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ABSTRACT OF THESISName of Candidate Richard James OmanDegree Doctor of PhilosophyDate March, 1958Title of Thesis WILLIAM PENN: A STUDY IN THE QUAKER DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITYAs Exemplified Particularly in His Colonial Experiment.

This dissertation is a study in William Penn's doctrine of political authority. In the awareness that an authentic conception of authority ultimately proceeds upon the authority of truth acknowledged - in his case, the truth of God as mediated by the Inner Light - Penn wrought out afresh a genuine version of political authority. The Quaker leader clearly saw that authority always assumes obedience. The progress of political freedom depends on the quality of that obedience, the same being inseparable from the source of that authority - as Penn saw it, a divine source. This divine context of political authority is increasingly lost sight of in our day and age.

Taking the classical-biblical view of authority as the measure of Penn's thought on the subject of political authority, an effort is made to examine the progressive character in the formulation of his ideas. This is done in four steps. First, a consideration is made of the Inner Light as the basis of authority in the life-experience of William Penn. This is followed by a study of the doctrine of political authority as its principles were wrought out in the struggle for religious toleration in England. Third, this doctrine is examined at work in the constitutional frames of government in colonial Pennsylvania. And finally, attention is devoted to certain ethical considerations issuing from the doctrine, as applied to the problems of Penn's day - problems which are still our own problems for a large part. While the over-all sequence of experiment following upon experience dominates the presentation, yet it is shown that in the thick and heat of events a conversation takes place between the two.

Penn believed that a religious commonwealth, in government as well as in citizenship, was not a contradiction in terms, that a State based on and guided entirely by Christianity was a human possibility, and a divine command. In a word, Penn brought God back into the world.

The sacred rights of the individual conscience formed the central pillar upon which Penn was to build his State. As he viewed the matter, the obligation rested upon those holding political authority to bring their principles into harmony with the Light within each man. When this was done, certain marks of true political authority were bound to follow: e.g., religious toleration, nationalism, a high regard for property, a respect for human interests. Faith and works could not be separated.

Penn's efforts to formulate a working doctrine of political authority helped to point up the menacing defects of the power-conception of the State, where government becomes the instrumentality of man rather than of God. But, at the same time, Penn revealed a personal confusion between the State and a "community", and as a result, the source of civil authority was confused with its method of application.

The crisis of our age is a crisis of authority, and since true authority in the last analysis is the authority of the God of Scripture, our problems are ultimately theological in nature. In this awareness, we can learn much from one for whom political authority found its source and its strength in the power of the living God.



WILLIAM PENN:

A STUDY IN THE QUAKER DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY  
As Exemplified Particularly in His Colonial Experiment

by

RICHARD JAMES OMAN

A DISSERTATION

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To my father, and to the memory of my mother.

## PREFACE

The present study forms one aspect of what has become to the writer a problem of major concern: the bases of authority in the life of the individual Christian. This problem first came to his attention some years ago in the midst of the travail of a personal religious encounter. Since that time the issues involved were brought into clearer focus as a result of working with first-year students in one of America's leading Protestant seminaries. The political factor of the problem stemmed from the writer's pre-ministerial academic studies in the realm of political science - a study still very dear to his heart. It is his fervent hope and prayer that as a result of this investigation the practical aspects of the whole problem of authority - at least as they relate to one of the major areas of a man's life: the body politic - may be seen in a new light. From this awareness may appear fresh approaches to some of the perplexing issues of authority which now confront this day and age.

It is a great pleasure for the writer to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to those whose personal help has made it possible to prepare and submit this dissertation. The Society of Friends in Edinburgh, Scotland, gave me freely their friendship and encouragement and made my visits to their Meeting House a pleasure not easily forgotten. The staffs of the Friends' Library, the British Museum, and the Public Records Office - all of London - made possible a firm footing in the initial stages of preparation. To Thomas E. Drake, Curator of The Quaker Collection at Haverford College, to

Frederick B. Tolles, Librarian of the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, and to R. N. Williams II, Director of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania - together with all their assistants - the writer owes an appreciation beyond words. To the Librarian of The Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Kenneth S. Gapp, and to the Librarian and staff of the Princeton University Library for their many courtesies, the writer is deeply indebted. Principal J. H. S. Burleigh of New College, Edinburgh, and Mr. George Shepperson, Department of History, Old College, Edinburgh - the supervisors of this dissertation - gave of their wisdom, time and effort in a measure beyond the normal call of service. Professor Emile Caillet of Princeton Theological Seminary, close Christian friend as well as colleague, was good enough to read through the manuscript with such thoroughness and insight, making many helpful suggestions and valuable criticisms, that in a very real way, without his help, this study may never have reached its present form. Finally, a special acknowledgment is due Miss Janet Pigot, Secretary in the Department of Commerce of the University of Edinburgh, who served so faithfully in the typing of this manuscript. Her willingness to serve, and constant attention to detail, were invaluable supports as the final copy came into being.

To all of these, I tender my hearty thanks. It is the writer's hope that these chapters may not be wholly unworthy of the rich experiences that he has had of fellowship with such men and women.

Richard J. Oman.

Edinburgh, Scotland  
March, 1958.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

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- B. The measure of the subject: the classical-biblical view of authority
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- A. PART I - THE EXPERIENCE: THE DOCTRINE OF THE INNER LIGHT IN THE MAKING
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1. "Doing the Truth"
2. Minorities: attitude towards Indians and slaves
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IV. CONCLUSION

- A. The suggestiveness of William Penn's experience and experiment
- B. Its contributions and shortcomings in the light of the classical-  
biblical view of authority
- C. The resulting conclusions applied to our contemporary scene.

## INTRODUCTION

This work is a study in William Penn's "doctrine" of political authority. The word "doctrine" is used guardedly, because Penn's thought was that of a man on the move. Authority always assumes obedience. The progress of political freedom depends on the quality of that obedience, the same being inseparable from the source of the authority. To William Penn that source was ultimately a divine source. It has become the author's conviction that this divine context of political authority is increasingly lost sight of in our day and age, with the result that our modern world loses sight of its true meaning and significance to the point of setting itself up in revolt against God the Creator, as the rise of godless ideologies unmistakably indicates.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the problems which this question of authority has for men and women of this generation. The question lies at the roots of much of our contemporary thought and practice, political and social as well as religious. Today, as in the seventeenth century, theology is deeply implicated in the social upheaval of the times. The enquiry with which the following pages are concerned is therefore far from being an academic discussion or unrelated to the practical problems of daily life.

## I

The time has come to reconsider and dwell upon the case of such a man as William Penn who in the light and fervour of his life experience, more especially in his colonial experiment, wrought out afresh a genuine version of

political authority for our day and age. This he did in the awareness that a genuine conception of authority ultimately proceeds upon the authority of truth acknowledged - in his case the truth of God as mediated by the Inner Light. His doctrine of political authority was a Quaker doctrine. This fact prepares us to understand that in his case experiment followed upon experience - the personal experience of biblical truth, that is, of truth grounded in and identified with the consistency and reliability of God. His theories of government and politics did not turn out to be those of the purely democratic idealist. In his view government took its origin from God. It would seem difficult therefore to reconcile views according to which the legislation of William Penn is admired, while the religion which inspired it is treated with contempt.

The revelations of the "Inner Light" seem to have worked in Penn's political philosophy a powerful transformation. He constantly urged, through all the vicissitudes of his life, the inalienable rights of religious liberty. To him, accordingly, the function of government was to guarantee such rights. In taking this position he made no pretence to the discovery of new truth. His teachings proceeded from eternal verities accessible to all men through the Inner Light. If at times he seemed dogmatic, such an impression resulted rather from the trustful certainty of the convinced believer that he was than from the self-assurance of the philosophic doctrinaire that he was not. For this reason he must figure on the stage of history in roles other than that of philosopher or theorist. As the fearless advocate of religious toleration he had to play a political role. His services as a Quaker preacher and missionary are at one with his labours in behalf of toleration. He is remembered as one who built a haven for those oppressed for conscience sake. As an imperial statesman he is honoured by men of all opinions. Within the context of his

life and thought, his colonial endeavours did indeed constitute "an holy experiment". Religion is the key to Penn's humanitarianism and to the political liberalism with which his name has come to be associated.

Although biographical details are frequently given to illustrate the formation and development of Penn's thought, this study is not a biography. Neither is it a history of the period, although discussions of religious, political and social phenomena are included to illuminate the motives and attitudes of one who was in his generation so prominent a public figure. His ideas of the nature and function of the State were conceived in an era vitally important to English and American constitutional history, an era absorbed in decisive controversy and rich in the formulation of political theory. But it is precisely this fact which has made historians of the period, and more specifically students of William Penn, wont to neglect the religious background and spirit of our subject's total thought. Here a man's religion deals with the most intimate personal concerns. Hence the necessity of viewing his life-work in the totality of its religious context.

It further stands to reason that the problem of authority in such a context is bound up with that of the source of authority now ascribed to a revelation - rather to the Revelation - of God. Everyone who calls himself a Christian takes this for granted. The discussions which have arisen among Christians, either individually or as organised in various bodies, are concerned with the nature or extent of the authority on which their belief is based - ultimately with the seat of that authority. It may be said accordingly that Christianity is inseparable from some form of authority. As a result it would seem arbitrary to distinguish between "religions of authority" and "religions of the Spirit", for the Spirit Himself is the most commanding

authority.<sup>1</sup>

## II

In the awareness of this essential fact, we may now turn our attention to the classical-biblical view of authority as to the most widely accepted view in Reformed circles. The time would seem ripe for such a reconsideration. And it is not one of the least merits of William Penn to invite a re-examination of this kind. One of the main aspects of our present plight in the Western world today is that the classical-biblical view of authority has been allowed to fade away, leaving only distorted vestigial aspects strewn over the contemporary scene. In no other conceivable area is there such a need for reconstruction. The crisis of our age is a crisis of authority, and since true authority is in the last analysis the authority of the God of Scripture, our problems are ultimately theological in nature.

The distinction must be made at the outset between religious, ecclesiastical authority on the one hand, and civil authority on the other. It is the former with which we have been dealing. But civil authority refers to the power wielded by the State over its constituent members in the pursuance of its end. It is the natural means to the natural end of the State, and therefore comes immediately from God. Since the State is a necessary society having for its end the complete temporal good of its constituent members, it has indeed supreme authority in its own sphere, but must not act contrary to the natural or divine law, or encroach on the sphere of religious ecclesiastical authority in spiritual matters. What actually happens in the case of William

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<sup>1</sup>This is said, however, with an awareness that the media through which the Spirit works differ widely, especially in the traditional context of "religions of authority" versus "religions of the Spirit" - see Auguste Sabatier, Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, (New York: McClure, Phillips, and Co., 1905), xv-xxxii, espec., xxviii-xxxii. Cf. infra. 8.

Penn as a man of his time and religious persuasion is that to him God is the God of the Bible, the God of Jesus Christ, and it is in this manner that civil authority becomes involved in religious and ecclesiastical authority practically in terms of theocracy.

For our immediate purpose, the following principles of the classical-biblical view warrant our attention: (1) that Christianity is an authoritative religion because its whole raison d'être consists in its claim to be the Word of God for man; (2) that Christianity is an historical religion and the truth which is revealed was mediated to us through (the "stuff" of) history. Therefore there must be some medium, person or institution in which confidence can be placed before Christianity may be said to speak "with authority". And (3) that the man Jesus who "spoke with authority" passed on that self-same authority to His Apostles whom "He sent in His Name" as He was made "both Lord and Christ". Against every form of irrationalism and scepticism, the classical tradition of Christian thought down through the ages has maintained that such basic truth is knowable because of Him Who remains the living Truth. Truth in the biblical sense is grounded in the reliability of God. The Old Testament has been thus fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ, Who henceforth becomes the locus intelligentiae, the place of understanding. Here then is the source of authority.

The whole raison d'être of Christianity consists in its claims to be summed up in the Word of God. And it is received, if at all, solely on the ground that it is "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God" (I Thess. 2:13). This conviction has coloured and governed the whole content of the Christian Revelation. Christianity claims to be either the decisive, sufficient, authoritative and final word or message of God to us men, or to be nothing at all. It claims that the Proclamation is with manifestation

of the Spirit and with power. If this be the case, obviously such a Proclamation is made to the whole personality of man. Man must yield himself obedient to the message in its once-for-all-ness.

Yet if it is a mistake to distinguish between religions of authority and religions of the Spirit, as if the latter were lacking in exterior authority, there is a real distinction between religions which teach authoritatively and insist upon the acceptance of dogmatic statements, and religions which rely only upon the authority of the Spirit within man. The question then is: granted that Christianity is an authoritative Word of God to man, how does man come to accept that Word as true and to believe in it? Does its authority come through any outward channel? And, if so, what authority can be placed in the trustworthiness of that channel? Or is reliance to be put solely upon the exercise of man's enlightened reason, or his conscience, or the inner witness of the Spirit considered as something other than reason or conscience?

If we closely analyse the actual practice of the Christian's obedience we shall be led to agree that the immediate ground of faith for him is an "inner something" in him which responds to a revelation. Nevertheless, it cannot be the only ground. Especially if the revelation comes to us in the form of historical truth, then something more is required. And here authority comes in as the secondary ground of belief. Some person or some institution in which confidence can be placed must declare "with authority" the truth which is to be believed. This was the work of the prophet. It was with authority that the prophets spoke to ancient Israel. And the prophet's task was to commend the message by awakening a response in the human heart. This is in reality the only way in which a revelation is or can be made to us. Manifestly this is how Jesus became the Way for men. "He taught with authority and not

as the Scribes." He came not in His own Name, but in that of God whom He claimed to be His Father. His message was Himself. And He appealed to that "inner something" in man upon which He could build His Ecclesia. This was the self-same authority of Christ He passed on to His Apostles whom He sent forth in His Name. The essence of that commission lies in the personal allegiance which the disciples of Christ have for Him. They "receive" Him into themselves. The Christian believers individually and as a Body receive the Word of God. Thus the self-same authority with which Christ spoke abides in the Church.

But the mystical Body of Christ, although indwelt by the Holy Spirit, remains nevertheless a human organism. It is composed of human members incorporated into Christ. It has an earthly as well as a heavenly nature. It is essential that these two elements should be viewed in their togetherness. The Church's teaching authority is determined by her relation to Christ. "The Spirit is in the Church only when it is a Church of the Word, and the Spirit is in the Word only when it is the Word in the Church. It is the Church that is defined as the communion of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Further, the supremacy of Scripture is nowhere to be isolated from the belief and practice of the Church. The interpretation of Scripture is always the responsibility of the Church. The tradition of faith lies behind the written word; but the tradition is subject to the correction of Scripture which is the abiding standard of doctrine. Thus the teaching authority inherent in the Church was limited to that which had been revealed and was recorded in the Bible. The Bible is an authoritative record to which the teaching Church

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<sup>1</sup>George S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 94 f.

appeals in confirmation of her Gospel because it declares how God of old time hath "spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners" and has now spoken "unto us in his Son". This record constitutes a Revelation because the history is itself the groundplan, as it were, on which the Revelation was performed and through which it was made known. In other words, the Scriptures not only constitute a record of Divine-human events but a record which has a particular meaning. That meaning for us Christians, to whom the Bible belongs, can only be interpreted and understood in the light which the Holy Spirit sheds upon it as He bears witness to Him who is the fulfillment of Scripture. He is the Word of God who speaks to man, not to man in his isolation, but as a member of the people of God on the plane of history.

The special ministry of the Holy Spirit calls for further amplification. A Revelation to be known and recognised as such presupposes a genuinely inspired and receptive man. Both revelation and inspiration are in fact involved in one and the same activity. Revelation is the act in and through which God causes man to receive it and enter into its meaning, and this implies essentially the work of the Holy Spirit who heightens man's spiritual sensitivity and gives him insight and understanding. The conclusion would seem therefore to be that like the distinction made for the sake of clarity between reason and revelation, so also the distinction between natural and revealed religion is not to be construed in terms of a contrast.

In the last resort the question of authority is a matter of spiritual judgment. When we come to discuss the problem of the ultimate authority which the man Jesus Christ possessed and which He transmitted to His Apostles and through them to the Church of which He is the living Lord, such a claim turns out to be a matter of faith rather than one of proof. Credo ut intelligam.

"No man can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

### III

Among the Puritans in England during the seventeenth century one may trace the emergence of a reliance on the Holy Spirit and the immediacy of a spiritual experience. In actual practice such experience became the primary authority. It was the Quakers who carried to their logical conclusion the tendencies that had always been at work in this direction among Protestants. The Quakers found that the same gift that inspired the prophets was in themselves. Whereas formerly Protestants had regarded the Bible as the "rule of faith", now it was insisted that the Holy Spirit is the touchstone by which everything, including the Bible itself, was to be tried. Others again equated the conscience with the Spirit; or the reason. Nevertheless the main body of Puritans distinguished between the Holy Spirit within man and his reason and conscience. Such apparent confusion, however, calls for some degree of clarification as to what is the ultimate standard of authority. Is it the Scripture, or reason, or the Church? The Quakers said it was the Inner Light. But even so, Quakerism could not leave the problem in isolation from the group consciousness. There was the Quaker fellowship to which the Inner Light had to conform. The Inner Light was not of itself an infallible guide. Here then we discern, even in the most radical and individualistic of Puritans, a sense that the Church in some form or other is a necessary accompaniment of spirituality. We have come full circle.

The classical-biblical view of authority which we have just explored is at one with those who emphasise the more "spiritual" aspects of the faith in opposing the Catholic attempt to canalise the Spirit in the historically continuous institution, but it agrees with Catholicism in condemning those who

would repudiate all historical mediation. In other words, the classical-biblical view recognises an element of truth in the insistence on the sovereign independence of the Spirit. But it sees error when these truths are isolated from each other and opposed to each other. In correlating the Spirit with the Word, both the centrality of the incarnation and the sovereign Lordship of the Spirit are maintained.

It seems advisable, therefore, to keep in mind this classical-biblical view of authority as we approach a consideration of William Penn's doctrine of political authority. To do so should enable us to take as it were the measure of Penn's thought on this subject. In so doing we may further expect to avoid confusing the source of civil authority with its methods of application. The power wielded by the State over its constituent members in pursuance of its normal function and end leaves its constituted agents free to choose the means of its exercise. This they will do with a view to the temporal good of those who compose the human community, whether individuals or groups.

We live in an age that is less disposed than earlier periods to believe that the historical foundations of our liberties are purely legal. In the figure of William Penn we now detect a man who saw clearly the underlying problems in the relationship of Church and State. When we understand the Quakerism by which Penn himself was greatly influenced, we shall be in a position to appreciate his political ideas. His writings reveal clearly his attitude toward Church and State, and justify each step he took. His general inclination led him to consider and to reconsider the old problems of freedom and authority, and the fervour and religious insights he brought to bear carried him far in his enquiry. His ideas are suggestive, for he has much to say on the problem of political obligation. His experience in life and thought is an education in political theory.

This however does not imply that the modern formulation of William Penn in itself marks a "progress" over the classical view. In reality the shortcomings of the formulation of even such a committed Christian may give us an idea of how much of a retreat, or even distortion of the classical-biblical view there has been. In this case there would appear open possibilities of an improved reassertion in our day. Since so much was learned by Penn as he wrought out his formulation in the midst of crisis situations, there follows an opportunity for us of further clarifying his doctrine of political authority as we consider its possible bearing upon our contemporary situation.

The questions being asked by modern man concerning the nature and function of authority are live and pressing, for the problem of authority we have always with us. Each person is born into the world not as an isolated unit whose whole experience is to be gained de novo, but as a member of society which is what it is through the long heritage of the past. But whenever the community asserts its sway as final and absolute, it crushes the growth of the individual and partially destroys the very material out of which alone a healthy society can be built. Such a community becomes stagnant and decadent. Only as collective authority becomes persuasive may it hope to become a principle of order within the individual soul whose freedom it respects and fosters. The real discipline of Christians is not to be grounded in any external coercion but in the inner motions of the One Lord and the One Spirit.

It was previously noted that in the case of William Penn a genuine version of political authority was wrought out in the light and fervour of his own life experience, more especially in his colonial experiment. His was an instance of experiment following upon experience - the personal experience of biblical truth. This fact raises a real problem as far as method is

concerned. We would seem to be confronted with the necessity of accompanying William Penn through his meandering process of discovery. This procedure would prove too lengthy and must accordingly yield to one of exposition - of such a type of exposition, however, as will respect the progressive character of the formulation and remind us that Penn's doctrine of political authority was actually hammered out in the struggle with the realities encountered. We think more especially of religious toleration in England, the doctrine of political authority at work in his "holy experiment", and the ethical aftermath of the doctrine. What ultimately will come within view, we hope, is an over-all structure of political authority rising out of Penn's dedicated life-work.

There is a further implication in the process just outlined, namely that the wisdom gained was conditioned at every step by the nature of the man who gained it. What happens to us is very much of the same nature as we ourselves. We should therefore also keep in mind that we are dealing here with "a man on the move", a man of "flesh and bones" as Unamuno would say, who was striving for self-expression. We should be prepared to understand, then, that while the over-all sequence of experiment following upon experience dominates the presentation, yet in the thick and heat of events a conversation as it were takes place between the two.

The Quakers had no quarrel with the State except as it lent itself to the monopolistic claims of the Church to support and patronage. But concerning these claims of the Church the Quakers were intransigent. There could be for them no unholy alliance with intolerance. What George Fox called "that of God in every man" meant that every man had something of God in him - something divine, sacred and immune against any attempt of mere man to kill it, or crush it, or do it violence. A Quaker is as loath to compel another's religious

conscience as he is to allow interference with his own. Penn admitted there is a place in government for temporary laws, but these temporary laws are not to be confused with eternal religious and moral principles which underlie all mere legislation. The sacred rights of the individual conscience formed the central pillar upon which Penn was to build his state.

It was the ineradicable conviction of the conscience as being God's throne in man, and the power of it His prerogative, that Penn effectively translated into laws so different from those of some of the older colonies. Penn considered government the instrumentality which translates religion into social organisation. It is not strange, then, that Penn's Quaker conception of religion should be studied in order to appreciate Penn's Quaker institution of government in America. Religion was to penetrate government, and legislation was to comply with the requirements of truth as discovered by those who seek it.

In the history of Christianity, no setting for a consideration of this problem is of greater significance than the seventeenth century. This was an age pregnant with many of the great issues which surround the question of authority: Church-State relations; the problem of sovereignty, divine-right and natural law; religious toleration of minorities; the practical impact of religious-civil authority on the day-to-day affairs of the "man in the street". The Western world was awakening to a new realisation of itself, a movement which had begun in the Renaissance and the Reformation. A new age was in the making, the threshold of the twentieth century in which the present writer and his readers live. And the country which most reflected these eddying tides and currents was England.

#### IV

The Reformation in England had begun and developed in quite a different

way from that on the Continent. The first steps were a mere passing of control from the Pope to the King and did not necessarily affect the constitution of the Church, although it opened the way for many changes and made possible the gradual reformation which took place in England, as the conscience of the people was awakened to the evils of the old system. The gradual changes which were made, such as the dissolving of the monasteries, the introduction of the English language into the services, and the publication of an English prayer book, while they established Protestantism in England, still left much to be desired. There yet remained a fixed form of doctrine and fixed services to which all must conform, with very little freedom for the individual conscience.

Soon after the accession of Elizabeth, a new name, that of "Puritan" began to be applied to all who felt that the reformation of the Church was incomplete.

No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. . . . The whole temper of the nation felt the change. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class. . . . The great problems of life and death, whose questionings found no answer in the higher minds of Shakspeare's day, pressed for an answer not only from noble and scholar but from farmer and shopkeeper in the age that followed him.<sup>1</sup>

At first, it was the Presbyterians within the Puritan movement who came to the fore. The system of Calvin claimed to exercise entire supremacy over the lives of men. Based originally on the appeal which Scripture made to the heart by the witness of the Spirit, it tended more and more to erect the scheme of doctrine and the Presbyterian form of Church-organisation which

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<sup>1</sup>J. R. Green, Short History of the English People, chap. viii, quoted in W. C. Braithwaite, The Beginnings of Quakerism (2nd ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1955), 1.

the logical mind of Calvin drew from Scripture into a thing of authoritative institution. This was an age which exalted doctrine. Indeed, on the doctrinal side, religion exerted triumphant authority. The multitude regarded religion as a thing of doctrinal profession. A logical system of Divine truth which satisfied the intellect, compelled the enthusiastic acceptance of multitudes, and, if circumstances served, would not hesitate to claim for itself universal obedience.

Accordingly, during the reign of Elizabeth, there was not only the struggle between the supremacy of the Crown and the supremacy of the Pope, but there was also in preparation the struggle, which the pedantry and pretensions of the Stuarts precipitated, between the Divine right of a theocratic Presbytery and the Divine right of Bishops and Kings.<sup>1</sup>

While the Puritan movement continued to grow in strength, and to become more definitely hostile to episcopacy, at the same time Separatist Churches sprang up, opposed to both presbyters and bishops. The Independents and Baptists tended more toward making the people of the Church supreme, and allowing greater freedom to individual members.

When James I came to the throne, the hopes of all parties of Puritans rose high. But this was not to be. Rejecting Presbyterianism as agreeing with monarchy "no better than God with the devil"<sup>2</sup>, and slighting the petitions of the Separatists, James emerged as one who found the inviolable bases of Church and State in a Divine right of Bishops and a Divine right of Kings. Against the King was arrayed the whole weight of Puritan influence, and the Parliamentary struggle against the arbitrary government of James, and later Charles I, was mainly in the hands of men of Puritan sympathies. A rather

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 6.

uncertain fusion of the Puritan and Parliamentary movements became, for a time, complete.

During these unsettled years, the country had become full of persons who were adrift from their spiritual anchorage. The authority, usually so powerful, of the established institutions of religion had been destroyed. By the middle of the century, with Episcopacy dethroned, and now Presbyterianism neither popular nor established in any effective sense, the force of institutional religion was at its lowest point. While it was true that there was a singular variety in the denominational persuasion even of the parish ministers, a development of even greater significance now loomed on the scene. The overthrow of authority, and the intense religious earnestness of the times combined to produce a number of quick-growing but usually short-lived sects. With respect to the Church as with respect to the Crown, the old order was gone, but nothing stable had taken its place. Under the new conditions of religious freedom on the one hand, and active religious controversy on the other, which prevailed in England from the assembling of the Long Parliament, there had been a sudden growth of sects, which took their shape from the light, airy imaginations, or the deep spiritual yearnings of their votaries. There were thousands of honest-hearted persons who used their freedom to make a quest for truth, and many of these found no rest either in forms or in doctrines, and were weary with their travelling through the sects and athirst for the gospel of a living Christ. The religious climate was thus singularly favourable to the growth of Quakerism.<sup>1</sup>

It is usually agreed that the movement known today as the "Society

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<sup>1</sup>For further information on this subject, see E. B. Emmott, A Short History of Quakerism (London: The Swarthmore Press, 1923), 71 - 76; and Braithwaite, op. cit., 18 - 27.

of Friends" originated in 1647, the year in which George Fox began his work as a preacher in England at the age of twenty-three.<sup>1</sup> Quakerism existed in England long before Fox raised his voice, for an undercurrent of mysticism is observable everywhere during the long process of the Reformation, and before. Within the self-imposed limitations of this paper, it is neither possible nor necessary to do more than point this fact out.<sup>2</sup> As the mystical wing of the Puritan movement in the days of the Commonwealth, the "sect"<sup>3</sup> developed from a mild form of Anabaptism, and proceeded to grow rapidly during the Restoration period and after, apparently reaching its maximum membership in England in the reign of Queen Anne. Among the earliest names of the Society were "Children of the Light" and "Friends in the Truth", the traditional title "Quaker" dating from Fox's arrest and appearance before the magistrates at Derby in 1650.<sup>4</sup> The Quakers were pleased to declare war on all the organised churches, and, as will be pointed out later, one must consider the validity of that attack. The contempt and disfavour in which they were held were only equalled by the immoderate hostility they felt towards the organised churches. The persistent work among the laity in which they were engaged was important, though admittedly difficult to measure; for the weakening of the organised churches did not logically rebound to their advantage. To separate

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<sup>1</sup>Others prefer the year 1652, the date of the great Quaker conviction in Westmorland and North Lancashire.

<sup>2</sup>See Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion (London: Macmillan and Co., 1909), ad passim; Braithwaite, op. cit., 1 - 27; Eduard Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, trans. by H. J. Stenning (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930), 49 ff., 225 ff.; and Philip S. Belasco, Authority in Church and State (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928), 11.

<sup>3</sup>Despite the existence of religious sects of all kinds, the Friends did not regard themselves as a sect. George B. Burnet, The Story of Quakerism in Scotland (London: James Clarke and Co., 1952), 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 11 f.

the unnecessary and positively irreligious partnership of church institutionalism and sacerdotalism with religion was conceived by the Quakers to be their God-appointed task. They put no emphasis upon, rather did they attack, the equipment of authority generally associated with the inculcating of faith in the Christian.

The Church took too much for granted, and their children were too humble in their attitude. A true faith was taken to exist, and the Christian had to learn his duties, not discover them. This is the golden opportunity for all selfish authority. Its borrowed lustre reflects no light of those it authorises. It lives on the ill-being rather than the well-being of man. Obeying an authority, therefore, which was not to draw its strength from their well-being, men could not presume to judge the rightness of their duties. Their duties had to take into account their welfare, which was chiefly related to the after-life.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Quakers took issue with all outside authority. Under such authority the individual was rendered helpless. When there were different organisations of the churches with their different theories, the blindness of loyalty was only equal to the blindness of the conflict. The churches could thereby easily ignore their duties in society. The vested interests in the visible Church meant, above all, compromise with the powerful interests of the time; a visible Church cannot exist if the powers of the time turn against her. The composition and authority of a visible Church will be bent by the powerful few, and, according to the Quakers, the Christian makes a mistake who turns his religion accordingly. The whole strain of men's religion would be vitiated. If Christians put themselves under authority inside the Church, how could they deny authority outside it?

As we shall see, it is the Quaker theory of revelation which accounts for their attitude. The Quakers would have Christianity to be the life of

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 13.

Christians rather than obedience to a priori doctrines or institutions. Where, then, was the value of civilisation and the Church? Man was a social animal, and his conduct in the past was vital to an understanding of his course for the future. The individual cannot understand his relationship with his environment unless he takes into account the historic factors. The evils of the social order and the errors of political authority appear most obvious when the mind is least trained to the long standing needs of society. How could life among Christians continue unless the principles of their social relationship were taken into account? The life of the Church's Founder and the meaning of His doctrines were still the reasoned bonds of unity. Authority, which was responsible for the evil of society was also responsible for the good.

Amidst the multiplication of the Protestant sects, one thing became clear to the Quakers: that the churches, far from being adventurers into truth, fell from being interpreters to caretakers. The Christian religion could only reach the individual directly through the institutions of the Church. Thus in the Quaker concept of the "Inner Light" one may see how the Quakers reacted against this traditional theology of Christianity, and the formation of the attitude that they would inevitably express towards the institutions of the Church.

But George Fox, for all his zeal and activity, was still essentially a dreamer of dreams. Robert Barclay, the great Quaker apologist,<sup>1</sup> was ultimately the theorist of Quakerism, the man of doctrine. It was necessary that the dreams be implemented, the theory put into practice.

To find a man capable of such an effort, we must turn to one whom

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<sup>1</sup>His great work being, of course, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity . . . , first published in Latin in 1676, and in English two years later.

Lord Acton has described as "the greatest historic figure of the age."<sup>1</sup> The situation of William Penn in his own day was unlike that of any other worldly statesman and equally unlike that of any other Quaker of his time. He would likely have been a worldly statesman of mark, had he not become a Quaker at the age of twenty-three. He might have been a more strict and uncompromising Quaker, had he not been the leader in the most significant colonisation project ever initiated by an Englishman. The moral incompatibility for Penn himself involved in a double allegiance to the Society of Friends and to the Crown may well arouse our sympathy. His efforts for assuring freedom of conscience and individual liberty under beneficent laws have made Penn one of the great men in modern history.

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The historical setting for our subject proper having thus been outlined, the reader may now be invited to a sympathetic consideration of the Table of Contents in the light of our subject and of our method.

Since, as we hope to clarify the notion, religion is the key to Penn's doctrine of political authority, and since in his religion it is the doctrine of the "Inner Light" which is most important, the first part of this study is devoted to an examination of the Inner Light in the life-experience of Penn. Such an examination will provide the necessary background of William Penn's experience of religious "convincement", a consideration of the experience proper, and finally, furnish insights into the truth resulting from the

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<sup>1</sup>Lectures on Modern History (London: 1906), 223, quoted in William W. Comfort, William Penn and Our Liberties (Philadelphia: The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co., 1947), 45, and n. 30, p. 141.

experience. But this "raw" experience was to be tempered in the years which followed in the crucible of the struggle for religious toleration which took place in England, and among whose foremost participants was William Penn.

From the experience, then, we turn our attention in the second part to the test of that experience, as Penn's doctrine of political authority was wrought out in the ensuing struggle. This struggle was to take two essential forms. On the one hand, there was the protest against the intolerant policies of the Church when it attempted to interfere with the freedom of religious thought by the individual conscience. And on the other hand, in the light of the growing alignment between Church-State forces, there was an increasing attack against the sovereignty of the State, when such sovereignty was arbitrarily used to persecute dissenters from the established Church. From this two-pronged test of his experience, William Penn came clearly to see the political implications involved for himself and for his Society. Growing dissatisfaction with the turn of events in England caused him to look abroad for a land where his maturing political theories could be applied in a practical experiment of government. The struggle in England itself had providentially prepared our committed man for the experiment ahead.

The third part of our study provides us with the consideration of this essential aspect. Here we shall see Penn's doctrine of political authority at work in the colonial issues of early Pennsylvania. His "holy experiment" involved at the outset a conflict between the proprietary interests and the claims of the Crown. Here were forged basic constitutional questions that were to have a vital effect on the future relations of England with all her colonies. Within Pennsylvania itself, an examination of the laws, frames of government, and various constitutions during the period of Penn's proprietorship reveals the gradual change which took place in his doctrine of political

authority as theory met practice in the supreme experiment. The end result was to affect both the man and the colony.

But Penn's doctrine naturally issued in certain ethical considerations as applied to the problems of his day. And it is not surprising to discover that these problems are still our own problems for a large part. The concluding part of our subject thus brings us to an examination of the ethical aftermath of his doctrine of political authority, with the harvest of practical insights to be obtained therefrom. Here we see starkly portrayed the problem of living the Christian life, of "doing the truth". How the doctrine affected the colonial policy toward minorities, especially Indians and slaves, provides invaluable material with reference to the practical implementation of theory. The role of economics in the framework of the State cannot be ignored. And of vital concern then, as now, the problems relating to war and peace, defence and aggression come within the context of our field of investigation.

Personal experience tested in the struggle for religious toleration and applied in a colonial experiment with its resulting ethical aftermath: here are to be found the boundaries of our study. And from our investigation of the subject-matter, we may derive certain conclusions, first with reference to the suggestiveness of Penn's experience and experiment in the life-history of his own time. These in turn lead us to an evaluation of his doctrine of political authority, its contributions and shortcomings, in the light of the classical-biblical view of authority indicated earlier in this Introduction. And the contemporary relevance of our study is further signified as we apply the resulting conclusions to problems on the modern-day scene. For twentieth-century political theory and practice owes a tremendous debt and can still learn much from the life activity of this first Quaker world statesman.

PART I

THE EXPERIENCE:

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INNER LIGHT IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WILLIAM PENN'S EXPERIENCE

- A. The essential thread between the Biblical view of the Holy Spirit and the Quaker belief in immediate revelation
  - 1. The Biblical conception of the Holy Spirit
    - a. The Old Testament
    - b. The New Testament
  - 2. The Reformation
  - 3. Natural law
  - 4. Seventeenth-century England
    - a. The Calvinists and the Arminians
    - b. Hobbes and Locke.
  
- B. The significance of this historical context for William Penn's doctrine of political authority.

## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WILLIAM PENN'S EXPERIENCE

In religious thought the symbol of "light" has had a rich history. The subject is somewhat complicated due to the fact that this symbol expresses a train of thought that can be hidden behind such important expressions as logos, the eye of the soul, God's image, and similar terms. To this tradition belongs the concept of the Inner Light. In coming to Quakerism one approaches that movement within Protestantism that has most busied itself with this concept. Every early Quaker publication resembles a palimpsest. Behind every word lies the idea of the Inner Light. It is the key to everything that is characteristic of the Quaker society. This does not mean that there has been complete unanimity of views throughout Quaker history about "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world". It does mean that the Society of Friends was founded upon belief in immediate revelation, and rests on the reality of the Inner Light, the voice of God in the soul. The Quaker believes in a continuous revelation of God to man.

An awareness of this fact invites a consideration of the essential thread between the biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit, more especially that of the New Testament, and the Quaker position of belief in immediate revelation. To do so provides us not only with a basic understanding of the historical background of William Penn's experience but, at the same time, also enables us to get a firm grasp on those fundamental points of agreement and disagreement between his experience of the Light and the classical-biblical affirmations concerning the Holy Spirit.

The Essential Thread Between the Biblical View of the Holy Spirit  
and the Quaker Belief in Immediate Revelation

1. The Old Testament Conception of the Holy Spirit.

The name "Holy Spirit" is used three times only in the Old Testament (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63: 10, 11),<sup>1</sup> but there are numerous references to His work. The Spirit of God is the divine principle of activity everywhere at work in the world, executing the will of God. The Spirit is sent forth by God; the Spirit is the life of God. As such, the Spirit is life-giving. This creative principle, which animates the universe, finds a special sphere of activity in man. By the operation of the Spirit, man becomes not only a living soul but a rational being created in the image of God and reproducing the Divine life. The more definite sphere of the Spirit's action in the Old Testament is in connection with the prophets. Though the Spirit is still an "influence" rather than a "personality", yet as we rise to the higher plane of prophecy where the essential thought is that of God working, speaking, manifesting Himself personally, we approach the New Testament revelation.

One of the most telling points of contact between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the expectation of a special outpouring of the Spirit in connection with the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom. This was to distribute itself over the whole nation, corresponding with that extension of the Kingdom to include all nations in the people of God which is characteristic of later Hebrew prophecy. But it is on the Messiah Himself that the Spirit is to rest in its fullness. Its presence is His anointing.

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<sup>1</sup>The Old Testament never uses the phrase "the Holy Spirit". In the passages cited, the epithet "holy" is applied to the Spirit, but in each it is still further qualified by a possessive pronoun. (Ps. 51:11 - "thy"; Is. 63:10, 11 - "his").

