they may be rightly concerned therein; and some that may make a little appearance that way, may be put to silence, e'er they have had time sufficient to make, or to give full proof of their ministry: This temper therefore ought carefully to be watched against, and have a timely curb and discouragement in every mind, viz. every hearer ought in fear to request of God to be directed aright in *judgment*, that under a pretended care to promote the cause of religion, they may not in a blind zeal be instrumental to discourage so useful a gift.

Seventhly, Now we find this critical temper, that was so apt to judge without judgment, and to find fault without cause, our Lord did frequently reprove when it appeared, as may be seen in the

instance of the woman, whose penitence and humiliation¹⁰ induced here to wash her master's feet with her tears, and wipe them with her hair. Whose demonstration of love to our blessed Lord, (when *Simon* was ready to censure him for admitting) he by a very lively comparison commended, and in the application thereof smartly reprov'd the want of judgment, as well as charity of that *Pharisee*, who did so little for him himself, and yet was so ready to find fault with her; and by that means rather brought him to justify what he had before condemn'd. Which is often the case of *self-righteous professors*, who are apt (without just and mature consideration) to judge those, who from vile and ungodly sinners may suddenly become purified by the work of the spirit, and by the same may be fitted and required (tho' some may be apt to think it too soon) to come up in public service for God; whilst themselves, who have not loved so much, nor been so zealous to follow divine conviction, are lingering behind in the work; and yet these are most apt and ready to judge and censure those who are more faithful, and thus suddenly brought into obedience, as too *hasty* and *forward*.

And also in his answer to those who censured him for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, he plainly declared the end of his coming, which was the reason of his conduct in that, as well as other respects.

Eighthly, From all which it appears, that it has happened sometimes, the more vile and wicked any one hath been before conviction, the more thorough and quick hath their conversion been: They to whom much is forgiven, *love much*; and the more they love, the more hearty and zealous they are to go on with the work unto which they are called; and having known the terrors of the Almighty for sin, are the more earnest to persuade men; and I dare not say, but that such may in their zeal and warmth of spirit, a little stretch, at times beyond their authority; but when they do, they no sooner retire to their gifts, but they find sufficient smart for it in their own minds: But this begets them enemies; and because they appear wrong in *part*, they must by some be concluded wrong in the whole; which is an unwarrantable conclusion to make on any person.

Ninthly, Now if we rightly consider the matter, there may be a just cause for this zeal, if we will but give them this allowance, that as they have been like brands pluck'd out of the burning, and known the terrors of the almighty for sin, they are the more earnest to persuade men to repentance and amendment, both by reproof, warning of sinner, and threatening them with judgment, as having themselves so narrowly escaped: and this being the cause of that fervor and zeal such have appeared in, it will no doubt on strict examination be found, that the root of all this is love, and a design of good to the souls of men. Such therefore ought to be treated with great charity and meekness, and the good design in them encouraged; and that overforwardness in them rather shown to them than reprov'd; and when they see it, they will not need to be told of it, for shame will come fast enough upon them, (if they are true ministers) and may lie heavy; which may hinder some tender spirits from improving in their gifts, and render them less serviceable than otherwise they might, if they did moderately keep on their way, minding to keep pace with their gifts, neither going before, nor staying behind their leader; but wanting both judgment and experience, being children in the work, they can't do it all at once, and therefore in patience must be borne with for a time.

Lastly, This *preparation* by the Spirit for the ministry, so qualifies the receiver of this excellent inspiring gift, when called to the work, that he can experimentally say, *what I have tasted, felt, and heard of the good word of life, and the powers of the world to come, I declare unto you*. But what can such (as the apostle speaks of, concerning whom he avers they shall not inherit God's kingdom) say of their experience of the work of God's power in them, while they continue in

¹⁰ Luke 7:37

their gainsaying in the works of the flesh, such as adultery, idolatry, pride, covetousness, envy, and drunkenness, minding the pleasures of this world above any thing else; surely (as above) they have no experience to speak of to the people, nothing to say this will bring them to a fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Having said thus much concerning a true qualification for the receiving of this gift of inspiration, so absolutely necessary to every right minister, that without it he can't be one, I shall now speak of INSPIRATION itself, which is to be the subject next in course to be treated of, concluding this chapter with part of that excellent prayer of David's (so apt to this purpose) in the 51st Psalm, from the 9th to the 14th verse. *Hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit: Then will I teach (but not till then) transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* A short but full description of the right qualification of a gospel minister.

[Here's where I ask that you go back to the start of this section where I suggest a fresh way of reading James 3. MCH]

Session 4: Gospel Order

The term Gospel Order has many meanings. It can refer to something as specific and bounded as the series of three steps to be taken in correcting a church member (Matthew 18:15-18). Or it can refer, in the manner of Lloyd Lee Wilson, to something no less grand and sweeping than God's whole plan for the right operation of the universe. Among Friends, in most periods of Quakerism, it has meant something in between. It has meant the methods and structures whereby members of the faith community help each other remain aligned with God's great will and desire. It includes the steps of Matthew 18, but it includes much more.

Reading Matthew 18:15-18, it's important to note what's not there as well as what is there. What's not there is any license for slander, detraction, backbiting, or the formation of parties for or against other persons or parties. In fact, that's precisely what is excluded by the first step: if Abraham feels that Thomas has gone astray, the very first person Abraham needs to talk with about the matter is Thomas, not others, and especially not everybody who already doesn't like Thomas.

Also what's there is the reason for the whole process: "If he (she) shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother (sister)." (v. 15) It's all about restoration and reconciliation.

Here are three readings on gospel order, one by Luther, another by a modern Lutheran pastor, and one by Woolman. The last isn't *about* gospel order, it *is* gospel order as Woolman practiced it.

Luther's Eighth Commandment

[From *The Small Catechism*, in which Luther gives a short explanation of each commandment.]

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

Rushlimbaughitis

By Michael Rehak

At first I thought it was just random. Then the telephone rang and rang yet again. Could it be a full moon.? Was there something in the water? Then I realized that perhaps we are in the midst of an epidemic of Rushlimbaughitis.