## 2. The New Testament Conception of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament treats of Messianic times and the dispensation of the Spirit, and consequently the Spirit is mentioned much oftener in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. All the attributes of the Spirit revealed in the Old Testament are more fully disclosed in the New Testament in operation. The doctrine of the Spirit advances beyond the Old Testament chiefly in becoming more definite in respect to personality. Two elements combine to produce that language in which Jesus expressed the Divine Personality of the Holy Spirit, and upon which the Christian theology of the subject is founded. These two elements are, the promise of a Paraclete to the disciples, based on their experience of Himself, and the identification of that Paraclete with the Spirit of God, based on the older revelation.

The specific promise of the Paraclete must be read in view of the wider promise of the Abiding Presence, which is its background. Surely it is true Jesus promised that on His departure the Spirit should come and dwell with every believer; clothe with power, guide and teach the Church; bear witness of Christ and glorify Him; convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. But the first truth to be grasped by the Christian disciple is that to see Jesus is to see the Father. He must realise the true meaning of the comfort and peace he has found in Christ as the way through which he attains his own true end, which is to come to the Father and abide in Him. So the promise takes the form of a disclosure: the purpose of the Incarnation is fulfilled in the linking up of the chain - the Father in the Son; the Son in the Father; the believer in the Son; mankind in God.

Having promised another "Comforter", the Lord proceeds to identify Him with the Spirit (Jn. 14: 17). This enables Him to give to the Person of whom He speaks the name of "the Holy Spirit". Thus a new and potent

development is given to old ideas. This is shown in at least three ways.

First of all, the Spirit is from the Father. The revelation of Jesus Christ is primarily a showing of the Father. The principle of Jehovah's life thus becomes in the New Testament the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. This relation is consistently preserved. Just as the Son is spoken of as God only in relation to the Father and, as subordinate to, in the sense of deriving His being from, Him, so there is no independent existence or even revelation of the Spirit. In the second place, however, this is not inconsistent with, but rather results in, a dependence upon the Son. The Son enables the Spirit to become the instrument through which the work of Christ is applied to mankind. Jesus speaks of the Spirit as His own gift (Jn. 15: 26). As Christ came in the Father's name, so will the Spirit come in Christ's name. His office is to be the witness and interpreter of Christ. The testimony of the disciples was to reflect this witness. The dependence of the Spirit on the Son, both in His eternal being and in His incarnate life, is fully borne out by the language of the New Testament. Finally, the operations of the Spirit thus bestowed are all personal in character. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is parallel with the grace of Christ and love of God (2 Cor. 13: 14). Yet the Spirit is to convict the world by carrying on in the life and work of the Church the testimony of Jesus, the living Lord. The witness, the power, and the victory of Christ are transferred to the society of His disciples through the Spirit.

This means that the presence of the Spirit is a new experience for Christians. That the world outside Christ is a stranger to the Spirit is made clear by the facts of Pentecost. That the presence of the Holy Spirit was not only a new experience for themselves but also, as dwelling in the Incarnate Son, a new factor in the world's history, was recognised by the

primitive Christians in proportion as they apprehended the Apostolic conception of the Person of Christ. The Apostolic preaching was the witness to Jesus and the Resurrection, beginning from the baptism of John. Yet this Apostolic record is necessarily carried back to the narratives of the Infancy: God was in Christ. What, therefore, the Apostolic community claimed to possess was not merely the aptitude for inspiration, as when the Spirit spoke in old times by the mouth of the prophets, but union with the life and personality of their Master, through the fellowship of the Spirit which was His. Herein was the source of authority for the Christian believer.

The Acts is the record of the Spirit's expanding activity in the organic and growing life of the Christian Church. The events subsequently recorded are a series of discoveries as to the potentialities of this new life. The Epistles set before us, not systematically, but as occasion serves, the principles of the Spirit's action in this progressive experience, corporate and individual. From this stems the conception of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the living principle animating the whole body. The point of supreme importance to the Christian is to have the inward response of the Spirit to the Lordship of Christ.

We may state, then, that the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit arose out of the experience of the Church, as it interpreted and was itself interpreted by, the promise of the Comforter given by Jesus to His disciples. This appeal to experience follows the method adopted by St. Peter in his Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2: 33). To sum up the biblical view: the Holy Spirit is God; a Person within the Godhead; the Third Person, the knowledge of whom depends on the revelation of the Father and the Son, from both of whom He proceeds. He was in the world, and spoke by the prophets before the Word became flesh, and was Himself the agent in that creative act. Through Him

the atonement was consummated. He is the life-giving presence within the universal Church, the Divine agent in its sacramental and authoritative acts. He communicates Himself as a presence and power to the individual Christian, mediating to him forgiveness and new birth and eventually bringing him to the fullness of eternal life.

We should remain aware of the fact that running parallel with this traditional view of the Holy Spirit and sometimes in opposition to it, there has been a long and controversial history of various kinds of Christian groups which laid special stress on the direct illumination of the Spirit on the minds and lives of the individual believer. In the early church there had been such movements as Montanism, Donatism and Manicheanism. As we approach the middle ages such mediaeval mystical movements as the Albigenses and the Cathari appear on the scene. The positive contribution of these groups was to relate the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the doctrine of salvation and the Christian life. In this sense the Holy Spirit invites a soteriological view of the trinitarian doctrine. But such movements in turn tended to place an undue emphasis upon individual illumination and sanctification. The problem was brought into clear focus at the time of the Reformation, when the authority of the Spirit came under careful scrutiny as such authority related to Scripture and the Church.

### 3. The Reformation.

In the nature of the case, no theory as to the relationship between biblical inspiration and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit can be expected in the New Testament itself. The inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures as understood in the early Christian era was undoubtedly regarded as an extension of the prophetic gift. That the Bible is either verbally accurate or inerrant is no more a legitimate deduction from this principle than is

ecclesiastical infallibility from that of the Abiding Presence in the Church. Yet it is one of the ironies of Christian history that from a valid protest against an "infallible" Church the Protestant Reformation was led in time to adopt a position of scriptural infallibility which was to prove equally unsatisfactory.

The fundamental objection to the Roman Catholic position by the Reformers was that such a position destroyed the gospel by obliterating any distinction between the gospel and the teaching of the Church. The evangelical-Protestant understanding of the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church was determined, then, by its concern for the integrity of the gospel. The apostles were appointed as witnesses to Christ and His resurrection, not as successors to Him. They could confess and testify to the living Christ, but without the testimony of the Spirit who comes from the exalted Lord, the Lordship of Christ cannot be established among men. Indeed, it is this identity between the remembered Christ and the Christ present in the Spirit which is expressed in the Protestant doctrine of the means of grace.

First and foremost among the means of grace is the Word. For the churches of the Reformation this association between the Holy Spirit and the Word was located in the doctrine of testimonium Spiritus sancti internum - "the inner witness of the Holy Spirit". The Reformers believed that the Bible was given by God and that it was inspired both in content and also in form. It was sole-sufficient in matters of faith and conduct. But although all parts of the Bible were considered as inspired and authoritative, the Reformers did not accord an equal degree of inspiration and authority to every part. Thus not all parts of the Bible were of equal importance - and in this respect the Bible was in some sense analogous to the Church as the Body of Christ.

One can see here how the Reformation leaders, while emphasising the importance of the letter of the Bible, did not do so at the expense of the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was sovereign in His use and application of the Bible message. He gave to the believer an inward persuasion of the authority of its message as revealed truth. For genuine understanding there is needed that illumination of the Holy Spirit which is the individual counterpart of God's outward revelation. The revelation and the recording of it in written form are both objective acts. Illumination by the Holy Spirit is the subjective counterpart of these acts within the individual and for the salvation of the individual. And as it is God the Holy Spirit who gave the objective record, so it is God the Holy Spirit who effects the subjective illumination. The message and the application of the message are both of God. While many rational arguments could be presented in favour of acceptance of the Bible, in the last analysis the real reason for belief is that inward knowledge of the truth of Scripture which is necessarily present when the Holy Spirit applies that truth to the soul. To the self-attestation of the Bible there is added the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. But that argument is a rational argument only for the believer.<sup>1</sup> With this emphasis upon the Lordship of the Holy Spirit the Reformers attempted to safeguard themselves against dead literalism and scholastic rationalism in their understanding of Holy Scripture.

Thus the Church and the Bible belonged together. The Reformers were aware that an emphasis on this "witness of the Spirit" might lead to the charges of subjectivism and individualism. Such conclusions, they asserted,

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<sup>1</sup>In this connection see John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by John Allen, I (7th Am. ed., Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), Bk. I, chap. vii, especially paragraphs iv-v, 88-92.

were a denial rather than a consequence of the true doctrine of the authority of the Spirit in the biblical revelation. The true doctrine, they insisted, had nothing in common with theories of "spiritual guidance" which operated independently of Scripture. Rather, the correct position implied the contrary of individualism, for it is the Spirit of God alone which makes men to be of one mind in a house. The Spirit in the Church is a corporate possession and is the bond of unity. It brings individual Christians to a common mind, binding them in one fellowship of the Spirit and leading them to think with the Church - not by themselves, that is, as "heretics". The authority of the Bible was in the last resort the authority of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

What actually happened in practice to this theory will be examined in a moment. But first we must turn our attention to a brief consideration of a philosophical climate which developed alongside the Reformation movements, and which was to have great implication for the doctrine of political authority. Indeed William Penn's own experience and experiment cannot fully be understood apart from the political and philosophical climate of his times.

At the time of the Reformation, the retort obvious to the claims of the Church was not merely an appeal to Scripture and the Spirit. It involved an appeal to the sovereignty of the State. In their attack on the Church, the Reformers were compelled to depend upon the secular powers for their support. Consequently the divine institution of secular government encouraged the idea of absolutism and submission. The sovereign State was most logically firm when it claimed the divine right of authority. Now the counterpart of the attitude of the Reformers, who based submission to government on the natural sinfulness of man and the written command of the Bible, was to be found in the development of natural law philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Within the limits of this study, we cannot consider the Roman or Thomistic views of natural law directly, but confine ourselves mainly to their

#### 4. Natural Law.

The significance of natural law was to be found more in its function than in the doctrine itself. Because of that very function, the notion of natural law was able to exert an influence which it would hardly have exerted had it remained in the regions of philosophic abstraction. Here was a system of law which purported to be grounded on its intrinsic value rather than on its power of compulsion. In its simplest expression the doctrine of natural law goes back to God. Its precepts derive their authority from the fact that they are confirmed and implemented by revelation. Properly speaking, natural law is essentially the concern of man. Because of its divine character, it is absolutely binding and overrules all other laws. It precedes them in time; it also precedes them in dignity. These are strong and sweeping phrases. But natural law is unintelligible unless we realise its close link with the eternal divine order on which the whole creation ultimately rests.

It was also true that natural law had its limitations. In order fully to appreciate the inherent limitations of natural law, one must never forget that, according to the Thomist conception, natural law was only the condition and the means for the attainment of a higher order. If grace does not abolish nature, neither does nature abolish grace. Reason and faith go hand in hand, but reason is the handmaid. This conception of natural law was greatly qualified in seventeenth-century England to be sure, but must always be kept in mind lest one entirely misconstrues the endeavours to base a natural system of government and ethics on it. Natural law was the token of the fundamental harmony between human and Christian values, the expression of the potential

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ensuing sixteenth and seventeenth century developments. See Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, Natural Law, (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), ad passim.

perfectibility of man and of the power and dignity of his reason. But this leads to the second limitation of natural law theory.

In natural law there was originally no direct assertion of man's self-sufficiency and inherent perfection. There was no vindication of abstract "rights", nor of the autonomy of the individual as the ultimate source of all laws and of all standards. Rather it was readily acknowledged that the law of nature was not the only law which guided a man on his way to perfection. Other laws were necessary. Human laws must be established to draw out the conclusions of natural law, and to restrain man, evil man, from wrongdoing by force and by fear. Divine laws were revealed in order to lead man to his heavenly destination, to remedy the weakness of human judgment, to probe the secrets of man's heart and thus to leave no evil unforbidden and unpunished. All law, eternal and natural, human and divine, is linked together in a complete and coherent system.

Following the Reformation, we enter the period of the introduction and the coherent application of the growing individualistic principle in natural law to political philosophy. This is the period in which political theorists turned to the idea of social contract for their interpretation of the relationship between the individual and the community. Here was an idea which referred not only to the notion of an agreement between individuals as to the origin of society but which also purported to define the terms on which that society was to be governed. Civil society was construed as the result of a deliberate act of will on the part of its components. Men may obtain civic liberty by entering a social contract among themselves. This contract must be based on the assumption that sovereignty cannot be delegated. Not without deep roots in history, such a view of society played an important part in the religious and civil dissensions which mark the beginning of modern Europe -

not the least case being in the England under consideration.

The theory of the social contract provided the means of setting the new emphasis on the natural "rights" of the individual within the framework of the State. Indeed, it was primarily a rational explanation of the State, the only explanation compatible with the pattern of thought laid down in the modern notion of natural law. The different interpretations of the contract and of its consequences are merely the result of different interpretations of human nature, that is, of the impact of natural law upon man.<sup>1</sup>

An important adjunct to the natural law - social contract development must here be noted. The adjunct referred to is the appearance of the "right" of resistance to "unjust" or "unlawful" government. It was given prominence and actuality in the great social and political upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Protestant writers seemed to be inclined to justify the rights of resistance on grounds of history or of Scripture rather than of natural law. If this is so, then the Quakers, led by William Penn, mark a turning-point: the first great attack on behalf of the individual against the sovereign State from within the context of natural law "rights".<sup>2</sup> A momentous change had taken place under cover of the same verbal expressions. The ius naturale of the modern political philosopher was no longer the lex naturalis of the mediaeval moralist nor the ius naturale of the Roman lawyer.

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<sup>1</sup>Substantially, the content of the contract is the "natural right" of the individual, which is exchanged against a counterpart of equal or greater value - the benefits of society and the security of political organisation. The social contract may effect a complete transformation of the original right, as is the case with Hobbes and Rousseau. Or it may leave that right unaltered, and have no other purpose than to secure it, as Locke was anxious to maintain. But in all cases the contract is the necessary pattern of all legal and political obligations.

<sup>2</sup>See "A Reply to a Pretended Answer", A Collection of the Works of William Penn, ed. by Joseph Besse (London: J. Sowle, 1726) II, 810. Hereafter this collection will be designated by the title, Works.

The modern theory of natural law was not, properly speaking, a theory of law at all. It was a theory of rights.

This theory involved the assertion that command is not the essence of law. That this was of staggering importance can be seen in connection with the doctrine of sovereignty. The latter was a formidable tool in the hands of political leaders and a decisive factor in the making of modern Europe. It was also an object of passionate controversy. It met with enthusiastic support and with unbending resistance from different quarters and in different countries. But it also appeared to undermine the very possibility of natural law thinking. Natural law is not properly law if sovereignty is the essential condition of legal experience. It is not possible to conceive a law of nature if command is the essence of law. The fact is that the period under our consideration saw a constant shifting and realignment of forces. The independence of the State had first to be secured against the all-pervading sway of religion and morality. Then the position was reversed as the need to secure the freedom of religious and moral experience against the encroachments of State action came within view. If, to the human individual, some "natural capacity" to set in motion legal consequences is attributed, or some "creative force" to the individual will in laying down legal precepts, then State sovereignty is deprived of its essential function as the ultimate source of all rules which have positive validity. It was a new chapter in history when the notion of natural law survived and indeed blossomed into new life even after the doctrine of sovereignty had been finally accepted as the necessary presupposition of the modern State.

An awareness of this development of natural law, with its corollaries of the social contract and the right of resistance thus provides us with the necessary introduction into the most immediate context of William Penn's

experience: the England of the seventeenth-century. Here we again pick up the main thread of our line of development between the biblical view of the Holy Spirit and the Quaker belief in immediate revelation. Only now we shall be able to examine our position from within the fundamental philosophic framework of natural law, thus enabling the fuller significance of the historical background of our subject's experience to come into view.

### 5. Seventeenth-Century England.

We are prepared now to answer the question we posed earlier as to the practical outworkings of the Reformation theories. The successors of the early Reformation leaders were confronted with the problem of how the Holy Spirit furnishes man with a formal attestation of the authority of Scripture. It was around this problem that the essential weakness of the testimonium Spiritus sancti internum doctrine was to be found. This is amply proved by the development that took place in the century following Calvin's death. It soon became apparent that the inner witness of the Spirit was too vague, elusive and "subjective" a ground on which to rest the authority of Scripture. It was felt necessary to find something more tangible and "objective" to pit against the historically grounded position of Rome. The later reformers proceeded to elaborate a rational or quasi-rational account of the way in which the Word was inspired into the prophets and apostles. They thus transformed inspiration into a theory which was capable of objective verification. In so doing they took a view incompatible with the Christian-biblical understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, and this was to be seen in two essential ways.

First of all, a false antithesis was set up between Scripture and the Church. The theologians of the post-Reformation period were determined to

assert the authority of Scripture over the Church. Indeed, they strove to establish the authority of Scripture on a ground with which the Church had nothing to do. What they failed to realise was that, while the authority of canonical Scripture is not conferred upon it by the Church, it is inseparably bound up with the testimony of the Church. Canonical authority has meaning only in relation to the faith of the Church. Scripture is essentially what it is in the Church.<sup>1</sup> In the severing by theologians of the authority of Scripture from its natural context in the faith of the Church, there appeared on the one hand, a distorted conception of the nature and scope of Scripture and, on the other hand, a distorted conception of the operation of the Spirit. It is with the latter that we are most concerned here.

Secondly, when the theologians of this period attempted to make Scripture dependent exclusively on the inner witness of the Spirit and refused to accept the historical testimony of the Church's faith as the external correlate or counterpart of this inner witness, they left the Spirit doctrine vulnerable to the charge of subjectivism. It was to escape that charge that appeal was made to the quality of Scripture itself, which was considered to furnish objective evidence of its having been divinely inspired. As a result the personal character of the Spirit was buried beneath a mass of literalistic interpretation. The theological climate reverberated with charges and countercharges of "subjectivity" versus "dead objectivity". In the heat of the battle, contestants gathered around two focal points: strict Calvinism and its opponent, Arminianism.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the issues were clearly drawn. The post-Reformation theology had reverted to a tradition of Augustinianism, with certain Lutheran and Calvinistic accretions polemically

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<sup>1</sup>See Hendry, op. cit., 86.

adjusted to the errors of Popery. Before the close of the previous century, the confessionalism of the Reformed churches was already beginning to burden Christian minds which had not lost all sense of freedom - minds in which any trace of the original Protestant spirit survived. This is clearly seen in the writings of the early Arminians.

In a way, Arminians became the special and formal outlet for all this mental uneasiness in Protestantism. While agreeing in their general theory as to Scripture, the Arminians and Calvinists differed in their application of the theory. The difference proved very important. The Calvinists recognised in Scripture not merely an authoritative guide to the reason and the conscience, but a coactive and constraining power over the reason and conscience. The authority of Scripture, said the Arminians, is merely "directive". It is the witness of the Holy Spirit in the divine Word; but it can only be brought near to the individual and become operative by his own free inquiry and assent. It was not, and could not be, an external power capable of being wielded by the Church. Any claim to exercise such a power was strongly repudiated.

In carrying out their views, Arminians were led to attack the whole system of confessions. It was held that symbols and confessions, according to their true meaning and even their ancient usage, had no other design but to testify, not what was to be believed, but what the authors of them themselves believed. Such professions of faith were declared to be mirrors of Christian opinion - formulated expressions of the Christian consciousness of their times, but in no way were they to be held as limiting the freedom of Christian discussion, or as "foundations of faith". Above all, they were not to be held as limiting the truth of God, so that those who were unable or unwilling to receive them were thereby excluded from salvation. It must be admitted that

no Protestant party ventured to maintain in theory that confessions were other than human and fallible documents. Nevertheless, the dominant orthodoxy strongly contended for the infallibility of the doctrines taught in them, and their compulsory relation to the individual conscience. All this system of confessional and Church authority was vigorously attacked by the Arminians.

But perhaps the most significant and solvent of all the principles enunciated by Arminianism was the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. "This distinction not only assailed the narrowness and stringency of the prevailing Protestant dogmatism, but the whole idea upon which dogmatism, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, was built."<sup>1</sup> It raised the vital question as to the essential character of Christianity and the conditions of Christian communion.

Arminian teaching, especially with reference to its views on Scripture, opened the flood-gates to unbridled Protestantism. This in turn led to the appearance of sectarianism and individualism. Anyone could claim the authority of Scripture for his own interpretation as being the witness of the Holy Spirit. In this, the dispensation of the Spirit superseded the historical revelation of Christ.

Thus several forces of free opinion, or, more truly, various manifestations of the same right of free inquiry, began to appear and to reappear on the scene, sometimes in a desultory, sometimes in a more organised form. They found a congenial soil in the England of the seventeenth century, and grew up, amidst many difficulties to be sure, into a position of increasing influence.

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<sup>1</sup> John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, I (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1872), 34 f. The present writer is indebted to pp. 1 - 36 of this work for much of the thought concerning the Arminian-Calvinist positions.

Among these movements was that which came to be known as the Society of Friends.

Before concluding this section, however, the theological issues at stake must be seen as part and parcel of the philosophical framework of natural law, the general principles of which have already been considered. And this is so for a very practical reason. Immediately preceding, and during, the life-span of William Penn two names dominated the philosophical horizon: Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). It was inevitable that William Penn should find himself drawn to a consideration of the thought of these two men. From this contact with the philosophical climate of his time new insights were added to the development of his own doctrine of political authority.

Thomas Hobbes argued mechanistically that life is simply the motions of the organism and that man is by nature a selfishly individualistic animal at constant war with all other men. In a state of nature, men are equal in their self-seeking and live out lives which are "nasty, brutish, and short". To escape the natural anarchy, men contract with each other to surrender their selfish rights and secure peace in a created state. When men create the state they form a compact among themselves to submit absolutely to the sovereign, who is outside of the agreement and whose only obligation to the people is to protect them.<sup>1</sup> Failing this obligation, the sovereign is liable to legitimate opposition. Temporal power is always superior to ecclesiastical power; Hobbes strongly attacked the Roman Catholic Church. It should be noted that

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<sup>1</sup>In this connection, see Howard Warrender, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press), 1957, 180 - 188. Warrender states that the duties of the sovereign would appear to be directed towards securing these objectives: "security", "prosperity", and "equity, and the harmless liberty of the subject."

the power of the sovereign derived originally from the people, a subtle challenge to the doctrine of the divine right of kings.<sup>1</sup> Further, the right of citizens to revolt was implicitly recognised, and the logic of Hobbes' position could apply equally well to king or parliament.<sup>2</sup> He argued that the sovereign must support truth and freedom of thought, since these promoted peace.

Hobbes attempted to provide a materialistic psychological and sociological foundation for a new political theory,<sup>3</sup> based on the assumption that human conduct was determined, as the conduct of ants and bees is determined, by reflex actions following known laws. He set himself against all the powerful and still developing constitutionalist tradition, expressed in innumerable books and long entrenched in institutions. He was a radical sceptic, with a cynical view of human nature. If he was not an atheist, he was certainly an agnostic.

Hobbes tried to sweep away the whole structure of traditional sanctions, and to set up a new and raw standard by which government should be judged - utility. Anticipating Bentham and Austin, he wished to base social morality simply on positive law, the objective being a state of mind, "felicity".<sup>4</sup> Whatever precisely the idea meant to Hobbes, it was anthropocentric, conceived within the bounds of immediate experience. It could be brought about only if society was deliberately contrived to circumvent the results of greed and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 104 f., 108 - 111, 128 - 133. Cf. 177 - 179, 261 - 263, 320 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 147 - 150, 192 - 196, 276 f., 321 f.; "... a continuous right of self-defense in the face of extreme danger is .... a basic limitation upon political obligation" - p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 91 - 93. Cf. 267 f., 313 f.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 209 - 211, espec. n. 2, 210.

selfishness, motives which he thought predominant in human nature.

Since, in Hobbes' view, the traditional religious and ethical means of changing men's hearts from within have to be discarded,<sup>1</sup> it is necessary to create an external structure which will prevent their behaviour having its normal consequences. The State was to be neither the promoter of the good life, nor the protector of rights. It was the conciliator of interests - one might add, the forcible conciliator. Hobbes' outlook was, therefore, utilitarian. He believed that the remedy for greed and egotism was authoritarian government. Though Hobbes' originality lies in his definition of the unqualified nature of sovereign power, irrespective of its form, he shows a consistent liking for authoritarian methods.

This revolutionary attitude rested on the assumptions of a crude behaviorism. First, that we can know directly nothing of reality. In consequence the metaphysical and religious sanctions of traditional political thought were visionary at best. This view, of course, is not explicitly stated, but it is implied. Secondly, Hobbes believed we know "felicity" when we see it. Thirdly, he believed that the best way of attaining "felicity" is by the "conciliation of interests" within his crude-blueprint for authoritarian government.

Although Hobbes was the first to raise this formidable question: given a radical scepticism about natural law and a cosmic order, how can society continue to believe in itself, how retain its vitality? - he never found the political or psychological answer.<sup>2</sup> Hobbes' aim was to undermine a whole

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., Ibid., 164, 226 ff.; 294 n.1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 313 f. Hobbes may be said "to refuse to evaluate the motives behind consent."

fabric of thought, but he burrowed so deeply that few realised what he was doing. In place of the old structure torn by rival allegiances, he substituted one which was completely enveloped by the secular power. The sovereign had taken upon himself the person of the State; all acts and opinions had their sanction in him; he was the incarnation of the secular spirit, enforcing opinions deemed necessary not for the salvation of the soul but for the safety of the State; himself the clearly defined source of authority, and the unlimited extent of his power the guarantee of peace.

These remedies appeared to surrender every human sentiment in politics, to disparage everything hitherto accepted as good, and to exclude the possibility of progress. In place of the natural instincts which make men social and therefore political, Hobbes appeared to erect a mechanical and crushing despotism, a Moloch on whose altars were sacrificed all that men had hitherto held true or sacred. It is therefore not surprising that English political theory has derived more from Locke than from Hobbes. Representative English thinkers have started from Aristotle's assumption that man is a social and political animal, and have rejected theories which force men into some preconceived conception of the State.

Nevertheless, Hobbes' theories were to find their most complete vindication in Restoration England; and if he was not the inspiration of later Stuart absolutism, he was its prophet. When Penn was at Oxford, the Leviathan was the foremost work on politics and statecraft. He must have read it.<sup>1</sup> And in the reading of it, Penn came to see that Hobbes' views, and Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah "who shall build my city and let go my captives",

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<sup>1</sup>See the essay by Francis Taylor, "William Penn, Constitution Maker", in Children of Light, ed. H. H. Brinton (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), 33.

were views that did not match.

It is true that John Locke's published works belong to a period after Charles' reign, as Hobbes' Leviathan to a period before it; but both philosophers have this interesting link with the reign, that, while the Restoration period witnessed the application of some of Hobbes' most characteristic doctrines, the same period created that public opinion which made possible of realisation many of the ideals professed by Locke. The one pushed to extremes the results obtainable from the older mechanical method of reasoning; the other restored human nature to its place in the state, and propounded a system which, though liable to logical objection, was nevertheless eminently practicable and reasonable.

In 1669, Shaftesbury had been one of the eight proprietors of the new American colony, Carolina. To John Locke, Shaftesbury's employee, was assigned the task of drafting its first charter. This state paper is indicative of Locke's political philosophy when aged thirty-seven. In this Carolina Charter there is little indication of the liberal. It is primarily based upon a feudal conception. It reflects little or nothing of his later political, religious and educational liberalism, expounded in his two great essays on government, published during and after Penn's efforts in practical constitution making and operation.

In Carolina Locke found the only practical application he ever attempted of his political ideas.<sup>1</sup> How does one account for this autocratic outlook on the part of one later associated with liberalism? Apparently the ill success of the democratic revolution of England had made Locke an enemy to popular

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. William Hepworth Dixon, William Penn: An Historical Biography (London: Chapman and Hall, 1851), 234-6; George Bancroft, History of the United States, II (15th ed.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1852), 144ff.; William T. Hull, William Penn, A Topical Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 231, n. 494.

innovations. He had seen the commons incapable of retaining the precious conquest they had made. Hence he looked to the aristocracy as the surest adversaries of arbitrary power.

In his Letters on Toleration, which appeared from time to time in English after 1689, Locke now urged that there should be an established church with the broadest possible toleration. Only atheism and Catholicism should be legislated against as inimical to religion and the state. Contradicting Thomas Hobbes, Locke now believed the original state of nature was happy and characterised by reason and tolerance. In that state all men were equal and independent, and none had a right to harm another in his "life, health, liberty or possessions". The state was formed by social contract because in the state of nature each was his own judge, and there was no protection against those who lived outside the law of nature. The State should be guided by natural law. Rights of property are very important, for each man has a right to the product of his labour. Locke forecast the labour theory of value. The policy of checks and balances as followed in the Constitution of the United States was set down by Locke, as was the doctrine that revolution in some circumstances is not only a right but an obligation.

Locke's Essay on Toleration (1690) raised the subject of toleration from the level of theological polemic, and placed it on almost universal grounds. In general, he contended that toleration was due to all who are themselves tolerant; conversely, the state should expel only those whose principles incite either to persecution or to subversion. In this way he gave an abstract setting to the latitudinarian doctrines of the Whigs. To the same party he did a signal service by his Treatises of Government (1690). Primarily written as a confutation of Filmer, the Treatises disposed of two things: first, the

sovereignty which divine right genealogists traced back to Adam; and, secondly, the social contract as distorted by Hobbes, whereby men were supposed to have surrendered their powers to an irresponsible abstraction. Locke started from the assumption that man had once been in a state of nature, but he wisely avoided any attempt to describe that state; for he claimed that it was merely a non-politic condition, similar to that which prevails between two independent states not bound by treaties or agreements. The beginnings of the body politic were, he held, to be found in common consent.

Still using the old categories, he declared that, once men have established themselves in a body politic, the first and fundamental law impels them to establish a legislative power. This is not only the supreme power, but "sacred and unalterable in the hands where the community have once placed it"; nor does it rule by extemporary decrees, but by "promulgated standing laws, and known, authorised judges". Hence a clear distinction between the legislative and the executive; the latter responsible to the former, and the former responsible to the people. But as the world is in a constant state of flux, that part of the legislative which consists of elected representatives must, in course of time, be reformed or altered so as to correspond with changes in the distribution of population. Prerogative Locke defined not as something outside or above the laws, but as a power in the hands of the Prince to provide for those exceptional cases which cannot be left to the determination of the laws. The Treatises on Government in fact furnished the theoretical or scientific apology for the Revolution of 1688.

The Significance of this Historical Context  
for William Penn's Doctrine of Political Authority

The whole idea of social contract, of the divine right of kings, of the place and privilege of property, of the right of opposition, of the necessity

for freedom and toleration - all these, and more, were problems thrust upon the world of the seventeenth century. As one very much involved in that world, Penn was indebted to anyone throwing light upon the Quaker approach, either directly or indirectly. In the workings of the Inner Light Penn found the binding force which enabled men to settle under governments. Government was indeed of divine origin and purpose. Neither State nor Church were entitled to exceed the bounds of their authority, when such action on their part invaded the prerogatives of the individual soul. Sovereignty came ultimately from God; society, its origin lying in God, derived its political organisation from human consent.



## CHAPTER II

### GEORGE FOX AND ROBERT BARCLAY

#### A. George Fox

1. The note of personal discovery
2. Deviations from historical Christianity
3. The "Inner-Light" as the cardinal article in his theology.

#### B. Robert Barclay

1. Barclay the theologian
2. The Inner-Light and the institutions of authority.

#### C. Summary: the problem of the Light as viewed by early Quakerism

1. The Inner Light and the Spirit of Christ
2. The Trinity
3. In what sense may we speak of "salvation"?

## CHAPTER II

### GEORGE FOX AND ROBERT BARCLAY

We must make clear at the outset the nature of the impact upon Penn of the thought and work of two early Quakers, George Fox and Robert Barclay. This chapter is concerned with a sketch of the respective contributions of these two men toward the development of the doctrine of the Inner Light. In that development, William Penn was to discover new insights and meaning into his own encounter with the Light, or moment of "convincement". This experience of conversion took place in the year 1667, when Penn was twenty-three years of age. The first recorded meeting between Penn and Fox was in August, 1671, when Penn accompanied Fox from London to Gravesend on the latter's journey to America.<sup>1</sup> His meetings with Barclay, too, were not to take place until after his experience of convincement. Yet it was his contacts with these two men in later years, until their deaths, which was to provide depth and increased import to the experience itself. To George Fox, the "founder" of Quakerism and to Robert Barclay, "the formulator of Quaker doctrine", William Penn was indebted for many of his religious insights and beliefs.

### GEORGE FOX

George Fox certainly had the enviable confidence and stubbornness of

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<sup>1</sup>George Fox, Journal, ed. Norman Penney, II (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), 176 f. C. E. Vulliamy, William Penn (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 103, feels that Penn's first meeting with Fox took place after the return of the latter from America in April, 1673.

character which help to make the great leader. Indeed, he was more a leader than a prophet. He had qualities which gave him an extraordinary influence. He possessed an almost unfailing perception of design and character. Even when he could not see them with his eyes he realised what sort of people were near him. He had visions, whether actual or symbolic, of coming events.

From his childhood Fox had been aware of a deep spiritual rhythm in his own nature which he could not immediately relate to his knowledge of other men or harmonise with any current theological explanation of God. He stands before us as a lonely figure. Born in 1624 of a humble but respected family in Leicestershire, the future Quaker leader was innocent of any higher education. He was a grave and thoughtful child and was brought up under the influence of a home and church life that was Puritan in character. Very little is known of his youth apart from the facts which he recorded in his Journal. Regarded by modern historians of religious movements as having expressed one of the authentic varieties of religious experience, Fox, like Penn, had to wait for twenty-three years before that experience came to him.

An earnest student of the Bible, the needs of the soul gripped him at the age of nineteen, and he was literally driven forth by a spiritual impulse. He left his home and became a wanderer, seeking for truth. For four years he wandered obscurely in the wilderness. This period was climaxed by the famous illumination in which a voice came to him while walking in the fields. We find in his Journal the brief account of the annunciation to him personally:

And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition": and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give Him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace and faith and power. Thus when God

doth work, who shall let it? And this I knew experimentally.<sup>1</sup>

Out of this central experience of his life sprang the vital message of Quakerism. The important feature of this experience is that it was personal, direct and decisive. Fox was now certain that he was right, that he had heard for himself, without human intermediary, the divine assurance that God was with him and in him. Forthwith he began his ministry.

Fox was more the religious genius than the logical thinker. The man was greater than his writings. To study his idea of the Inner Light is to become aware of the interrelation of his emphases rather than to be introduced to a systematic theology. To attempt to reduce his thought to merely a coherent system is to misrepresent him. His ideas were more of the nature of a working description of practical religion. Thus in trying to unearth from Fox's writings his teaching of the Inner Light we do so in the awareness that it will be necessary for the most part to keep to Fox's reactions to concrete situations.

What first strikes the reader of these writings is the note of personal discovery, of the certainty of Truth inwardly revealed. His own simple spontaneous effusions, the outpourings of a mind filled with the spirit, might naturally seem to a man who had been on such a long pilgrimage to be a more satisfactory and more authoritative statement of the truth revealed to him than would be the case of the more logical and ponderous theological works of the day. Religious, not political reform, was his first concern. In his own persuasion Fox's mission was to the world.

This mission was based upon the recognition of his inward personal

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<sup>1</sup>The Journal of George Fox, rev. ed. John L. Nickalls (Cambridge: University Press, 1952), II.

experience of God, for which "light" was the only conceivable analogy. This Light was wholly divine. It showed man what was evil, and brought men into an experimental unity with God and through unity with God to unity with their fellow Christians. Men must turn to the Light and avoid the evil which it lays bare to them. This Inner Light was above any outward teaching; it alone was infallible.

Into every department of life Fox carried this same light of truth and righteousness. A more exact definition, a clearer explanation, one shall look for in vain. The Scripture metaphors, such as the light, the seed, fully satisfy Fox, and he can conceive of no difficulty in comprehending them, except that which arises from lack of the truth they signify. In spite of his lack of historical perspective, and in spite of his attempt to rely wholly upon immediate experience, Fox held that his personal revelation was fully consistent with the revelation that had come to men in the past. Religion must be drawn away from mere external authority, and founded in the human experience of the Inner Light. It was left to George Fox to accept this doctrine as the cardinal, if not the only indispensable article in his theology.

In the preface to the published edition of Fox's Journal,<sup>1</sup> William Penn had made note of the extraordinary gift that Fox had in "opening the Scriptures". As we have already mentioned, Fox was a real student of the Bible. In defining the Light, he at the same time attempted to minimise the chance of the inward revelation being in opposition to the Bible. He went so far as to point out that, as the writers of the Bible were inspired by the

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted as "A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers", Works, I, 858 - 892, espec. 878 - 884.

Light, the outstanding characteristic of the Apostolic Church was that it lived in the Light. Thus, in obeying that same Light a man would be following the apostolic pattern. This goal Puritanism would never attain, so long as it remained bound to the written word.

In holding such views, Fox broke with the Puritan reliance upon the letter of Scripture. While the Scriptures are the "words" of God, Fox declared, as words they become externalised and human. They become disconnected with the divine power. The power is the word, the spirit, which speaks directly to human spirits. It is the Light that lighteth every man. Hence the individual inspiration will be found to be consistent with the revelation as reported in the Bible. As a man lives in the Light the Scriptures are opened to him by the spirit of God, and thus the Scriptures become meaningful. But it is the divine opening not the text that is the religious authority. To admit the final authority of the Bible is to admit that something external is religiously binding. Fox believed that Puritanism, by making the Scriptures the final authority for faith and conduct, put bounds to the Light and said that the Light should reveal no more.

Fox had also defined the Inner Light as "Christ". This did not contribute to a solution of the problem of ultimate authority, since for most people the word "Christ" derived its content from Scripture, in which case the final authority of the individual is traced back to the Bible. But here Fox introduced the distinction between Christ as the "seed" and Christ as the "light". As the seed, Christ resembles closely the imago Dei idea. Fox thinks of it as inactive in man until regeneration. It is never identified with the Holy Spirit. It is always described as Christ. The "light", on the other hand, is always active in man even before regeneration. It is sometimes said to be Christ, but it is more often said to be from Christ. It is occasionally said to be from God. Thus, while emphasising the indwelling

of Christ in man, Fox at the same time never loses the conception that Christ is also transcendent. But the symbolism is not always clear, and one should be careful of pressing philosophic and theological categories upon the thought of a man who in his own lifetime was rather opposed to the juggling of religious terminology.