Rush is the master of taking a kernel of truth, removing it from its context, surrounding it with distortions, and embellishing on it creatively. He then invites others to participate in negative judgments. Rush, however, is not in relationship, nor is he interested in being in

relationship, with any of those he criticizes. Power is exercised, negative as it may be, when he is able to get others to collaborate in discounting the targeted person. This is done in the name of truth; that kernel of truth.

Rushlimbaughitis is infecting our congregations. Members, in too many congregations, have ceased to build healthy relationships with their pastors (and pastors with the members). A kernel of truth is found; the pastor expressed strong emotions at an inappropriate time, or is not friendly enough, or does not appear to be interested in listening to criticisms. The kernel receives the .spin. treatment. Some details of the behavior or event are left out, not intentionally. They simply are not known to the observer. Other details may be omitted because they would not support the ultimate goal of reaching a negative judgment. The spin continues with some embellishments and additions by others. Then it is spread by telephone or e-mail. Generally the purpose of such spins is to make the teller appear to be wiser, in the right, or the victim. Often those who feel offended or powerless are most susceptible to Rushlimbaughitis.

The problem begins with the .kernel. of truth. Jesus said, .You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.. In order for truth to have freeing power in our lives we dare not depend on only a kernel. Freedom requires we be about the hard work of .knowing. the whole truth. True freedom is only experienced in mutual relationships. Mutuality fosters understanding, acceptance, and openness. Power relationships, especially negative power, bind people, divide people and keep people defensive.

The good news is that there is an antidote for Rushlimbaughitis. The antidote is caring enough to confront; going to the person and saying the truth about yourself and asking for more information from them.

.When you said ... that made me uncomfortable. I heard you saying Is that what you meant? When you do I feel afraid. Can you help me understand? The medicine is identifying your feelings and risking to share them.

Feelings are about what is going on inside of you. If you can substitute the word .am. for .feel. in the sentence, then it is a feeling. I feel afraid; I am afraid. I feel anxious and concerned; I am anxious and concerned. If the word .that. follows the word .feel. . .I feel that...., then you are making a judgment, not sharing a feeling. Judgments are not helpful. Luther put the challenge before us in explaining the Eighth Commandment,that we will not deceitfully belie, betray, slander nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him and put the best construction on everything.. Be healthy; practice good medicine.

[from Google's cache of a page on the website of South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

<http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:M33hIjovhpMJ:www.scsw-elca.org/page3main.htm+luther+put+best+construction+everything&hl=en&ie=UTF-8>]

Woolman: A Copy of a Letter written to a Friend

[From chapter 3 of the *Journal*]

In this, thy late affliction, I have found a deep fellow-feeling with thee, and have had a secret hope throughout that it might please the Father of Mercies to raise thee up and sanctify thy troubles to thee; that thou being more fully acquainted with that way which the world esteems foolish, mayst feel the clothing of Divine fortitude, and be strengthened to resist that spirit which leads from the simplicity of the everlasting truth.

We may see ourselves crippled and halting, and from a strong bias to things pleasant and easy find an impossibility to advance forward; but things impossible with men are possible with God; and our wills being made subject to his, all temptations are surmountable.

This work of subjecting the will is compared to the mineral in the furnace, which, through fervent heat, is reduced from its first principle: 'He refines them as silver is refined; he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.' By these comparisons we are instructed in the necessity of the melting operation of the hand of God upon us, to prepare our hearts truly to adore him, and manifest that adoration by inwardly turning away from that spirit, in all its workings, which is not of him. To forward this work the all-wise God is sometimes pleased, through outward distress, to bring us near the gates of death; that life being painful and afflicting, and the prospect of eternity opened before us, all earthly bonds may be loosened, and the mind prepared for that deep and sacred instruction which otherwise would not be received. If kind parents love their children and delight in their happiness, then he who is perfect goodness in sending abroad mortal contagions doth assuredly direct their use. Are the righteous removed by it? their change is happy. Are the wicked taken away in their wickedness? the Almighty is clear. Do we pass through with anguish and great bitterness, and yet recover? He intends that we should be purged from dross, and our ear opened to discipline.

And now, as thou art again restored, after thy sore affliction and doubts of recovery, forget not Him who hath helped thee, but in humble gratitude hold fast his instructions, and thereby shun those by-paths which lead from the firm foundation. I am sensible of that variety of company to which one in thy business must be exposed; I have painfully felt the force of conversation proceeding from men deeply rooted in an earthly mind, and can sympathize with others in such conflicts, because much weakness still attends me.

I find that to be a fool as to worldly wisdom, and to commit my cause to God, not fearing to offend men, who take offence at the simplicity of truth, is the only way to remain unmoved at the sentiments of others.

The fear of man brings a snare. By halting in our duty, and giving back in the time of trial, our hands grow weaker, our spirits get mingled¹¹ with the people, our ears grow dull as to hearing the language of the true Shepherd, so that when we look at the way of the righteous, it seems as though it was not for us to follow them.

A love clothes my mind while I write, which is superior to all expression; and I find my heart open to encourage to a holy emulation, to advance forward in Christian firmness. Deep humility

¹¹ Ezra 9:2

is a strong bulwark, and as we enter into it we find safety and true exaltation. The foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man. Being unclothed of our own wisdom, and knowing the abasement of the creature, we find that power to arise which gives health and vigor to us.

Session 5: The Church In the World

The church, living in God's eternal wisdom, is always under assault by the world with its rival wisdom. Occasionally, the world makes the mistake of allowing its assaults to be both hostile and violent. This backfires completely; it was under precisely these conditions that both early Christianity and early Quakerism grew most quickly. More often, more consistently, and more effectively, the world attacks the church by buying it off. James and Woolman were both sure of this.

For John Woolman, discipline in the church was essential. That Friends were sometimes disowned did not trouble him in the least. Quakerism could not have done the corporate act of giving up slaveowning if it hadn't been willing to remove from its membership those who continued to hold their fellow humans in bondage.