One final word regarding Fox's Christology in connection with the Inner Light must be added. Fox identifies the Light with the pre-existent Christ, and he identifies the pre-existent Christ with the historical Jesus. Jesus was the pre-existent Christ with a human body. Jesus did not have a human nature for the human is earthy.<sup>1</sup> The Light that lighteth every man was the indwelling of the pre-existent Christ whose earthly life is recorded in the Gospels. And this Light does not change.

When it came to the question of the relation of the Light to reason or conscience, Fox rarely troubled himself to answer. He had a distrust of human learning and human inventions, but trusted rather in the promptings of the Light. When pushed for some sort of an answer, however, the Quaker leader asserted that this Light is not the natural conscience nor the natural reason of man. It is the Divine power that quickens the conscience and gives spiritual perception. The mental faculty by which we perceive the light of Divine Truth is improved by exercise and impaired by abuse; but the Light itself does not change, for God is one and the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Personal experience of the Inner Light, since it is of a purely spiritual nature, cannot be induced or strengthened by external means, although it may be intensified by the grouping together of devout persons in a congregation.

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<sup>1</sup>"Fox's view inclines to Apollinarianism with a tendency to Sabellianism" - Rachel Hadley King, George Fox and the Light Within (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1940), 165.

Institutional religion, theology and ritual are mere inventions of man; the only true Church is the mystical union or body of believers. In many instances Fox and his followers were violent in their denunciation of the established churches. After the days of the apostles the Church fell away from its early state of living in the direct power of God. As a result, the Church was increasingly divided and became corrupt.

This could only mean that the whole system of compulsion in matters of religion and conscience were wrong. The only foundation of order was that which is agreeable to that of God in the individual soul. Fox himself was to undergo the rigours of persecution. But without pain, were there any values? Was not pain a proof of faith? So Fox believed, and so he suffered. The attempt to obtain ~~credal~~ and ritual uniformity by means of external authority would, in the last analysis, gain nothing. The only real unity was in the Light. Where the Light leads it never persecutes or gains its ends by violence, because it has no violence to use. The Light acts not externally but within the individual.

Fox died in 1691. His letters and journals contain few references to Penn, and those few references are invariably discreet, never commendatory or enthusiastic. The two men were seldom together. Their methods in many respects were totally different. Still, there can be no doubt of Penn's tremendous admiration for Fox and of the influence of the latter upon the life-experience of the future colonial proprietor.<sup>1</sup>

The two men did indeed supplement each other. It is quite possible that Quakerism would have disappeared later had not the enthusiasm of Fox, the religious genius, been shared and organised and made politically and socially

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 882, 883, show Penn's high esteem for Fox.

serviceable by Penn, the Quaker statesman.

It was from Fox that Penn learned the significance of reliance upon the Inner Light. Inherent in this reliance was the cardinal problem of authority. Fox had claimed to have found in the Light his infallible authority. Once raised to the level of a working creed, the doctrine could not fail to undermine the foundations of traditional Christianity. It is too general to be specifically Christian. In many instances Fox used inherited terminology without co-ordinating it with his other thought. In so doing, the whole problem of authority was actually thrown into confusion.

The confusion was to stem from Fox's endeavour to incorporate the role of external authority within his larger context of the Inner Light. The true Quaker doctrine, he declared, is not subversive of authority. Rather the "common sense" doctrine of the belief that to each man was given his own measure of the Light provides for the institutions of authority. Subjection to due authority does not do away with the need of inward guidance. The servant needs such guidance in two directions: he needs it for the right performance of his services; and he needs it in order to choose his master. For his obedience is in no case unconditioned or unreserved. His allegiance is maintained subject to a higher power, and finally to the Highest. External authority is derivative and provisional, not absolute. Furthermore, it looks forward to its own suppression. The only authority a free man can freely recognise is the authority which helps him to be more free - the wise authority that makes him wise, the authority of law which makes him more just; the authority of strength which fosters his weakness and makes him strong. All true external authority is therefore serviceable. The highest Authority is Servant of all.

But to the visionary insights of George Fox were added the more precise

and logical formulations of the philosopher of Quakerism, Robert Barclay. It is to a consideration of his thought, in relation to the doctrine of the Inner Light, that we are now invited to turn our attention.

#### ROBERT BARCLAY

It is curious that Barclay - like Penn - should have received his training in Huguenot France. French Protestantism was of a narrow, clear, theological character. For a time Barclay showed signs of coming under the influence of Rome. But in order to understand his theology it may be of value to mention something further of his life and character. Barclay was born in Scotland in 1648. His father was a prominent soldier, and through his mother the boy was related to the house of Stuart. The highly talented youngster was educated in the Presbyterian Church and later sent to study theology at a Scottish Catholic seminary in Paris, where an uncle of his was rector. He returned to Scotland in 1663. About this time his father retired from public affairs and devoted the rest of his life to religion. After much searching, he joined the Society of Friends. The fact of having joined the Society did not, however, make him wish to influence his children. He preferred that they should hear and think for themselves and make their own decisions. It was not long before the son, Robert, felt that he, too, must join the despised Quakers. In 1667 he became a member of the Friends, whose greatest theorist he was eventually to become. He devoted himself to journeys and literary work in the service of his new-found faith and was several times sent to prison for the sake of his testimony. His practical ability was shown not only in the management of Ury, the family estate in Scotland, but also in his governorship - by proxy - of East Jersey, an American colony bought by the Quakers. He died in 1690, at the age of forty-two.

Two years later Barclay's works were published by William Penn. Almost everything that Barclay has written is included there. The most important work of this Quaker theologian is his Apology, which was published in Latin in 1676 and in English in 1678, and was translated into Low Dutch, French, Spanish, Danish and German. In the course of time it has appeared in some thirty-two complete English editions.<sup>1</sup> As to learning and depth, the Apology has sometimes been compared with Calvin's Institutes. It came to be a norm for the theological thinking of the Quakers in the centuries which followed. It is the work of a young Scotsman of twenty-seven, who, having acquired in his Presbyterian youth a habit of clear doctrinal formulation, now brought to the exposition of the Quaker faith all the gifts of a lucid and penetrating intelligence. Barclay was undoubtedly assisted by George Keith, an older and riper scholar, in the preparation of his book. But the form and expression are his own, and the Apology remains one of the most subtle and yet one of the most convincing defences of intellectual and spiritual Christianity which has ever been written.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the learning, the subtlety, and the brilliance of Barclay are all subservient to the urgency, the inspiration of his message; they are all infused or directed by his tremendous fervour.

A Christian, according to Barclay, is not made by a creed or profession, but only by his recognition of the inward Light, the true vehiculum Dei, by which he is made conscious of the living nature of God Himself. The Scriptures can only be interpreted by the Spirit, not by the eye or ear. A mere literal

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<sup>1</sup>The edition used in these pages is the fourth English edition, London: T. Sowle, 1701.

<sup>2</sup>See The Conception of the Inner Light in Robert Barclay's Theology (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1954), 13 f., and nn. 1, 2 - pp. 14 f. This is an invaluable work on the subject.

knowledge of Christ can save no one. The real knowledge of Christ is an unmistakable experience, and it may be felt by those who have no literal knowledge whatever. No belief can be true, no membership in the Church can be real, without conversion, without a total surrender or subjection of the earthly man. Neither churches nor magistrates have the right to interfere with the conscience, which is a thing divine. Let us examine these points of Barclay's theology a little closer.

If mere logic is to prevail, Barclay ought to have won his opponents over to his doctrine of immediate revelation. Although he is often guilty of a strongly spiritualised exegesis when he tries to prove his doctrine of the Inner Light by reference to the New Testament, Barclay does try to distinguish between certain, spiritual, saving heart-knowledge, and uncertain, literal, and soaring airy head-knowledge. He puts the Church Fathers and the Reformers in the witness-box to prove that the true knowledge of God is inwardly revealed by His Spirit and by this alone. Augustine, Clement, Tertullian, Jerome, Gregory, Cyril, Bernard, Luther - all are quoted to the same effect. But to this documentation he adds his own personal witness.<sup>1</sup>

Fallen man has no possibility of obtaining the right knowledge of God by the help of the difficult faculties of the soul. He must have a mystic organ as a mediator of the right, mystic knowledge. Barclay calls this organ in man by many names, using the symbolism of "light", symbols from the world of nature, from the senses, from Scripture. In this connection, the Inner Light is not considered as a part of man's soul. It is something that a man had before the fall but that also remained after the fall. This it was able to do since it does not belong to a natural man but to a divine

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<sup>1</sup>See Apology, 357.

principle working in the soul.

Whatever may be thought to have been left behind after the fall of God's image, so long as it is not visited and influenced anew from the Source of life and light, it cannot enable man to do good or convict him of evil. Barclay denies any vestige of the image of God after the fall. When the Inner Light is mentioned he can speak, however, as though this Light were a vestige. Here Barclay is not consistent. His very manner of expression betrays a dependence on Scholastic theology. But from his involved argumentation, two points stand out clearly.

The first fact brought out refers to the universal nature of the Light which exists in every man. Here Barclay has recourse to the testimony of non-Christian peoples and of missionaries. It is neither possible nor necessary to produce here all Barclay's proofs from the New Testament for the occurrence of the Inner Light in all men. Only one Scriptural proof will be cited, because it occupies such a central place in Barclay's demonstration and is so significant for his scriptural interpretation. It concerns the words in John 1: 9 - "that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world". In these words Barclay sees a clear proof and mentions that they are called by some "the Quaker text". However he strenuously maintains that the Inner Light's universality must not entail that its faculty of saving light should be restricted.

This leads us to note the second essential characteristic of the Inner Light: its saving function. Barclay wages war against any kind of "natural light" as saving light. He sees such a saving light only in the Inner Light. Yet his difficulty of avoiding the possibility of a natural knowledge of God is expressed in the manner in which he determines the relation between grace and man's activity and passivity after conversion. Man's share in conversion

is rather a passivity than an activity, but once God begins to work on a man, then the man becomes a "co-worker" with grace. There is co-operation between grace and man's newly created will to be saved. This stands in contrast to any sola gratia doctrine.

We have seen that Barclay established his doctrine of immediate revelation on the authority of Church Fathers and the verification of experience. We noted, too, that he based his views on the Bible. But to clearly understand his reliance upon the latter, we must say a word about his appreciation of Scripture in relation to the Inner Light.

According to Barclay, it is the doctrine of immediate revelation upon which the Bible itself depends for its authority. Although the argument places the Scriptures in a secondary position to the Light which gave them forth, the Quaker leader asserted that they nevertheless gave a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation. In one sense the Quakers denied the Scriptures, he declared, and in another sense they did not. They denied that the Scriptures were the supreme authority and ultimate foundation, claiming these honours for the Inner Light from whom the Scriptures proceeded and by whom they were themselves inspired. They acknowledged the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, and, in a sense, their authority, only an authority secondary and subordinate, being derived from the Light. Barclay follows this up with an admission that he sees no reason why there should not be a supplementary Bible written in his own day or thereafter. He saw no reason why the canon of Scripture should be closed. Yet he safeguards himself against the objection that this makes the present Scriptures and their canon incomplete. No foundation can be laid down other than that which has already been laid. The Scriptures give a complete and extensive testimony of all the main doctrines of the Christian faith. Thus the possibility of a still larger

canon involves not a revelation of a new Gospel with new doctrines but rather a new revelation of the old, good Gospel with the old, good doctrines.

The Scriptures are thus necessary to the Christian, seeing that they give the clearest possible expression of what has already happened, from a mystical aspect, to the man who has obeyed the Inner Light. In a similar manner, Barclay's idea of the necessity of Christ's historical work of redemption must be explained.

A work of redemption proceeds in every man, but the inner justification is brought to such consciousness and clearness that it can be said to be Christian first in him who has a knowledge of Christ's historical work of redemption. Christ died for all men. Every man can receive justification through Christ as the Inner Light, even if he has never had the opportunity to know anything about the Cross of Golgotha. This latter historical event has no necessary connection with the mystical justification in man. Rather the historic work of redemption is but an exemplification in the outer world of that which has always been in the depths of the soul. This is a logical application of the doctrine of justification arising from Barclay's general views on the relation between the Inner Light and the historic revelation.

This relation Barclay has not worked out in detail. Here and there he provides us with glimpses of his views. At the same time, one can see how these views would call for serious repercussions on the part of evangelical understanding of the Bible and the Atonement.

If the true knowledge of God is by nature inner and spiritual, the criterion must also be inner and spiritual. It is therefore an easy matter to exclude reason as a rule of faith, for it is destroyed and cannot give man any certain knowledge in spiritual things. Human reason, which in a mystical respect can only give an outer and unspiritual knowledge, can therefore not be

the standard for the true knowledge of God. It may sound strange, therefore, when Barclay expressly says that the revelation through the Light does not contradict right reason. In this case, the main point seems to lie in right reason. This would mean that the knowledge of reason does not contradict the spiritual knowledge, when these are kept apart each in its own sphere. This interpretation would agree with other statements of Barclay.

He denies that he wishes to despise or underrate reason. That is what raises man above the animals. But such knowledge of God as it obtained by reason rather hinders than helps man's salvation. The only right organ for obtaining the right knowledge of God is the Inner Light. Man should allow his understanding to be enlightened by the divine and pure Light in order to be led aright in natural things. The enlightened reason in those following the true Light may further be of benefit to man also in spiritual things. But such co-operation does not mean a fusion of the spheres of both organs but helps rather in making a sharper differentiation between them. When man follows the Inner Light, his natural powers are released from the burden of being compelled to have something to do with the attainment of a right knowledge of God and is all the more freely employed in dealing with natural things. So too, the freer the intellect becomes from its self-inflicted burden of trying to attain a right knowledge of God, the freer it is to consider objectively and clearly to express the content of that knowledge.

Neither can fallen man through conscience acquire a right knowledge of God. The human conscience, unlike the light, is liable to error. Barclay likens the conscience to a lantern, within which the Light shines. Being a natural quality, in itself conscience has no light. But here again, Barclay's thoughts are scattered, and it is difficult to ascertain clearly the exact relation between conscience and the Light.

When in his work, The Anarchy of the Ranters, Barclay introduces the role of the Church as being a part of the seat of authority, he raises a number of pertinent remarks on the relation of the Light to the Church.<sup>1</sup> He includes in the Church all those who have been "called out" of the world and its spirit by God in order to walk in His light and life. This is meant to incorporate those who are still living in this world as well as those who have already departed this existence. These two groups together make up the Catholic Church. Outside of this there is no salvation.

These views cannot be claimed to be original for Quakerism. Nor are they necessarily connected with the doctrine of the Inner Light. A connection with the latter, however, is clearly established when Barclay gives a more detailed account of the Church's members. In what might be called the "outer circumference" of the Church are found those members who have received Christ in the Inner Light, even those who have not learned to know the historic Christ. In the "inner circumference" are those who have met the historic Christ and received Him as an Inner Light. This church is the ecclesia particularis in contrast to the ecclesia catholica universalis, which embraces the outer circumference. To be a member of this particular church a knowledge of the historic Christ is required, for as God provides a chance for such knowledge, it constitutes an absolute necessity for membership of the Church. The particular church is also called the "visible" church. True membership is dependent always on the inner, real holiness of the members, under the inspiration and guidance of the Light. Here again as regards the church one detects the spiritualising tendency in Barclay's exegesis.

Such a view of the Church precludes any religious compulsion, when it concerns the exercise of faith, usages of worship and standards of behaviour

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<sup>1</sup>Philadelphia: J. Cruikshank, 1770. Cf. also the 1757 edition, Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall.

proceeding from faith. There is, of course, a limit to religious freedom. If men on the plea of freedom do something that conflicts with morality or the permanent laws which are universally recognised by all Christians, authority has the right to intervene against them. Barclay means that authority's jurisdiction is extended to maintain outer order, but as soon as this duty is exceeded, authority becomes guilty of religious compulsion.

Authority cannot judge in questions of conscience; in these God alone is the judge. The Church should not kill excluded members or deprive them of their privileges in the community. While the Church has the right to employ the sword of the Spirit in severing from its fellowship members who are unworthy of this fellowship, she has no right to use the worldly sword to compass the ruin of those excluded. Nor is the border line between State and Church drawn in such a way that the State shall punish in accordance with the trials and decisions of the Church. The State shall not be the Church's hangman.

Thus, the Inner Light is constitutive and also a regulative and all-determining principle. It constitutes the believer's and the Church's experience, and regulates the forms of their activity. It fully accounts for, and justifies, all that seems peculiar in the Society of Friends. But it is not, on that account, a sectarian principle. On the contrary, declared Barclay, it is Christianity itself. The measure of its novelty and strangeness is the measure in which the existing Churches have apostatised from the primitive standard - to which the Quaker rule is, sans phrase, a return.<sup>1</sup>

From such a position it is not difficult to see the opposition of

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<sup>1</sup>See James B. Russell, "An Examination of the Doctrine of the Inner Light in the Apology of Robert Barclay" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New College, University of Edinburgh, 1931), 49 f.

Quakerism to the establishment of any one institutional religion in the country. Behind it all is the great faith in the Inner Light which compels liberty of conscience. All wisdom came from God, and since God was in all men through the Inner Light, the suppression of men's consciences was committing a religious crime of the first order.

#### PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE QUAKER POSITION

The experience and thought of these two men, George Fox and Robert Barclay, served as the nexus between William Penn's original moment of conviction and his later development of doctrine as it was wrought out in personal trials and colonial experiment. Before concluding this chapter, however, it seems to be in order to suggest some of the major points of controversy between Quaker doctrine and the established confessional beliefs. In so doing we shall have an immediate introduction into the life-experience of the founder of Pennsylvania.

When, as was often the case, the Quakers were charged with "heresy", they put out statements showing what they believed to be their own fundamental orthodoxy. What chiefly <sup>distinctive</sup> characterised their theological position from that of most of the other Christian bodies of their time was their resolute insistence that it was not stagnant orthodoxy, but life that made a person a Christian. Christianity was for them essentially an experience of the Light and a way of life based on that experience. Yet while the Quakers clearly wished to defend themselves against a pantheistic interpretation of the Inner Light, their line of thought cannot be said to be quite clear. For example, Barclay's manner of making of the Inner Light a metaphysical characteristic forcibly brings out the metaphysical question of the relation between God and the Inner Light. Should Divinity in this case be thought of in terms of

pantheism or rather in terms of personality? To all practical purposes this issue does not seem to come to any satisfactory solution.

Then, too, in spite of the theoretical acceptance of the authority of Scripture, it is noteworthy that nearly all the points in which Quaker theory and practice diverge from the traditional theories and practices of Christendom were also divergences from the letter of the Bible. Certainly the belief in the Inner Light carried with it a stronger faith in guidance, both universal and corporate, than had been customary. The Quakers surely did not mean that there was no common standard of belief, any more than that there was no common standard of right action - it was the Inner Light. Such reasoning failed to convince the opponents of Quakerism. It appeared to grant too much and prove too little, to carry with it the mind of the age. It was felt that there was a flagrant lapse of logic in the assumption that the inward witness of the Light would necessarily guarantee the "inspiration" of precisely those books which the Church tradition had handed down. The Protestant might easily suppose that the Quaker meant no more than he himself meant when he said, that the Scriptures are known to be God's word, by the testimony of the Spirit. Conscience convicts of sin: only the Bible reveals the remedy, and by the revelation proves itself divine. Securely entrenched in this strong position, the orthodox believer could afford to disregard the preaching of Fox and the logic of Barclay. While practically submitting to the authority of Scripture as unreservedly as the Puritan did, these men had left immediate revelation as an unknown quantity. Little wonder that the Puritan held to an authority known, tried and proved; and declined to recognise what seemed shadowy and uncertain.

Following upon the Quaker views of the Light and Scripture, it is natural that the whole question of the historical Jesus and the divinity of

Christ should come under consideration. The position is extremely serious, in our own day as in the seventeenth century, for the authority of Christ was and is constantly being quoted to uphold positions which free and unfettered historical inquiry makes absolutely untenable. Further, this use of the authority of Christ is partly a vicious circle. One uses His words to prove the documents and the doctrines. But how does one know that he has really got His words? In attempting to avoid the dualistic religious philosophy involved in an understanding of the divine nature and the human nature of Jesus by a reliance on the Inner Light, the Quakers only raised a number of other problems, notably that of the Trinity and that of salvation.

The word "Trinity" seldom occurs in their early writings, except when they remark that it is not a word which is found in the Bible. In their thought God was not divided: God is one. He becomes manifest in various ways. In the Old Testament He appeared as Father; in the Gospels as Son; since the Gospel days as Holy Spirit, revealing His will in the hearts of those who heed His voice. Thus the Light, as experienced in personal form, may appear as Father, Son or Holy Spirit. To the charge of being Socinians, the Quakers would answer that Christ was not only the historical Jesus of Nazareth, but also the eternal word of John I, God Immanuel. But the orthodox conception of "three distinct and separate persons" in the Trinity, each with different functions, yet all one - this was a conception the Quakers could not accept, believing it to be a human fallacy.

The heaviest of the charges brought against the early Quakers was that by their doctrine that Christ was in every man they made salvation needless. It was charged that they left no place for atonement, conversion, the "new birth", and so swept away the very essentials of the Christian religion. Far from rejecting Christianity, however, the Quaker insisted that he but maintained

its primitive simplicity: Christianity is freedom. So far from salvation being something finished and completed, it was a life capable of infinite expansion - boundless in its possibilities of growth and blessedness. As a consequence of this faith, every avenue to truth was to be kept open. It was only by a rather difficult interpretation that the Quakers were able to grant the sacrifice of Christ any temporal and eternal significance. It would appear that a man is regenerated not so much by the death of Christ as by His life in one's heart. Atonement was an inward work, or it was nothing. But the description remains ambiguous and misleading. There was much here that seemed to dethrone historical Christianity, and to relegate it to the rank of a mere species of the one true, universal, all embracing, natural theism which the Quakers drew from Christian Scripture.

To say that the true Light was not the reason of the individual, nor the conscience of the individual - but rather the Light of universal reason, the voice of universal conscience - such statements did little to clarify the basic issues at stake between the classical-biblical position and the Quaker formulations. And, as has already been indicated, it was equally difficult to relate the Quaker understanding of the "Church" with that which had grown up over the centuries. Finally, perhaps it would not be out of place to suggest that the religion that declares every man enlightened by the divine Light would logically seem to call for the establishment of government on the bases of universal and equal enfranchisement. Thus, the doctrine of the Inner Light was not only a cardinal principle for the religious life; it was also the prophecy of political changes.

Of course it was true that many of the doctrines of Christianity remained, for those who became Quakers, much as before. It was what they did with the doctrines, where they placed them, that made the chief difference between them

and their persecutors. But fundamental to the entire structure of Quaker life and thought was the doctrine of the Inner Light. From a consideration of this doctrine in the thought of George Fox and Robert Barclay, together with a declaration of the basic points at issue between the doctrine and the more traditional systems of belief, we now turn to an examination of the Inner Light in the experience and theology of William Penn. Such an examination is made necessary, not only if we are to understand Penn's role in the general development of Quaker thought but also if we are to appreciate the pivotal function of the Light in his doctrine of political authority.

### CHAPTER III

#### WILLIAM PENN AND THE INNER LIGHT

##### A. Personal Conviction

1. Contributing factors to the experience of "convincement"
2. The experience proper
3. Immediate results: an apprehension of the universal nature and "saving" function of the Inner Light.

##### B. A series of insights into the resulting truth

###### 1. The Inner Light and Scripture

- a. The Inner Light as the true source of the authority of Scripture
- b. The battleground: the theological climate of the seventeenth century as it related to Scripture
- c. Penn's definition of the Quaker understanding of Scripture
  - (1) The Scriptures containing a declaration of the mind and will of God
  - (2) The Scriptures and Jesus Christ
  - (3) The necessity to live the Scriptures
- d. Answering the charges of Quaker opponents
  - (1) Against equating Quaker writings with Scripture
  - (2) Against disparagement of the Scriptures

###### 2. The Inner Light and Jesus Christ

- a. The problem as viewed by William Penn
  - (1) The Trinity
  - (2) The person and nature of Christ
    - (a) "Gentile-Divinity"
    - (b) The historical Jesus
    - (c) Jesus and the Light
  - (3) The offices and functions of Christ
    - (a) "Saviour"
    - (b) Moral reprover
    - (c) Spiritual dynamic

###### b. Summary statement

3. The Inner Light and Reason or Conscience

- a. A justification for the distinction between "reason" and "conscience"
- b. The place and purpose of the reason in man according to Penn
  - (1) The inspiration of the Light as an aid to reason  
("Convincement": an impression upon the understanding which helps the individual if his mind is seriously stayed thereon)
  - (2) The danger of human authority in reason
- c. The place and purpose of the conscience in man according to Penn
  - (1) The Inner Light and conscience
  - (2) The element of "faith"

4. The Inner Light and the Church

- a. Penn's definition of the Church (what the Church is):
  - (1) A people of God
  - (2) The "faith" of the Church
  - (3) The Spirit of God as the seat of authority in the Church
- b. The functions of the Church
  - (1) "Worship"
  - (2) To "convince and persuade"
- c. Points of conflict with the established Church
  - (1) The "right" of compulsion
  - (2) The importance of authority within the Church
  - (3) The sanctity of the individual conscience

CONCLUSION: THE INNER LIGHT IN THE EXPERIENCE OF WILLIAM PENN

- A. The recognition of the universal nature of the Light
- B. The pragmatic value of the Light
- C. The Inner Light as the ultimate and supreme authority.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM PENN AND THE INNER LIGHT

An understanding of William Penn's religious experience, particularly as it relates to his doctrine of the Inner Light, is necessary before his work can be understood. Not only as a protagonist of Quakerism in the field of religion, but also as proprietor and governor of Pennsylvania, and in all the secular affairs of his life, he sensed the compelling hand of God and devoutly believed that he was God's instrument in the service of humanity. Throughout his career he felt the serious responsibility toward a Higher Power. Penn's relations with people in all walks of life, from the lowliest of the Indians to the most esteemed of the nobility, gave steadfast testimony that he believed God to be present in the heart of every man; that God could speak to the hearts of all men through human instruments. Those who truly feared God, said Penn, would have a secret guidance from a higher wisdom than was possible from human sources; they would be directed by the spirit of truth and wisdom. He believed that the secret direction of the Almighty would be seen principally in matters relating to the good of the soul, but that it could be found also in the everyday concerns of life. He testified that in his own experience he was never disappointed in receiving Divine guidance and direction, but he reiterated that the happiness of Divine guidance could be enjoyed only by the humble in spirit, Grace was individual, and the Spirit was the guide that led to all truth. As a man of action, he saw that action, to be effective, must spring from religious foundations and have religious inspiration.

In Quakerism Penn found the satisfaction of his spiritual requirements. The Quakers had not courted him. Their principles had won him. But they set him to work.

### Personal Conviction

It was from his teacher at Saumer, Moïse Amyraut, that Penn was to receive a deepening of his conviction on many points, and help to define the ideals which had already begun, perhaps unconsciously, to actuate his conduct. While the ideal of religious liberty was foremost in the study of Amyraut, there were many less vital points in his doctrine which find an echo in Penn's life and work; for example, teaching on the universality of grace and on the relative freedom of the will. Amyraut sought to portray a natural morality, a morality founded upon the human conscience. Man should endeavour

. . . to build upon the foundations laid by nature, the instruction given to him by revelation; and to that end, while not neglecting the light which may reach him from without, it is the human conscience - his own conscience above all, which he must study and interrogate. The Laws of God are every where printed upon the heart of man, who is himself their true commentary.<sup>1</sup>

Surely one of the most interesting studies in the whole scope of religious biography is the manner in which William Penn became a spiritually free man, an experience through which one must have passed oneself before one can do anything effective for the freedom of others. The struggle within him between the earthly and the spiritual began early and lasted for nearly a dozen years. The conflict was a trying one. During this period Penn had undergone all the influences which, acting on his own nature, made him what he

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<sup>1</sup>Moïse Amyraut, La Morale Chrétienne, as quoted in Mabel Richmond Brailsford, The Making of William Penn (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), 122. Cf. also, 115 - 124. H. G. Wood, "William Penn's The Christian Quaker", in Children of Light, ed. H. H. Brinton (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1938), 6 f., questions if Amyraut was actually Penn's teacher.

was: Loe, Owen, Amyraut, Sidney, and his father - those were the men who had most affected his attitude towards life. His experiences at Oxford, in Paris, in London; his active service as a combatant on sea and land; his taste of business and of glittering social life, were matter enough for this attitude to work on. Healthy, handsome, young, not without the social graces, on the whole more serious than most, he was able to adapt himself to lighter matters. Yet it was difficult for him to know where, exactly, he did fit in. He felt he was competent, but asked for something large to which he could put his hand, something to which he could devote himself. He liked responsibility, but thus far he was all at sea; undecided, directionless. The crystallising occurrence was not long in coming. Through the ministry of Thomas Loe, Penn was brought under conviction, and henceforth began his public career as a Quaker.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Loe was an Oxford tradesman, who had been converted to Quakerism about 1653. From that date, until his death in 1668, his life was a series of travels, punctuated by imprisonment. He had early been attracted to Ireland as a field ripe for missionary activity. It was on a journey to this land that Loe first came into contact with the Penn family. At the time, the Penns were living at the Macroom estate, which had been given to William Penn's father for his services to the Commonwealth. The meeting which Loe held with the Penn family occurred when William was in his early teens, and stemmed from an invitation which the elder Penn extended to the Quaker preacher. Judging from such information as we have available on the meeting, it appears that Loe made

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<sup>1</sup>See, in this connection, Benjamin F. Trueblood, The Development of the Peace Idea and Other Essays (Boston: 1932), 213 - 215; Comfort, Remember William Penn (Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1944), 20 f., 23 f.; William I. Hull, William Penn, A Topical Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 106 f.; Bonamy Dobrée, William Penn (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1932), chap. iii, 33 - 49.

a very deep impression upon his audience at Macroom. The event did not result, of course, in William's immediate acceptance of Quakerism, but may have had some influence in predisposing him towards it. At any rate, it seems that in the years immediately following, Penn experienced several divine "visitations".<sup>1</sup>

During Penn's brief matriculation at Oxford, Loe was preaching in the vicinity of the university, but there is no evidence of a meeting between the two men at this time. Several years were to pass before the paths of the two crossed again. The setting was again Ireland. The year was 1667. Admiral Penn had lost Macroom Castle at the Restoration. A grant of the Shangarry estates had been substituted, but the title was in dispute, so William was sent to Ireland to straighten out matters. At the shop of a Quaker woman in Cork he learned that Thomas Loe, whose preaching had so much impressed him when but an adolescent, was at that very time in the town and would speak at the next meeting, the following day.

Penn attended the meeting. He saw a great change in Loe, for although the latter was but thirty-five years of age, he was already broken in health and had only one more year of life before him. The Quaker preacher chose as the theme of his message, "There is a faith that overcometh the world, and there is a faith that is overcome by the world". As though predetermined, the theme spoke to a young man swimming in the seas of indecision. But let Penn speak for himself.

And in this seeking-state I was directed to the testimony of Jesus in my own conscience, as the true shining Light, giving me to discern the thoughts and intents of my own heart. And no sooner was I turned unto it, but I found it to be that which from my childhood had visited me, though I distinctly knew it not: And when I received it in the love of it, it showed me all that ever I had done . . . judging me as

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<sup>1</sup>Hull, op. cit., 108.

a man in the flesh, and laying judgment to the line . . . And as by the brightness of his coming into my soul, he discovered the man of sin there, upon his throne, so by the breath of his mouth, which is the two-edged sword of his Spirit, He destroyed his power and kingdom. And so having made me a witness of the death of the Cross, he hath also made me a witness of his Resurrection. So that in good measure my soul can now say, I am justified in the Spirit; and though the state of condemnation unto death was glorious, yet justification unto Life was, and is, more glorious.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to estimate, with any psychological accuracy, the exact effect of Loe's preaching on William Penn. It surely was not that of a sudden, unexpected total change of life. Throughout his life, up to this moment, Penn had been a "seeker after truth". His life had given evidence of a search for a faith that would satisfy the inner longings of his soul, for a ministry congenial to his own spirit. But in the course of this search, he seems never to have passed through any stages of harrowing crises which, in the religious history of so many men, precede the final surrender. Rather we are led to agree with Vulliamy that it was "Thomas Loe who led him gently to the final stage and made him a Quaker".<sup>2</sup>

Penn soon gave evidence of his new enthusiasm. His own experience had brought to him the most fundamental and the most important distinctive doctrine of Quakerism, that of the Inner Light. From his first publication, Penn touches upon what he will continue to reiterate in all his theological writings: the sufficiency of the Light Within, that is, of the eternal Christ, for individual guidance to a life leading to salvation; hence the obligation of the Christian to seek perfection by making his life square with his profession; the interference of ecclesiastical tradition and book-learning with the return to the simplicity of primitive Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter, "To the Countess of Falckensteyn and Bruch, at Mulheim", Works, I, 81.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., 52.

As a student of New Testament and Church history, Penn early came to two conclusions: first, that the claim of the infallibility of the Church was a myth, and second, that there was danger in a literal interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. He experienced the need for a more intimate organ of Christian revelation, in order that both Church and Bible might be properly understood and estimated. The same divine spirit which animated Jesus shines in every man and enables him to commune directly with God, the spiritual father of all. This was the supreme lesson of Jesus: to direct men's attention to the true Christ, the Christ Within, for through it they might achieve salvation from sin here and from punishment hereafter. But this would not result in an inward, personal religion alone: the Inner Light in every man made all humanity sacred; hence the social "testimonies" of the Quakers were accepted by him as fully and striven for as ardently as by most of his Quaker contemporaries. "'I am the Light of the World; Ye are the Light of the World:' such were the two halves of the Quaker doctrine as Penn professed and practised it."<sup>1</sup> From this fundamental belief followed others which seem equally novel, untrue, and wicked to Penn's opponents.<sup>2</sup> But in any case, Penn's theology, like that of the Quakers in general, cannot be separated from his ethics; for his religion can scarcely be expressed in any other terms than those of daily conduct. As an expositor and defender of the doctrine of the

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<sup>1</sup>Hull, op. cit., 170.

<sup>2</sup>For example, a mode of worship based on "silence" which enables the Inner Light to function; the substitution of a spiritual baptism in the heart for a water-baptism of the body; a rejection of the outward ceremony of the Lord's Supper; the immortality of the soul, as vital in this life as in the other; these and various other parts of the Quaker religion as expounded and exemplified by Penn all flowed necessarily out of their fundamental belief in the existence, guidance, and inspiration of the Inner Light, the Voice, or the Spirit, or the Christ Within. Ibid., 170 f.

Inner Light, Penn ranks with Fox and Barclay as its champion. But he was a man of a more practical turn of mind, and of his most widely-known work, "No Cross, No Crown", one Quaker historian has said: "The book developed into a general Apologia for Quakerism on the side of its practice, as Barclay's work . . . was on the side of its theory."<sup>1</sup> Penn's work as an apologist is the least known and perhaps the least attractive of his activities. But, as mentioned already, to understand Penn one must understand his religion. His religious writings date almost entirely from the twelve years following his "convincement", before the excessive cares of the world and of his government fell upon his shoulders and led him upon a larger stage. During these years he was also busy travelling, preaching, setting up his own home, and doing time in prison. In spite of other occupations, he found time to write perhaps thirty formal pamphlets and books, in some of which an astonishing amount of the world's best literature is drawn upon.

The line of development to be followed in Penn's exposition of the doctrine of the Inner Light is designed to point up the basic authoritative nature of the Light.

Penn commenced his approach to the question of how wide was the distribution of the Inner Light by reference to the book of Genesis, and reasoned, on the basis of the Scriptural assertion that God "made man in his own image", that because God is light, Adam must necessarily have had the divine light in him. It was the possession of the Light which gave Adam the moral sensibility which resulted in the awareness of the wrong he had committed, and the fact that all men everywhere had this same consciousness of wrong, in a more or less degree, was taken as witnessing to the universal existence of

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Graham, The Faith of a Quaker (Cambridge; University Press, 1920), 127.

the Inner Light. That all men have had some sense of this universal gift Penn sought to prove by copious quotation from the Greek philosophers, ancient authorities, Church Fathers, and many others.<sup>1</sup> He did, however, believe that there were varying conditions imposed upon the operation of the Light. These were imposed by God.

"Penn said that the soul of man was incapable of sensing God, worshipping God, unless God himself first came into man's life. There is no capacity native to man by which he is enabled to seek and worship God. If man "is restless till he rests in God" it is because something of God is agitating his inner self; remove that divinely induced discontent and man would become ignorant and unaware of a sense of incompleteness. Human nature is of such a character that it possesses a possibility and a potentiality for spiritual progress, but it does not lead to an awareness of God, but only to a condition receptive to God."<sup>2</sup>

. . . I would that all should understand what we mean by Revelation, and that is this, That from our conviction of the least evil, to our redemption from it; and all the knowledge we have of God, his way, and good pleasure towards us, throughout the whole exercise of our religious life; we ascribe our knowledge and instruction to no other thing than the discoveries or revelation of the Spirit of God in our hearts: But this not in a moment, but gradually, through our obedience to what we know of him.<sup>3</sup>

Thus all revelation is continuing and progressive, as man is able to comprehend it. It concerns the discovery and illumination of the Light and Spirit of God "relating to those things that properly and immediately concern the daily information and satisfaction of our souls in the way of our duty to

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, "The Spirit of Truth Vindicated", Works, II, 93 - 151; "The Advice of William Penn to His Children", Works, I, 911.

<sup>3</sup> "A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Harry B. Miner, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "The Doctrine of the Inner Light" (Edinburgh: New College, University of Edinburgh, 1935), 147.

Him and our neighbor."<sup>1</sup>

. . . as without holiness none can see God, so without subjection to that Spirit, Light, or grace in the heart, which God in love hath made to appear to all, . . . there is no attaining to that holiness which will give thee an entrance into His presence, in which is joy and pleasure forever.<sup>2</sup>

One may anticipate, then, the application of such a conception of inward, universal Light, to all areas of life. The constant standard of truth and goodness is God in the conscience. Liberty of conscience is therefore the most sacred right, the only avenue to religion. To restrain it is an invasion of the divine prerogative. It robs man of the use of the instinct of a Deity. To take away the great charter of freedom of conscience is to prevent the progress of society; or rather, as the beneficent course of Providence cannot be checked, it is in men of the present generation but knotting a whipcord to lash their own posterity. The Inner Light is the revelation of truth, the guide of life, and the oracle of duty.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 48. For other passages dealing with the universal nature of the Light, and its identification with God, see "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", Works, I, 450 f.; "The Advice of William Penn to His Children", Works, I, 893 f.; "The Guide Mistaken, and Temporising Rebuked", Works, II, 11, 18; "Wisdom Justified of Her Children", Works, II, 489 - 491; "Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 502; "The Counterfeit Christian Detected", Works, II, 579 f., 583 f.; "A Key, opening the Way to Every Capacity", Works, II, 779 - 781; "Primitive Christianity Revived", Works, II, 855 - 858, 861 - 867.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to a Friend, dated the 10th of the 5th month, 1668, Works, I, 5. For notations on the calendar system of the Quakers, see Comfort, Remember William Penn, 163. On this "saving" function of the Light, see "The Spirit of Truth Vindicated", Works, II, 91 - 110, 112 - 128; and "Letter to the King of Poland", Works, I, 56; "Tender Counsel and Advice", Works, I, 198; "Truth Exalted", Works, I, 246; "The Advice of William Penn to his Children", Works, I, 893; "A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers", Works, I, 892; "Plain-Dealing with a Traducing Anabaptist", Works, II, 184; "Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 502 f.; "The Counterfeit Christian Detected", Works, II, 582; "A Key, opening the Way to Every Capacity", Works, II, 779 - 781; "Primitive Christianity Revived", Works, II, 858 - 861.

### A Series of Insights into the Resulting Truth

We indicated earlier in this work that religion is the key to the understanding of William Penn. He was by no means a theologian. Yet as an active exponent of his new faith, Penn could not help but become involved in doctrinal discussion. In the course of his life as a Quaker he was thus led to formulate certain basic theological implications resulting from the emphasis laid on the Inner Light. The truth which he discovered in his own experience provided Penn with a series of insights into the relation of the doctrine of the Inner Light with other basic affirmations of the Christian faith. In order to appreciate fully Penn's understanding of the Light one must see it in the context of these relations.

#### 1. The Inner Light and Scripture

The Bible was the religion of the Protestants; had the Quakers a better guide? What was the exact nature of the authority of Scripture? How best could the charges made against the Quakers by their opponents be answered? At this point Penn turns his attention to the battleground upon which was being waged the controversy over the relationship between the Inner Light and Holy Scripture.

He reaffirms the high value which the Quakers place on Scripture, but points out that they believe the things contained therein not simply because the things are there, but rather "for that we are witnesses of the same operation, and bring in our experimental testimonies to confirm the truth of theirs . . . ." <sup>1</sup> He attacks those who would make of the writers of Scripture mere "penmen" in the hand of God, purely passive to the revelation, will and

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<sup>1</sup>"The Christian Quaker and His Divine Testimony", Works, I, 590.

motion of the Spirit. Nor is any great formal learning necessary for the true understanding of the Word of God. The development of priests and so-called "teachers of Scripture" has only hopelessly confused the main issues.<sup>1</sup>

And truly, when we consider the smallness of the writings of the evangelists, the shortness of Christ's sermons, the fewness of the epistles written by the apostles, and the many and great volumes of commentators and critics since, we may justly say, the text is almost lost in the comment, and truth hid rather than revealed in those heaps of fallible apprehensions.<sup>2</sup>

Penn, losing himself somewhat in terminology, defines the Quaker understanding of Scripture as "the words of the Word, a declaration of the great law, word, or commandment, but not that law, word, or commandment".<sup>3</sup>

I do declare to the whole world, that we believe the Scriptures to contain a declaration of the mind and will of God, in and to those ages in which they were written, being given forth by the Holy Ghost, moving in the hearts of holy men of God; that they ought also to be believed, read and fulfilled in our day, being useful for reproof and instruction, that the man of God may be perfect: and they have been, and are instrumental to great good upon the spirits of people, by the secret power of God, which often strikes and presses home to the very conscience, the weighty truths declared therein; yet we do deny them to be the Word of God, ascribing that alone to Christ Himself, and that not without Scripture and reason.<sup>4</sup>

This Quaker understanding of the definition of Scripture brings Penn to point out that it is not the truth of the Scriptures which is in question, but the necessity of making them ours by a process of assimilation under personal guidance. One must live the Scriptures, not just give intellectual assent to them. Of what real use are the Scriptures as we now have them?

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<sup>1</sup>"A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 56; "An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 748 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 749.

<sup>3</sup>"Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity"; Works, II, 237.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., (underlining mine).

Nor would we be thought to lessen the virtue, use, and reputation of the Holy Scriptures, whilst we endeavor the vindication of the Holy Spirit, in his office of revelation to believers.

They are useful in two eminent respects.

First, historically, as giving us a true narrative of the transactions of those ages of the world, in reference to the Church or State of both Jews and Christians, their trials, troubles, temptations, lapses, recoveries, and perfect victories.

Secondly, doctrinally, as presenting us with a true account of the principles and doctrines of the people of God, their holy faith and patience; I cannot phrase it better than a divine glass, in which we see (I say WE SEE) who first have that heavenly organ and eye opened by inspiration and revelation, the states and conditions of the primitive saints; which is matter of unspeakable comfort and confirmation, as well as of good example to us; yet still, the efficient cause of all is the convincing revelation and operation of the Eternal Spirit of God; and the Scriptures are only useful as unfolded by the inspiration of the same.<sup>1</sup>

This in no way lessens the authority of Scripture, but rather corrects the mistakes of those who thought of them beyond what they really are. Their authority, Penn asserts, is grounded upon the living Word of God, and whoever comes to this conclusion honours the Scriptures aright.

We do receive and believe the Scriptures given forth by holy men of God as they were moved of the Holy Ghost, and that they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness; yet since they are writings relating to the things of God, no man can understand them, or have an assured testimony of them, but by the Spirit of God . . . which alone reveals the deep things of God . . .<sup>2</sup>

How such an understanding approaches the interpretation of Scripture as a rule of faith and life, Penn was not slow to answer. As the Scriptures are not the Word of God, but a declaration of the Word of God, so the Scriptures are not the general rule, but a declaration of the true general rule. "A" rule and "the" rule are two different things. By "the" rule of faith and practice Penn understands the living, spiritual, immediate, omnipresent, discovering, ordering spirit of God; and by "a" rule he apprehends

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<sup>1</sup>"A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 37.

<sup>2</sup>"The Counterfeit Christian Detected", Works, II, 594; cf. "Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 239.

some instrument by and through which this great and universal rule may convey its directions. He will admit that several parts of Scripture are such a subordinate, secondary and declaratory rule, but even here, the reason for obedience is because they are the eternal precepts of the Spirit in men's consciences, there repeated and declared. It is the testimony of the Spirit which is the true rule for believing and understanding of the Scripture; therefore not the Scripture but the Spirit of Truth must be the Rule for our believing and understanding them. As faith and experience were before Scripture, and as there must be a rule and judge before faith, therefore the Scripture is not that rule or judge. Wherefore the Scriptures are so far "from being the great rule of faith and practice, that the Light of Christ within us is both our warrant and rule for faith in and obedience to them."<sup>1</sup>

This brings Penn to the task of answering the charges of his opponents that such a view leads the Quakers to equal their sayings and writings to the Scriptures, indeed, to prefer them before the Scriptures. This charge he declares a "foolish inference". "Truth was and is Truth all the world over, and there was and is but one way to come to it in all ages, I mean inspiration. The Scriptures are true and our writings are true; but will it therefore follow that we bring them upon a vie?"<sup>2</sup> For men not spiritual to judge of religious and spiritual matters, much less to write of them is vain and idolatrous. In short, no man can understand spiritual things but the spiritually discerning; none can so be without the inspiration of the Almighty, or Spirit

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<sup>1</sup>For a consideration of this problem of Scripture as a rule of faith and practice, see: "A Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Practice", Works, I, 591 ff., especially 607 f.; "Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 247 - 250; "Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 507 f., 515 - 517; "The Real Quaker Justified", Works, II, 589 - 595, especially 591, 594.

<sup>2</sup>"Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 242; cf. also, "The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication", Works, II, 323 - 378, especially 324, 327; "A Testimony to the Truth of God", Works, II, 878.

of God.<sup>1</sup>

Men are apt to think that if they have the Scriptures they have all. Such persons account the Scriptures as the only Word of God and so look no further. Therefore, the Quakers feel themselves constrained and, they believe, by God's good Spirit, once again to point people to "the great Word of Words, Christ Jesus, in whom is life and that life the Light of men".<sup>2</sup> In so doing, men might "feel something nearer to them than the Scriptures, to wit, the Word in the heart, from which all Holy Scripture came, which is Christ within them, the Hope of their glory."<sup>3</sup>

In such manner Penn defends the Quakers from the common charge of disparagement of the Scriptures. To regard the Scriptures as a permanent blueprint for a Church, or as the unique revelation of the divine will, is against every Quaker interpretation of the Scriptures themselves.

Nevertheless, Penn asserts that the authority of the Scriptures is subordinate only to the authority of the Spirit which inspired their authors. It seems to the Quakers to be axiomatic that whatever writings were by inspiration are of less value than the Spirit that gave them forth. To seek the revelation of the Holy Spirit in their understanding of the Scriptures and of their daily duty was and is the purpose of the Quakers both in their community worship and in their private devotions. If the Holy Ghost had left doubts in Scripture, "which is yet irreverent to believe, I see not how men

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<sup>1</sup>"The New Athenians no Noble Bereans", Works, II, 800. Harry B. Miner, in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "The Doctrine of the Inner Light" (Edinburgh: New College, University of Edinburgh, 1935), 181 - 183, comes to a conclusion depicting Penn's view of Scripture as far more depreciative than the present writer has indicated.

<sup>2</sup>"A Key, opening the Way to Every Capacity", Works, II, 782.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

can resolve them; it is the work of that Spirit."<sup>1</sup> If a man is led by the Spirit of God, then he is a son of God. Let this be sufficient to vindicate his sense of a true and unerring rule, not in a way of derogation from Holy Scripture, but as the rule for understanding them. Verily, of the Quakers, Penn declares, "no society of professed Christians in the world can have a more reverent and honorable esteem for them than we have."<sup>2</sup>

The Scriptures, particularly the New Testament, are concerned largely with the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. What was the nature of this revelation? How are the divine Christ and the human Jesus related to the doctrine of the Inner Light? We are now prepared to examine how these issues came to a head in the thought of William Penn.

## 2. The Inner Light and Jesus Christ

The fear lest he and his fellows might suffer from the terrible punishment of being called non-Christian - as indeed many of them were already being punished - led Penn to attempt definitions of this article of his faith. He declared, "It is not our way of speaking to say the Light within is the Rule of the Christian religion; but that the Light of Christ within us is the Rule of true Christians, so that it is not our Light but Christ's Light that is our Rule."<sup>3</sup> What formed the context of such a statement?

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<sup>1</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 747.

<sup>2</sup>"A Testimony to the Truth of God", Works, II, 878. For a convenient summary of other Penn quotations on the subject of the Holy Scriptures, see Thomas Evans, An Exposition of the Faith of the Religious Society of Friends (2nd edition; Philadelphia: Kimber and Sharpless, 1828), 252 - 257. Cf. also "Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 260 - 264; and "The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication", Works, II, 362 - 374, - both of these selections dealing with the subject of the Holy Spirit and Scripture.

<sup>3</sup>"A Reply to a Pretended Answer", Works, II, 812. For some rather generalised statements of the Quaker point of view, see such sources as

Primarily, as has been noticed, Penn believed in the reality and immanence of God in the human soul. However, because of the immature spiritual condition of the Jewish people, God could not make the approach that the gospel Jesus declared made to later generations. Rather, the truth of that appeal was expressed in a more attractive form, for the Jewish people, in "types and prophecies". The advent of Jesus in the flesh gave new character to the Light, so that those living before the time of Jesus, or without knowledge of Him, were not in such a privileged position as the Christians.

In approaching Penn's understanding of the relationship which existed between the Inner Light and Jesus Christ, we must make clear at the outset our mode of procedure. The first thing which strikes the reader of those sections of Penn's writings which deal with this relationship is the apparent confusion inherent in Penn's own mind regarding the subject. This does not mean that Penn was without constructive suggestions. It does mean, however, that behind the richness of his imagery and terminology there existed certain presuppositions not always clearly observable to the eye. These presuppositions, the present writer believes, were basically neo-platonic in character. Penn recognised the kinship of Christianity and the findings or aspirations of Greek philosophy. He was fond of stressing the parallelism which the Greek

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Edward Grubb, Authority in Religion (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1924), 90 ff.; Edward Grubb, Authority and the Light Within (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1908), 46 f., 120 - 126; Edward Grubb, What is Quakerism? (London: Headley Bros., 1917), 126 - 130. On p. 128 of this latter work Grubb makes the interesting observation that the principle of the Inner Light means that in every self-conscious person there is at work the "Oversoul" - a "Consciousness greater than his own". This neoplatic interpretation is very evident in Quaker writings. Cf. also Howard Brinton, Friends for 300 Years (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 18 ff., for the views of Fox and Barclay in this connection; and 39 - 41. The present writer, however, cannot agree with the statement of Brinton that the problem of how the divine nature and the human nature of Jesus can exist together in a single person "did not trouble the early generations of the Society of Friends", p. 39.

Fathers drew between their new faith and their old philosophy. But unlike the Greek Fathers, Penn generally ignored the differences between Christianity and Greek philosophy of which the early Church was equally conscious.

If, as we hope to make clear, these neoplatonic assumptions were dominant in Penn's reflections on the relationship between the Light and Christ, this necessarily led to certain Christological problems - and much confusion. For example, there was a difficulty in apprehending the relation between the Light and the Trinity. Again, there was confusion on the relation between the Light of Christ within, and the Christ of history. If Christ was Logos from the beginning, in all men from Adam, was it necessary for the Christ to be incarnate in Jesus? What exactly were the functions of Jesus Christ in relation to the Light? To these problems Penn gave a great deal of thought and expression.

To get as near as possible to Penn's exact meaning, a three-fold approach will be employed. To begin with, we shall examine his views on the meaning of the Trinity. This then leads us to a consideration of the person and nature of Christ. And, finally, we shall turn to an examination of the offices and functions of Jesus Christ in relation to the doctrine of the Inner Light. In each instance we shall try to reconstruct the likely evolution of William Penn's apprehension of Christianity, and show how his suggestions were in line with some of his presuppositions. At the same time, this should enable us to discover reasons for his apparent confusion.

As was pointed out at the conclusion of Chapter II, the Quaker position on the Light raised a number of problems, not the least of which was that of the Trinity. Penn was accused of attacking the doctrine of the Trinity in his "The Sandy Foundation Shaken" and of defending the doctrine in his "Innocency with her Open Face". Throughout thirty years of exegesis, and thereafter, Penn and the Quakers were classed as Unitarians and Socinians because they would not acknowledge "one Godhead subsisting in three distinct and separate persons".

Penn contended that there was no foundation for the Trinity in Scripture (which is a matter for debate), the word never even being use in them (which is true); that the doctrine of the Trinity was first advanced in the Athanasian creed three centuries after Christ (which is not true); that the doctrine occasions idolatry in the Roman Church, and is a source of scandal to the Jews and Turks.<sup>1</sup> To "divide" the Godhead in the manner to which the Church had become accustomed was but a bowing to "men's invention".<sup>2</sup>

In "Innocency with her Open Face" Penn asserts the unity of Christ with God. In affirming the unity of Christ and God he would deny their separateness. Penn must also find the unity between God and man before he can account for Christ as one with both. If the separateness of God and man is affirmed, then the separateness of God and Christ follows, for Christ was clearly man, in the completest sense. According to Penn, the admission of the unity within the Godhead must never be understood as a confession of the separateness "between three persons".

In another work Penn declares, in answer to Jonathan Clapham's charge that the Quakers openly deny the doctrine of the Trinity: "Yet if by Trinity he understands those three witness<sup>es</sup> in heaven, Father, Word and Spirit, he should better have acquainted himself with what we disown, than ignorantly thus to blaze abroad our open denial of what we most absolutely credit and believe".<sup>3</sup> Penn acknowledges his own adherence to Scriptural phrases and terms, avoiding the fallacy of the usage to which the "school-men" are forced in describing

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<sup>1</sup>"The Sandy Foundation Shaken", Works, I, 264. Said Pepys of this work, "I got my wife to read it to me; and I find it so well writ as, I think, is too good for him ever to have writ it; and it is a serious sort of book, and not fit for everybody to read". Diary, III (5th ed.; London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854), 101.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"The Guide Mistaken, and Temporising Rebuked", Works, II, 18.

Scriptural truths,<sup>1</sup> and in an interesting paragraph, summarises his understanding of the three Persons:

To conclude this brief account, I am constrained, for the sake of the simple hearted, to publish to the world, of our faith in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

We do believe in one, only, holy God Almighty, who is an eternal Spirit, the Creator of all things.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only Son, and express image of his substance; who took upon him flesh, and was in the world; and in life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension and mediation, perfectly did, and does continue to do, the will of God; to whose holy life, power, mediation, blood, we only ascribe our sanctification, justification, redemption, and perfect salvation.

And we believe in one Holy Spirit, that proceeds and breathes from the Father and the Son, as the life and virtue of both the Father and the Son; a measure of which is given to all to profit with; and he that has one has all, for those Three are One, who is the Alpha and Omega - the First and the Last, God over all, blessed forever. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

It perhaps would not be too presumptuous of the modern reader to inquire of Penn, "What does all this really mean"? In his adherence to Scriptural terminology, Penn tried to protect himself against the charge of being non-Christian. But in his use of the terms and phrases of Scripture, he was unable to formulate any clear-cut understanding of the concept which is involved in the very word "Trinity". The underlying "unity" demanded by his neo-platonic presuppositions would not permit him to go further than merely making assertions such as we have just indicated.

Penn's Christology followed from his Trinitarian doctrine. As a prelude to this, Penn felt obligated to develop his views on what came to be known as "Gentile-Divinity". This obligation stemmed from the charge that the Quakers threatened to destroy the unique saving-function of Jesus Christ. The Quaker apologist attempted to protect himself and his friends against this

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<sup>1</sup>"A Key, opening the Way to Every Capacity", Works, II, 783, and "A Testimony to the Truth of God", Works, II, 879.

<sup>2</sup>"A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 66 f. Cf. W. W. Comfort, William Penn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944) 79.

charge, and at the same time he hoped to escape from the barriers which seventeenth century divines had reared against the possibility of the salvation of the heathen.

"Gentile-Divinity" was the concept that God had afforded His people in all ages such a measure of His eternal Spirit as has been sufficient to inform, rule, and guide them infallibly in and about those things which are absolutely necessary to be known or done unto eternal life. In his "The Spirit of Truth Vindicated", Penn takes almost eighteen pages to prove that this concept is so, drawing mainly from the words of Christ and St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> Penn is claiming that some measure of the Light of Christ, a truly saving Light, had been vouchsafed to the Gentiles before Christ's coming. The presence of this Light is evidenced by their arriving at certain fundamental truths of religion and morality.

Presumably what is meant is that those who obey the measure of Light vouchsafed to them will find it sufficient for their personal salvation. But it may be taken to mean that the truths revealed apart from the historic Christ - for example, general truths of morality common to almost all religions - are the essential truths of all religion for all time. If this latter interpretation is correct, then this Gentile-Divinity is sufficient for the salvation of all men, without any further revelation through Christ. It is doubtful if Penn realised that this latter interpretation was the one most likely to follow any adoption of his views on "Gentile-Divinity". According to Penn, the body or holy manhood of Christ is the instrument whereby the divine life reveals itself to vulgar capacities, to men who are "outward and abroad". In effect, it was the indirect and ultimate purpose of the external observances

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<sup>1</sup>Works, II, 96 - 110.

enjoined on the Jews and the direct and immediate purpose of Christ's coming in the outward, in historic actuality, to make man's relation to God inward and personal. But is this not pressing the distinction between "inward" and "outward" too hard? One can heartily agree with the statement: "Then it must be confessed that Penn's outline of Gentile Divinity bears an eclectic and artificial character".<sup>1</sup> What Penn lacked was an adequate conception of the history of salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Having asserted this preliminary defence on behalf of the Quakers against the charge of minimising the saving function of Christ, Penn moved on to a direct consideration of the person of Christ. Here he fell back, as he usually did, on Scriptural expression. And here, too, one may detect the presuppositions which lay behind his thought. Penn thought that Christ was perhaps best represented by the sun of the physical world, and from him radiated beams of Light which, not only dispelled the darkness, but also exerted certain influences. As we are subject to and led by the Light, we receive a "holy power". In addition to the sun analogy, Christ is also referred to as "the Spirit of Jesus",<sup>3</sup> "the great prophet of God in you",<sup>4</sup> "a Light to the Gentiles and a Leader to the people",<sup>5</sup> "the SON, the substance . . . without beauty, without ornament, and without any external excellency",<sup>6</sup> "the Spiritual Moses",<sup>7</sup> the people's Light, Guide, King, Law-giver, Bishop and Heavenly Shepherd.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Children of Light, ed. H. H. Brinton (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), I. "William Penn's Christian Quaker", by Herbert G. Wood, 21. The present writer is indebted to Mr. Wood for this whole chapter.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>3</sup>"To all those Professors of Christianity", Works, I, 209.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 210. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., 211. <sup>6</sup>Ibid., 212. <sup>7</sup>Ibid., 214. <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 219.

Really to understand the person of Christ, of course, Penn was compelled to open the question of the historical Jesus and the Christ of God, and with this problem Penn wrestles in a section of "The Christian Quaker".<sup>1</sup> From the outset, he appears to be in troubled waters. For Penn, Christ's appearance was of two different types. One was a pre-incarnation manifestation, and the other an incarnation and post-incarnation one. For those who lived before the time of the incarnation, to know Christ as the Inner Light was to know Him as was then fully possible. For those who lived during the time of the incarnation, and ever after, it became fully necessary, if one were to take advantage of every spiritual possibility, to know both the Inner Light of all time and the Christ who appeared in the flesh. Penn thought that by a correct understanding of these two "types" of Christ's appearing one could not confuse what was possible before the Incarnation with what became possible after it. For example, this would account for the difficulty of prophesying the advent of Jesus when already the Inner Light was universally bestowed.<sup>2</sup>

Penn felt that much of the problem concerning the relationship between the Light and the historical Christ was often that of language, the difficulty of expressing clearly the difference in character between the external spiritual factor in man's experience of God, and the relationship of that with the facts of the Incarnation. Often the same Christ, Penn charged, was used by the Church indiscriminately of the two aspects of the question at issue. While the present writer cannot but admire Penn's desire and efforts to provide a clarification over the matter of the Eternal Logos and the historical Christ, here again the implication is strong that, for Penn, the gift of the Light before

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, chaps. xiv - xix, 565 - 584.

<sup>2</sup>See Miner, *op. cit.*, 155f.

Christ's appearance in Jesus was in the nature of an "emanation" from a more or less indistinct centre of divine power. In Jesus Christ, then, all the influences represented in those emanations and the power resident in the original source were gathered together and given clearer definition and purpose. Once again, it appears to this observer, that Penn's neo-platonic assumptions hindered rather than helped him in his task.

That this question of the person of Christ was important, we have already indicated in our reference to the fact that Penn early was led to defend the Quakers against the charge of diluting the saving-function of our Lord. The seventeenth century mind was dominated by the fear of eternal damnation. The salvation of the soul of the individual sinner from eternal torment was regarded by men of that time as the summum bonum; hence the supreme importance of the metaphysical question of Christ's character and function. It outraged Penn that Calvinistic predestinarians should suppose God capable of condemning men to eternal misery while withholding from them the Light needed for salvation. Penn asserted repeatedly his belief in the "divinity of Christ" and in the "unity of Christ and God"; but did this mean that Jesus was wholly divine (was He God) or was He partly divine and partly human (like all other mortals, though neither divine or human to the same "degree")? Did it mean, also, that Jesus was divine, like "that of God" within every man, and that Jesus or the Historic Christ was the same as the Christ Within?

Penn attempts to answer these questions. In order to make clear the relationship between Christ and God he forthrightly declares: "And if Christ be all and in all, and He that is all and in all be the true and living God, then because Christ is all and in all, Christ is the true and living God".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The Spirit of Truth Vindicated", Works, II, 137.

Lest his readers be mistaken on this identification of the Christ with God, Penn uses what amounts to a creedal confession:

And now I will tell thee my faith in this matter: I do heartily believe that Jesus Christ is the only true and everlasting God, by whom all things were made, that are made, in the heavens above or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth; that He is as omnipotent, so omniscient and omnipresent, therefore God.<sup>1</sup>

Following upon his identification of Christ with God, Penn proceeds to make clear that the Light which shines in the heart of mankind is Christ, "though we do not say that every particular illumination is the entire Christ, for so there would be as many Christs as there are men, which were absurd and blasphemous."<sup>2</sup> Yet Penn only confuses the issue when, in another place, he makes this statement:

I deny, in the name of all that abused people, that we ever owned or professed the Light within every man to be God; though we say it is of God; . . . . Wherefore we utterly deny that the manifestation in man, strictly considered, is the most high God, but a manifestation of or from God, by the inshinings of His blessed Light.<sup>3</sup>

Once more, Penn's neo-platonic presuppositions cause him to falter in his Christological construction. Christ was God; the Light is Christ; but the Light is not God, rather "of" God or "from" God. In vain do we search for a way out of the predicament into which Penn's thought has carried us. More hopefully do we turn to examine what Penn had to say about the earthly life of Jesus.

The physical life of Jesus, as Penn sees it, was of secondary importance - a concession to the nature and frailty of mankind. The historical Jesus served, as it were, as the "housing" for the essentially spiritual nature of

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<sup>1</sup>"Letter to John Collenges", Works, I, 165.

<sup>2</sup>"The Christian Quaker", Works, I, 569 (underlining mine).

<sup>3</sup>"Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 295 (underlining mine).

Christ. This "housing" was crucified through the evil will of mankind. In this sense the body of our Lord became a most precious offering in God's sight, and drew God's love the more eminently unto mankind.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of the recipient of the influences emanating from the eternal Christ often determined their extent and character. But Christ, as the eternal Logos, being present in mankind from the beginning, suffered the evil existent in the world from the creation. When His spirit suffered in the crucifixion, it could rightly be said that He carried "the sins of the whole world" because He had hitherto endured the universal sin of mankind. Adam, by refusing at the very beginning to obey the Inner Light, gave an impetus to those forces of human nature which constantly through the years placed the Inner Light under disadvantages. "The physical crucifixion of Jesus, as an external event in time, did not exercise a retroactive influence, but because of mankind's continuous rejection of the Light it could be said that the Light suffered the experience of crucifixion from the very beginning."<sup>2</sup>

Penn followed Barclay in believing that the Inner Light was a moral reprover that continued, undiminished in its power, through all the aberrations of moral delinquency. This view of the continuance of a vital religious principle entailed a theory of the duality of man's essential nature. The ordinary interests of life were allied to the operation of carnal faculties and these could be opposed to the divine life and principles of the "Holy Jesus".<sup>3</sup> "Penn also implied no essential difference between the influence of

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<sup>1</sup>"Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 506. Cf. also the sources listed in Thomas Evans, op. cit., 77 - 94, with references to Works, I, 268 - 270, 569; II, 136 - 139, 295, 645, 780, 817, 824 f., 885, 894. Also, "Letter to Dr. Hasbert", Works, I, 155; "Letter to John Collenges", Works, I, 164 - 167; "A Tender Visitation", Works, I, 219; "Truth Rescued from Imposture", Works, I, 491 f.; "A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers", Works, I, 892; "The Guide Mistaken, and Temporising Rebuked", Works, II, 11; "A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 65 ff.; "A Testimony to the Truth of God", Works, II, 876 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Miner, op. cit., 155.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 171.

the immanent spiritual condition of man before Jesus and the power to change men introduced into life by the crucifixion."<sup>1</sup> His first attack on the old theology included a denial of the impossibility of God's pardoning a sinner without a plenary satisfaction by Jesus Christ, and the justification of a sinner by faith alone. While Penn included in his definition of salvation the avoidance of punishment hereafter, he laid chief stress on the avoidance of sin here and now; and he denied that Christ's "propitiation" would suffice without repentance and atonement on the part of the sinner himself. He believed, apparently, that neither would suffice in itself, but were sufficient when united. To this doctrine he adhered throughout his writings, and made a very detailed and cogent exposition of it in "Primitive Christianity Revived". In this work, he owned Christ as sacrificer and mediator for the individual from the guilt of sin, but insisted that the individual must free himself from the power and pollution of sin.<sup>2</sup>

The whole end of the holy life of Christ was to draw the minds of men more inward, to a manifestation of that same life. In such a view the Quakers thought they had found in the eternal Christ a spiritual dynamic for present life. Indeed, the work Christ had to do was twofold: to remit, forgive, or justify from the imputation of sin past, all such as truly repented, believed and obeyed Him; secondly, by His power and Spirit operating in the hearts of such to destroy and remove the very ground and nature of sin, whereby to make an end of sin, and finish transgression present and to come. The first removes the guilt, the second the very cause of it. Thus Christ the Son did not die to "satisfy" an exacting Father, but in order that man, by dying to sin through his grace, might live to a salvation. Men must be saved not in, but from sin.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>2</sup> Hull, *op. cit.*, 169 f.

In this sense, that is, in believing in the call to strive for perfection in this life, the Quakers may be called perfectionists.<sup>1</sup>

So sin becomes equated with the darkness of men's minds before the Christian revelation, and to be translated from the latter and cleansed from the former are in many ways equivalent. The essential difference was one of emphasis: "what had always been possible was in the crucifixion of Jesus made so vivid that ever afterwards men could see in that supreme witness to a continuing fact something analagous to the fact itself."<sup>2</sup> However, as has been pointed out, while making salvation as extensive in time as the bestowal of the Light, Penn yet gave a significance to the fact of the crucifixion itself. "Those who knew the Gospel story had a greater responsibility in rejecting it, for it was an added witness to the Light which was available - the outward Christ made an added appeal to the Christ manifest within the Light."<sup>3</sup> The rejection of the belief that Christ had come in the flesh was so intimately bound up with the belief in the Light that to reject one was to reject the other. It was the Inner Light that saved. In accepting the authority of the Light to the degree necessary for salvation, there is produced a spiritual condition, which creates in turn the obligation on the part of the individual to accept the facts of the outward life and work of Jesus, if those facts became known. Hence the "cross" to which Penn appeals is in reality a figure of speech denoting the struggle within between the Light and the self. It is within a man that the lusts are to be crucified. The way to the cross is spiritual: the denial of self. Penn gives an emphasis to the objective fact of the crucifixion only in so far as it becomes a type of this other, spiritual

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<sup>1</sup>William W. Comfort, William Penn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 86 f. Cf. Graham, op. cit., 123 - 125.

<sup>2</sup> Miner, op. cit., 178.      <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 179.

cross.<sup>1</sup>

Understood in such a way, the Inner Light becomes the medium of Christ. Emphasis was laid upon the paramount position of the Inner Light in the spiritual history of mankind from the very beginning, a position and authority which the crucifixion and revelation of Jesus did not essentially affect.

As was true in the case of George Fox, we may sense here the example of one who uses inherited biblical and theological terminology without fully co-ordinating it with his other thought. We lose sight of the historical meaning of the Incarnate Lord and are confronted with a rather confused understanding of the authority of Christ in relation to the doctrine of the Inner Light.<sup>2</sup> The uncertainty of this position may be seen further as we turn now to a consideration of Penn's thoughts concerning the relation of the Light to reason and conscience.

### 3. The Inner Light and Reason or Conscience

We need to qualify immediately the distinction here made between "reason" and "conscience". The former refers to the power in man by which he recognises anything as true, whether in the domain of fact or in that of beauty or worth. The latter term stands for the perception of the difference between right and wrong, and the conviction that it is always our duty to

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<sup>1</sup>"No Cross, No Crown", Works, I, 272 - 437; Miner, op. cit., 179.

<sup>2</sup>For further information on the offices and functions of Jesus Christ see Thomas Evans, op. cit., 77 - 94. the page references to Works, I, 577, 762; II, 19, 66, 165, 311, 411, 420, 670, 867, 877, 880 f., 885, 891. Cf. also, "A Tender Visitation", Works, I, 216, 218; "The Sandy Foundation Shaken", Works, I, 255 - 264; "The Christian Quaker", Works, I, 523 - 531, 573 ff., 584 - 590; "A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers", Works, I, 892; "Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 289; "Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 517 - 520; "A Brief Answer to a False and Foolish Libel", Works, II, 670; and, "A Key, opening the Way to Every Capacity", Works, II, 784 f.

follow the right and avoid the wrong.<sup>1</sup> In the case of both reason and conscience it is the Light which has enlightened these faculties and brought mankind along the path of truth and goodness.

It is to be recognised that the principle of authority, especially in religion, has often been brought into sharp contrast with reason, and it has been supposed that they are essentially opposed to one another. Yet it is at the same time questionable whether anyone does service to religion or its authority by presenting it as irrational. Penn does not appear to have been troubled with this problem of reason in religion. He seems to have had a "normal" view of the place and purpose of the intellect in man. For him, "convincement" was an impression upon the understanding which helps the individual if his mind is seriously stayed thereon.<sup>2</sup>

Reason gives us our judgments about truth and error. Reason must start with certain premises which it does not itself produce. If these premises are bad and are carried to their logical conclusions, the worst evils result. An enlightened reason, as contrasted with a darkened one, will start with the right premises, and the Light itself, being the Truth, will guide reason into further truth.

A great deal is said by Penn about the inability of reason to reach religious truths unless the Light, or the Scriptures or other writings inspired by the Light, furnish it with the right premises on which to work. In his "Defence of the Duke of Buckingham's Book of Religion and Worship", Penn declares: "Nor do I think a man can have any reason to render for his religion, that receives his religion without the suffrage of his own reason."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Grubb, What is Quakerism?, 38 - 41; cf. Grubb, Authority in Religion, 20.

<sup>2</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 794.

<sup>3</sup>Works, II, 717.

Further, "in religion authority concludes minors; but conviction determines men".<sup>1</sup> And such conviction comes from the guiding of the Inner Light.

Human authority preferred above reason and truth Penn declares a "great ecclesiastical evil".<sup>2</sup> When opinions are made articles of faith, that is, the constructions and conclusions of men from sacred writ and not the text under the guidance of the Inner Light; when such constructions have been enjoined and imposed as essential to eternal salvation and external Christian communion - then such authors may be said to either rest upon authority of their own judgment or conform themselves to the examples of ages less pure and clear. The prevalence of dependence upon human authority can be seen in the great power and sway of the clergy, and the people's reliance upon them for the knowledge of religion and the way of life and salvation.

As we shall see more clearly in the next section, to Penn an imposing Church bears witness to herself, and will be both party and judge. She requires assent without evidence, and faith without proof: therefore false. "Christian religion ought to be carried on only by that way by which it was introduced: which was persuasion. . . . And this is the glory of it: that it does not destroy, but fairly conquer the understanding."<sup>3</sup> Religion and reason are thus seen to be so consistent, that religion can neither be understood nor maintained without reason.<sup>4</sup> If reason must be laid aside, a man is so far from being infallibly assured of his salvation that he is not capable of any measure or distinction of good from evil, truth from falsehood. The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 773.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 777. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 778.

Inner Light at work in the soul of man will deliver him from doubt and uncertainty when such occasions should arise.

The Inner Light, as with respect to reason, is not to be identified with conscience. Conscience is not the Light in its fullness, but the measure of Light given us. The Light illumines conscience and seeks to transform an impure conscience into its own pure likeness. Conscience is partly a product of the Light which shines into it and partly a product of social environment. Therefore conscience is fallible. But conscience must always be obeyed because it reflects whatever measure of Light we have by which to form our moral judgments. This measure of Light in the conscience may be increased; as this occurs conscience becomes more sensitive to moral truth.

Conscience, in the best sense of the word, has ever been allowed to be a bond upon men in all religions: but that religion, whoever holds it, which under pretence of authority, would supercede conscience, and instead of making men better, the end of religion, make them worse by confounding all sense and distinction between good and evil, and resolving all into an implicit faith and blind obedience unto the commands of a visible guide and judge, is false; it cannot be otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

The element of "faith" enters in. The Quaker, on faith, accepts the guiding principle of the Inner Light; it is not passive, blind submission to, or acceptance of, any external authority, however it may hold claim to be divinely certified. It is rather the open response to the inward authority with which God speaks to man. No action of mere man can "declare" faith. The Inner Light was not subject to the dictates of men, whether they came in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 793 f., Miner, in his thesis, op. cit., 160, holds that Penn calls the Inner Light simply the "just principle in your own conscience", and consequently does not differentiate between conscience and the Light. Quite the contrary seems Penn's real statement of the case. The Inner Light is something far more inclusive than any meaning to be applied to the term "conscience". Miner does, however, go on to say that all men had a moral sensibility of various degrees, and that its degree depended upon one's sensitiveness to the Light; that the universality of moral awareness was one more evidence of the possession by all men of the Light. Cf. Brinton, Friends for 300 Years, 34 f.; Grubb, Authority and the Light Within, 106, 133; Turner, op. cit., 204.

the form of Church decrees or political acts. Our very conscience accuses and excuses our own hearts, that all men are to walk as they have received the leading and truth of the Inner Light, and not usurp a judging power over the faith or liberty of a fellow-Christian.<sup>1</sup>

Penn's logic is remorseless: a Christian implies a man; a man implies understanding and conscience. He who has no understanding nor conscience - as is surely the case of him who has delivered these faculties over to the will of other men - is no man, and therefore no Christian.<sup>2</sup> It is in such logic that Penn discovers the essential relationship between reason and conscience and the doctrine of the Inner Light.

#### 4. The Inner Light and the Church

What we have said about the freedom of the individual in matters of reason and conscience under the guidance of the Inner Light applies, in a corporate capacity, when we come to a consideration of William Penn's understanding of the relationship between the Light and the Church. It is our intention in this section to consider that relationship. The more strictly political conception of Church-State relations will occupy our attention in Part Two of the dissertation.

While the Quakers instinctively worked out their attitude to the Church, Penn brought more solid reasoning to bear. His education, experience, and personal background at once gave him claim to respect as a writer on this subject. For the sake of orderly exposition, we may divide his thought into

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<sup>1</sup>"A Defence of the Duke of Buckingham's Book of Religion and Worship", Works, II, 717.

<sup>2</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 794.

two areas: the nature of the Church, and the functions of the Church.