But for Woolman, not only was it essential that the work of disciplining church members be done with an eye to restoration and reconciliation, but that it be done in the pure spirit of love which comes from God. To this end, Woolman has strong words to the leaders of meetings, on their obligation to have an eye single to God. The first reading for this session is Woolman's final statement on the matter, an epistle to all American Friends which he left behind on his departure for England. His Friends in Philadelphia meeting were prompt and faithful in getting it published. How faithful American Friends were in reading it from the heart is a question. I find it hard to conceive that the splits that convulsed Quakerism in the century after Woolman could have occurred if this epistle had been handed to every newly recorded minister and every newly appointed elder, from generation to generation, like the precious pearl it is. It is not easy reading, but, like everything Woolman wrote, it repays repeated visits and renewed efforts.

The second reading for this session is a short bit from Woolman's Journal, in which he reports another minister's conviction that the love of wealth was driving the Holy Spirit out of the assemblies of Friends.

The third reading is a piece on schools from Woolman's *On Pure Wisdom and Human Policy*. Woolman here demonstrates the importance of liberating our children from the opinions and judgments of others (even of our human selves) so that they can learn to serve God in the purity Woolman has called for in his final epistle.

Woolman's Final Epistle

An Epistle to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends

Beloved Friends,

Feeling at this time a renewed concern, that the pure principle of light and life, and the righteous fruits thereof, may spread and prevail among mankind, there is an engagement on my heart to labour with my brethren in religious profession, that none of us may be a stumbling-block in the way of others; but may so walk, that our conduct may reach the pure witness in the hearts of such as are not in profession with us.

And, dear friends, while we publicly own that the Holy Spirit is our leader, the profession is in itself weighty, and the weightiness thereof increaseth in proportion as we are noted among the professors of truth; and are active in dealing with such as walk disorderly.

Many under our profession, for want of due attention, and a perfect resignation to this Divine Teacher, have in some things manifested a deviation from the purity of our religious principles, and these deviations having crept in among us by little and little, and increasing from less to greater, have been so far unnoticed, that some living in them have been active in putting discipline in practice, with relation to others, whose conduct hath appeared for dishonorable in the world.

Now as my mind hath been exercised before the Lord, I have seen that the discipline of the church of Christ standeth in that which is pure; that it is the wisdom from above which gives authority to discipline; and that the weightiness thereof standeth not in any outward circumstances, but in the authority of Christ who is the author of it; and when any walk after the flesh, and not according to the purity of truth, and at the same time are active in putting discipline in practice, a veil is gradually drawn over the purity of discipline, and over that holiness of life, which Christ leads those into, "in whom the love of God is verily perfected." I John ii.5.

When we labor in true love with offenders, and they remain obstinate, it is sometimes necessary to proceed as far as our Lord directed, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." Matt. xviii. 17. Now when such are disowned, and they who act therein feel Christ made unto them wisdom, and are preserved in his meek, restoring spirit, there is no just cause of offence ministered to any; but when those who are active in dealing with offenders, indulge themselves in things which are contrary to the purity of truth, and yet judge others whose conduct appears more dishonorable than theirs, here the pure authority of the discipline ceaseth as to such offenders, and a temptation is laid in their way to wrangle and contend. -- "Judge not," said our Lord, "that ye be not judged," Now this forbidding alludes to man's judgment, and points out the necessity of our humbly attending to that sanctifying power, under which the faithful experience the Lord to be "a spirit of judgment to them." Isaiah xxviii. 6. And as we feel his Holy Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body in us, and can say, "it is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me," right judgment is known.

While Divine love prevails in our hearts, and self in us is brought under judgment, a preparation is felt to labor in a right manner with offenders; but if we abide not in this love, our outward performance in dealing with others, degenerates in formality; for "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." I John v. 3.

How weighty are those instructions of our Redeemer, concerning religious duties, in which He point out, that they who pray, should be so obedient to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that humbly confiding in his help, they may say, "Thy name O Father be hallowed! Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—In this awful state of mind is felt that worship which stands in doing the will of God, on earth as it is done in Heaven, and keeping the Holy Name sacred. To take a holy profession upon us is awful, nor can we keep this Holy Name sacred, but by humbly abiding under the cross of Christ. The apostle made a heavy complaint against some who profaned this Holy Name by their manner of living; "through you, he says, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles." Rom. ii. 24.

Some of our ancestors through many tribulations, were gathered into the state of true worshippers, and had a fellowship in that which is pure; and as one was inwardly moved to kneel down in their assemblies, and publicly call on the name of the Lord, those present, in the harmony

of united exercise, joined in the prayer. I mention this, in order that we of the present age, may look unto the Rock from whence we were hewn, and remember, that to unite in worship in a union in prayer, and that prayer acceptable to the Father, is only in a mind truly sanctified, in which the sacred name is kept holy, and the heart resigned to do his will "on earth, as it is done in Heaven." "If ye abide in me," saith Christ, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will in my name, and it shall be done unto you."—Now we know not what to pray for as we ought, but as the Holy Spirit doth open and direct our minds, and as we faithfully yield to its influences, our prayers are in the will of our Heavenly Father, who fails not to grant that which his own spirit, through his children, asketh;—thus preservation from sin is known, and the fruits of righteousness are brought forth by such as inwardly unite in prayer.

How weighty are our solemn meetings when the name of Christ is kept holy! "How precious is that state in which the children of the Lord are so redeemed from the love of this world, that they are accepted and blessed in all that they do!" R. Barclay's Apology, p. 404.

How necessary is it that we who profess these principles, and are outwardly active in supporting them, should faithfully abide in Divine strength, that as He who hath called us is holy, so we may be holy in all manner of conversation! 1 Pet. i. 15.

If one professing to be influenced by the spirit of Christ, proposeth to unite in a labor to promote righteousness in the earth, and in time past he hath manifestly deviated from the path of equity, to act consistently with this principle, his first work is to make restitution so far as he may be enabled; for if he attempt to contribute towards a work, intended to promote righteousness, while it appears that he neglects, or refuses to act righteously himself, his conduct has a tendency to entangle the minds of those who are weak in the faith who behold these things, and to draw a veil over the purity of righteousness, by carrying an appearance, as though that was righteousness which is not.

Again, if I propose to assist in supporting those doctrines, wherein that purity of life is held forth, in which customs proceeding from the spirit of this world have no place; and at the same time, strengthen others in those customs by my example; the first step then, in an orderly proceeding, is to cease from those customs myself, and afterwards to labor, as I may be enabled, to promote the like disposition and conduct in others.