Penn opens his presentation by stating that the Church is "but a company of people agreed together in the sincere profession and obedience of the Gospel of Christ".<sup>1</sup>

We do believe there is one, and but one universal Church, the ground and pillar of truth, and that is in God. . . . And as such, neither is every visible society making profession of religion, nor are all of them together that Church; but such alone who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and ingrafted into the true vine, bringing forth the fruits of holiness, to the eternal honor, glory, and renown of Christ the Head, Who is over all, God Blessed for evermore. . . . It is the Spirit's ministry, and man only a mean, or instrument, through which the teaching is conveyed, or direction rather to the true teacher, the Light in the conscience.<sup>2</sup>

A man must believe as the Church believes, that is, must have the same faith the Church has. Then he must have the same rule, because the Church can be no more the rule of that faith than she can be that faith of which some would make her the rule. If then the Church has faith, and that faith have a rule, and she can no more be the rule of her own faith, than she can be that faith itself, it follows she cannot be the rule of the faith of her members, because these members have the same faith, and make up this Church.<sup>3</sup> In this closely-reasoned argument Penn attempts to place the seat of authority not in the Church nor in its pronouncements, but rather within the Spirit of God working upon man.

In an exegetical study of the term "Church",<sup>4</sup> Penn applies the words

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<sup>1</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 778.

<sup>2</sup>"Quakerism a New Nick-Name for Old Christianity", Works, II, 268.

<sup>3</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 778.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 781.

"Body" and "Bride" of Christ.

The true Church is become Christ's Body, and He . . . lives, reigns, and puts forth Himself in and by her; and . . . all those who come not thus to experiences the Christ of God to dwell in them . . . are ignorant of God's Christ . . . and know not any entrance into the Holy of Holies, where the divine unction from the High Priest is received, and the blessed, holy, spiritual fellowship of the Gospel is witnessed.<sup>1</sup>

In this respect, the Church takes in all generations, and is made up of the regenerated, be they in heaven or on earth.<sup>2</sup> A Scripture-Church, as she may be called visible, is a company or society of people believing, professing and practising according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and His apostles. Their faith is seen in their exemplary lives.<sup>3</sup> They are of one heart and of one mind, because the One Spirit

into which they have all drunk, and by it are baptised into one Body, leads them all. Now to every member is a measure of the same Spirit given to profit with . . . but in this diversity of gifts and offices, each member is sensible of the other, and moves and acts by one and the same life, Spirit and guidance, which is omnipresent, proportionable to every member in its distinct office.<sup>4</sup>

Further, "the same lowly frame of mind that receives and answers the mind of the Spirit of the Lord in a man's self, will receive and have unity with the mind of the same Spirit through another . . ."<sup>5</sup> In this connection, "the capacity that Christians stand in to Christ is spiritual, and not worldly or carnal; and for that reason not carnal or worldly, but spiritual methods and

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<sup>1</sup>"The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication", Works, II, 419 f.

<sup>2</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 781.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 800.

<sup>4</sup>"A Brief Examination and State of Liberty Spiritual", Works, II, 695.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 696.

weapons only are to be used to inform or reclaim such as are ignorant or disobedient".<sup>1</sup> In short, those people who have apprehended the Church and the Kingdom of Christ to be solely visible and worldly, like other societies and governments, have thought it not only lawful but necessary to use the arts and forces of this world to support His Church and Kingdom, especially since the interest of religion has been incorporated with that of the civil magistrate. But, Penn declares, the Kingdom and the Church of Christ, that is chosen out of the world, stands not in "bodily exercise . . . nor in times nor places, but in faith, and that worship which Christ tells us is in Spirit and in Truth".<sup>2</sup>

If the nature of the Church, then, is spiritual, and consists of those being led by the guidance of the Light, precluding any enforced conformity of views by established churches, what may we say are the functions of the Church? The first is obviously that of "worship". Church worship has developed because man's mind, being so much abroad through unstable and vain wanderings from God's Light, was unfit to dwell on the Lord. In wisdom and in condescension to the weakness of man and the darkness of that carnal state, God did accommodate both His disclosures to man and that worship He required from man, according to his capacity to receive the one and perform the other. It was not insufficiency in God nor in His Light or Spirit, but rather it was His mercy and goodness that prompted God to proportion both His discoveries and requirements according to man's ability.<sup>3</sup>

Penn considers that the tasks of the Church which is its highest honour

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<sup>1</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 812.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 813.

<sup>3</sup>"Reason against Railing, and Truth against Fiction", Works, II, 505 f.

and greatest victory over men are "to convince and persuade".<sup>1</sup> He does not object to a national Church per se, provided it be by consent and not by constraint. There is no special virtue in a Church established by law, for no human law can make a true Church. A true Church is of Christ's making, and is established by the Gospel. No Church can give faith, and therefore is unable to force it. What is constrained is not believed. In case of schism or heresy, the power that Christ gave to His Church was that offenders, after the first and second admonition, should be rejected.<sup>2</sup> They should not be imprisoned, plundered, banished, nor put to death. Within the Church there is an anointing to lead into all truth: the Inner Light. That Christ as well gave His Church power to reject as to try spirits is not hard to prove, Penn asserts, but this is no cause for intolerance or persecution.<sup>3</sup> A man has no dominion over the faith of his brother, nor commission to be lord over his conscience. This is Christ's right, His alone, and that by purchase. "In short, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and if anything be short, God will reveal it; let us but be patient."<sup>4</sup> Thereby, Penn affirms, no Scripture-Church discipline is oppugned or weakened; "let not the sentence end in violence upon the conscience unconvinced".<sup>5</sup>

Penn attempts to relate the Quaker people with whom he has become associated with such a doctrine of the Church. To the charge made against

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<sup>1</sup>"Good Advice to the Church of England", Works, II, 754.

<sup>2</sup>"A Brief Examination and State of Liberty Spiritual", Works, II, 697 f.

<sup>3</sup>"Judas and the Jews", Works, II, 201.

<sup>4</sup>"An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions", Works, I, 804.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 805.

them that the Quakers would prefer a loose person before a non-conformist, Penn cries, "an horrid lie".<sup>1</sup> Rather the Quakers own and cannot but cherish sobriety, and a conscientiousness to God in all. The Quakers are pictured as a living, spiritual society, and in the gift of the discerning power and authority of God's holy and unerring Spirit, are far from apostate - yea, adhere to the one only true Church of God.

It is not difficult to see where such a view of the nature and functions of the Church, as applied to the Quaker body, would come into sharp conflict with the doctrines of the older churches. The position of the organised churches was strong in that they had at their disposal a course of instruction to school the Christian conscience into sobriety. Instruction in Christian morals, obedience to political authority, and the encouragement of institutionalism of the Church forged the conscience into a sociable attitude. The implication, however, as the churches saw it was that the individual must restrict his liberty. It is better that he restricts the boldness of the enterprise than find himself, unrestrained, leading to disaster. Ideas incompatible with the teachings of the organised churches must be restrained: was it not better thus than upsetting a system which enables the far-reaching freedom of so great a number? Unguided, the Christian conscience would find itself restrained at every point. Defended by the Church a power was at disposal which would penetrate society and bend to assent even every unwilling party.

Penn's religion, however, was in the Inner Light, and none would be allowed to restrict its freedom. Progress in society was impossible otherwise. Not even the value of the institutions of the Church could justify a wrong

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<sup>1</sup>"The Spirit of Alexander the Coppersmith Justly Rebuked", Works, II, 195.

attitude. That the churches could, on the grounds of their interests, utilise the method of coercion was a proof to Penn that it was not alone the religious motive which moved them. If the function of the churches was ostensibly to guide into harmony the wayward conscience of the individual, the increase of compulsion lessened the right of the Church to utilise it. Penn did not deny the importance of the visible institution in carrying with it the wisdom of the ages and the ideas of its members from the beginning of the religion, though he never actually paid his tribute. He did flatly deny that a residuary power of persecution should remain in the hands of those in authority if the institution with its good effects were to continue. It was upon the soundness of his position that the validity of his attack depended.

#### Conclusion

The essential truth presented by Penn is found to lie in his recognition that there is something of the Infinite, something of God - the Inner Light - in every man; that religion consists in the expansion of this Light in the surrendered soul; that Christianity can never be expressed by any system of dogmatic formulae. We have tried to show how Penn's suggestions were in line with some of his presuppositions, notably those presuppositions which were neo-platonic in character. Because of these neo-platonic assumptions a prevailing confusion was found to exist in Penn's thought on the Light. It is doubtful if he was ever able to really rise above the dualistic philosophy of his day. Further, in making the Light wholly divine and supernatural, a position was taken which virtually made the individual infallible.

We may attempt to summarise the constructive aspects of Penn's theological writings in this manner: the Almighty created the universe by means of His Spirit, and also man. He gave man, besides his intellect, an "emanation"

from His own Spirit, thus making man after His own image. This image has been largely lost. A portion, however, continued in all posterity, being possessed by mankind in different degrees. Jesus possessed the image immeasurably, and without limit. Except a man have this image, this Light of God, he can have no knowledge of God or spiritual things. Neither can a man, except he have this Light, know spiritually that the Scriptures are of divine authority, or spiritually understand them.

Penn held that such a view of the Light does full justice to human reason. The Light of God which had been given man in different degrees was given as a spiritual teacher or guide to man's spiritual concerns. The Light performs this office by internal monitions and, if encouraged, it teaches even by external objects of the creation. This latter thought allows for the fact that the soul is born and nursed in the shadow of external authority. Most of such external authority the soul may take on trust as belonging to the overall scheme of things, part of which scheme the soul has itself already verified, and more of which she hopes to verify in the course of time under the leadings of the Inner Light.

This Light, then, is a universal Light, and continues its office to the present day. The Light, as it has been given Universally, so has it been given sufficiently. Hence God is "exonerated" of injustice, and men are left without excuse. Those who resist this Light, are said to quench it, and those who attend to it may be said to be in the way of redemption. Yet it is doubtful if any man can ever fully quench the Light. As a redeemer of men, the Light works both outwardly and inwardly: outwardly by the sufferings of Christ, which produced forgiveness of past sins and put men into a capacity of salvation; inwardly, by the operation of the Light which converts men and preserves them from sins to come. The two are closely connected with each other.

This power of inward redemption is bestowed upon all, and has the power of leading men to perfection. "Election", as of public import, relates to offices of usefulness and not to salvation.

Being a man of business ability, Penn sought to find in religion a force of pragmatic value. He saw the necessity for the Inner Light to have a direct influence upon the social attitudes of mankind.

Accordingly, the future Quaker statesman was led to advocate the possession by all men of the Inner Light, the universality of grace, the obligation to seek perfection, and belief in a continuing revelation. That such doctrines came into conflict with the traditional accepted view of things in the seventeenth century is not hard to see.<sup>1</sup> The accepted significance of the historical Christ, the contemporary Calvinistic teaching of predestination and election, the priority of faith over works, the finality of scriptural revelation and the intellectual interpretation of truth - all came subject to serious reconsideration and defence. That man is not a slave, a chattel, or an automaton, but a rational, moral, and spiritual being; that persecutions of religious opinions either by Church or State is unchristian, irrational and futile, stunting the stature of the individual and undermining respect for law; that the private judgment of men who guarantee their sincerity by their readiness to suffer for their convictions leads not to anarchy but towards the Civitas Dei, the Kingdom of God on earth - to state such doctrine is to become aware of the extent to which they have entered into the higher thought of the modern world. "... the presence of men and women who are prepared to sacrifice all worldly advantage to the obligations of a higher allegiance enriches the life of the community, and adds that peculiar quality of moral worth which is

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<sup>1</sup>For a listing of these doctrines, see Comfort, William Penn, 89, 73. For their application to Penn's colonial experiment, Ibid., 133.

the hall-mark of a lofty civilisation".<sup>1</sup>

The result of making the Light Within of first consideration is to make men question the validity of their actions. Penn's doctrine faced a severe test in the struggle for religious toleration which took place in England. Church toleration enables religious worship and interprets the human spirit according to that end; liberty of spirit enables a free conscience and relates religious worship to that end. The problem of the liberty of the individual, therefore, transcends matters of Church worship and questions the whole of human conduct. If each man has his own virtues, the importance of religious worship in the seventeenth century merely indicates how such virtues impressed the mind in the ages that preceded. But theology and priestcraft were under serious suspicion, and Quakerism captured the spirit of the reaction. They were convinced of new ideas and their Inner Light urged them to go forward.

Further application of Quaker doctrines may then be expected: the equality and sanctity of all men in the divine sight will show in a democratic frame of government favourable to personal liberty; the universality of grace will appear in Penn's trust of the Indians and of his colonists; the search for absolute perfection will be the ideal pursued by Penn; the belief in continued revelation will be reflected in the revisions of his constitutions, as new light is granted.

This discussion of Penn, then, points to the conclusion that the Inner Light is the ultimate and supreme authority, because its evidence is in itself, whereas the authority of the Bible, Christ, reason and conscience, and the Church, depend upon it. When it is sought to stretch their authority beyond this limit, the demand arises: whence hast thou this authority? The answer

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 5 f.

must always at last be brought back to the test of the Inner Light.

The history of the believers in the Inner Light warns that there is danger even here. Was it a weakness that the Quakers claimed for reliance on the Light? The Light is of God; the Light works in men; but there are serious consequences of trusting to logical reasoning in such matters. "The spirit" of the Quakers was, not the pure cause, but the effect of that cause working in the midst of human ignorance, prejudice, and conceit. We see not the Light of God alone, but the Light operating upon human finiteness, fallibility, infirmity. It is true that in time the Quakers realised that trust in the Inner Light did not permit them to attribute infallibility to their own judgments. But this was to come after sad scandals had shown the liability of the Children of Light to be self-deceived, and suppose themselves to be led by the Light when they were not. They were prepared to uproot the principles of the old order on the grounds of the Light Within. Was there not a danger that if men nourished a sovereign tyrant within themselves that was taken for granted and not analysed, they would prepare the way for a greater slavery? The Inner Light, as a sanctified prejudice treasured in each individual, would prevent a realistic analysis of the conditions necessary for the achievement of men's freedom.

The fact was that to liberate the individual judgment from its fetters a call on divine assistance was indeed necessary. The Quakers claimed God for the individual. Without the Light they would not have demanded liberty for the individual. That which was divine was obviously good and must be released. To liberate the man by means of the Inner Light was the same as enabling obedience to God. In so doing, the Quakers were able to obtain a greater respect for humanity and human judgment. It could not be supposed that God, in appointing governments, their law and authority, should hurt the freedom of the individual wherein His Spirit and His works are sown.

PART II

THE TEST:

THE DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY BROUGHT OUT  
IN THE STRUGGLE FOR TOLERATION

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND GROUP AUTHORITY

- A. The political scene in seventeenth-century England
  - 1. The historical background of the period
  - 2. A policy of persecution: the basic points at issue
  
- B. Quakerism and political life
  - 1. Democracy and the sect movements
  - 2. The political implications of the doctrine of the Inner Light
  - 3. Quakerism vs. the established churches
  
- C. The Quaker apologist: William Penn
  - 1. The quality of his writings
  - 2. The general nature of his attack and defence.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND GROUP AUTHORITY

. . . I abhor two principles in religion, and pity them that own them. The first is, obedience upon authority without conviction; and the other, destroying them that differ from me for God's sake. Such a religion is without judgment, though not without teeth. Union is best, if right; else charity. And as Hooker said, The time will come when a few words spoken with meekness and humility and love shall be more acceptable than volumes of controversies, which commonly destroy charity, the very best part of the true religion . . .<sup>1</sup>

In the first part of our study we have examined the doctrine of the Inner Light in the making. This investigation we deemed necessary because of the central role of the Light in all Quaker thought and practice, more especially in the personal experience of William Penn. In the awareness of the religious preparation of our man, we are concerned now to show how the truths resulting from Penn's understanding of the Inner Light were applied to his doctrine of political authority. This application may be studied best initially through an examination of the development of Penn's doctrine of political authority as it was wrought out in the struggle for religious toleration in England. Such a struggle produced the foundation principles of political authority which Penn was to later apply in his supreme experiment, that of colonial Pennsylvania.

#### The Political Scene in Seventeenth-Century England

The Reformation movement, in England as well as elsewhere, was aware

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<sup>1</sup>"William Penn to Dr. Tillotson", Works, I, 126 f.

of this fact: namely, that the values of any society held together by sacerdotalism were bound to be of a character nearest to the sacerdotal function. The incapacity of men, the virtue of faith, and the importance of dogma were the natural methods of assuring sacerdotal pre-eminence, and when these notions were the bonds of society it became a matter of crucial interest to safeguard them. It is of interest to note that the Reformation, far from abating intolerance within the Church, actually intensified it, for the eyes of the law were multiplied and strengthened. The sanction of a divine authority and justification, with which the Reformers, particularly in England, crowned the new national consciousness, did not at first transform the connection between the spiritual and secular authorities.

In England, the intolerant spirit as a policy pursued by the State began early. The Act of Supremacy, 1534, was a significant landmark. Thereby infallibility was skilfully linked with political sovereignty. A century after the Catholic persecution of the Protestants in England had come to an end, the Protestant churches which claimed the right of enforcing uniformity of faith and worship entered upon a severe persecution of those groups which claimed the right of independence. The latter sects were on the "radical fringes" of Protestantism, and were so despised by the Lutheran, Anglican and Presbyterian "established" churches that their persecution might have been as brutal and fatal to their existence had not a century of somewhat more humanising influences intervened. It is questionable whether it was the experience of the Commonwealth alone that invalidated the dictum, "No Bishop, No King"; for Presbyterianism, once established, would never question the divine right of political authority. The greater the power of kings the better, so long as it was used for the propagation of truth and the suppression of error. Many of the Independents were themselves Calvinistically inclined, and when

Independency came into prominence it entered upon an intimacy of association with the State, not logically justifiable. The restoration of Charles was only possible by an understanding between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy.

At this point the English political scene was strangely complicated. Even now it is not an easy matter to trace the major currents of the age. The Cavalier Parliament was one of the least intelligent and one of the most vindictive which has ever assembled at Westminster. A common hatred of Puritanism had united the Cavaliers and the Anglican bishops in a policy of persecution. But this policy was not aimed at the Puritans alone: the "creeping invasion" of the Roman Catholics was also attacked. It was frequently supposed, though never with much reason, that the Quakers might join with the Catholics in a combined attack against the Anglican position. Neither Church nor Parliament, however, had any real security. Charles was not a monarch of the type desired by the Cavaliers, having little sympathy for the Church of England, or for the patriotic gentlemen who supported the bishops. On the other hand, the dissenters were indirectly favoured by the crown, not because Charles liked them, but quite possibly because he saw in toleration a principle that would open the door for Catholic entry. Although he had declared for liberty of conscience, Charles soon found his hands forced by both Parliament and Church. Acts of Uniformity, Conventicle Acts, Test Acts - all were passed as a safeguard against the encouragement of the sects, and the return thereby to the anarchy of the commonwealth period. At least, so the argument ran. This ushered in a new policy of persecution. Powerful issues were at stake between Church and State. The Church needed the authority of the State; it was those churches that won the favour of political authority that obtained toleration. The implication was intolerance for the rest.

Yet strangely enough, the conflict of intrigue and interest among the

Crown, Parliament, and Church made up a situation not entirely unfavourable to the Quaker movement.

### Quakerism and Political Life

It must always be kept in mind that, in contrast to the official Reformation, much of modern democracy descends from the so-called sect movements of the immediate post-Reformation period. Fundamental to the democratic movement was a transformation of the idea of God. It is perhaps not too far from the truth to assert that many of the conceptions employed in the modern concept of the State are theological conceptions that have been secularised. Luther's transcendent God is the omnipotent director and provider, and His representative upon earth is the monarch, "by the grace of God". The monarch is not bound by the law, and intervenes at will as God intervenes by miracle. The equally transcendent God of Calvin is the supreme engineer, working according to laws, whose work, and in particular the economic "machine", runs on of itself without interference. The God of the democrat is the immanent God of mystical experience, Who reveals Himself in the individual soul and in the corporate body and realises Himself through man. It was this "second-wave"<sup>1</sup> of the Reformation that gave to the world democracy. Quakerism became the heir and trustee of the "reform of the Reformation".

The Quakers were quite naturally among the front ranks of those who were to feel the injustices of persecution.<sup>2</sup> Their sufferings were long and severe. The Society of Friends rejected the most cherished sacraments, baptism

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<sup>1</sup>C. von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Democracy and Religion (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930), 18.

<sup>2</sup>In this connection, see William C. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), 1 - 211. ad passim, especially 21, 88, 108 ff.

and the Lord's Supper; they interpreted the divinity of Christ, as has been shown, in a new and strange fashion, thereby placing themselves outside the pale of Christianity. They rejected the substitutionary theory of the death of Jesus, as taught by Luther. The rigid Calvinistic doctrine of election was denied.

. . . they rejected an ordained ministry for themselves, and refused to attend the services and pay tithes to the clergymen ordained by others, thus undermining the church; they broke the public peace by holding meetings in the streets, and the Sabbath by travelling outside of their own parishes to meetings held at a distance; whipped for vagrants for pursuing their missionary work, they were nevertheless hated for their superior workmanship and success in business; refusing to take an oath in courts, they struck at the whole judicial fabric of the state; and declining to take the oath of allegiance, they gave aid and countenance to the foreign and domestic enemies of the English Commonwealth and to the foreign allies of the despotic Stuart kings.<sup>1</sup>

Thousands of Quakers were imprisoned, and of this number, a sizeable figure were put to death.<sup>2</sup> But in vain. Despite the renewed efforts of Church and State, the Quaker movement persisted. Why was this, and what central problem did it raise?

The answer to the first of these questions may perhaps be found in the recognition that the Quaker preaching of the Inner Light, of the immanence of God in the human soul, this self-submersion into the will of God, made possible the freedom of man. Here was preaching which struck a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of men struggling for individual freedom and liberty in the midst of persecution and intolerance. The response thus aroused could not be readily suppressed; the fires of enthusiasm could not easily be extinguished.

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<sup>1</sup>Hull, op. cit., 198 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 199. Cf. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 114; Arnold Lloyd, Quaker Social History (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), 105. n. 2.

At the same time, the problem of the right co-ordination of the spiritual guidance of the individual with the spiritual discernment of the community occasioned one of the chief difficulties of early Quakerism. This was the problem of authority, and may be defined in these terms: what are the limits within which an individual member of a Christian fellowship may, against the weight of opinion of others, follow what he takes to be the leadings of the Inner Light?<sup>1</sup> In England the demand for freedom of the individual was to lead, in some cases, to an expression for the complete severance of Church and State. This principle did not spring from indifference, but from a high valuation of the religious domain which brooks no intermixture with worldly power. Tolerance was to be more than a legal maxim. It was founded on a new conception of truth.

While our earlier chapters revealed many actual points of contact between Quakerism and politics, the question remains nevertheless to ascertain whether Quakerism as such can possibly have real bearing upon the political life. A whole wing of Quakerism, the "Quietists" of Quaker history, of today and yesterday, have answered this question in the negative. Yet the name of William Penn in the seventeenth century, of John Bellers and John Woolman in the eighteenth, of Herbert Hoover in the twentieth, are enough to remind one that Quakerism has in truth much to do with politics, and that too, with politics of a particular tendency.

A belief in such a treasure of illumination as the Inner Light, possessed in common by all the sons of men brings all men into brotherhood as being also the sons of God. The Quaker conceived it to be his business not only to establish harmony between the human and divine elements within himself

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd, op. cit., 21.

but also harmonious relations with men of all races and colours and beliefs with whom he came into contact. In short, all men have in them something divine, and human life is therefore sacred. In holding to universal grace the Quakers believed that all men were endowed with the ability freely granted by God to resist evil and to do good, if they were willing - and able - to exercise this ability. Men would reciprocate if treated kindly and justly. This the Quakers held as the basis for their dealings with other men.

Such an outlook brought the Quakers face-to-face with the view-point of the established churches. According to this view-point, it was the visible Church alone which provided the channels of instruction. The complaint of the individual on the grounds of an "inner conviction" might lead him to forge a path away from society. If the individual followed out the implications of his dissent, said the Church, he will be quarreling with the very grounds of his attack. The established churches were not slow to point out that authority, which was responsible for the evils of society, was also responsible for the good. If God speaks to each man, He has also spoken thus for a thousand ages. "Wisdom is sensitive to such experience." A man "cannot obey his light if as a result he comes into conflict with his fellows." Even though it is based on a prejudice, the mind of course is free. "To follow the teachings of authority or experience is not against one's light so long as one is so disposed." However, "if the individual turns inward to the vacant spaces of his mind, his judgment may be good, but it also might be ignorant. The most prejudiced of men is he who thus limits himself, because he has built his judgment upon the smallest possible experience. It was not against the freedom of the mind to learn from the experience of the past. Visible authority was abundant in her resources, were they in the Church or in the State."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 175.

It was just the fundamental emphasis on the visible features of the Church which assured that the deeper things would be protected; for even authority must respect the playthings of her flock, since they would appeal to her too. A doctrine was fundamental to Christianity because it actually was powerful among Christians; and whatever the thing itself was, it carried the life of the Church with it. . . .

There was a reason, therefore, in the unreasonableness of the fundamental. The Church and her institutions remained valid to her devotees even though they did not to her heretics, a conclusion in itself not incompatible with the Quaker spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless this viewpoint of the Church failed to make an impression upon the Quakers. Religion was a matter of the Inner Light within the individual, and none would be allowed to restrict its freedom. Persuasion and intercourse were balm to the ills of society, and in this the Society of Friends was a serious critic of the methods of the Church. That the churches could utilise the methods of coercion on the grounds of their interests was a proof to the Quakers that it was not alone the religious motive which moved these churches. This does not mean that Quakerism denied Church power within a religious body. As Penn himself was to put it:

There is either such a thing as a Christian society, sometimes called a visible body or church, or there is not. If there be not, all is at an end; and why contend<sup>we</sup> at all? If there be, then this church either has power or not. If no power, then no church. If a body, church or society . . . then there must be a power within itself to determine; an anointing to lead into all truth. Deny this, and all falls of itself. . . the question then is this: But, how far may this church enjoin the consciences of individuals any performance, supposing their dislike? I answer: it would be first inquired into whether those things have been once generally owned by such a church or not? Secondly, or if it be about some superadded ceremony, something over and above what each member at first sat down contended with?<sup>2</sup>

Granted the existence of authority within a religious body, if the

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 18. Cf. 245 f.

<sup>2</sup>"The Spirit of Alexander the Coppersmith Justly Rebuked", Works, II, 192. Cf. 201.

institutions of the Church were a means by which the Christian individual could operate safely and peacefully, it did not follow that those who spoke for the institution should therefore have authority over the rest, to bend them as they wished. To do so would lead to the corruption of the Inner Light which was the source of religion. It would encourage pride and arbitrary authority on the one hand, and obedience, slavishness, and ignorance on the other. Quaker leaders confessed that the variety of sects in the world was a great discouragement, especially when it was considered with what confidence each party pleaded the truth and divine origin of their persuasion. Still men were not to be satisfied with pretence, but evidence. Education was too short, and tradition did not reach far enough, to ascertain any man of the verity of his persuasion.<sup>1</sup> As for the Quakers,

Be it known to all men, that the power of God, the Gospel, is the authority of all our men's and women's meetings; that every heir of that power is an heir of that authority, and so becomes a living member of right of either of those meetings, and of the heavenly fellowship and order in which they stand: which is not of men, nor by man.<sup>2</sup>

That a Church should hold certain fundamentals in terms of certainty apart from certitude was quite incompatible with individual liberty. Such a position by the Church assured the existence of a good outside the understanding of the guidance of the Inner Light. To admit this was a direct attack upon the sanctity of the conscience. It was this position in the organised churches which sharpened Quaker antipathy towards them. There was here involved, as the Quakers saw it, all the elements of tyranny. Where consent is dispensed with, there can be no limit to the claims of authority.

In England, the protest against Church intolerance came from two

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<sup>1</sup>"Wisdom Justified of her Children", Works, II, 463.

<sup>2</sup>"Travels in Holland and Germany", Works, I, 53.

sources which, though often at variance, were both powerful in attack. The one protest was on behalf of liberty of the individual guidance of the spirit of God; the other, on behalf of political-Church authority. The former arose from religious necessity transcending all political considerations. Here was involved the individual conscience in reaction from the theological and dogmatic aspects of religion. This argument was inspired chiefly by faith in the possibilities of human nature and a belief in the significance of morality rather than theology in religion. The second source of protest against Church intolerance arose as a matter of civic and immediate political convenience as well as Church advantage. Toleration, in this instance, was advocated as an advantage to the peace and welfare and authority of both Church and State. It may be said, in other words, that the protest against Church intolerance was based on "spiritual" and "secular" grounds. The movements from which these sources of attack developed - allied now, were destined in future years to become themselves protagonists of a fiercer struggle. But in the period immediately after the middle of the seventeenth century, it was in the alliance of these two movements that Church intolerance was weakened, in so far as it showed itself, with the noted exception of the Roman Catholics.

The Quakers were involved in both sources of attack because, for their Society, the whole problem of individual liberty depended on the meaning given to the Inner Light. The security of any authority - religious or political - depended upon the proper awareness and development of the Light. The religious struggles of the early Quakers furnished the fertile soil from which were to spring the writings on toleration by the Quaker spokesman par excellence, William Penn.

The Quaker Apologist: William Penn

With magistral glance Penn appreciated the position of the Quakers in

their struggle for toleration. In virtue of the fact that the State is concerned with men's welfare, the right of religious liberty is a civil right. Where this liberty is abridged by the State, that State is not free. It was, therefore, proper that the great case for religious toleration and religious freedom should be put by Penn. The method of this Quaker apologist is an education in the method of Quakerism generally. But much more: it provides an insight into the formative processes of the mind of Penn as he laboured with the birth-pangs of a political doctrine of authority. The standard of religious toleration was later to find its magnificent exhibition to the world in Pennsylvania. Here a liberty of religious freedom was worked for as a State policy. The Quaker defence was enduring because - through the efforts of William Penn - it had been fought on proper grounds.

The grounds of Penn's defence were numerous: he pointed out the futility of persecution to gain converts; he appealed to the constitutional privileges which the persecutor violated; he referred to the economic argument of Quaker contribution to the national economy as well as their contribution to political stability. "Pacifist though he was, Penn is willing to point out to non-pacifists the military advantages of a state united by its freedom from religious dissensions."<sup>1</sup>

Penn's written protests against religious persecution and pleas for civil and religious liberty were numerous, and among the most penetrating in the whole history of English reform.<sup>2</sup> Not only Pennsylvanians but all English-

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<sup>1</sup>Henry J. Cadbury, "Persecution and Religious Liberty, Then and Now", The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXVIII (1944), 364. Cf. the whole article, 359 - 371, especially 359 - 365. The present writer is much indebted to Dr. Cadbury for this contribution.

<sup>2</sup>This does not preclude the possibility that "personally and privately and by word of mouth Penn contributed to the education of individuals, including those of highest position, so that the ultimate toleration in England owed more to him in this way than by his pen." Ibid.

speaking people and even all who own allegiance to modern ideals of humanity and democracy, are in his debt. This is well expressed in a great English biographical collection:

As a stout champion of the right of independent thought and speech, as the apostle of true religion, of justice, gentleness, sobriety, simplicity, and "sweet reasonableness" in an age of corrupt splendour, morose pietism, and general intolerance, Penn would be secure of a place among the immortals, even though no flourishing state of the American Union revered him as its founder.<sup>1</sup>

Penn's writings struck hard. Memorials to the High Court of Parliament, to the sheriffs of London, to justices and lords; his speeches before a committee of Parliament, and before King James on presenting an address of the Friends; his treatise on "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience"; his "Address to Protestants of all Persuasions"; his tractate on "England's Present Interest"; his "Project for the Good of England"; his political manifesto on "England's Great Interest in the Choice of a New Parliament" - all these and more papers and treatises which, though written in the antiquated language of the seventeenth century, might still be read with great profit, particularly in the none too saintly circles of modern politics.

Penn was anything but the figure so often depicted: that of a man of placid disposition, submitting passively to injustice, and never using vigorous and pungent speech in defence of justice and liberty; he can "hardly be classed as a mystic".<sup>2</sup> The objects of his thoughts were greatly external, and the man of action impresses itself upon the student of his life rather than the man of

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<sup>1</sup>J. M. Rigg, "William Penn", Dictionary of National Biography, XLIV (1895), 317. For a somewhat different point of view, see C. E. Vulliamy, William Penn (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 113.

<sup>2</sup>Isaac Sharpless, "William Penn Practical Mystic", an article in William Penn, Fruits of an Active Life, selected by W. W. Comfort (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1945), 77 - 89.

introversion. He saw the hand of the Lord in the various events of his life, in oftentimes unconscious guidance, noticed afterwards rather than felt in advance. This does not mean that he was without moments of the peace and confirmation of retired communion. But these moments, added to his life of action, produced the religious man of service. Although much of his literature dealing with theological matters is of little possible interest now, he deals with great questions of life and liberty. It was inevitable that a life which combined the lofty idealist and the practical man of affairs should have been somewhat inconsistent with itself. Many of his writings, doctrinal and political, contain discrepancies. More often, they are but questions of emphasis.<sup>1</sup> The idealist and the practical man of affairs would necessarily clash in politics and business. However, it is easy for an anchorite to be consistent. But the honest man who influences his generation must have large allowance made for him if, in minor actions, he seems to his fellows sometimes to contradict his principles for the sake of a larger consistency. We judge certain men; by certain men we are judged.

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain the period in Penn's life when the struggle for religious toleration seized him, and cast him forth as one of the most effective protagonists of freedom. Essays for toleration - anonymous for the most part - are assigned to Penn even before 1670. The number of published essays by Penn on this general subject is underestimated, usually by reason of this frequent use of anonymity or pseudonymity and because they were many of them not reprinted in his collected works, even in the fullest collection of those works. Between 1675 - 1680 the toleration struggle seems to have

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<sup>1</sup>Although the present writer cannot quite agree that it is impossible to differentiate from the general Quaker views on religious freedom anything unique or individual in the writings or behaviour of William Penn. Cf. Cadbury's article, op. cit., 361.

gained the dominant role in his life and thought.<sup>1</sup> In the period immediately preceding, Penn had been prominent as a defender of his coreligionists. He had been in all his activities above all a Quaker. He had become one of its recognised spokesmen, and had paid the penalty of being such. It was by his Quakerism that he was distinguished from the worldly society which he would naturally have frequented, and it was by his worldly associations that he stood out in the religious Society which he had espoused.

In his protest against Church intolerance, Penn was at the same time to launch an attack against State sovereignty. Penn, the Englishman, was the defender of the ancient rights of his countrymen as citizens and subjects. He was proud of his race and country. "In a life of seventy-four years, four years in his American woods are not enough to qualify him for any other citizenship than that of an Englishman."<sup>2</sup> The value and influence of Penn's arguments are hard to appraise. Other voices were being raised in the cause of freedom, of which some were influential in one quarter and some in another. The really stable victory of toleration could come only when it had support of both King and Parliament. One ought not to claim for the Quakers - and for Penn - credit which humanly speaking is due merely to the accidents or conjunctions of history. Yet, this notwithstanding, one feels compelled to note that before Penn, Quakerism had little or no experience in this larger field of toleration and government. The investigator detects no Quaker of Penn's time who theorised on government. For Quakerism was primarily a personal religion, and it had kept out of all part or interference in public affairs. It was important to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 360, nn. 3 and 5. Cf. Comfort, William Penn, 20, 102.

<sup>2</sup>Comfort, William Penn, 101 f.

Penn and his coreligionists that the civil law should confine itself to the immoral and the criminal; and that the ecclesiastical law should attend to its own affairs. There was, in his judgment, no harm in a lack of religious conformity. What was essential for England was national unity, if she were to flourish. And unity and good will could prevail only if men's consciences were free to worship as they pleased. More than a decade of trials, hardships and persecution now raised in his mind the question of what he, as a Quaker, working within the frame of Quakerism, could do to advance that liberty of conscience to which all his fellow citizens were entitled as one of the rights of man.

With the exception of a four-year period after 1681, when there was a break in his polemic for civil and spiritual liberty occasioned by his plans for and visit to Pennsylvania, Penn was to devote the bulk of his energy for the next decade and more to this subject of religious toleration, and the civil rights which are its corollary. It was not merely the personality of William Penn which gave to his efforts the fundamentals of freedom and liberty and justice. These principles came from his theology. It could not be that a man, who made as his cornerstone the doctrine of divine guidance of the individual, could, in time, create other than a commonwealth devoted to civil and religious liberty. A man who was willing to go to jail indefinitely rather than disobey the scruple with regard to his hat, would also develop as a political principle obedience to a duty which demanded peace even at a sacrifice of what seemed common-sense in government. To the present writer it seems that the statesmanship of William Penn was a direct product of his Quakerism. Both his statesmanship and his religion were to face a severe test, as Penn proceeded to hammer out a doctrine of political authority in the midst of the struggle for religious toleration in England.

CHAPTER V

THE PROTEST AGAINST CHURCH INTOLERANCE

- A. Basic emphases developed by Penn in his argument for toleration
  - 1. True religion is worth suffering for; it is able to sustain those afflicted for it
  - 2. The ends of persecution are unworthy
  - 3. Persecution violates a number of basic conditions:
    - a. It directly invades the Divine prerogative
    - b. It is contrary to the nature of the Christian religion, which is meekness and love
    - c. It is against Scripture
    - d. It is against the very privilege of nature
    - e. It is destructive of the very principles of reason
    - f. It is economically destructive of the power of a nation
  - 4. Penal laws and tests should be abolished
    - a. Such tests are inconsistent
    - b. They are in conflict with the basic civil rights of Englishmen
- B. A protest against the growing Church-State alignment
  - 1. The recognition of the necessity for civil obedience
  - 2. The distinction between "fundamental" and "temporary" laws
  - 3. Persecution as a contradiction to government
  - 4. The protest directed to "heart" as well as to "head".
- C. The social significance of the protest against intolerance
  - 1. It aroused the conservative forces in society
  - 2. It placed before the King and people the goal of economic and social security
  - 3. It denied the ground of Church establishment.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PROTEST AGAINST CHURCH INTOLERANCE

In this chapter we shall concern ourselves with those arguments on behalf of liberty of conscience which William Penn directed against the Church and the policies of persecution with which the Church had become associated. Our next chapter will take up these arguments as they were directed in Penn's attack against the State. Such a division of material will make it possible for the reader to see more clearly the fundamental issues at stake in the struggle for toleration by the Quakers and, at the same time, reveal the general outline which Penn's doctrine of political authority was to take.

The protest against Church intolerance rested upon certain emphases concerning the nature of true religion which Penn had developed early in his career as a Quaker. In the light of the growing Church-State alignment, these emphases in turn underwent a gradual shift, incorporating in ever greater measure a political thrust. Quite naturally, this latter movement carried with it tremendous social implications.

#### Basic Emphases Developed by Penn in His Argument for Toleration

Penn would have all men know that he scorned that religion which was not worth suffering for, and which was not able to sustain those that were afflicted for it. Quakerism was his religion and answered favourably to both conditions. He was resigned to answer the will of God, by the loss of goods,

liberty and life itself, if need be.<sup>1</sup> For those who would persecute him and his religion, Penn desired but the forgiveness of God. He set forth a number of arguments to support a policy of religious toleration. The ranks of the Church were subjected to a steady flow of propaganda. Two of the most powerful of Penn's works, dealing with this subject of toleration, were "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", and "Good Advice to the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Dissenter".<sup>2</sup> In the former work Penn attempts to defend the liberty of the individual in religion by appeal to the authority of reason, Scripture and antiquity.<sup>3</sup> In the latter, the "duty, principle and interest" of the dissenter is aroused toward the abolition of the penal laws and tests.

Penn exposes the self-contradiction of those persecutors, who boast of the Reformation and are yet adversaries to individual liberty. He never ceases, in discussing toleration, to gird at Protestants for using themselves the very tactics and cruelty with which they charged the Catholics. All persecution for religion implies infallibility on the part of rulers, which is frankly anti-Protestant attitude. Moreover, all restraint or persecution is futile, because it is temporal and is opposed to true religion which is spiritual. This heralds the point for which Penn is to argue so cogently, the removal of religious faith and practice from the jurisdiction of government.

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 39.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 443 - 467; Works, II, 749 - 773.

<sup>3</sup>The exact date of this publication has been the subject of some controversy. Cf. Comfort, William Penn, 27; Vulliamy, op. cit., 82; the article by Cadbury, op. cit., 361, and n. 6; Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 74, n. 4; Hull, op. cit., 203 f., and 95. The 1671 work appears to be a revised edition of the book published in Dublin, in 1669.

Penn's "Case" is a noble and learned plea for religious toleration, and the arguments which compose it have been woven so completely into the texture of modern thinking, that they will be read today solely for their historical interest, and as a reminder of the debt which England - and the world - owes to the man who was willing to spend his whole life in advancing them.

By "liberty of conscience" Penn understands not only a mere liberty of the mind in believing or disbelieving this or that principle of doctrine, but the exercise of every man in a visible way of worship. A man is most clearly persuaded that God requires him to serve Him in the free and uninterrupted exercise of the human conscience. Such a freedom is a matter of faith, and if omitted, sin occurs.<sup>1</sup> By "imposition, restraint and persecution" Penn means not only the strict requiring of a man to believe in the truth or falsity of a thing, and upon refusal to incur the penalties enacted in such cases, but also any coercive hindrance from meeting together to perform those religious exercises which are according to Quaker faith and persuasion.<sup>2</sup> Any such imposition violates a number of basic conditions.

To begin with, it directly invades the Divine prerogative. Whoever interposes human authority to enact faith and worship upon others usurps the authority of the Almighty, and assumes His incommunicable right of government over conscience. As noted above, the Protestants are equally guilty as the Catholics in the eyes of Penn. Representatives from both groups would enthrone man as king over conscience, and what follows is that Caesar has all, God's share and his own. Being lord of heaven and earth, both are Caesar's and not

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<sup>1</sup>"The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", Works, I, 445, 447.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 447.

God's. This defeats God's work of grace, and deprives God of the power of judgment. In these particulars men are accustomed to entrench upon divine property, to gratify particular interests in the world through a misguided apprehension to imagine they do God good service (at best).<sup>1</sup>

Further, such imposition overturns the very nature and practice of the Christian religion. The nature of the Christian religion is meekness. It is the privilege of the faith to carry with it a most self-evidencing verity which is ever sufficient to obtain believers without the weak "auxiliary" of external power. In short, the Christian religion entreats all, but compels none. Furthermore, the true followers of Jesus Christ enacted and confirmed their religion with their own blood, and not with the blood of their opposers. Those who would restrain and persecute actually obstruct the promotion of the Christian religion. The eternal rewards of the faith are obscured, for where men are religious because of fear, and that of other men, this is a slavish thing, and the recompense of such a religion is condemnation, not peace. Since it is man and not God who is thus served, man, having no power but what is temporary, must needs have temporary rewards only.<sup>2</sup>

Such imposition is also against the plainest testimonies of Holy Scripture. These testimonies condemn all force upon the conscience. "The inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding" (Job, 32:8). If no man can believe before he understands, and no man can understand before he is inspired of God, then the impositions of men are excluded as unreasonable and their persecutions for non-obedience as inhuman. The mere change of parties in power cannot alter these basic truths.<sup>3</sup>

Not only are the prerogatives of God, the true nature of religion, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 447 f.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 448 f.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 449 f.

the testimony of Scripture contradicted by persecution, but so also is the very privilege of nature. "If God made of one blood all nations, then where any person enacts the belief or disbelief of anything upon the rest, or restrains anyone from the exercise of their faith to them indispensable, such a person exalts himself beyond his bounds, enslaves his fellow creatures, invades their right of liberty, and accordingly perverts the whole <sup>order</sup> of nature." Mankind is thereby robbed of the use and benefit of that instinct of a Deity, called elsewhere the Inner Light. That Divine Principle in the universality of mankind serves little purpose if men be restricted by the prescriptions of some individuals. Such as invalidate the authority of this heavenly instinct destroy nature, or that privilege with which and to which men are born. All natural affection is destroyed. Nature being one in all, such as ruin those who are equally entitled with themselves to nature, ruin it in them. And so the state of nature is brought to the state of war, the great Leviathan of the times.<sup>1</sup>

By no means least of the arguments against persecution was that it is destructive of the very principles of reason.<sup>2</sup> Those who impose, or restrain, are uncertain of the truth; yet these same people, after admitting their fallibility, then proceed to impose and restrain. What is this but to impose an uncertain faith upon certain penalties? To believe a man must first will; to will, judge; to judge, understand. If the latter is prohibited, none of the former is possible. In short, that man cannot be said to have any religion that takes it by another man's choice and not his own. Where men are limited in matters of religion there the rewards which are entailed on the free acts of men are quite overthrown. Such as supercede the "Grand Charter of Liberty

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 450 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 451 f.

of Conscience" frustrate all hopes of recompense by rendering the actions of men unavoidable. They subvert all true religion, for where men believe not because it is true but because they are required to do so, there they will disbelieve, not because it is false but because they are so commanded by their superiors, whose authority their interest and security obliges them rather to obey than to dispute. The mind is destroyed. Such conformity does not unbrute us, but unman us, for in taking away understanding, reason, judgment and faith, a man is let go to graze in the field with the rest of the beasts. Shall men suffer for not doing what they cannot do? Penn poses the question whether men must be persecuted here in this world if they do not go against the guidance of their consciences, and punished hereafter if they do? The end of persecution is the conformity of judgments and understandings to the acts of such as require it; the means are fines and imprisonments - "and bloody knocks to boot". The understanding can never be convinced by force: only by arguments that are rational, persuasive and suitable to its own nature - something that can resolve its doubts, answer its objections, enervate its propositions. "Force may make a hypocrite; 'tis faith grounded upon knowledge and consent that makes a Christian."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere Penn states: "Non-conformity may be ignorance, but apostacy is wilful distorting and erring from the faith, worship and discipline of the true church . . . . The worst enemies are those of a man's own house."<sup>2</sup> Thus, if there be error in religious matters, this error is to be attributed to a mistake in the understanding, for want of a better illumination. An error can never be dislodged, but by reason and persuasion as being most suitable to the intellect of man. Restraints

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 452.

<sup>2</sup> "The Spirit of Alexander the Coppersmith Rebuked", Works, II, 195, (underlining mine).

and persecutions are no convincing arguments to the most erring understanding in the world. On the contrary, they are slavish and brutish. The way of force makes, instead of an honest dissenter, a hypocritical conformist - nothing being more detestable to God and man. Such views, Penn declares, are the very maxims and axioms of conscience that Protestantism used in the defence of its own liberty.<sup>1</sup>

A few years later Penn produced several more doughty statements on this subject, declaring whatever the power and art of the spirit of man can produce will never be able to give or rule that true faith which overcomes the world.<sup>2</sup>

In his "Good Advice to the Church of England . . .", Penn argues that the true Church weapons are light and grace, and her punishments, censure and excommunication. He warned the Church not only of the inconsistency of tests for religion but also of the danger that such tests might one day be turned upon the Church herself. It was ridiculous to talk of giving liberty of conscience and at the same time imagine that those tests that exclude men from that service and reward ought to be continued. In the name of consistency, her own, and the public good, the Church was summoned to toleration.<sup>3</sup>

A mingling of religion with other affairs of life is very characteristic of Penn. Religion infuses, rather than replaces, secular interests with the Quaker. Hence Penn can include in this appeal to the churches the reminder that there are those charms in liberty and property that no endeavours can

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<sup>1</sup>"The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", Works, I, 451 f., 457.

<sup>2</sup>"Wisdom Justified of her Children", Works, II, 462 - 497.

<sup>3</sup>Works, II, 757, 771.

resist or disappoint. If there must be persecution let it be for man's works and not for his opinions, else it is beheading him before he is born.

Penn concludes his argument by an appeal to the patriotism of his countrymen:

. . . to be an Englishman, in the sense of <sup>the</sup> government, is to be a freeman, whether Lord or Commoner, to hold his liberty and possessions by laws of his own consenting unto, and not to forfeit them upon facts made faults, by humor, faction, or partial interest prevailing in the governing part against the constitution of the kingdom; but for faults only, that are such in the nature of civil government; to wit, breaches of those laws that are made by the whole, in pursuance of common right, for the good of the whole.<sup>1</sup>

Penn hammers this fact home when he notes that the moment a concession is made to any such breach upon their general liberty, for whatever reason, then men sacrifice themselves in the prejudices they draw upon others or suffer them to fall under. If as Englishmen they were mutually interested in the inviolable conservation of each other's civil rights, then surely in securing the rights of others they were safeguarding their own. Penn argued that the repeal of the Penal Laws and Tests would show to the world, and to men's own hearts, that this was so.<sup>2</sup> This is a selfish argument perhaps, but one that carried considerable weight.

A short time later Penn wrote his last contribution to the subject which need claim attention here. Plainly seeing that the Anglican hostility to the repeal of the Penal Laws was based on fear of the Roman Catholics, he points out that all the dissenters or non-conformists were, under existing laws, in the same boat; that if the laws were repealed, the Anglicans would gain the support of all the dissenters, who were in the country, to help to suppress

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 771.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also, The Reasonableness of Toleration and The Unreasonableness of Penal Laws and Tests (London: John Harris, 1687); and Comfort, William Penn, 129 f.

any hopes that the Catholics may entertain.

A national religion by law, where it is not so by number and inclination, is a national nuisance; for it will ever be a matter of strife. If she seeks to be safe but not to rule, that which preserves the rest secures her; if more is expected, 'tis less reasonable, in my opinion, for the rest to sacrifice their safety, to her authority then only to subject her rule to their security.<sup>1</sup>

What was wanted, Penn felt, was a Magna Charta for the religious freedom of the individual. The State was called upon to grant that document.

From the beginning of his crusade for religious liberty, Penn had struck the note of statesmanship, as well as of the sanctity of conscience. As early as 1667, during his first imprisonment, in Cork, he had written to the Earl of Orrery, Lord President of Munster, appealing for a speedy release of all the Quaker prisoners, and remarking:

But I presume, my Lord, the acquaintance you have had with other countries, must needs have furnished you with this infallible observation: that diversities of faith and worship contribute not to the disturbance of any<sup>2</sup> place, where moral uniformity is barely requisite to preserve the peace.

Penn's strenuous efforts on behalf of oppressed minorities were not exhausted in the defence of English Quakers but extended to the championship of similar groups on the Continent.<sup>3</sup> Then, too, Penn played a prominent and controversial role in the struggle for religious toleration for Roman Catholic adherents.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Great and Popular Objection against the Repeal of the Penal Laws and Tests (London: A. Sowle, 1688), 8 f.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 3.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see Penn's letter of 1674 to the authorities of the city of Emden, Works, I, 609 - 611. Cf. Beatty, op. cit., 123 f.

<sup>4</sup>See Beatty, op. cit., 150 - 155; Penn's early Letter Book (1667-1675), 123 f.; "First Speech to the Committee", Works, I, 118 f.; "Letter to Dr. Tillotson", 1686, Works, I, 128; A Letter to Mr. Penn with His Answer (London: Andrew Wilson, 1688), 8. In essentially the same form, this letter

Did Penn dispense too easily with the traditions and ideas of men, believing that there was a reasonableness in nature that was a compensation and resource? He read into the nature of man and of life certain fundamental principles which always urged a man to the good life. Yet his explanation did not seem to quite meet the difficulty. He had still to indicate the method of maintaining it. The authority by which a man guided his life Penn took for granted would be built up quite apart from the institutions which promoted conduct and order. Yet, we may ask, does not indifference to the actual content of the religion of a man's choice cast doubt on the sincerity of one's allegiance? A man has a strange religion when he continuously unmakes it, for it becomes no beacon guide to his life. Was the authority of the Inner Light sufficient to serve as that guide?

#### A Protest Against the Growing Church-State Alignment

The implication that Christians had a right to express freedom in religious matters at the expense of organised Christianity was a condition concerning which the State could not remain ignorant. On common ground the established churches universally persecuted Protestants and Catholics according to the interest or relationship of nations. Thereby were the organised churches secured among nations. It was merely the international aspect of those doctrines which the organised churches had forged within each nation. One saw the churches everywhere crushing the sanctity of opinion on the anvil

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selection may be found in Works, I, 131 - 139, especially 137 (A Letter from William Popple, Secretary to the Plantation Office to William Penn, and William Penn's Answer). Notice, however, Penn's reference to preserving "the common Protestantism of the Kingdom", 137. For further thoughts by Penn concerning this subject, see Fruits of An Active Life (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, 1945), "Religion", 15 - 42, and "Toleration", 70 - 76. These pages contain selections from the works of Penn, 1668-1699.

of their interests. One now knows why the churches held so closely to national tradition. Here was a power which would hold both Church and nation together. It was the natural tendency of all organised religion to court lay power for its establishment. As a result, the Church began to appreciate the personality of the nation, as the nation likewise appreciated its Church. The armour of authority was a matter of no small importance to the Church that was defended and secured thereby. Only on this foundation did the Church act. After all, was it not true that the Christian of the Church of England could no more help being an English citizen than the citizen of England could help being a member of the Church of England? Of supreme value was national tradition, therefore, to the security of the Church. Indeed, the sincerity of the organised Church could be measured by the ardour with which it applauded it. It is here that one found the perfect union between Church and State and the marriage of their interests. For tradition was the guiding star of authority; and only from the wisdom of a mutual past could authority find life and substance in obedience from her subjects.

Admittedly, the Church learned thereby the politics of authority, but in return authority had taken her into account. If Christianity in England met nationality in England, Protestantism was a medium which could include them both and, at the same time, set in motion the forces necessary for their preservation. The Protestant tradition of the nation was one of the formative elements of its authority, and, at the same time, the reason that the later Stuart's efforts appeared to the age to be in direct conflict with the will of national authority. Authority was not a mass of dry bones, but drew its life from the blood of human disposition. The Church, if it desired authority, must always avail itself of, and never ignore, those conditions which encouraged obedience. In an era of nationalism, as it existed in England, the Church

would understand that obedience was certain where it was placed securely on a national plane. The official policy of the Church followed, and did not precede, the attitude of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

As these truths began to dawn upon the consciousness of William Penn, there came a gradual shift in emphases in his struggle for religious toleration. The position and power of the Church was increasingly aligned with that of the State. This being so, the benefits of freedom of religion must be seen as applying to the nation as well as to the individual. As early as 1671, during his imprisonment in Newgate, Penn appealed by letter "To the High Court of Parliament", which was then considering more drastic means of enforcing the Conventicle Act. In this epistle Penn asserts the belief of the Quakers in civil government as God's ordinance for the punishment of the evil-doers. Although he admits that they cannot comply with the laws prohibiting the worship of God according to conscience, it being God's prerogative to preside in matters of faith and worship, "yet we both own and are ready to yield obedience to every ordinance of man relating to human affairs, and that for conscience sake".<sup>2</sup>

Throughout his writings Penn distinguishes between "fundamental laws", which are indispensable and immutable, and temporary and alterable laws reflecting changing opinions and judgments. It was under the latter type of law that the Quakers were being persecuted, the Anglicans of the period, according to Penn, making religion State policy. The use to which such laws were being put destroys the peace, the prosperity and the unity of the nation. A point to which Penn will turn again is that those temporary laws have deprived the people of ancient privileges gained for them in earlier reigns. This point will be

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<sup>1</sup>Vide Belasco, op. cit., 182 ff.; Comfort, William Penn, 46.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 41 f.

considered further in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that Penn early set forth the assumption, basic in his reasoning at other times, that the English Parliament was not sovereign and that the King might set aside a "temporary" law. Magistrates should be given discretion as to how they arrived at "the main end, which is voluntas magistri, salusque regis et populi".<sup>1</sup> One cannot help but notice here in Penn an inconsistency in method and the equally obvious consistency in purpose.

Several reasons for freedom of conscience have been mentioned already in considering Penn's "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience".<sup>2</sup> One further reason remains to be examined. Persecution, Penn asserts, carries with it a contradiction to government, which he defines as "an external order of justice, or the right and prudent disciplining of any society by just laws, either in the relaxation or execution of them".<sup>3</sup> The just nature of government lies in a fair and equal retribution; but nothing can be more unequal than that men should be rated more than their proportion to answer the necessities of government, and yet should not only receive no protection from it but by it be seized of their liberties and properties. Surely if men be contributaries to the maintenance of government they are entitled to the protection which it affords. Further, it is an act of injustice on the part of government to inflict penalties for intellectual disagreement. Such penalties cannot convince the understanding; and for the government of this world to intermeddle with what belongs to the government of another, and which can have no ill aspect or influence upon

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<sup>1</sup>Letter "To J. H. and his Companions", 1674, Works, I, 170. Cf. Letter Book (1667 - 1675), 144 - 150; Beatty, op. cit., 125 f.

<sup>2</sup>Supra, pp. 139 - 143.

<sup>3</sup>Works, I, 453.

it, shows more of invasion than right and justice. Penn here again draws the distinction between "laws fundamental" and "laws superficial".<sup>1</sup> The laws of restraint fell under the latter category. To continue persecution under them overturns the very ground of the Protestant retreat from Rome.<sup>2</sup> Such policies will never succeed for "reproach has followed the Christian religion, when the professors of it have used a coercive power upon conscience; force never yet made either a good Christian or a good subject".<sup>3</sup> Becoming very practical, Penn points out that if persecution continues there will be no peace for the nation, no plenty either for those who suffer directly and for their oppressors, and no unity, which is requisite to uphold men as a civil society.<sup>4</sup>

The single question to be resolved in the case briefly will be this: whether any visible authority (being founded in its primitive institution upon those fundamental laws that inviolably preserve the people in all their just rights and privileges) may invalidate all or any of the said laws without an implicit shaking of its own foundation, and a clear overthrow of its own constitution of government, and so reduce them to their statu quo prius, or first principles: the resolution is every man's, at his own pleasure . . . .<sup>5</sup>

Penn re-emphasises the Quaker readiness to obey the ordinances of men which are only relative of human and civil matters, and not points of faith and practice in worship. The real cause of wars and revolutions and dangers to government is not the toleration of others to live as the free men God made them but rather the narrowness of spirit depicted in persecution. Where there is toleration the empire stands safe. The very open nature of Quaker meetings is used to illustrate their peaceful purposes. The Quaker apologist concludes with an appeal for liberty of conscience as an undoubted

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 453, 455.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 454.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 455 (underlining mine).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

right by the law of God, of nature and of country.<sup>1</sup>

Penn addresses his arguments not only to the reason and consciences of the rulers and people, but also to their feelings of humanity. In a small work, "The Continued Cry of the Oppressed for Justice", he relates many cases of great suffering among Friends on account of religion.<sup>2</sup> He continues his appeal to "Caesar", that is, Charles II, to beware of the Anglican clamour for uniformity in religion. The economic factor is not ignored.<sup>3</sup> Not only does Penn claim that the Quakers are right in acting according to the spirit within them, but also that in so doing they belong to the line of recognised Protestant theologians. He adds:

Forasmuch as the maintenance of justice and preservation of the peace of civil societies have in all ages been the great end of government . . . (persecution under the laws for conformity) and this not for refusing conformity to the state or denying Caesar his due or being chargeable to parishes or useless to the government, but only because of our conscientious dissent from the present church . . . seems to be an alteration in the ancient English government, by making an ecclesiastical conformity the grand and necessary qualification in Englishmen to the peaceable enjoyment of their natural and civil inheritances . . . .<sup>4</sup>

Penn is by no means adverse to paying due homage to royalty, not merely with reference to England, but abroad as well. It is true, he states, that the Quakers "honor all men in the Lord . . . but much more, Kings, and those whom God hath placed in authority over us".<sup>5</sup> In speeches before a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 456 - 464. It is possible that Penn did not realise the ultimate political significance of his own stand, as he eliminates himself from the ranks of those whose dissent is "civil and political" in distinction from "religious and conscientious" - 467.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 705 - 710.

<sup>3</sup>See Comfort, William Penn, 123.

<sup>4</sup>Works, I, 706.

<sup>5</sup>"To the King of Poland", Works, I, 58.

committee of Parliament he affirms:

I think it not amiss, but very reasonable, yea, my duty now to declare to you . . . first, that we believe government to be God's ordinance, and next, that this present government is established by the providence of God and law of the land, and that it is our Christian duty readily to obey it in all its just laws, and wherein we cannot comply through tenderness of conscience, in all such cases not to revile or conspire against the government, but with Christian humility and patience tire out all mistakes about us and wait their better information, who, we believe, do as undeservedly as severely treat us, and I know not what greater security can be given by any <sup>1</sup> people or how any government can be easier from the subjects of it.

Gradually Penn found that his activities on behalf of the struggle for religious toleration led him more and more into prominent participation in English politics. The otherworldliness of many Quakers made them look askance upon such participation; and their exclusion from public office and resentment towards a persecuting government re-enforced their subordination of politics to religion. But the condition of public affairs modified Penn's private theory, and he determined to utilize political devices for the cure of political evils. As a child of high parentage, and a friend of kings, he was notably qualified in several ways for this attempt, despite his membership in a despised religious sect. Penn concluded that the printed word was not the only, or perhaps the most effective contribution he could make in the great struggle. He therefore plunged into practical, partisan politics in the campaign to elect his friend Algernon Sidney to Parliament. Penn's efforts here, while not committing the Quakers as a body, do set out unmistakably the views of the man who was their Parliamentary manager. The unfortunate outcome

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 119 f. The reference to "tire out all mistakes about us" is surely a Quaker mode of thought, and so often effective! Cf. Samuel M. Janney, History of the Religious Society of Friends, II (Philadelphia: T. Ellwood Zell, 1861), 291 f.; Samuel M. Janney, Life of William Penn (6th ed., Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1882), 140.

of this campaign need not concern the reader here.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the sufferings which befell the Quakers, Penn drove home to the authorities the experience which many Friends had undergone: namely, being denied the lawful judgment of their peers. Often they were tried in absentia, with the judge and jury being one and the same; or the juries, being so overawed at the presence of the judge, would bring in a verdict out of sole desire to please the magistrate.<sup>2</sup> In 1683 he wrote to the Duke of Ormond: "It is not our will to vex men for their belief and modest practice of their faith with respect to the other world, into which province and sovereignty, temporal power reaches not from its very nature and end."<sup>3</sup> A few years later he further pointed out the inconsistency of the government forbidding freedom of worship to native Englishmen, while, at the same time, allowing the worship of foreign Jews and French Protestants resident in England to proceed unmolested.<sup>4</sup>

In March, 1685-6, the King, probably at Penn's instance, made proclamation of pardon to all who were in prison for conscience's sake, whereby some twelve hundred Quakers regained their liberty. About the same time, under the title, "A Persuasive to Moderation to Church Dissenters", 1686, Penn published an article for the immediate repeal of the penal laws. It was addressed to King and Council and developed his great argument that it was the union of interests and not of opinions that gave peace to kingdoms. Coming after his initial experiences in Pennsylvania, the document showed Penn as an optimist,

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<sup>1</sup>See Hull, op. cit., 211 ff.; Lloyd, op. cit., 91. Chapter VI will consider Penn's views during the campaign.

<sup>2</sup>"A Preface to a Book of Sufferings", Works, I, 228 f.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in "Address of Monsignor Kieran", Penn and Religious Liberty (Philadelphia: n.p., 1908), 15.

<sup>4</sup>See Comfort, William Penn, 126 f., a reference to Penn's "Considerations Moving to a Toleration and Liberty of Conscience."

undismayed by the character of the people whom he wished to persuade. In the abstract, such arguments from authority might well be counted upon to impress authoritarians, if those authoritarians be both consistent and logical. Penn set forth some interesting qualifications of the theory that conscience should be untrammelled. That such a thing as conscience - the apprehension and persuasion a man has of his duty to God - existed, must not be denied.<sup>1</sup> He defined liberty of conscience as "a free and open profession and exercise of that duty, especially in worship";<sup>2</sup> but he added a qualification: "I always premise this conscience to keep within the bounds of morality and that it be neither frantic nor mischievous, but a good subject, a good child, a good servant in all the affairs of life; as exact to yield to Caesar the things that are Caesar's as jealous of withholding from God the thing that is God's".<sup>3</sup> This qualification, as Beatty points out,<sup>4</sup> is so charged with ambiguity that its precise meaning would be difficult of determination.

"A Persuasive to Moderation to Church Dissenters" was presented to James II; one may perhaps question whether in thus defining his own views Penn was influenced by no motive other than the simple desire to state his convictions. To what extent can one inspired by the Inner Light foredoom his conscience to be "but a good subject, a good child, a good servant", even in all the affairs of this life, particularly when those affairs are likely to be regulated by a government so arbitrary and despotic as that of James II? Penn went on to define toleration as an "admission of dissenting worships, with impunity to the dissenters".<sup>5</sup> This definition supposes, of course, an

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<sup>1</sup>Works, II, 729.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Beatty, op. cit., 132.

<sup>5</sup>Works, II, 736.

established church, or at least a religious body favoured in some way above dissenters but having no power to punish them. A thoroughgoing libertarian of the present day would be as little satisfied under such a regime as he would be if possessed of a conscience that was obliged to keep "within the bounds of morality" as externally defined.

The Quaker leader makes clear that the current objections to toleration are based on the alleged danger to the interests of Church and State. The Church is fearful lest failure to punish dissenters result in such latitude as would keep up the dis-union and, instead of compelling dissenters into a better way, leave them in the possession and pursuit of their old errors. The State is fearful lest tolerance hazard a change of the State, the national form being interwoven with the frame of the government. It is to this latter fear that Penn devotes his attention. To controvert these objections by the State, he contends that both governments and reigning families have survived safely under changing religions, instancing England, Germany and Denmark. Indeed, a government can better maintain itself against separate small bodies than against one great hostile religion, which might, as it has done, upset the whole existing system.

In answer to the question as to whether a government, and especially a monarchy, is safe under religious toleration, Penn maintains that a sovereign's safety depends upon civil rather than ecclesiastical obedience; that property and civil rights must be disentangled from mere opinion; that "mankind by nature fears power and melts at goodness"; that unified loyalty is of value to the prince; that the enemy is afraid of unified people, because for a prince "to be loved at home is to be feared abroad".<sup>1</sup> What the Quaker was trying to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 730 ff., especially 738, 739.

do here was to prove to Parliament that if the Protestants stopped persecution of each other and all held together, none need fear the Catholics or such a kindly king as Penn took James to be. At the same time, the Quaker leader was working to keep the King from ruining his own popularity by his open favour of his Catholic subjects. Penn appealed to the monarch's sense of dignity and to the exalted nature of his position. Princes, more than ordinary mortals, needed to be tolerant. Intolerance might deprive the monarchy of some of its best subjects. Policy, then, if no higher motive, would dictate to rulers the value of religious toleration. "'Tis the mercies of princes that above all their works give them the nearest resemblances to Divinity in their administration."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, history was soon to show that Penn was setting up straw men against which to direct his arguments.

#### The Social Significance of the Protest Against Intolerance

While it is neither the desire nor intention of the present writer to go fully into the social significance of the protest against intolerance, preferring to defer such a consideration to the discussion on colonial Pennsylvania, some brief mention of the social repercussions in England is called for. The demand on the part of the Quakers for liberty of conscience was bound to result in social repercussions. Such a demand will always arouse the conservative forces in society. The Quakers quarrelled with the virtues of the seventeenth century, for these virtues had played their part and were rapidly degenerating into habits, receiving no intimate approval. Undoubtedly the greatest virtues accepted by the moral standard of society were connected with Church institutionalism. This was not least due to the fact that the division

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 737.

between Church and State had been commonly misconstrued. Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's implied that men should withhold their spiritual needs in social life. It damned and impoverished the standard of society. One can see here the point of the Quaker refusal to pay tithes. It was the logical cap of the whole system. The payment of tithes was bound up with that which, in the old order, stood in the way of freedom of conscience. The fact was that in their struggles against tithes the Quakers were denying the authority of the State or prescription to give any ultimate sanction to the ownership of property. Here, in a way, was the counterpart of the Quaker objection to written revelation. Men could not be bound by any contract in the past of which they were not aware, unless it obtained their continuous and intimate approval. Nor was there any validity in any State command so long as it did not convince the judgment of man. Men were endowed with a Light which would expose the dark secretions of authority.

The social and economic benefits of toleration had already been noted by Penn. In his "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", he had informed his public that the laws regarding non-conformity, far from benefiting the country, would be the assured ruin of it were they executed.

For where there is a decay of families, there will be of trade; so of wealth, and in the end of strength and power. And if both kinds of relief fail, men, the prop of republics; money, the stay of monarchies, this as requiring mercenaries, that as needing freemen, farewell the interest of England . . . .<sup>1</sup>

The "peace, plenty and unity"<sup>2</sup> so essential to the welfare of a nation and her people will not be forthcoming should persecution continue. Temperance enriches a land; it is a political good as well as a religious one for all

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 454; cf. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 455, and supra, p. 150.

governments.<sup>1</sup> When people have done their duty to God, and in relieving the misery of their fellow-men, then it will be time to think of pleasing themselves. Would that all the wealth being wasted on selfish and unimportant luxuries be devoted to the care and eradication of social and economic ill. Penn, the social reformer, was keen on this. And he rounded out his argument with the observation that the security of property or civil right, from being forfeitable for religious dissent, became a security to the throne and the royal family.<sup>2</sup> The alternatives which faced the dissenters were either to be "ruined, fly or conform".<sup>3</sup>

The struggle for religious toleration obviously was bound to have far-reaching ramifications not merely in the political realm, but in the social and economic realms as well.

The logical result of such religious freedom was to deny the whole ground of Church establishment. Once the infallible Church was deserted there would be many opinions as to what was God's will. The days of confident assertion were over. It was in the obscurity of religious obligation that the peril of the State loomed often unnoticed. The necessity of a Visible Church gave the churches an obvious interest in political authority. Authority must come to their assistance if they were to endure. The conscience of the dissenter was not his justification. The cases of conscience of the Quaker were directed against those principles which made the intolerant attitude of the churches necessary. The interest of the seventeenth century was in the tend-

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<sup>1</sup>"No Cross, No Crown", Works, I, 372 f. Cf. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 61 - 63, and n. 6, 61 f.

<sup>2</sup>"A Persuasive to Moderation", Works, II, 736 f.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 742 f.

encies then operating that enabled the Church to settle submissively and passively under the authority of the State. "Whether consciously or not, the Church was moving to a solution of the problem. Convinced that authority within the Church had as great a right to take advantage of the general freedom as the rebellious spirits, the bride of Christ was secretly to have intercourse with the State. The familiarity of her relationship was in a short time to breed the contempt which she earned."<sup>1</sup> Before long, the struggle of the Church came to its remarkable conclusion. "It found highest visible authority in the State, and contented itself with advising those who spoke for it. . . . The State reaped a bargain in the transaction."<sup>2</sup> Further, it was good for the State that the Church should go on persuading the conscience of its members. There was, therefore, something of necessity to State authority in the religious persecution of the seventeenth century.

It was no concern for the individual conscience which prompted the State to eventually permit Church toleration within limits in the seventeenth century: rather was it the sign of her determination to pursue relentlessly, and crush the individual conscience, no matter where it wandered in the new experiences of a new world. The State had earned the right of domination: it would permit no escape.<sup>3</sup>

In a society of sects and schisms it was necessary that the powers of Church and State be revised. In glorifying the individual directly under the guidance of the Inner Light, the Quakers were naturally less zealous for the authority represented in these institutions, so long as it meant their continued persecution for nonconformity. This new "religion of the spirit" would never be forthcoming in the power necessary unless it were intimately and rationally related to the old order. A philosophy of free conscience evolved into a philosophy of reform.

While it is true that the record of William Penn as an advocate of

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 142. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 155. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 156.

religious toleration is not free from compromise - one has only to think of the general prejudice of his day against the Roman Catholics - he was nevertheless the enemy of cruel and violent persecution for religion. As he surveyed the battleground of his cause, with the growing awareness that the struggle was not only against Church intolerance but necessarily would involve an attack against the unmitigated and unwarranted use - and abuse - of State sovereignty, Penn concluded that religion belonged outside the control of the State, that the civil rights of Englishmen must be regained, and that the political union of loyal citizens did not depend upon unity of religious belief.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ATTACK ON STATE SOVEREIGNTY

#### A. Historical exposition of the attack

##### 1. Early writings and tests

- a. First blows against State power
- b. Trials and imprisonments:
  - (1) The Penn-Mead Trial, 1670
  - (2) The imprisonment of 1671 at Newgate
- c. The Test Act of 1673

##### 2. Two notable works of 1675

- a. "A Treatise of Oaths" - a protest against requiring oaths
- b. "England's Present Interest Considered" - an argument for the inviolability of English rights

##### 3. Three works of significance in 1679

- a. "An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions" - a careful attempt to determine the province of Church and State.  
An appeal to civil magistrates
- b. "England's Great Interest in the Choice of This New Parliament" - the presentation of a statesmanlike programme for toleration
- c. "One Project for the Good of England" - a plea for civil union as the surest guarantee of civil liberty

##### 4. A forward look: the later years of Penn's efforts to secure religious toleration for his Society in England

- a. His association with James II
- b. His relationship with William and Mary
- c. Later writings: a summary.

B. General principles now brought to light

1. The political principle of toleration
2. The political principle of nationalism
3. The political principle of property
4. The political principle of human interest.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ATTACK ON STATE SOVEREIGNTY

The protest against Church intolerance by William Penn soon led him to face the whole problem of State sovereignty. He could not allow the significance of the relationship between Church and State to pass unnoticed. The modern earnestness of his tone showed how Penn realised the gravity of the issues at stake.

The exact nature of the "attack" on State sovereignty by Penn must be clearly understood at the outset. He was not against the State per se, but rather against the forces of the State when these forces were linked with those of the Church in a programme of religious persecution. A continual play of interest, strengthening the sacerdotal attitude, was the evil of which Penn loudly complained. When this has been said, it must be recognised at the same time that the implications of Penn's attack, as history was to show, were far-reaching in their effect on the political notion of sovereignty, even down to our own day.

Following an historical exposition of the various works in which Penn formulated his attack on State sovereignty, we shall attempt to draw out the implications, the basic principles which were brought to light by the attack. These principles were to be used later by William Penn in the "holy experiment" of Pennsylvania. However, in order to firmly ground Penn's position in its Quaker context, a few words must be said first on the viewpoint of the Church toward the State, and an effort made to show how this viewpoint came into direct conflict with Quaker notions of the Inner Light and the relation of the Light

to men in society.

Faced by the growing authority of the State, the Church found that the power which existed in the State could be utilised for her own ends. Indeed, the authority of the State was in effect the main pillar of Church establishment. As viewed by the Church, the quarrel of the State with dissentients was essentially the quarrel of the Church with her heretics; for he who proved the moral invalidity of authority might bring the whole structure of the Church into collapse and confusion. It was right for the Church to prevail; and so the disposition of her power was right also. A powerful **State** is the indissoluble associate of an eternal Church. This is why a fiction of moral superiority inhered in the will of the State. Thereby the rightness of the Church security remained. It is not difficult to see how this outlook of the Church brought forth the opposition of the Society of Friends.

The cause of the Quakers was intimately related to the conditions of their age. The social order, they saw, was vital in the influence it has on the interests and experiences of society. In so far as the social conscience partakes of and expresses the individual conscience, thus far will its dictates exert an obligation upon the individual.

Of course, neither the individual nor society could be said to possess ultimate sovereignty: this was the possession of God. Through the Inner Light, however, the imperative will of God was to be heard by all men at all times. His dictates did not need interpretations by priests, philosophers or kings, but were for each individual to determine. The Law of God was not to be effective in a pre-political stage and diverted ever afterwards from men's self-determination by the gilded bonds of contract. Rather, self-determination was to be the necessary accompaniment of every stage of man's existence. The highest judgment of men could be pitted against the sovereign will of the State.

If there were a contract there would be as much disagreement as to its meaning and interpretation as was the case with the written word. The human spirit was too great to be bound down, and that man served God most who strove most to understand Him.

The sovereignty of God therefore involved a continuous evaluation of the acts of the legislator; no morality inhered in legislation by the mere enunciation. It needed the moral allegiance of man to obtain validity. A diligent and, indeed, arduous effort is expected of the individual. It is expected of him to exert the full extent of his powers, short of violence or compulsion, to dissolve himself of the responsibility of acting against his light.<sup>1</sup>

This understanding of the individual's relation to law, of course, takes away the whole foundation of sovereignty as the State considered it. Was this presumptuous effort of the individual not a threat to the stability of institutions? Limiting the State, in this manner, on all sides, did not the Quaker attitude lead straight to anarchy?

The sovereign State had to take into account that it could not exact obedience from all men in all circumstances. A sovereign State, however, can have no meaning unless it implies the right to command and the fact of obedience. The effort of Quakerism had been to drive a wedge between force and power, and on the basis of this distinction the Quaker attitude toward the State was expressed. The Friends demonstrated that the State possessed great resources of compulsion, but force had no relation to power where some were willing to suffer and disobey. To the extent that the State, through its organisation, expressed a will and demanded an obedience, the State would less likely be obeyed from a sense of duty. In a realistic analysis, the sovereignty of the State, when claimed without reference to the individual will, was itself a danger to society. To the Quaker, there was no moral validity in any legislative

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 112.

act except in so far as it inspires obedience from a sense of duty. The fact of disobedience was a proof of the failure, no matter the cause. The experience and history of Quakerism were to become a striking comment on the claims of the State. The protest which Quakerism made never bent to the ruling of the State; far from that, by adhering to their determination the Quakers stamped their protest upon the very fabric of society.