To be convinced of the pure principle of truth, and diligently exercised in walking answerable thereto, is necessary, before I can consistently recommend this principle to others. I often feel a labor in spirit, that we, who are active members in religious society, may experience in ourselves the truth of those expressions of the Holy One—"I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me." Lev x. 3. In this case, my mind hath been often exercised when alone, year after year; and in the renewings of Divine love, a tender care hath been incited in me, that we who profess the inward principle of light to be our teacher, may be a family united in that purity of worship, which comprehends a holy life, and ministers instruction to others.

My mind is often drawn towards children in the truth, who having a small share of the things of this life, and coming to have families, may be inwardly exercised before the Lord, to support them in a way agreeable to the purity of truth, in which they may feel his blessing upon them in their labors; the thoughts of such being entangled with customs contrary to pure wisdom, conveyed to them through our hands, doth often very tenderly and movingly affect my heart; and when I look towards and think on the succeeding generation, fervent desires are raised in me, that we, by yielding to that Holy Spirit which leads into all truth, may not do the work of the Lord deceitfully, may not live contrary to the purity of the Divine principle we profess; but that as

faithful labourers in our age, we may be instrumental in removing stumbling-blocks out of the way of those who may succeed us.

So great was the love of Christ, that He gave himself for the church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that it should be holy, and without blemish, “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Eph. v. 27. And when any take the name of Christ upon them, professing to be members of his church and led by his Holy Spirit, and yet manifestly deviate from the purity of truth, they herein act against his gracious design in giving himself for them, and minister cause for the continuance of his afflictions, viz., in his body, the church.

Christ suffered afflictions in a body of flesh prepared by the Father; but the afflictions of his mystical body are yet unfinished; for they who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death. And as we humbly abide under his sanctifying power, and are brought forth into newness of life, we feel Christ to live in us, who being the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and always at unity with himself, his spirit, in the hearts of his people, leads to an inward exercise for the salvation of mankind, and when under a travail of spirit, we behold a visited people entangled by the spirit of this world, with its wickedness and customs, and thereby rendered incapable of being faithful examples to others, sorrow and heaviness, under a sense of these things, are often experienced; and thus, in some measure, is filled up that which remains of the afflictions of Christ.

Our blessed Saviour, speaking concerning gifts offered in Divine service, says, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. v. 23,24. Now there is no true unity, but in that wherein the Father and Son are united; nor can there be a perfect reconciliation, but in ceasing from that which ministers cause for the continuation of the afflictions of Christ; and if any, professing to bring their gift to the altar, remember the customary contradiction which some of their fruits bear to pure, spiritual worship, it appears necessary to lay to heart this command, “leave thy gift before the altar.”

Christ graciously calls his people brethren; “whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother.” Mark iii.35. Now, if we walk contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus, while we continue to profess it, we offend against Christ, and if, under this offence, we bring our gift to the altar, our Redeemer doth not direct us to take back our gift, he doth not discourage our proceeding in a good work; but graciously points out the necessary means by which the gift may be rendered acceptable, “leave,” saith he, “thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother;” cease from that which grieves the Holy Spirit, cease from that which is against the truth as it is in Jesus, and then come and offer thy gift.

I feel, while I am writing, a tenderness to those who, through Divine favor, are preserved in a lively sense of the state of the churches, and at times may be under discouragements with regard to proceeding in that pure way which Christ, by his Holy Spirit, leads into. The depth of disorder and weakness which so much prevails, being opened, doubtings are apt to arise, as to the possibility of proceeding as an assembly of the Lord's people, in the pure counsel of truth; and I therefore feel a concern to express, in uprightness, that which hath been opened in my mind, under the power of the cross of Christ, relating to a visible gathered church, whose members are guided by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is called the body of Christ, Col. i. 25.

Christ is called the head of the church, Eph. i. 22.

The church is called the pillar and the ground of the truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Thus, the church hath a name that is sacred, and the necessity of keeping this name holy, appears evident; for when a number of people unite in a profession of being led by the spirit of Christ, and publish their principles to the world, the acts and proceedings of that people may, in some measure, be considered such as Christ is the author of.

Now while we stand in this station, if the pure light of life is not followed and regarded in our proceedings, we are in the way of profaning the Holy Name, and of going back towards that wilderness of sufferings and persecution, out of which, through the tender mercies of God, a church hath been gathered. Christ liveth in sanctified vessels, Gal. ii. 20. and when his Holy Name is profaned, and the pure gospel light eclipsed, through the unfaithfulness of any who, by their station, appear to be standard-bearers under the Prince of Peace, the living members in the body of Christ, in beholding these things, in some degree experience the fellowship of his sufferings; and as the wisdom of the world more and more takes place in conducting the affairs of this visible gathered church, and the pure leadings of the Holy Spirit are less waited for and followed, so the true suffering seed is more and more oppressed.

My mind is often affected with a sense of the condition of sincere-hearted people in some kingdoms where liberty of conscience is not allowed, many of whom being burdened in their minds with prevailing superstition joined with oppressions, are often under sorrow; and when such have attended to that pure light which hath in some degree opened their understandings, and, for their faithfulness thereto, have been brought to examination and trial, how heavy are the persecutions which, in divers parts of the world are exercised upon them! How mighty, as to the outward, is that power, by which they are borne down and oppressed!

How deeply affecting is the condition of many upright-hearted people who are taken in the Papal inquisitions! What lamentable cruelties, in deep vaults, in a private way, are exercised on many of them! and how lingering is that death, by a small slow fire, which they have frequently endured who have been faithful to the end!

How many tender-spirited Protestants have been sentenced to spend the remainder of their lives in a galley chained to oars, under hard-hearted masters, while their young children are placed out for education, and taught principles so contrary to the consciences of the parents, that, by dissenting from them, they have hazarded their liberty, lives, and all that was dear to them of the things of this world!

There have been in times past, severe persecutions under the English government, and many sincere-hearted people have suffered death for the testimony of a good conscience, whose faithfulness hath ministered encouragements to others, and hath been a blessing to many who have succeeded them. Thus, from age to age, the darkness being more and more removed, through the tender mercies of God, a channel hath at length been opened the exercise of the pure gift of the gospel ministry, without interruption from outward power, a work which is rare and unknown in many parts of the world.