### Historical Exposition of William Penn's Attack

William Penn was keenly aware of the tension which was building up during the latter part of the seventeenth century as a result of the growing Church-State alignment. He soon came to see that the Quaker protest against Church intolerance, by virtue of the increasing reliance upon the State by the Church, was bound, sooner or later, to bring the Quakers face-to-face with the problem of State sovereignty. We have just examined the context of the Quaker position as a necessary prelude to the consideration of William Penn's own line of attack. To the exposition of his attack proper our attention is now invited.

#### 1. Early Writings and Tests

There was little persecution of the Quakers in 1668, with the reins of government in the hands of the tolerant Buckingham, and Penn had free service, besides going once or twice to court in the summer on behalf of suffering Friends.<sup>1</sup> The Quakers generally acknowledged the authority of the State with three exceptions: they would not fight, they would not take an oath, and they refused "hat-honour". In the first two instances, their disobedience was grounded on what

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<sup>1</sup>"Fragments of an Apology for Himself", Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, III, Part II (1836), 233 - 242. (Hereafter called Memoirs).

they believed was the authority of Scripture (Matthew 5:44; 5:33, 34), and in the last instance, on their belief that the uncovering of the head is the alone outward signification of their adoration towards God and that it was not lawful to give such an honour unto men. Although the testimony against hat-honour was soon regarded by the rest of the world as a harmless eccentricity which could be safely ignored, the former two objections were to cause considerable trouble.<sup>1</sup> In "Innocency with her Open Face",<sup>2</sup> and "No Cross, No Crown",<sup>3</sup> Penn early asserted that the Quakers did not disturb the civil peace. Rather obedience, active or passive, was their principle, and they believed in the policy of toleration as both a political and religious good. However, even at this time, Penn was reluctant to allow the joining of forces of Church and State.

. . . as a gentle treatment of dissenters has ever been the most effectual way for uniting differences in religion, (at least preserving of the peace) so should all magistrates remember . . . that their authority cannot reasonably extend beyond the end for which it was appointed, which being not so to enthrone themselves sovereign moderators in causes purely conscientious, but only to maintain the impartial execution of justice, in regulating civil matters with most advantage to the tranquillity, enrichment, and reputation of their territories, they should not bend their forces, nor employ their strength to gratify the self-seeking spirit of the priests, or any private interest whatsoever; - an exercise below the dignity of their office, and much too narrow for that universal influence it should have upon the public.<sup>4</sup>

In his letter to the Lord Arlington, Penn points out that the only persons unfit for political societies are those who maintain principles

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<sup>1</sup>See Lloyd, op. cit., 80 - 96.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 270 f.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 372.

<sup>4</sup>"The Guide Mistaken, and Temporising Rebuked", Works, II, 31. Cf. 23.

destructive of "industry, fidelity, justice and obedience"; and surely the Quakers, as well as the majority of the non-conformists are not guilty of holding to such principles. Freeing the prisons of those wrongly charged would therefore be greatly in the "Kings' interest".<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after his return to England from a visit to Ireland, in 1670, Penn became involved in his most notable trial, which is famous in English history for establishing the rights of defendants and juries. The circumstances surrounding this incident have been much proclaimed.<sup>2</sup> If there had been any doubt in Penn's mind as to the national importance of maintaining freedom of conscience and its attendant consequence of toleration of worship, it was dispelled by the interest of the public aroused by what was in reality two trials, one of the alleged culprits, and the later one of their jury.

William Hepworth Dixon said of Penn's court experience:

The importance of this extraordinary trial can hardly be over estimated, either as a piece of history shedding light on the opinions held in high places in the age immediately succeeding a time in which, even by the confession of men otherwise adverse to it, justice had been incorruptibly administered; or as a stand taken once for all upon the ancient liberties of England against the encroachments of an apostate king and a licentious court. It established a truth which William Penn never ceased to inculcate - that unjust laws are powerless weapons when used against an upright people. It proved that in England at least the ruling power of the moment, even when agreed in all its branches, was not impotent; that there still remained, and ever must remain, a grand check to unjust government in the public conscience. . . . It may be said . . . that these trials gave a new meaning - infused a new life, into the institution of the jury. . . . From that day the jury ceased to be a mere institution - it became a living power in the state: a power not inferior to either King or Commons.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Works, I, 151 - 154.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Works, I, 7 - 35, and 502 - 511; Comfort, William Penn, 105 - 117; Comfort, Remember William Penn, 34 - 50; Braithwaite, Second Period of Quakerism, 68 - 74; Brailsford, op. cit., 305 - 322, especially 312 ff.; W. W. Comfort, "The Quakers", Pennsylvania History Studies: No. 2 (Gettysburg: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1948), 12 - 14.

<sup>3</sup> William Penn (London: Chapman and Hall, 1851) 112 - 114.

Worship, Penn declared, can never be a crime; no meeting or assembly designing to worship God can be unlawful.<sup>1</sup> The right so to meet is one of the ancient rights of Englishmen, finding its roots in the Magna Charta.<sup>2</sup> Here again is to be found the distinction between law by power and law by contract.<sup>3</sup> The laws securing liberty and property are unalterable; they are not pro tempore only, but are grounded in the eternal. These points are reinforced in his "A Seasonable Caveat against Popery" and "Truth Rescued from Imposture", written during the same year, 1670.<sup>4</sup>

In February, 1671, Penn was arrested for preaching at a Quaker meeting, taken to the Tower of London, and sentenced to six months in Newgate for refusal to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy.<sup>5</sup> He made use of his imprisonment by writing numerous letters and pamphlets in defence of his principles, and revising his "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience". In reply to an attack by Thomas Jenner and Timothy Taylor,<sup>6</sup> Penn states the conviction of the Quakers that it is the will of God and dictate of nature and reason that mankind should associate or live in society. Such societies should have just and righteous laws. Again, such laws are by nature either fundamental, and so indispensable, or superficial, and so alterable. All laws ought to be punctually kept: neither the innocent be punished or the

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 22. Cf. Comfort, William Penn, 119, 133; Beatty op. cit., 29; "The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication", Works, II, 345.

<sup>4</sup>Works, I, 467 - 486, especially 481 - 484; Works, I, 486 - 521, especially 499, 502, 510 f.

<sup>5</sup>See Comfort, Remember William Penn, 50 - 53.

<sup>6</sup>"A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Part II, Works, II, 32 - 90, especially 32 - 34, 72 f.

guilty go free. Correspondingly, the magistrates chosen to administer the laws must be chosen with care. They must, in turn, be faithful and true to the trust committed unto them. Except for conscience, the people stand as firmly obliged to obey the magistrate and diligently to seek the well being of the government. No people can justly claim the benefit of that government they seek to ruin.

In "The Proposed Comprehension",<sup>1</sup> the Quaker leader tries to show that there is no reason, either in conscience or government, why the Quakers as well as all others should not be tolerated. Indeed, the Friends are pictured as a party "in the bottom of their very soul, greater lovers of the good old English government and prosperity of these kingdoms" than the rest of those now being persecuted. While it may be true that differences in judgment about religion be a sufficient reason to excommunicate a man, yet nothing certainly of that sort ought to deprive men of "their air natural and civil to breath freely in".

The Test Act of 1673 showed that Parliament regarded the Church as a political instrument of extraordinary value. Under the terms of the Act no person was eligible for civil or military employment in the service of the State unless he took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, renounced formally the doctrine of transubstantiation, and received the sacrament according to the rites of the Church. Such a sturdy measure could not fail to produce a startling result. Though efficient in discovering and removing Papists, it ran too far in other directions. By forcing dissenters to qualify and to obtain certificates from the clergy, or else to resign from public offices, the Test Act intensified the hostility between Anglican and Puritan, gave rise to the most obnoxious forms of hypocrisy, and finally committed the respectable

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<sup>1</sup>Works, II, 186 - 189.

non-conformist elements to a stern political opposition. For Quakers the new act itself had no fresh pitfalls. It was not specifically aimed in their direction. Quakers, on the question of the oath alone, were excluded already from the public service. But they suffered greatly from the withdrawal of the Indulgence and from the growing militancy of the Anglicans. Now they were to be herded into the prisons again, and fined or bullied or threatened by angry magistrates. Penn protests:

Certainly there is such a thing as civil uniformity, where a religious one may be inobtainable, and methinks there can be nothing more irrational than to sacrifice the serenity of the one to an adventurous . . . procurement of the other. Let men be men before Christians, and not repute that the best way of making them the last, which inevitably destroys the very constitution of the first . . . . It is not my purpose to dispute for liberty of conscience, but recommend it.

. . . it is not for the interest or honor of his (the King's) government, for any to be over officious in the enlarging his prerogative beyond those bounds, the excellent fundamental laws of England have circumscribed the whole government with. No Prince's crown in Europe stands more firm than his, upon English law; the law gives both might and right . . . . We are no sycophants, yet we fear God and honor the King.<sup>2</sup>

Even stronger words than these were needed if the situation in England were to be met. These words were not long in appearing on the scene.

## 2. Two Notable Works of 1675.

In 1675 Penn produced two notable works, "A Treatise of Oaths" and "England's Present Interest Considered".<sup>3</sup> The testimony for truth and against oaths runs like a strong warp thread through the homespun of early Quaker

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<sup>1</sup>Letter "To Justice Fleming", Works, I, 157.

<sup>2</sup>"Wisdom Justified of her Children", Works, II, 487.

<sup>3</sup>Works, I, 612 - 672, 672 - 705.

history, but it was not until 1695, when the Affirmation Act was passed allowing Quakers to affirm in civil, though still not in criminal cases, that the testimony against oaths was finally recognised by Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Aside from its political importance, Penn's treatise on oaths ranks in far-reaching scholarship with "No Cross, No Crown" and "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience". No less than one hundred and twenty-two authorities, ranging from Pythagoras to William of Orange, are quoted in it to substantiate the futility and folly of exacting oaths. It is introduced by a short address to Parliament, signed by Penn himself and some of the most prominent members of the Society, showing the hardships under which they were suffering on account of their conscientious refusal to swear, and praying that measures might be taken for their relief. Basing his argument on the injunctions of Jesus (Matthew 5:34) and the Apostle James (5:12), Penn proceeds to attack the practice of requiring oaths. Such oaths, he declares, involve a basic distrust in man, by attempting to awe him into speaking the truth. This runs contrary to the belief in the omnipresence of God in the souls of men. It is a presumptuous tempting of God to summon Him as a witness to "our terrene and trivial businesses", and to expect Him to visit immediate afflictions upon perjurers. Oaths are useless as a safeguard against perjury. Further, the taking of oaths demands the pagan and superstitious form of kissing a book - especially the Bible, which forbids men to swear at all. This treatise by Penn was endorsed by twelve of his contemporary Quaker leaders, and became and still remains the Quaker classic on the subject. It does not appear to have

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<sup>1</sup>But see, Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 184 f.; "To agree to words which could be regarded as an oath by the civil authority that administered the Affirmation, but as less than an oath by those who took it, did not provide an honest solution of the question." Cf. "Wisdom Justified of her Children", Works, II, 487 - 489.

had any immediate influence on the Parliament or nation, for persecution still continued without abatement. This fact induced Penn to publish his second major treatise of the year, in which he offered many weighty considerations of a political nature to show the necessity of toleration.

Penn's acquaintance with the legal and constitutional history of his country is shown by the readiness with which he used it to argue for the inviolability of English rights. In this work, "England's Present Interest Considered", he traced the development of these rights from Saxon times with abundant citation of charters and statutes. An examination of this book reveals the essentials which Penn thought should characterise the religion of a society and the benefits which would result from such a regime. Following a graphic picture of the Quakers' sufferings, Penn pointed out that persecution had failed of its object of enforcing uniformity, but on the contrary had greatly increased nonconformity. Toleration was advocated as the best solution of the religious problem, and the advocacy of it was based on three grounds: namely, the rights of Englishmen, government impartiality, and the promotion of general and practical religion. Those rights and privileges which he terms "English", and which are the proper birthright of Englishmen, may be reduced to three: an ownership and undisturbed possession of property; a voting of every law that is made, whereby that ownership may be maintained; and influence upon, and real share in that judiciary power that must apply every such law, which is the ancient, necessary and laudable use of juries. All of these are documented from English history. Penn then proceeds to maintain a sentiment far in advance of that age: that so far from a government being weakened or endangered by a variety of religious sentiments, it is, on the contrary, strengthened by them, provided that all are equally tolerated, for it prevents combinations against the government.

The last chapter of this essay deals with general and practical religion. Among the reasons suggested as to why the adoption of such a general religion would benefit society, Penn offers these: that in this general religion all the "religious persuasions" of the country would be included and toleration would reign; general religion would bring back "ancient virtue"; the assurance that the fruits of toil were not to be forfeited as a penalty for religious dissent would insure that men became more industrious and diligent; finally, general religion would "render the magistrate's province more facile and government a safe as well as easy thing". Penn could not fail to utter a subtle rejoinder concerning the fear by many that if liberty were granted the dissenters would employ their meetings to insinuate against the government: "This objection may have some force so long as our superiors continue severity."<sup>1</sup> In the conclusion he draws this corollary: that the way to quiet differences and promote the public interest is, first, to maintain inviolably the rights of liberty and property; second, that the Prince govern himself upon a balance toward religious interests; and third, that minor differences be overlooked and practical religion promoted.

One may easily question whether Penn was not claiming too much for his proposed reform, but few will deny that an elimination of religious intolerance would effect a substantial improvement in the life of the nation. The point of all this was to adjure the Established Church to mind its own affairs. It had Parliament in its favour at the time, and was abusing its power to torment all nonconformist dissenters. It was not so much the Anglican Church as a recognised State Church that Penn was girding at; it was rather its assumption of infallibility and the right to persecute. While this must be said, at the

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<sup>1</sup>"England's Present Interest Considered", Works. I, 696.

same time Penn was growing ever more aware that the close association between Church and State meant that he could not divorce the one from the other: a protest against Church intolerance would inevitably involve, in one form or another, an attack against State sovereignty. There is no need of religious uniformity to guarantee national safety and prosperity. What is required for those ends is national unity based on confidence in civil government. This latter need is what Penn the founder will seek to satisfy a few years later in the frame and constitution of his land beyond the seas.

### 3. Three Works of Significance in 1679.

Letters on toleration followed during Penn's travels in Holland and Germany in 1677.<sup>1</sup> A few years later, the troubles of the nation still continuing, Penn wrote three works of significance for the struggle for religious toleration. The first of these was "An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions".<sup>2</sup> It proved its permanent value, if not its immediate popularity, by requiring a second edition a dozen years later. The first part of the book treats of various offences against the laws of morality, which were then alarmingly prevalent in England. The second part of the work treats of certain evils that relate to "The Ecclesiastical State of the Kingdom". The last point under this head deals with the propagation of faith by force, and considers, in this connection, the role of the civil magistrate. All of this leads up to persecution, which Penn denounced in a special "Appendix" on seven "causes and cure of persecution". Penn placed his address upon the placid and

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. William I. Hull, William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania (Swarthmore: Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, No. Two, 1935), ad passim, especially 281 f., 284 f., also 202 f. (1680).

<sup>2</sup>Works, II, 717 - 818.

convincing basis of historical experiences, and the citations he made of past events and classic statements rivalled in number, learning and cogency those of "No Cross, No Crown" and "A Treatise of Oaths". So far as his political position is concerned, the work is noteworthy for its careful attempt to determine the province of Church and State. "Let us confront our ecclesiastical matters with the plain text and letter of Holy Scripture; this is Protestant: and let us compare our civil transactions with the ancient laws and statutes of the realm; this is English."<sup>1</sup> For seventeen years, Penn says, protests have been made to Parliament without any lasting redress of the abuse of power exercised over conscience by the Anglican Church. He appeals now to the civil magistrates. "Not that I would have Church-Society or authority to be despised; they that do so are much in the wrong: let everything have its due place and just share: . . . but let them have no more. Let God have his part . . . ."<sup>2</sup> Penn goes on:

. . . to you that are in authority . . . consider your commission, and examine the extent of your authority, you will find that God and the government have impowered you to punish . . . impieties . . . . It was to prevent these enormities that government was instituted; and shall government indulge that which it is instituted to correct? This were to render magistracy useless. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Not the least of the reasons which Penn sets forth as enforcing his supplication is the "preservation of government". God has given the magistrates their office, and they are to serve Him in the fulfilling of their functions. "Mis-government is the occasion, though the devil be the cause of that mischief and ruin that attend nations." As executioners of the policies of the ecclesiastical authorities, the civil magistrates are also guilty of the charge of propagation by force.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 810. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 718. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 733. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 733, 741 - 743, 796.

. . . divine worship and all things relating to it belong unto God, civil obedience to Caesar . . . . it is not in the power of any man or men in the world to compel the mind rightly to worship God. Where this is but attempted, God's prerogative is invaded, and Caesar,<sup>1</sup> by which word I understand the civil government, engrosseth all. . . .

What are the things that belong to Caesar? To love justice, relieve the oppressed, right the fatherless, and in general to be a terror unto evil-doers and a praise to them that do well.<sup>2</sup> Those guilty of persecution for the sake of religion but "confound the things of Caesar with the things of God, divine worship with civil obedience, the Church with the State".<sup>3</sup> The maintenance of the national religion thereby makes Caesar the judge of what is God's Light!<sup>4</sup> Those who disagree with Caesar must lose either convictions and soul, or estates and liberty. "Let God send what Light He pleases into the world, it must not be received by Caesar's people, without Caesar's licence."<sup>5</sup> "Every spark of integrity must be extinguished where conscience is sacrificed to worldly safety and preferment."<sup>6</sup> This means tragedy, since it is one great end of government, by all laudable means to preserve sincerity. Penn is not slow to thrust home the point to "Caesar" that he is never to think him true that is false to his own conscience. Besides, "raped consciences treasure up revenge, and such persons are not likely to be longer friends to Caesar than he has preferments to allure them or power to deter them from being his most implacable enemies".<sup>7</sup>

Penn concludes with an understanding of the "Church" as not being found in time nor place, but in faith and worship.<sup>8</sup> It is with satisfaction that he quotes Hales of Eaton:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 797.   <sup>2</sup>Ibid.   <sup>3</sup>Ibid.   <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 799.   <sup>5</sup>Ibid.   <sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.   <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 813.

. . . the authority of kings over our outward man is not so absolute, but that it suffers a great restraint: it must stretch no farther than the Prince of our inward man pleases; for if secular princes stretch out the skirts of their authority to command ought by which our souls are prejudiced, the King of souls hath in this case given us a greater command, That we rather obey God than man.<sup>1</sup>

On the eve of the second Short Parliament, Penn published his noble address to the electors, "England's Great Interest in the Choice of this New Parliament".<sup>2</sup> He felt that the future of England, whether slavery or freedom, lay in the hands of the voters, and in their choice of representatives. It was a serious hour for the nation, following the alleged discovery of the Titus Oates' plot. Penn presented a statesmanlike programme: to protect Protestantism, impeach corrupt ministers of state, eliminate bribery from Parliament, provide for frequent Parliaments, tolerate Protestant dissenters at least, and give financial control of the monarchy to the Parliament - that is, to give to the power of the purse supremacy over the power of the sword. Toleration was made the aim and peroration of the address, although in this electoral manifesto, it was not made expressly to include the feared and hated Papists.<sup>3</sup> This document was a part of the campaign in which Penn was lending aid to his friend Algernon Sidney, who was unsuccessful in his contest for a seat in the Commons. Thus to carry out his programme, Penn stressed the need for free election, without fear, flattery or bribery, and the election of the right kind of men. The standard Penn prescribes for these is a high one, and is made specific by the statement of a dozen rules for the selection of the most fit.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 814 f.

<sup>2</sup>Works, II, 678 - 682.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Hull, William Penn, 213; Beatty, op. cit., 33, 152. The same was true of his "Address to Protestants" - Beatty, 152.

Hull declares:

it is plain from this pamphlet that he believed the opportunity had arrived for securing by peaceful, constitutional means that limited monarchy which Pym and Hampden had worked for in parliament and which Cromwell had fought for on the field of battle. As results of a constitutional government, Penn believed, would come peace and order in public affairs, prosperity, religious liberty, and genuine Christianity in private life.<sup>1</sup>

Penn thus stressed the supremacy of law. Human constitutions would govern the ideal state; but above them would be God and nature.

In his third notable work of that same year, "One Project for the Good of England",<sup>2</sup> Penn immediately addressed the new Parliament. The form of his address was a plea for civil union as the surest guarantee of civil liberty. He reminded his readers that the foundation and end of civil government was civil interest. With this civil interest, religious bigotry and persecution interfered. In-as-much as the existence of Protestantism in England was being threatened by Anglican persecution of Protestant nonconformists, enabling Jesuit plots and Catholicism to have an opportunity for competitive growth, Penn desired that all Protestants form a united front for the preservation both of Protestantism and of England. As a Quaker opposed to the taking of any oaths, he contended that the required oaths of allegiance and supremacy were ineffective as a means of detecting Papists. He proposed instead a form of affirmation of allegiance, with the opportunity to register publicly these affirmations as a matter of record, and with the appropriate penalty for failure to do so. In this work we see the principle of what Comfort calls "substantial unity rather than absolute uniformity", a principle "that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 213 f. Note the discussion of authorship and style, 214.

<sup>2</sup>Works, II, 682 - 691.

Quakers have always sought to observe in secular as well as in spiritual affairs".<sup>1</sup> What this means is that while Penn had firm faith in the unity and supremacy of the Divine Power, he was a pluralist rather than an absolutist in his view of political sovereignty. This in spite of occasional views quite inharmonious with those of the pluralist.<sup>2</sup>

Although Penn's political and literary efforts on behalf of religious toleration were unrivalled by any writer or statesman of the time, he himself felt, however, in 1680, that these efforts appeared to be fruitless. His appeals to king, judges, Parliament, Anglicans, Protestants, all the electors and inhabitants of England, seemed to have been in vain. Persecution continued rampant; fines, confiscation of property, flogging, imprisonment in stocks, banishment, imprisonment even unto death, were still endured by his long-suffering fellow-Quakers. Statistical records of their manifold sufferings were drawn up in 1680, and presented to one of the "short" Parliaments; and for these Penn wrote three prefaces, making one more desperate appeal.<sup>3</sup> In a short time, however, he was to turn his attention to his "Holy Experiment" across the seas, and the founding of a great commonwealth dedicated to both political and religious liberty. To a consideration of this subject, the concluding parts of this study will be devoted.

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<sup>1</sup>William Penn, 125.

<sup>2</sup>E.g., "This government must have a supreme authority in itself to determine and not be superseded or controlled by any other power, for then it would not be a government but a subjection, which is plain contradiction" - "One Project for the Good of England", Works, II, 683. Beatty, op. cit., 22, states that since the pamphlet was composed to defend the English government against papal encroachment that this fact explains the "lapse into political monism".

<sup>3</sup>Works, I, 226 - 229.

#### 4. A Forward Look.

Before turning from England, however, a few statements are in order with reference to the later years of Penn's efforts to secure religious toleration for his Society in the home country.

After the accession of James II to the throne, Penn found his continued association with the monarch to be a source of increasing criticism, especially in regard to the King's Roman leanings. He was continually forced to defend himself against the charge of being a Papist.<sup>1</sup> Penn's advocacy of religious toleration and his praise of James II for issuing the Declaration of Indulgence were ascribed by his enemies to ulterior and sinister motives. Among these, were love of money and the desire to restore England to the Stuart monarchy and Roman Catholicism. As a Jesuit in disguise, Penn was charged with merely pretending to believe in religious toleration; and his many treatises and speeches on this topic during the years 1685 to 1689 were regarded as a means of attaining his real object.<sup>2</sup> The exact nature of the relations between the Crown and Penn are still subject to obscurity and heated discussion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see "Fiction Found Out", Works, I, 126; and "A Defence of the Duke of Buckingham's Book of Religion and Worship", Works, II, 717.

<sup>2</sup>For example, see Penn's speech to the King, and the King's answer (1687), together with a note by the editor, Works, I, 130 f. For references regarding the story of the relations between James II and William Penn, see Beatty, op. cit., 9, n. 15; also, 39, 51, 154, where the author notes Penn's leniency toward the personal characters of Charles II and James II. The author's statement, 39, that Penn seemed in some respects "to have been in practice a tacit supporter of despotism, if not of kingship by divine right" must be interpreted with care. In one place Beatty states that Penn "did not advocate the divine right of kings" (38); in another, that "he had accepted the theory of the divine right of government" (51). Cf. also, Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 116 f., 134-150.

<sup>3</sup>See John Stoughton, History of Religion in England (4th ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), IV, 124, for a critical statement; and Belasco, op. cit., 6, 292 ff., 200, 308, for a more sympathetic appraisal of Penn's position.

It is indeed true that good citizens were divided during the short and chequered reign of James II, according to the relative importance which they assigned to parliamentary authority and religious equality. As a result of his colonial experience, Penn was to come to the conclusion that liberty without obedience was confusion, and obedience without liberty was slavery. Where both meet, government was likely to endure. The people is the politic wife of the prince, and may be better managed by wisdom than ruled by force, for wisdom is based on experience, and the experience of society is a reflection of the interests of those that compose it. That is why Penn felt that a division of function in government which followed the interests of society would bring government more into contact with the interests of society. But with all this talk of "society", the importance of the individual was never to be lost sight of, for it was the individual, led by the Inner Light, who was responsible for the make-up of that society. It was Penn's conclusion that, for the sake of social authority, the State must consider the interests of the oppressed in society.

The treatment James received from the nation pointed to one thing: he was no king. For the churches to pledge themselves where there was no authority would give a lie to their Christianity and their methods. Great changes were taking place. The authority of the State could no more be frittered away than the authority of the Church. There were no grounds for the Church to conclude that the will to tolerate Catholics was the will of State authority. Thus the attitude of the Church toward the Revolution.<sup>1</sup> But Penn was not convinced that Parliament, or for that matter any other institution in the State, had the right to exert authority. The will of Parliament, as it appeared in the

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 302 ff.

laws of the land, must await the reception of the individuals that comprise society before receiving judgment. The title did not precede the thing. There were no sovereign rights of authority. The people go before the representatives, and the Creator before the creature. The representative depends upon the people, and the creature subsists by the power of its Creator. It seems that, to Penn, the gradual transference of power from King to Parliament did not alter the problem of political authority. Where law was the will of authority, the absence of will took away the foundation of law. It was for this reason that it could be said "Penn preferred James without penal laws to Parliament with them". He found that what James did was not against the freedom of the people, the strength of the laws, or political authority.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Revolution, it may be observed that King William regarded toleration as a political necessity, on much the same grounds as Penn. Friends had little direct share in the passing of the Toleration Act, Penn himself being under a cloud of suspicion. Still, the Act began a new era for Friends and other nonconformists. The general disabilities which befell them were mainly due, as has already been noted, to the necessity for taking oaths. Some relief for this was granted in the Affirmation Act of 1695.<sup>2</sup>

In the concluding sections of his "A Key, Opening the Way to Every Capacity", Penn reaffirms the Quaker belief in government in Church and State as God's ordinance, and both as requisite and very beneficial. Still, Friends cannot, out of tenderness and not obstinacy, conform to it in matters relating to religion and conscience, "in which Christ only is Lord and King".<sup>3</sup> "Fruits

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 308, 313.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, 151 ff., especially 153, 157, 160 - 176, 181, 190; and supra, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup>Works, II, 788 - 790. Cf. "A Testimony of the Truth of God", II, 878.

of Solitude", published in 1693, contains a number of observations on government.<sup>1</sup> In summary form, Penn provides a cap-stone to his thought in "Advice to His Children", (1699):

Meddle not with government; never speak of it; let others say or do as they please. . . . I have said little to you of distributing justice, or being just in power or government, for I should desire you may never be concerned therein, unless it were upon your own principles, and then the less the better, unless God require it from you.<sup>2</sup>

Were such words spoken out of the bitterness of experience, or the sage counsel fostered by age? Whatever the reason,<sup>3</sup> it may be safely assumed that William Penn himself felt that God required of him that very same participation in the affairs of government for which his fame and renown have entitled him to an immortal place in the history of man's struggle for religious and political freedom. That an attack on sovereignty is not an attack on authority is proved by Penn's efforts to deal with the problem of obedience to the State. The mere technique of government, though important, does not cover the whole ground. The human will or opinion cannot be ignored. On the contrary, it is everything, and is the only outlet a man has for the interests he wishes to express. If this is so, then the use of force or coercion in the State can never solve the problem of obedience. The use of force means rather the decay of authority.

At the same time Penn knew that the individual will was not the full expression of the man. There are some interests belonging to man which must

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<sup>1</sup>Works, I, 818 - 858, especially 834 - 6, fragments 329 - 369.

<sup>2</sup>Works, I, 900. 907.

<sup>3</sup>Isaac Sharpless, Quakerism and Politics (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1905), 79 - 81, suggests some reasons for these thoughts.

be expressed corporately. A well-regulated, efficient government, sensitive to the will of the people, yet capable of expressing for them what at times they were themselves incapable of doing - such was the ideal view of government as Penn saw it. He himself was to discover, however, that such a political condition was frequently incompatible with too large a degree of political liberty. In his "holy experiment" Penn was to find his own role not so much that of the rebel, but that of the administrator in power, threatened by dissenters who wished even greater liberty.

### General Principles Now Brought to Light

Following upon this historical exposition of William Penn's attack on State sovereignty, it should be possible to extract certain principles of political authority, which forced themselves upon Penn in the midst of his struggle for religious toleration. These principles were weighty with implications for the political role of the individual in society, as well as indicating Penn's basic concept of Church-State relations. A formal presentation of such implications will be offered in the next chapter. Here our concern is with the principles themselves, as they were brought to light through the writings of Penn on behalf of liberty of conscience.

#### 1. The Political Principle of Religious Toleration

What the Quakers demanded, Penn argued, was not unreasonable. By toleration they meant a liberty of mind - the right to believe what doctrines they wished - and a liberty of worship - the right to act on their beliefs. Their coming together to worship would be without danger to the government or laws of the land, and would result in their moral improvement and thus the moral improvement of the State. Religion, the noblest end of man's life, was

the best bond of human society.

Penn directed his arguments at many targets. First, he exhibited that toleration would be advantageous to the King. No kingdom divided against itself could stand. It well became the prince to tolerate dissenting sects because thereby he not only promoted religion, but actually fostered its civil function, to bind society together. A prince who ruled with temperance, mercy, justice, meekness, and fear of God was assured of respectful and loyal subjects.

Second, Penn held that it was to the larger interests of the nation to tolerate freedom of worship. He admonished the controlling groups in Parliament again and again that there could be no conviction except by the Spirit. To enact sincere conformity by law was impossible. Intolerance would vitiate both peace and plenty, those twin goals for which government was instituted among men, because civil society could not exist if it was not the will of all that it should exist. Penn pleaded for equal rights for dissenting groups other than his own Society of Friends, for an equilibrium attained by the pushes and pulls of many sects against each other. This balance would be the means of minimising faction.

Third, Penn strongly urged the advantage toleration brought to commerce and industries of the nation - a new argument introduced in the years following the Restoration. In language designed to appeal to the business instincts of merchants, ship-owners, and colonial factors whose influence in Parliament was appreciable, he warned of the results of intolerant and repressive measures and denied that toleration would lead to revolutions or civil strife. History had proved the opposite to be true. On toleration the empire stood safe; on intolerance it stood shaking, like a house built upon the sands. If intolerance persisted, there would certainly be two dire results: impoverishment of the

people and emigration of part of the producing class to other lands. If, on the other hand, toleration was adopted, prosperity would ensue and immigration of artisans and labourers into the country would be encouraged.

Finally, Penn appealed to the moral interest of all in society. He pointed out that the Quakers were a useful, productive, universally law-abiding, exemplary element in the civil state, instructed by their theological doctrines in respect for their superiors and obedience to law, and devoted to simple living, virtue, and industry in the community. They should be protected in order to preserve the moral foundations of the State. Never was the hand of God raised against a righteous nation.

## 2. The Political Principle of Nationalism

Penn proposed that national feeling ought to cure religious disagreements. He felt that England had the freest government in all the world. The freedom of Englishmen came from the constitutional limitations which confined government to its proper sphere and preserved the private rights of all the subjects. While Penn by and large accepted the doctrine of the social contract and the rights of nature which had attained general currency in the crises of the seventeenth century, he accepted it with some peculiar reservations. He did not embrace fully the discredited theories of the divine right of kings, although he did assert that government was divinely ordained. Yet he was placed in the inconsistent position of opposing government as power when he sought to win civil rights for the Quakers. The reconciliation he made among the contradictory theories of the natural rights of men, the divine origin of government, and the oppressiveness of government as power is often a foggy part of his thought. Nevertheless, it is an important key to Penn's political philosophy.

Government, Penn said, was indeed the mandate of God, but the all-important

element was the purpose of that mandate: to achieve the good of the whole. Government was an expedient, necessary but not innately desirable, forced upon men to control the anarchy of nature. Every man had a royalty of his own which he lost by combining in government; yet by entering society he received protection in exchange for sovereignty. This philosophy was the familiar theory of the social contract.

But when Penn came to the problem of political obligations, he departed in a measure from convention. The government on its side had duties of justice as well as of protection, and the maintenance of justice was the spirit of true government. The Quakers were not enemies to government in general but only to injustice wrought by governments or by anyone else. It will be noted that Penn did not claim the right of revolution, though this may appear as the logical result of his argument. More was at stake than the syllogistic perfection of a logical system of politics. Penn was not only pleading the Quaker cause; he was also pleading the cause of property, to which revolution was abhorrent. He was trying to convince a timid governing class that Quakerism could be tolerated without danger to governmental institutions, that it could quietly exist within a State governed as England was governed.<sup>1</sup>

At any rate Penn felt his obligation to the State more important than those limitations his sphere of private rights imposed upon the State. He contended that this obligation was to the State as law, not as sovereign or prince. It was the rule of law he was defending. Law must be supreme. It governed ruler and ruled alike. It was the glory of the English king that he

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Belasco, *op. cit.*, 250 ff. J. H. Powell, "William Penn's Writings: An Anniversary Essay", *Pennsylvania History*, XI (October, 1944), 249, significantly points out that the "question of majority will, the definition of general will, the matter of consent - these and many other aspects of his belief would have to be examined to throw the clearest light on his 'stopping at the half-way house'". See Powell's entire article, 233 - 259.

was a prince by right, not might; by law, not power. These were the two alternatives in government: will and power, condition and contract. The one rules by men, the other by laws.

It is not difficult to see how this political principle of nationalism closely follows upon the principle of toleration. In the mind of Penn, toleration was not an ideal separate from the stable government of the English monarchy. Penn desired not freedom of worship in the abstract but freedom of English worship under English institutions.

### 3. The Political Principle of Property

Penn was essentially a conservative thinker, seeking to preserve the interests of a man of property in a political order based on property, convinced that the English monarchy was the safest guarantee of property that existed. He believed that the "men of estates" gave stability to society. He even attributed the success of Pennsylvania to its beginnings by men of wealth. The fourth part of this dissertation will be partially devoted to a study of certain of the economic aspects of the colonial experiment.

Penn wished on the one hand to secure equality and recognition for the Society of Friends but on the other to receive a guaranty of the inviolability of his property, a sort of security in which toleration and economic liberty prevailed side by side harmoniously. With these two criteria, toleration and security, the one economic but full of ethical content, the other ethical but big with political and economic implications, he measured society.

What has been said is not to be interpreted as minimising the disabilities which Penn suffered for his Quakerism. Nevertheless, it is essential that it be recognised that Penn's property interest moderated his politico-religious radicalism. The laws of England, Penn observed, gave the most protection to

property that there was throughout the world. Thus Penn founded his political thinking on the subject's right to property and his right to share in government in order to protect his property. It will not lessen our regard for the benevolent motives which actuated Penn to realise that he was truly far behind many of his contemporaries in the lengths to which he was willing to go in governmental reform. Penn's ideal State was a paternalistic government assuring to subjects the "possession and enjoyment of their own".

#### 4. The Political Principle of Human Interest

The ultimate problem of political thinking, which Penn frequently had to tackle, concerned the fundamental nature of human nature. To Penn's contemporaries this question was particularly significant, since by the social-contract theory government was assumed to be the result of an escape from primitive anarchy. If in his natural, presocial condition man had been essentially good, then the civil state was a descent from his goodness; but if he had been bestial and savage, the State was an ascent to a higher, nobler plane. Though Penn nowhere developed his ideas on this subject systematically, he often expressed them, and there are ample indications throughout his works that he felt man's lot in society to be richer, more productive, and morally better than his life in presocial nature. He spoke of the freedom that comes through obedience and of the elevated condition of the social man.

Penn early hit upon the concept of "interest", the belief that the individuals and the groups struggling with one another in society formulated certain persisting and identifying values which they sought to effectuate either consciously or unconsciously, and which could be relied upon to predict their reactions to any given situation. Men had interests as individuals and in groups as well. Some were primary, some derived. The elementary ones they

all had in common. "Civil interest" was the basis of all civil government. "National interest" was the support of the nation. Penn declared that the foundation of governments was the interest in government that men had and that when the government went beyond its function of fostering the interests of individuals, it overreached its own interest.

The good of the whole was "the rise and end" of government. How could a man determine that good? Penn answered that he should consult his own interest - freedom to worship as he pleased, property rights, etc. In preserving the good of the whole governments were but consulting interests they had apart from individuals or rather interests they had as the sums of individuals, for the "whole" would unite with the government in a general will for the good of the government. The interests of the subjects were the most potent force in society; the State was an instrument for directing them. All persuasions of religion were governed by their interests; they supported the rulers and the kind of a State which best served the interests they most highly prized.

No consideration of Penn's political thought would be complete without a notice of this term "interest". In using it, Penn did not mean a materialistic determinism, though the term does not exclude economic pursuits.

What Penn appears to have meant is that men act according to their notions of their own good, and if these notions are properly qualified by understanding, by moral goodness, and by regard for truth and justice, each man's good will result in the good of society as a whole. This was an optimistic concept, for Penn believed the generality of men capable and desirous of attaining goodness. It was an individualistic concept, which regarded society as the sum of the true, valid, or good interests of all individuals in it.<sup>1</sup>

Penn was convinced that the deepest interests were those for which a man felt his own personality had been responsible. Personal interest was the

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<sup>1</sup>Powell, op. cit., 259.

foundation of a man's commitments. Only by understanding this could one attempt to understand a man's obligations to society.