As these things are often fresh in my mind, and this great work of God going on in the earth has been open before me, that liberty of conscience with which we are favored hath not appeared as a light matter. A trust is committed to us, a great and weighty trust, to which our diligent attention is necessary. Whenever the active members of this visible gathered church use themselves to that which is contrary to the purity of our principles, it appears to be a breach of this trust, and one step back towards the wilderness; one step towards undoing what God, in infinite love, hath done

through his faithful servants, in a work of several ages, and is like laying the foundation for future sufferings.

I feel a living invitation in my mind to such who are active in our religious society, that we may lay this matter to heart, and consider that we stand in a state of outward liberty, under the free exercise of our conscience towards God, obtained through the great and manifold afflictions of those who lived before us. Gratitude is due from us to our Heavenly Father, and justice to our posterity. Can our hearts endure, or our hands be strong, if we desert a cause so precious, if we turn aside from a work under which so many have patiently labored?

May the deep sufferings of our Saviour be so dear to us, that we may never trample under foot the adorable Son of God, nor count the blood of the covenant unholy. May the faithfulness of the martyrs when the prospects of death by fire was before them be remembered, and may the patient constant sufferings of the upright-hearted servants of God in later ages be revived in our minds; and may we so follow on to know the Lord, that neither the faithful in this age, nor those in ages to come, may ever be brought under suffering, through our sliding back from the work of reformation in the world.

While the active members in the visible gathered church stand upright, and the affairs thereof are carried on, under the leadings of the Holy Spirit, although disorders may arise among us, and cause many exercises to those who feel the care of the churches upon them; yet, while these continue under the weight of the work, and labor in the meekness of wisdom for the help of others, the name of Christ, in the visible gathered church, will be kept sacred; but, while they who are active in the affairs of this church continue in a manifest opposition to the purity of our principles this, as the prophet expresseth it, is "as when a standard-bearer fainteth"; Isaiah x. 18. and thus the way opens to great and prevailing degeneracy, and to sufferings as for such through the power of Divine love, are separated to the gospel of Christ, and cannot unite with any things in opposition to its purity.

The necessity of an inward stillness hath, under these exercises, appeared clear to my mind. In true silence strength is renewed, and the mind is weaned from all things, except as they may be enjoyed in the Divine will; and a lowliness in outward living, opposite to worldly honor, becomes truly acceptable to us. In the desire after outward gain, the mind is prevented from a perfect attention to the voice of Christ; yet being weaned from all things, except as they may be enjoyed in the Divine will, the pure light shines into the soul. Where the fruits of the spirit which is of this world, are brought forth by many who profess to be led by the spirit of truth, and cloudiness is felt to be gathering over the visible gathered church, the sincere in heart, who abide in true stillness, and are exercised therein before the Lord for his name's sake, have knowledge of Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings; and inward thankfulness is felt at times, that through Divine love, our own wisdom is cast out, and that forward, active part in us is subjected, which would rise and do something in the Church, without the pure leadings of the Spirit of Christ.

While aught remains in us contrary to a perfect resignation of our wills, it is like a seal to a book, wherein is written "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" concerning us. Rom. xii. 2. But when our minds entirely yield to Christ, that silence is known which followeth the opening of the last of the seals, Rev. viii 1. In this silence, we learn to abide in the Divine will, and there feel, that we have no cause to promote except that alone in which the light of life directs us in our proceedings, and that the alone way to be useful in the church of Christ is to abide faithfully under the leadings of his Holy Spirit in all cases; and being preserved thereby in purity of heart and holiness of conversation, a testimony to the purity of his government may be held forth through us to others.

As my mind hath been thus exercised, I have seen, that to be active and busy in the Church, without the leadings of the Holy Spirit, is not only unprofitable, but tends to increase dimness; and where way is not opened to proceed in the light of truth, a stop is felt by those who humbly attend to the Divine Leader, a stop which, in relation to good order, is of the greatest consequence to be observed. Thus Robert Barclay, in his treatise on discipline, (see pages 65, 68, 84.); “That the judgment or conclusion of the church or congregation is no further effectual, as to the true end and design thereof, but as such judgment or conclusion proceeds from the spirit of God, operating on their minds who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.”

Now in this stop I have learned the necessity of waiting on the Lord in humility, that the works of all may be brought to light, and those to judgment which are wrought in the wisdom of this world; and I have also seen, that in a mind thoroughly subjected to the power of the cross, there is a savor of life to be felt, which evidently tends to gather souls to God, while the greatest works in the visible gathered church, brought forth in man’s wisdom, are unprofitable.

When people are divinely gathered into a holy fellowship, and faithfully abide under the influence of that Spirit which leads into all truth, "They are the light of the world," Matt. v. 14. Now, holding this profession hath appeared to me weighty, even beyond what I can fully express, and is what our blessed Lord seemed to have in view, when he proposed the necessity of counting the cost before we begin to build.

I trust there are many who feel at times, under Divine visitation, an inward inquiry after God; and, when such in the simplicity of their hearts, observe the lives of a people who profess to walk by the leadings of his Spirit, of what great concernment is it that our lights shine clear, that nothing in our conduct carry a contradiction to the truth as it is in Jesus, or be a means of profaning his Holy Name, and be a stumbling-block in the way of those sincere inquirers.

When such seekers as are weary with empty forms, look towards uniting with us as a people, and behold active members among us depart, in their customary way of living, from that purity of life which, under humbling exercises, hath been opened before them as the way of the Lord's people, how mournful and discouraging is the prospect! and how strongly doth such unfaithfulness operate against the spreading of the peaceable, harmonious principle, and testimony of truth among mankind!

In entering into that life which is hid with Christ in God, we behold his peaceable government, where the whole family are governed by the same spirit, and the “doing to others as we would they should do to us,” groweth up as good fruit from a good tree. The peace, quietness, and harmonious walking in this government, is beheld with humble reverence to Him who is the author of it; and in partaking of the Spirit of Christ, we partake of that which labors and suffers for the increase of this peaceable government, among the inhabitants of the world. And I have felt a labor of long continuance, that we who profess this peaceable principle, may be faithful standard bearers under the Prince of Peace; and that nothing of a defiling nature, tending to discord and wars, may remain among us.

May each of us query with ourselves, have the treasures I possess, been gathered in that wisdom which is from above, so far as hath appeared to me?

Have none of my fellow-creatures an equitable right to any part which is called mine?

Have the gifts and possessions received by me from others, been conveyed I a way free from all unrighteousness, so far as I have seen?

The principle of peace, in which our trust is only on the Lord, and our minds weaned from a dependence on the strength of armies, appears to me very precious; and I often feel strong desires, that we who profess this principle, may so walk as not to give just cause for any of our fellow-creatures to be offended at us; that our lives may evidently manifest, that we are redeemed from that spirit in which wars are. Our blessed Saviour, in pointing out the danger of so leaning on man as to neglect the leadings of his Holy Spirit, said, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven." Matt. xxiii. 9. When the wisdom from above is faithfully followed, and we are therein intrusted with substance, it is a treasure committed to our care in the nature of an inheritance from Him who formed and supports the world. Now, in this condition, the true enjoyment of the good things of this life is understood, and that blessing is felt in which is real safety. This is what I apprehend our blessed Lord had in view, when he pronounced, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Selfish worldly-minded men may hold lands in the selfish spirit; and depending on the strength of outward power, be perplexed with secret uneasiness, lest the injured should sometime overpower them, and that measure be meted to them which they measure to others. Thus, selfish men may possess the earth; but it is the meek who inherit it, and enjoy it as an inheritance from their Heavenly Father, free from all the defilements and perplexities of unrighteousness.

When proceedings have been in that wisdom which is from beneath, and inequitable gain gathered by a man, and left as a gift to his children, who, entangled by the same worldly spirit, have not attained to that clearness of light in which the channels of righteousness are opened, and justice done to those who remain silent under injuries; Here I have seen, under humbling exercise of mind, that the sins of the fathers are embraced by the children, and become their sins; and thus, in the days of tribulations, the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon these children, who take hold of the unrighteousness of their fathers, and live in that spirit in which those iniquities were committed, to which agreeth the prophecy of Moses; concerning a rebellious people; "They that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them." Lev. xxvi. 39. Our blessed Lord, in beholding the hardness of heart in that generation, and feeling in himself, that they lived in the same spirit in which the prophets had been persecuted unto death, signified, "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, should be required of that generation, from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple." Luke xi. 50,51.

Tender compassion fills my heart towards my fellow-creatures estranged from the harmonious government of the Prince of Peace, and a labor attends me that they may be gathered to this peaceable habitation.

In being inwardly prepared to suffer adversity for Christ's sake, and weaned from a dependence on the arm of flesh, we feel that there is a rest for the people of God, and that it stands in a perfect resignation to his Holy will. In this condition, all our wants and desires are bounded by pure wisdom, and our minds wholly attentive to the counsel of Christ, inwardly communicated, which hath appeared to me as a habitation of safety for the Lord's people, in times of outward commotion and trouble; and desires from the fountain of pure love are opened in me, to invite my brethren and fellow-creatures to feel for, and seek after that which gathers the mind into it.

John Woolman.

Mount Holly, New Jersey, 4th Month, 1772.

The World Encroaches on Friends: a Snippet from Woolman's Journal

Twenty-fifth* of ninth month, 1764. -- At our Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia this day, John Smith, of Marlborough, aged upwards of eighty years, a faithful minister, though not eloquent, stood up in our meeting of ministers and elders, and, appearing to be under a great exercise of spirit, informed Friends in substance as follows: "That he had been a member of our Society upwards of sixty years, and he well remembered, that, in those early times, Friends were a plain, lowly-minded people, and that there was much tenderness and contrition in their meetings. That, at twenty years from that time, the Society increasing in wealth and in some degree conforming to the fashions of the world, true humility was less apparent, and their meetings in general were not so lively and edifying. That at the end of forty years many of them were grown very rich, and many of the Society made a specious appearance in the world; that wearing fine costly garments, and using silver and other watches, became customary with them, their sons, and their daughters. These marks of outward wealth and greatness appeared on some in our meetings of ministers and elders; and, as such things became more prevalent, so the powerful overshadowings of the Holy Ghost were less manifest in the Society. That there had been a continued increase of such ways of life, even until the present time; and that the weakness which hath now overspread the Society and the barrenness manifest among us is matter of much sorrow." He then mentioned the uncertainty of his attending these meetings in future, expecting his dissolution was near; and, having tenderly expressed his concern for us, signified that he had seen in the true light that the Lord would bring back his people from these things, into which they were thus degenerated, but that his faithful servants must go through great and heavy exercises.

Woolman On Schools

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x. 14.

To encourage children to do things with a view to get the praise of men, to me appears an obstruction to their being inwardly acquainted with the Spirit of Truth. For it is the work of the holy Spirit to direct the mind to God, that in all our proceedings we may have a single eye to him; to give alms in secret, to fast in secret, and labour to keep clear of that disposition reproved by our Saviour, "But all their works they do for to be seen of man."

That Divine light which enlightens all men, I believe does often shine in the minds of children very early, and humbly to wait for wisdom, that our conduct toward them may tend to forward their acquaintance with it, and to strengthen them in obedience thereto, appears to me to be a duty on all of us.

By cherishing the spirit of pride, and the love of praise in them, I believe they may sometimes improve faster in learning, than otherwise they would, but to take measures to forward children in learning, which naturally tend to divert their minds from true humility, appears to me to savour of the wisdom of this world.

If tutors are not acquainted with sanctification of spirit, nor experienced in an humble waiting for the leadings of Truth, but follow the maxims of the wisdom of this world, children who are under their tuition, appear to me to be in danger of imbibing thoughts and apprehensions reverse to that meekness and lowliness of heart, which is necessary for all the true followers of Christ.

Children at an age fit for schools, are in a time of life which requires the patient attention of pious people, and if we commit them to the tuition of those whose minds we believe are not rightly prepared to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," we are in danger of not acting the part of faithful parents toward them; for our heavenly Father doth not require us to do evil, that good may come of it; and it is needful that we deeply examine ourselves, lest we get entangled in the wisdom of this world, and through wrong apprehensions, take such methods in education, as may prove a great injury to the minds of our children.

It is a lovely sight to behold innocent children; and when they are sent to schools where their tender minds are in imminent danger of being led astray by tutors, who do not live a self-denying life, or by the conversation of children who do not live in innocence, it is a case much to be lamented.

While a pious tutor has the charge of no more children than he can take due care of, and keeps his authority in the Truth, the good spirit in which he leads and governs, works on the minds of such who are not hardened, and his labours not only tend to bring them forward in outward learning, but to open their understanding with respect to the true Christian life. But where a person has charge of too many, and his thoughts and time are so much employed in the outward affairs of his school, that he does not so weightily attend to the spirit and conduct of each individual, as to be enabled to administer rightly to all in due season; through such omissions he not only suffers, as to the state of his own mind, but the minds of the children are in danger of suffering also.

To watch the spirit of children, to nurture them in Gospel love, and labour to help them against that which would mar the beauty of their minds, is a debt we owe them; and a faithful

performance of our duty, not only tends to their lasting benefit, and our own peace, but also to render their company agreeable to us.

Instruction thus administered, reaches the pure witness in the minds of children who are not hardened, and begets love in them toward those who thus lead them on; but where too great a number are committed to a tutor, and he, through much cumber, omits a careful attention to the minds of the children, there is a danger of disorders gradually increasing amongst them, until the effects thereof appear in their conduct, too strong to be easily remedied.

A care hath lived on my mind, that more time might be employed by parents at home, and by tutors at school, in weightily attending to the spirit and inclinations of children, and that we may so lead, instruct and govern them, in this tender part of life, that nothing may be omitted which is in our power, to help them on their way to become the children of our Father, who is in heaven.

Meditating on the situation of schools in our provinces, my mind has at times been affected with sorrow, and under these exercises it has appeared to me, that if those who have large estates were faithful stewards, and laid no rent, or interest, or other demand, higher than is consistent with universal love; and if those in lower circumstances would, under a moderate employ, shun unnecessary expense, even to the smallest article, and all unite in humbly seeking to the Lord, he would graciously instruct us, and strengthen us, to relieve the youth from various snares in which many of them are entangled.

Appendix 1: On War

I don't plan to use these materials in our sessions. (Neither do I plan to resist using them if the Spirit so leads.) I used them in a study of James I did at Berkeley Friends Church. I offer them here for your edification and, in the case of the second one, your shock.

Woolman on War

[from Chapter 4 of the Journal]

In the fall of this year, having hired a man to work, I perceived in conversation with him that he had been a soldier in the late war on this continent; and he informed me in the evening, in a narrative of his captivity among the Indians, that he saw two of his fellow-captives tortured to death in a very cruel manner. This relation affected me with sadness, under which I went to bed; and the next morning, soon after I awoke, a fresh and living sense of Divine love overspread my mind, in which I had a renewed prospect of the nature of that wisdom from above which leads to a right use of all gifts, both spiritual and temporal, and gives content therein. Under a feeling thereof, I wrote as follows:- "Hath He who gave me a being attended with many wants unknown to brute creatures given me a capacity superior to theirs, and shown me that a moderate application to business is suitable to my present condition; and that this, attended with his blessing, may supply all my outward wants while they remain within the bounds he hath fixed, and while no imaginary wants proceeding from an evil spirit have any place in me? Attend then, O my soul! to this pure wisdom as thy sure conductor through the manifold dangers of this world.

"Doth pride lead to vanity? Doth vanity form imaginary wants? Do these wants prompt men to exert their power in requiring more from others than they would be willing to perform themselves, were the same required of them? Do these proceedings beget hard thoughts? Do hard thoughts, when ripe, become malice? Does malice, when ripe, become revengeful, and in the end inflict terrible pains on our fellow-creatures and spread desolations in the world?

"Do mankind, walking in uprightness, delight in each other's happiness? And do those who are capable of this attainment, by giving way to an evil spirit, employ their skill and strength to afflict and destroy one another? Remember then, O my soul! the quietude of those in whom Christ governs, and in all thy proceedings feel after it.

"Doth he condescend to bless thee with his presence? To move and influence thee to action? To dwell and to walk in thee? Remember then thy station as being sacred to God. Accept of the strength freely offered to thee, and take heed that no weakness in conforming to unwise, expensive, and hard-hearted customs, gendering to discord and strife, be given way to. Doth he claim my body as his temple, and graciously require that I may be sacred to him? O that I may prize this favor, and that my whole life may be conformable to this character! Remember, O my soul! that the Prince of Peace is thy Lord; that he communicates his unmixed wisdom to his family, that they, living in perfect simplicity, may give no just cause of offence to any creature, but that they may walk as He walked!"

Billy Graham's Plan to Kill a Million People

[MCH note: the main article here is appalling. But I have inserted it just as it appeared in the form of a thread on an internet discussion board, a Christian forum, to make another point. If the article itself hasn't made you cry, realize that the response, in which some Christian posts to the forum to let us know he is yawning, is the only response this article got. God help our human race, and God help the Christian church.]

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When Billy Graham Planned To Kill One Million People - Click [HERE](#) for Original Thread

Arther Miller

March 12, 2002

American Journal

When Billy Graham Planned To Kill One Million People

<http://www.counterpunch.org/alexgraham.html>

By Alexander Cockburn

There's a piquant contrast in the press coverage across the decades of Billy Graham's various private dealings with Nixon, as displayed on the tapes gradually released from the National Archive or disclosed from Nixon's papers. I'll come shortly to the recent flap over Graham and Nixon's closet palaverings about the Jews, but first let's visit another interaction between the great evangelist and his commander in chief. Back in April, 1989 a Graham memo to Nixon was made public. It took the form of a secret letter from Graham, dated April 15, 1969, drafted after Graham met in Bangkok with missionaries from Vietnam. These men of God said that if the peace talks in Paris were to fail, Nixon should step up the war and bomb the dikes. Such an act, Graham wrote excitedly, "could overnight destroy the economy of North Vietnam".

Graham lent his imprimatur to this recommendation. Thus the preacher was advocating a policy to the US Commander in Chief that on Nixon's

was advocating a policy to the US Commander in Chief that on Nixon's own estimate would have killed a million people. The German high commissioner in occupied Holland, Seyss-Inquart, was sentenced to death at Nuremberg for breaching dikes in Holland in World War Two. (His execution did not deter the USAF from destroying the Toksan dam in North Korea, in 1953, thus deliberately wrecking the system that irrigated 75 per cent of North Korea's rice farms.)

This disclosure of Graham as an aspirant war criminal did not excite any commotion when it became public in 1989, twenty years after it was written. I recall finding a small story in the Syracuse Herald-Journal. No one thought to chide Graham or even question him on the matter. Very different has been the reception of a new tape revealing Graham, Nixon and Haldeman palavering about Jewish domination of the media and Graham invoking the "stranglehold" Jews have on the media.

On the account of James Warren in the Chicago Tribune, who has filed excellent stories down the years in Nixon's tapes, media, in this 1972 Oval Office session between Nixon, Haldeman and Graham, the President raises a topic about which "we can't talk about it publicly," namely Jewish influence in Hollywood and the media.

Nixon cites Paul Keyes, a political conservative who is executive producer of the NBC hit, "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In," as telling him that "11 of the 12 writers are Jewish." "That right?" says Graham, prompting Nixon to claim that Life magazine, Newsweek, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and others, are "totally dominated by the Jews." Nixon says network TV anchors Howard K. Smith, David Brinkley and Walter Cronkite "front men who may not be of that persuasion," but that their writers are "95 percent Jewish."

"This stranglehold has got to be broken or the country's going down the drain," the nation's best-known preacher declares "You believe that?" Nixon says. "Yes, sir," Graham says. "Oh, boy," replies Nixon. "So do I. I can't ever say that but I believe it." "No, but if you get elected a second time, then we might be able to do something," Graham replies.

Magnanimously Nixon concedes that this does not mean "that all the Jews are bad" but that most are left-wing radicals who want "peace at any price except where support for Israel is concerned. The best Jews are actually the Israeli Jews." "That's right," agrees Graham, who later concurs with a Nixon assertion that a "powerful bloc" of Jews confronts Nixon in the media. "And they're the ones putting out the pornographic stuff " Graham adds

pornographic stuff," Graham adds.

Later Graham says that "a lot of the Jews are great friends of mine. They swarm around me and are friendly to me. Because they know I am friendly to Israel and so forth. They don't know how I really feel about what they're doing to this country." After Graham's departure Nixon says Haldeman, "You know it was good we got this point about the Jews across." "It's a shocking point," Haldeman replies, "Well," says Nixon, "it's also, the Jews are irreligious, atheistic, immoral bunch of bastards."

Within days of these exchanges becoming public the 83-year old Graham was hauled from his semi-dotage, and impelled to express public contrition. "Experts" on Graham were duly cited as expressing their "shock" at Graham's White House table talk.

Why the shock? Don't they know that this sort of stuff is consonant with the standard conversational bill of fare at 75 per cent of the country clubs in America, not to mention many a Baptist soiree. Nixon thought American Jews were lefty peaceniks who dominated the Democratic Party and were behind the attacks on him. Graham reckoned it was Hollywood Jews who had sunk the nation in porn. Haldeman agreed with both of them. At whatever level of fantasy they were all acknowledging power. But they didn't say they wanted to kill a million Jews. That's what Graham said about the Vietnamese and no one raised a bleat.

It's supposedly the third rail in journalism even to have a discussion of how much the Jews do control the media. Since three of the prime founders of Hollywood, were Polish Jews who grew up within fifty miles of each other in Galicia, it's reckoned as not so utterly beyond the bounds of propriety to talk about Jewish power in Hollywood, though people still stir uneasily. The economic and political commentator Jude Wanniski remarked last week in his web newsletter that even if the Jews don't control the media overall, it is certainly true to say that they control discussion of Israel in the media here.

Certainly, there are a number of stories sloshing around the news now that have raised discussion of Israel and of the posture of American Jews to an acrid level. The purveyor of anthrax may have been a former government scientist, Jewish, with a record of baiting a colleague of Arab origins, and with the intent to blame the anthrax on Muslim terrorists. Rocketing around the web and spilling into the press are many stories about Israeli spies in America at the time of 9/11. On various accounts, they were trailing Atta and his associates, knew what was going to happen but did nothing about it or were simply

what was going to happen but did nothing about it, or were simply spying on US facilities. Some, posing as art students have been expelled, according to AP. Finally, there's Sharon's bloody repression of the Palestinians, and Israel's apparently powerful role in Bush's foreign policy, urging him into action against at least two of the axes of evil, Iraq and Iran.

Phaedrine Stonebridge

In article <1451cd92.0308241743.29da601f@posting.google.com>, freethemedia2002@yahoo.com (Arther Miller) wrote:

> March 12, 2002

.. :: yawns ::

Appendix 2: Other Suggested Readings

I do not entertain the hope that any of you will read these things in their entirety before we gather. However, if you find the time, a reading of Woolman's Journal *in toto* would do no harm.

- Kierkegaard: *Purity of Heart Is To Will One Thing*
- Woolman: *Journal & Major Essays*. Phillips Moulton edition. (It's the one currently in print. Easy to get from Quakerbooks and other Friends booksellers.)
- Woolman: *Journal and Essays*. Gummere edition of 1922. Contains good essays not available elsewhere. Also some good historical background. Gummere must be taken with a grain of salt, however. She promulgated the belief that a picture, which H.J. Cadbury says is probably Benezet, is Woolman. Cadbury is far likelier to be right.
- Bownas: *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister*. I have used text from a dusty old copy I happen to have. The modernized text of the edition currently in print is perfectly acceptable. (I just didn't use it because there are no copyright issues with the 200-year-old version.)
- Brian Drayton: *On Living With a Concern for Gospel Ministry*. As Friends rediscover the classic Quaker understanding of ministry, they move in a direction I very much want to encourage.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *The Cost of Discipleship*.