Involved in all of these basic principles which Penn's attack on State sovereignty brought to light were deep theological roots. The intimate personal nature of the religious life of the Quakers, expressed by the authority given it under the guidance of the Inner Light, marked the essential point of departure in Penn's struggle for religious toleration. But if theology formed the basis for the principles behind William Penn's efforts for liberty of conscience, the implications of these same principles were very much political in nature. The way has been prepared for a statement of these implications for the individual, for the Church, and for the State.

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR TOLERATION

- A. For the Church
- B. For the State
- C. For the Quakers

## CHAPTER VII

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR TOLERATION

In the first part of this dissertation we were concerned to show the significance of William Penn's experience with the Inner Light, as providing the basic religious framework for his life work and thought. Thus far in our second section, we have endeavoured to examine the severe test which this framework was subjected to as a result of Penn's struggle for religious toleration in England. During the course of this struggle, involving a protest against Church intolerance on the one hand and an attack on State sovereignty on the other, there appeared the basic principles for Penn's doctrine of political authority. It remains for us here, in the concluding chapter of this section, to indicate the political and religious implications of this doctrine.

To be sure, these implications came to light even more clearly as Penn's doctrine of political authority was put to work in colonial issues. In the light of his work in Pennsylvania, it appears that Penn was greater as a political theorist and idealist than as a practical administrator. The fact is that the foundation documents which he prepared before leaving England, many of which have been examined in the preceding chapters, are the truest statement of Penn's generous intention to establish a self-governing democracy under Divine guidance. Hence the advisability of considering the politico-religious implications stemming from Penn's efforts in behalf of liberty of conscience, as a prelude to the "holy experiment" itself.

These documents point first of all to Penn's original idealism with its novel aspirations. It is not altogether easy for men in these days to understand this seventeenth-century whirlwind of furious theological controversy; tolerance has led to indifference: one no longer cares what his neighbour thinks, and at least one is ready to let him work out his salvation in his own way. But in the seventeenth century, men, sceptics and Hobbists apart, almost universally believed that anyone not of their faith was irredeemably damned, though Penn, in his heart of hearts, did not altogether think this. Two urgent duties therefore imposed themselves upon men: to convert all those one could; and to do battle by any means in one's power against the leaders of different faiths, which, of course, involved defending one's own at every opportunity. And since those who were not for you were against you, there was everywhere abroad a terrific spirit of opposition, often rancorous, sometimes cruel. Penn believed in political toleration because, among other reasons, only if worship were free could the truth fight unhampered against error. He would have men at liberty to worship as they pleased, but he would do his utmost to persuade and argue them into thinking in the way that he thought right. Thus, as soon as any opponent appeared, he was to be battled with, defeated, slain on his own ground; on no account could he be ignored. And Penn, not being the man to spare himself, was not by any means inclined to spare others. At the same time, if he did not perhaps love contention rather more than his own strict rule would allow, he never lost sight of the object, which was not to gain a victory, but to bring a certain kind of enlightenment to others.

A belief in Quakerism assumes that one believes the Inner Light throws unsurpassable insight on one's obligations to God. On the basis of that faith, one feels more assured in one's mind as to how one is to set up a good relationship

with God. The situation before the advent of Quakerism was that "faith in Christ and the visible Church went together, for both depended for their existence on their ability to assure certain minds as to their value in understanding human obligations to God."<sup>1</sup>

One should insist that men's ideals are in all sincerity based on the experiences they encounter. In seventeenth-century England, the outward, visible Church was considered necessary to the Christian faith. Yet the will of the Church, far from being any type of mystic unity, was at best and for most purposes a very imperfect and limited harmony of individual wills. In fact, the same thing is true of the State. When will becomes organized it is narrowed, however "representative" it may be. But the State at least gave the appearance of being united. The will of the State, as viewed by the organized Church, was an organization of wills so related, so limited, that a single decision prevailed and was accepted by the whole.

With rapacious appetite the State drew to itself all the implications of persecution here involved. Since Christianity was not the life of Christians who thought themselves such, but rather the life of those with the Christian faith who had taken the means to preserve it through institutions, it follows that at the borders of the militant Church a fierce persecution would rage . . . . For all Christians with faith were bound to the necessity of a visible Church; and a set of people who denied forms and ceremonies and the means by which the Church faith could remain eternal were enemies of Christianity. They could not be members of the Christian faith, for they denied the logical implications. They called themselves Christians, but they should be persecuted and eliminated; there should be no traitors in the fold.<sup>2</sup>

In actuality, therefore, in this conception of authority the organization of will was based on the subordination of class to class. This situation was something far removed from making the organization of will as responsive as possible to every harmony of will, every consensus, every prevailing opinion, which is a part of the ideal of democracy. Quite the

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 215.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 217.

contrary. Nowhere was the will of all classes to be formally admitted into the common organization. Representation and responsibility--representation to determine the ends of action and responsibility to secure the means--were two guiding principles of the modern State largely ignored in this approach of the Church to the State. The State had a right to persecute sects like the Quakers. The faith of the Church was the right faith, the only faith. "The Church, therefore, had the right of persecuting those who had benefited from her teachings, but denied her institutions the right to exist for their establishment and continuance."<sup>1</sup> This could best be done through the State.

The State has always been peculiarly associated with force. Force has been proclaimed to be not only its last resort, but its first principle. The powers of coercion inherent in the State were duly appreciated by the Church. The Church sought to enlist those powers for herself. "Here is a power in the State which can make certainty out of doubt, a fundamental out of a matter of indifference. . . . Where else was there a power that could so compose disagreements, compel allegiance, silence dissent? Authority was a divine power. Certainly its decisions were right."<sup>2</sup>

The Church could not avoid the consequences of its alliance. What the churches failed to see was that in the power of the State to eliminate doubt and establish certainty, Christian opinion, as such, had no religious value. It was this fact that William Penn saw so vividly. Force holds nothing together. Force is rather a substitute for unity. So far as it rules, there is no unity and no development. Force will not make a Christian, or a Church, or a State. The only justification for the belief which attributes good to force

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, *op. cit.*, 219. See also, for example, the article by H. J. Cadbury, "Persecution and Religious Liberty, Then and Now," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXVIII (1944), 359-371.

<sup>2</sup>Belasco, *op. cit.*, 222.

is simply this, that by experience men learn the inefficacy of mere force and then learn to modify or supersede it.

This was a truth, however, that had not yet dawned upon the conscience of most churchmen and most statesmen. Church and State had become an uneasy co-ordination of powers unlike in nature but like in claim. The new absolutism brought a new intolerance. To many in positions of authority it was considered a form of treason and not merely of heresy to profess a religion other than that by law established.

Political authority allied with the organised Churches would therefore flaunt the expression of religious opinion as of no account. . . . obedience to political authority is the natural result of obedience to the Churches under that authority. It was the State which gave life and power to the Church, enabled its continuance, and prevented its extinction.<sup>1</sup>

Before the true distinction of Church and State could be attained, the sense of religion as well as the conception of the State had to change. Working in this direction was the growth of a new and more personal and therefore profound spirit of religion. The essence of religion was seen to be personal conviction. The idea of the Church became that of an association of believers united by faith alone. Accordingly, the particularism of the Church became the wedge driven into the absolutism of the State, for political absolutism seemed to require a universal religion.

The Quaker was forced thus to consider these questions: the function of the State in the Divine order, and the functions of the Church and of the individual Christian in the State. The Church Catholic was to consist of all

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco. *op. cit.*, 230. Belasco's thoughts here pertain to the Toleration Act and its aftermath, 228ff., but the present writer has utilized them as applying better to the period before Penn's ventures in the New World. We have already noted that in one sense the Act represented a real advance towards the true distinction of Church and State, since it made subscription to the oaths of allegiance and supremacy the only test. It is also true, however, that these oaths were not merely expressions of political loyalty, for they retained a certain religious element.

sincere disciples of Christ, together with the living Spirit of their Master. Its relation to the State-systems of which these disciples are also members affects profoundly both its own welfare and the welfare of the State. The Christian has his paramount duty as a servant of the Kingdom of God, and has also his position as a member of the State. This second factor has also its rightful duties, which are as sacred in their place as those flowing from other forms of status, such as that of husband and wife or parent and child. A spiritual Church cannot leave it to any outward authority to determine these duties; it must itself seek to see, in the Light of the Spirit, what are the provinces and functions of the Church and the State in the Divine order. Perhaps this was to lead not so much to a theory of Church and State as an interpretation in practice of Christian citizenship.

The Quaker witness coupled a continued protest against the invasion by the State of the conscience of the individual Christian with the development of that very conscience: all true authority was from God, and, where rightly used, was derived from Him. While seeking to govern their own lives by a higher law, Friends, in accordance with Pauline teaching, thus accepted civil government as a Divine institution in its time and place, using as their guide: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". They have, at the same time, understood something of the "prophetic" function of the Church towards the State. Here was to be found the faculty of spiritual vision, enabling one to penetrate below the surface of life to its inner meaning. In these ways, alike by conscientious disobedience and obedience to the law, and by a bold witness which confronted the State with the ethics of Christianity, Quakerism took a definite relation to the world-order around it.

Henry J. Cadbury has declared:

The toleration that Penn advocated and practiced differs in some respects from what goes under that name today. He was not himself indifferent about religion. He was deeply concerned for it, without any of that popular fuzzy notion that it does not matter what a man believes. Penn has disciplined himself to combine with his own assured and stable convictions an objective policy of tolerating what seemed to him error, but of doing so in the higher interests of truth. While he urged the separation of Church and State for the sake of the State, he urged it also for the sake of religion. He recognised that imposed or even conventional religion cannot be strong. It must rest upon free choice, and it must imply responsibility. It must replace bigotry or sectarianism or indifference with an opportunity for voluntary cooperation and mutual trust.<sup>1</sup>

The Quakers, Penn not the least among them, knew full well that religious freedom must also be served by suffering - even voluntary suffering. Penn's devotion to religious freedom "was part of a fuller inclusive bent of life and character".<sup>2</sup> Whatever may be thought of Penn's democracy in government, he was - for an English "gentleman" of the seventeenth century - remarkably democratic in his mental outlook; and this was due to the religion which bade him seek and find God in himself and in his fellow-men. As a matter of historic fact, and not of prejudiced fancy, Penn's work for social reforms as well as political and religious reforms, was rooted in Quakerism, and sought to give expression to its fundamental tenet that the Divine Spirit lives within the souls of men and makes them capable of moral regeneration.

The elastic term "religious liberty", as used by the Puritans in the seventeenth century, meant, not that they desired all religious sects to come to the New World and abide with them with equal liberty of conscience. Their idea of liberty was more to establish themselves so far from the Stuart kings that they could live the religion they brought with them in peace and quiet. As we shall soon see, the arrival of the Quakers forced them to throw open America to greater liberty. No one can appreciate the history of Colonial

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 369.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 369 f.

Pennsylvania who does not take into account the spirit, the methods, and the beliefs of the Society of Friends. The political principles expressed there were the legitimate fruits of the religious principles of the Quakers, and of the best thought and experience of William Penn.

The work of Penn in England for liberty of conscience, for universal religious toleration, and the equal and impartial rights of all before the common law, has been less heralded and less appreciated than his experiment in the New World. It ought not to have been so. The two were only different parts of the same service to the cause of liberty. What he did in England produced the training and laid the foundation for the American experiment, and was in many ways the more difficult and trying. What he did on the banks of the Delaware was to test in practice the soundness and practicability of the doctrines whose advocacy had cost him so many years of thankless labour, social ostracism and relentless persecution on his native soil. It took, of course, a political genius of the highest order to conceive and execute the American scheme. But it required, in addition to genius, a sustained moral heroism to maintain for so many years the hard conflict by which he wrested from the English courts and government the recognition, for himself and for multitudes of others, of the simple rights of citizenship and of religion, a victory whose benefits went to all English-speaking peoples, and whose ultimate effect is yet a matter for future history.

PART III

THE SUPREME EXPERIMENT:

THE DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AT WORK IN THE COLONIAL ISSUES

## CHAPTER VIII

### PROPRIETARY INTERESTS VS. CLAIMS OF THE CROWN

- A. The background of Penn's colonial experiment
  - 1. "Government" - our measure of the subject
  - 2. The extent of Quaker influence in the political life of the colonies
  
- B. The colonial system
  - 1. Types of colonies
    - a. Corporate
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    - c. Royal
  - 2. A closer look at proprietary colonies as the type associated with William Penn
    - a. Their relationship to the Crown
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- C. Conditions peculiar to the Jerseys and to Pennsylvania
  - 1. The Jerseys
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    - a. The Charter of March, 1681
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      - (3) An important reservation: the rights of the Crown
    - b. "Certain Conditions and Concessions", July, 1681.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PROPRIETARY INTERESTS VS. CLAIMS OF THE CROWN

Penn's doctrine of political authority was put to work in his "holy experiment" of colonisation in the New World. This third part of our study and the next will be devoted to a consideration of the constitutional and legal applications of the doctrine, as well as an interpretation of its ethical aftermath.

Under the head of "government" fall naturally the relations between the colonial projects and the home government, the powers, purpose and policy of the proprietors and their associates, and the proprietary charters or frames of government - those documents of fundamental importance by which the proprietor limited and defined the exercise of his powers. An understanding of the organs of government, their functions and relations, the social elements and political tendencies which were operative among the colonists, the way in which colonists and proprietors came into collision - all these matters are properly treated under the head of government. Our vantage point for investigation will be determined by the political principles already outlined in Chapter VI. Implementation in a practical way outside England of those political principles developed in the home country came about as the stage was set by necessity for the settlement of the practical issue of proprietary interests vs. claims of the Crown. Let us first see how this was the case. Then, in the following chapter (Chapter IX) we shall examine the various frames of government erected in the colonial endeavour. The supreme experiment now in process put to the

test William Penn's doctrine of political authority henceforth at grips with colonial issues.

The extent of the Quaker influence in the political life of the colonies has been largely underestimated, primarily because of the concentration by political historians on the New England colonial projects, and the concentration by church historians on the religious activities of the Quakers. When the Friends came to America, however, conditions were different than in the earlier days in England. In the new environment political instincts came to expression. In Pennsylvania in particular the influence of Quakerism was increasingly felt with reference to the problems of the State. The New World seemed to the Society a providential field to be won for their truth. Opportunities for colonisation were quickly seized.

At the same time, as Rufus Jones so correctly pointed out, "we must not lose our perspective and balance".<sup>1</sup> The establishment of governmental "experiments" was never the primary aim of the Quakers. They were essentially concerned with the cultivation of inward religion and an outward life consistent with the tenets of their belief. Beneath their ventures in government there always existed a deeper purpose: "to make a fresh experiment in spiritual religion".<sup>2</sup> This underlying conception forms the basis of all the distinctive activities of the colonial Quakers.

#### The Colonial System

One of the basic facts in American colonial history is that of the

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<sup>1</sup>Rufus M. Jones, The Quakers in the American Colonies (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), xvi.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

difference between two types of government. One was the corporate colony, charter governments which were in origin and nature civil corporations. The other was the proprietary province, which was, to all intents and purposes, a landed estates of a feudal type granted by the Crown to favourites and petitioners. This latter type was essentially of the nature of a feudal principality, upon the grantees of which were bestowed all the inferior regalities and subordinate powers of legislation which formerly belonged to the counts palatine. Provision was also made for the maintenance of sovereignty in the King, and for the realisation of the objects of the grant.

The early life in America, including its religious aspects, was accommodated to - one is tempted to say, predetermined by - these two different types of settlement. The royal colonies came later: provincial establishments, the constitutions of which were outlined in the commissions and instructions given by the Crown to the governors, and the assemblies of which, held under royal authority, had their share in making ordinances which were local in character and not repugnant to the laws of England. It is true that with the end of the seventeenth century the increasing provision for royal colonies wiped out the distinction between chartered colonies and proprietary provinces, but in the meantime the stage had been set for the situation confronting prospective settlers in the New World.

In undertaking to set forth the relations between the chartered colony of Pennsylvania and the central government back in England, it is to be realised that the British system of colonial administration will not be as clearly revealed as in the case of a royal colony. In the latter, the powers of the home government were exercised immediately through the responsible agents of the Crown; in the former, they were exercised indirectly through the officials of proprietors and corporations. But the charter to William Penn, as we shall

see, contained provisions peculiar to itself, which drew the province into intimate connection with the central government.

The reason for this is not hard to find. Penn's charter was received at a time when English officials at home and in the colonies had learned by bitter experience the glaring deficiencies of the earlier charters viewed from the standpoint of imperial ideals. These defects arose from the difficult problem of enforcing imperial policies through officials not amenable to direct royal control. We shall return to this point when the Pennsylvania charter itself comes up for consideration.

Something of the general nature of a charter should be noted here. An analysis will show that it consisted of the premises, the movent clause, the habendum and tenendum clauses, the warranty clause, the penal clause, and the datal clause. The first stated the name and title of the grantee, a description of the thing granted, and the reason or consideration for its bestowment. The second, though often included within the first, expressed the reasons for the grant. The third limited and defined the estate granted, and the tenure by which it was held. The warranty clause recapitulated the name of the grantee, the description of the thing, and the service or rent to be rendered. Lastly, the penal clause contained the punishment that would follow any attempt to infringe the privileges granted.

More specifically, however, the colonial charters stated the names of the grantees, the territory and tenure, in the case of a corporation the organisation of the council and the right to admit new members, the privilege to transport persons and goods, exemption from duties except under certain conditions, the provisions for the appointment of officers and the administering of oaths. Furthermore, provision was made for the organisation of subordinate government in the colony, for the exercise of power through ordinance and instruction, the

care for general defence and dependence, and the restriction that the laws of the colony should be conformable to reason and to the laws of England. Lastly, the charter should be interpreted in a way most favourable to the grantee.

If the question, whether or not the Pennsylvania charter was the best example of a proprietary grant, is raised, the answer given will depend upon the standpoint from which it is viewed. If we consider only the essential characteristics of a proprietorship as a palatine jurisdiction, the Pennsylvania grant is certainly inferior to that of Maryland and the Carolinas, because the powers bestowed are more definitely limited. But if we examine it from the point of view of a careful supervision of the colonial establishments by the English government, we shall find that, while all the important feudal powers were given to the proprietor, they were so limited as to bring them into subordination to the system of imperial control. In this respect, and with a view to the attainment of this object, the charter of Pennsylvania was superior to those of Maryland and the Carolinas.

After these general observations concerning the colonial system and their charters, it remains necessary in this chapter to refer to those conditions peculiar to the procurement of Pennsylvania, and the resulting charter.

### Conditions Peculiar to the Jerseys and to Pennsylvania

#### 1. The Jerseys

To discover the origin of the grant of Pennsylvania, one must go back to the colonies of East and West Jersey.

There was a large Dutch province called New Netherlands which fell as a prize to England in 1664 at the close of the Dutch wars of Charles II, and which was made over by the King to his brother, the Duke of York. The Duke granted the region lying between the Hudson and Delaware estuaries to Lord Berkeley

and Sir George Carteret, who were to divide it between them, and it was renamed New Jersey in honour of Sir George who was a Jersey man. In 1674 Lord Berkeley offered his share of this province for sale. It was bought by a Quaker, Edward Byllinge, through an agent, John Fenwick, who was also a Quaker. A quarrel soon arose between these two men as to the division of the property. Penn, who lived near Fenwick in England, was called in as arbiter. He had been especially active in inducing Fenwick to accept his award; and when Byllinge fell into bankruptcy, Penn was appointed a trustee of his holdings. These included almost all the land in dispute, and Penn at once found a large task of colonisation on his hands. Arrangements were made for the separation of the trustees' property from that of Sir George Carteret. The latter took the more settled portion in the northern part of the territory, then called East New Jersey, while Penn chose the southern part, then called West New Jersey, lying along the Delaware and extending as far south as Cape May.

The colonisation of West New Jersey by the Quakers began in 1677 and 1678. During the four years before Penn's acquisition of Pennsylvania in 1681, Quakers and others to the number of three thousand settled in West New Jersey. In the latter year, Penn and eleven other Quakers bought from the widow of Sir George Carteret a large tract of land, that which had been called East New Jersey. These twelve Quakers afterwards associated with themselves as joint owners of the two provinces, twelve others, including Robert Barclay and some members of the Scottish nobility. The first three governors of New Jersey were Quakers, and the combined "Council of Proprietors" retained control until 1702, when they handed the rights of government over to the Crown, retaining, however, their rights as landowners.

The part which Penn took in the settlement of the Jerseys confirmed

him in his belief that there was a unique opportunity in the New World for successful experiments in good government and a great service to be rendered to mankind by pioneers of the right sort. He gladly availed himself in 1681 of a way which seemed open to him to obtain a province of his own, where he could work out his plans for a "holy experiment".

## 2. Pennsylvania

Circumstances favoured to an unusual degree the acquisition of Pennsylvania by William Penn. To the south ruled a Catholic proprietor, Lord Baltimore; to the north ruled another Catholic proprietor, who was also the warm friend of Penn, namely the Duke of York. Both of these proprietors were sympathetic to the Quaker ideal of toleration. Back in England, a Catholic King, although he had surrendered on toleration in that country, was more than willing that Penn, who had striven for it so valiantly there, should have a chance to try it out in the New World. Penn had joined hands politically with the moderate Whigs in demanding toleration and parliamentary government; Charles thought it wise to remove him to a distant arena, and at the same time place an ocean between the royal throne and the uncounted thousands of insistent Quaker Whig petitioners for the royal clemency. Penn and the moderate Whigs did not join with Shaftesbury and the extreme Whigs in demanding the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne; but they united with them in opposing the French policy of the royal brothers. Moreover, England's chief concerns lay in Europe with French, Dutch and Spanish rivals, whose strength in America would be diminished by prosperous English colonies. Even from the point of view of trade and taxes, the lands Penn asked for might some time become of value.

Another circumstance favouring the acquisition of Pennsylvania was the

financial condition of the Crown. Charles was hard up for money. His debts were huge, and one of these was due to Penn's father for arrears of pay, for loans, and for the customary rewards of successful admirals who added to England's empire. Aside from a reward for the acquisition of Jamaica, Charles owed Admiral Penn's son about £16,000 in capital and interest. This was a sizeable sum which a king would avoid paying if he could. Charles' brother James also, to whom he had granted New Netherlands, added his recommendation to the petition of the son of his friend and benefactor, the admiral. James knew that Penn and the Quakers would be far more acceptable neighbours to his American lands than some powerful Anglican lord and colonists fanatically intolerant of James' fellow Catholics. Indeed, a few months after Charles granted Pennsylvania, James added to Penn's domain the territories known as Delaware, thus giving additional access to the sea.

For all these reasons, Penn desired to acquire and Charles was willing to give the territory for which he petitioned. The private motives of his prospective colonists to which Penn appealed - like the public reasons why they emigrated - were religious, political and economic. Here too are further reasons for Penn's own interests in Pennsylvania. To all of these motives he appealed by voice and pen, in conversation, public addresses, letters and numerous pamphlets. The results of his appeal were of first-rate historical importance. Penn's first impact in colonial endeavours resulted in an emphasis on political and social action rooted in Quaker motivation to be sure, yet as such forcing religious propaganda per se to the fore. Some have concluded that Penn was, in a modern mercantile parlance, a "supersalesman", whose high-powered salesmanship might well be envied by modern promoters. But it is reassuring to find that Penn's appeal was directed to the higher motives and highest welfare of his prospective colonists. He did not hesitate to direct

solemn warnings to those who would consider going to the New World on the basis of less worthy motives.

a. The Charter of March, 1681.

In June, 1680, Penn petitioned the King to grant him "letters-patent for a tract of land in America lying north of Maryland, on the east bounded by the Delaware River, on the west limited as Maryland, and northward to extend as far as plantable".<sup>1</sup> The petition was handed over to the Lords of Trade, and received by them June 14th, 1680. It does not appear that in Penn's case the committee hesitated to increase the number of proprietaries in America, a fact due undoubtedly to the influence of Penn at court and his friendship with Charles II and the Duke of York. So far as the minutes of its deliberations show,<sup>2</sup> the committee in Penn's case was concerned chiefly with the difficulty of making the grant without detriment to the other proprietaries, the Duke of York on the north-east and Lord Baltimore on the south.

Penn's supporters, in his negotiations for a colonial charter, were the Earl of Sunderland, formerly his youthful friend Robert Spencer, Lord Hyde, Chief Justice North and the Earl of Halifax - no mean list of names.

The committee notified the agent of the Lord Baltimore, and Sir John Werden, agent of the Duke of York, in order that they might report whether the proposed grant would be consistent with the boundaries of Maryland and New York. At a subsequent meeting of the committee, a letter was produced from Sir John Werden, objecting to Penn's request, as well as a letter of objection from the

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<sup>1</sup>Hazard, Annals, 474.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 475, 480 ff. Cf. Great Britain: Calendar of State Papers, Colonial. America and West Indies. (London: H. M. Stationery Office). Volume for 1667 - 1680, items nos. 1373, 1390, 1544 - 1566, 1403 - 4, 1584, 1592 - 3 (Journal of the Board of Trade, III, 173 f., and ad passim).

agent of Lord Baltimore. Both letters had to deal with boundary questions. After some negotiations, settlements were agreed upon, although the boundaries between Maryland and Pennsylvania involved serious difficulties that became the subject of long and painful controversies until well into the eighteenth century.

At a meeting of the committee, January 25th, 1681, the boundaries of the proposed patent to Penn, settled by Lord Chief Justice North, with the alterations of Sir John Werden, were read and approved. At another committee meeting a paper was read from the Bishop of London, desiring that Penn be obliged by his patent to admit a chaplain (Anglican) upon the request of any number of planters in the colony. This request was referred to the Lord Chief Justice North. At a subsequent meeting of the committee, a draft of the patent was read, and there being a blank left for the name, it was agreed to leave the nomination of it to the King. At length, after many delays and much solicitude, Penn had the gratification to learn that his patent was prepared for the King's signature, which was affixed to it under the date 4th of March, 1681.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the charter was the last save one of the great proprietary patents gave the King and his council opportunity to profit by experience, and to hedge the new proprietary in by limitations unknown to the earlier documents. It was a witness to Penn's influence that at this time such a charter should have been issued at all. The charter consists of twenty-three

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<sup>1</sup>Actually William Penn became proprietary of his province of Pennsylvania and territories annexed thereto by four separate grants: (1) the province itself was granted to Penn by Charles II, March 4th, 1681, and published by proclamation on April 2nd, 1681; (2) the deed of the Duke of York for the province of Pennsylvania in the same terms substantially as the royal charter. This deed was given on August 31st, 1682, and was prompted by the foresight of Penn to protect him in the future against any claims of the Duke which might arise; (3) the grant of the Duke of York to Penn, August 24th, 1682, of the town of

articles, and is too long for insertion here. Some of its leading provisions, as they related to Penn's doctrine of political authority, should be pointed out.<sup>1</sup>

Penn and his heirs were made absolute proprietaries of the province. The powers granted to the proprietary were comprehensive. He was empowered, in cases of emergency, either by himself, his deputies or magistrates, to "make and constitute fit and wholesome ordinances from time to time", provided that such ordinances did not take away "the right or interest of any persons or persons for, or in their life, members, freehold, goods or chattels". By the assent and approbation, and with the advice of the freemen of the country, or their representatives in Assembly, Penn could enact such laws as should appertain to the peace and safety of the province; but all laws when enacted, were to be published under the seal of the proprietary or his deputies, and within five years were to be transmitted to the King, and by him delivered to the Privy Council. If not repealed within six months thereafter, such laws were to remain in full force and virtue. The right to repeal laws was reserved to the Crown. Perhaps it should be added here that the failure of the proprietary and his deputies to observe the provision of the charter which required all laws to be published, under his or their seal, led to serious trouble in the future.

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New Castle, otherwise called Delaware, and a district of twelve miles around it; (4) the grant of the Duke of York to Penn, on the same day, of a tract of land extending from twelve miles south of New Castle to the Whorekill or Cape Henlopen, divided into the two counties of Kent and Sussex, which, together with the New Castle district, were commonly known by the name of the "three lower counties".

<sup>1</sup> See Hazard, Annals, 488 - 499; Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, Vol. I (Harrisburg: The State of Pennsylvania, 1900), 3 - 18; Charter to William Penn and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania, ed. by George Staughton, Benjamin M. Nead, and Thomas McCamant (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, 1879), 81 - 90.

The proprietary was further empowered to appoint all judges, justices, magistrates, and other officers whatsoever, to erect courts for the administration of justice, and to pardon all manner of criminals, murderers and traitors only excepted.

The essentially feudal arrangement concerning land is important. According to the charter the ownership of the soil by the Penns could not be taken away from them, but the governorship could be. The territory was to be holden of the kings "in free and common socage, by fealty only for all services, and not in capite or by knights service". The payment of rent was to consist of two beaver skins, delivered annually at Windsor, and one-fifth of all gold and silver found. The charter acknowledged the right to sell or lease under any conditions parcels of land, "as of the seignior of Windsor", by such service, customs and rents as Penn would determine, "and not immediately of us, our heirs and successors". Thus Penn's future purchasers held their land directly from him, as he in turn held Pennsylvania from the King.

Although Penn himself preferred the name "New Wales" for his province, the King insisted on a name which would honour the father of Penn, and so the word "Pennsylvania" was coined.<sup>1</sup> The charter further noted that if any of the inhabitants to the number of twenty should signify their desire to the Bishop of London to have a preacher sent to them, such preacher should be allowed to reside and perform his functions without any denial or molestation whatsoever.

Penn had just received what was to prove the most valuable grant ever made by England to a private individual. Within the feudal relations stipulated by the Crown, he was free to establish such a government and laws as he personally

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<sup>1</sup>Annals, 500.

might desire. If one would understand the basic conflict between the proprietary interests and the claims of the Crown, what Penn desired is, therefore, of great significance. Whereas Massachusetts and Connecticut intended to defend their theocratic oligarchy and to hold their line against all intruders of other faiths, Penn planned a theocratic democracy which should evolve through the popular will under divine guidance. This was to be a greatly modified ideal, to be sure, but the starting-premise is worth noting, if only for its own sake.

Penn lost no time in forwarding his design. Five weeks after receiving the charter he published a prospectus which had been submitted for the approval of "traders, planters and shipmasters, that know those parts," and of the most eminent Friends in London. During 1681 and 1682 numerous important documents were issued by Penn testifying to his absorption in plans for colonisation and for establishing a government in his new province. Only one of these documents need concern us further in this chapter.

b. "Certain Conditions and Concessions," July, 1681.

Of the twenty articles comprised in this document,<sup>1</sup> ten concerned land divisions and allotments and the conditions attaching thereto; five treated of miscellaneous matters; and no less than five bespoke fair and just treatment of the Indians on the same basis as white settlers. The Concessions were not intended to define the particular form of government. Nevertheless, they helped to provide the framework into which Penn's political principles were brought to bear.

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<sup>1</sup>See Hazard, Annals, 516 - 520; Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, Vol. I, 18 - 23; Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia: J. Severns and Co., 1852), Vol. I, 26 - 29; Charter to William Penn . . . ., 467 - 470.

Among other things the document stipulated that no purchaser of ten thousand acres or more should have above a thousand acres lying together, unless in three years he planted a family upon every thousand of the same. Every man was bound to plant or put into service so much as should be surveyed and set out to him within three years after such survey, or else a new-comer should be settled thereon, who should pay the original settler his survey money. Quite typical by way of care and foresight was the provision that in clearing the ground one acre of trees was to be left for every five acres cleared, especially to preserve oaks and mulberries for silk and shipping.

On behalf of the Indians it was stipulated that, as it had been usual with planters to overreach them in various ways, whatever was sold to them in consideration of their furs should be sold "in the market place, and there suffer the test, whether good or bad: if good, to pass; if not good, not to be sold for good; that the natives may not be abused nor provoked". It was declared that no man should by any ways or means, in word or deed, "affront or wrong any Indian, but he should incur the same penalty of the Law as if he had committed it against his fellow-planters". If any Indian should abuse, in word or deed, any planter of the province, the said planter "should not be his own Judge upon the Indian, but he shall make his complaint to the Governor of the province, or his Lieutenant or Deputy, or some inferior magistrate near him", who should to the utmost of his power take care with the King of the said Indian, that all reasonable satisfaction should be made to the said injured planter. All differences between planters and Indians was to be ended by twelve men, that is, "by Six planters and Six natives, that so we might live friendly together", as much as in them lay.

The unique feature about these provisions in Penn's case is his determination to approach the Indians as men and brothers and to maintain friendly relations with them. This is a principle which has distinguished the Quakers

at all times in their relations with less privileged people. More will be said on this subject in Chapter XI of this study.

The various laws, frames of government, and constitutions with which the name of William Penn is linked were not forged in the midst of a vacuum. In this chapter it has been our intention of pointing out the context of the colonial experiment, a context which involves no less than the recognition of the fact that Penn's political principles would be forced to adjust themselves to a relationship between a proprietary province and the interests of the Crown. In the charter for Pennsylvania, William Penn was granted many far-reaching powers and prerogatives. But he was not entirely free to do what he pleased. A multitude of interests were involved other than his own: governmental forces in England, the plans of the surrounding colonies, the outlook of the settlers themselves. In the awareness of this situation, however, we can see how the description of Penn as the "first Quaker man of practical affairs" so aptly fits. The principles of Quaker theory had to be tempered with the realities of the situation.

The proprietary province provided room for the application of Penn's political principles as no other type colony could afford. It already appears that these principles proceeded from a high motivation genuinely rooted in religious conviction. We are now ready to approach the various government documents of the colonial situation, seeing in them, and in the private letters written by Penn himself in the midst of their negotiations, how his doctrine of political authority was shaped and re-shaped in the "holy experiment".

CHAPTER IX

LAWS, FRAMES AND CONSTITUTIONS

- A. Main articulations of Penn's doctrine of political authority
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  - 2. Political authority development: the natural result of belief in a continuing revelation
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3. "The Fundamental Constitutions for the Province of East New Jersey", 1683.
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C. Pennsylvania: the historical context for our study

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6. "The Charter of Privileges", October 28th, 1701
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## CHAPTER IX

### LAWS, FRAMES AND CONSTITUTIONS

Our concern in the previous chapter was to show how William Penn became interested in colonisation in the New World. His colonisation projects brought Penn face-to-face with the problems of political authority. These problems grew out of the context of the colonial situation involving conflicting points of view: proprietary interests vs. claims of the Crown. In his activities in the Jerseys and more especially in Pennsylvania Penn found the opportunity to implement in a practical way outside of England those political principles which had been formulated as a result of the struggle for religious toleration in his home country. These principles, in turn, formed the basis for Penn's doctrine of political authority.

In this present chapter we shall attempt to examine the colonial frames of government and various constitutions, with special reference to those provisions which exhibit or affect Penn's doctrine of political authority. Yet so crucial is the moment, and so intricate the evolution of the issue, that the present writer feels he should bring out the essential articulations of the doctrine first, before proceeding to the historical exposition of the documents themselves.

#### Main Articulations of Penn's Doctrine of Political Authority

Political principles, whatever their origin or nature, cannot long exist in a vacuum. They must be tempered in the forge of practical experiment.

Penn's doctrine of political authority was no exception to this fact. In his case, too, there must be acknowledged throughout a tension between theory and actual practice. The actual practice of basic principles held by the Quaker Founder was conditioned by circumstances, by individual weaknesses and inconsistencies. While charges of occasional expediency may arise from such situations, it is equally the case that new aspects of truth emerge from experiment.

Prominent Quakers who have been also prominent statesmen are very few and far between in the pages of history - although as numerous proportionally, perhaps, as the members of any other religious denomination. William Penn was the first and greatest of these. Penn himself believed that it was of the essence of Quakerism that its principles should be put into practice in every detail of conduct, including also and even the conduct of public affairs. He believed that a religious commonwealth, in government as well as in citizenship, was not a contradiction in terms, and that a state based on and guided entirely by Christianity was a human possibility and a divine command. A Society of Friends, he believed, could found a state animated by the conscious and enduring determination to yield glory to God in the highest and to act upon peace and good will toward men.

With religion at its core, Penn's concept of the state was nevertheless to be separated entirely from the mediaeval conception of a union of Church and State. The ecclesiastical bigotry and persecution of the one and the paganism of the other were to find no place in the religious and fraternal commonwealth which he aspired to establish - a conception he expressed in the very name of its capital. The colony which he founded was to be, not the temporary theatre of military and exploiting adventure, but the permanent homes of colonists who professed and practised a religion of love and friendship.

The oppressed of every kindred, tongue and nation were to be invited to share in all the God-given opportunities of life; religious toleration to be granted to all; equality for all before the law; law and government to be based on the consent of the governed; democracy in government, as well as in religion. Such were the Christian-Quaker principles and practices which Penn craved for the new experiment.

The broad principles of Penn will be found in the early Frames, but their importance was forecast in 1671 when, as we have seen, he distinguished between what he called "fundamental" and "superficial" laws. The former were "the determinations of right reason regarding moral and just living, with certain privileges that in the first constitution are agreed upon as essentials in government: as meers, bounds, and landmarks of truth, equity and righteousness, that as well confine rulers as people".<sup>1</sup> What were such "fundamental" laws?

The sacred rights of the individual conscience formed the central pillar upon which Penn was to build his state. It was the ineradicable conviction of the Quakers that conscience was God's throne in man that Penn translated into laws so different from some of those of the older colonies. Every man, whatever his race or language, has a natural religion or standard of right and wrong to which he can live faithfully if he wishes to do so. The important thing for the Quaker is to establish harmony between the human and divine elements in him. Man was called to be perfect. The belief in a continuing revelation of God's will to those who gladly inquire and seek for it leads to a belief in evolution in the affairs of men. It holds the Christian to the truths of the Bible so far as they are verified in human experience,

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<sup>1</sup>"A Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers", Works, II, 72. Cf. supra, Chap. V., 148.

but it does not stop with the Bible as if it alone marked the permanent revelation of the divine purposes. In other words, the belief leads one to look forward, to expect further revelation, as human capacity is able to bear it. No attainment marks a terminus of human endeavour so long as one can catch a God-given glimpse of something higher and better.

Thus the Quakers could find in the Bible no blueprint for such a permanent system of government for a church-controlled state as the theologians of Rome and Geneva could see. God, they believed, was interested in good men, not in forms of government. If men sought Truth and God's will, they would evolve a government which was agreeable to Him. "Man was born free", as Rousseau said later, and "All men are created equal", as the first American Congress was to say still later. They are brothers, the Quakers held, and it is their business in secular as well as in spiritual matters to seek together to know God's will. When the Quakers have their own way, this belief will lead them toward democracy in government. They will seek to set up what has been called a "theocratic democracy", a democracy of which God is recognised as the directing power to be consulted and obeyed by a human society of equals in whom there is a spark of the divine. Such a government Penn hoped to establish in the New World.

The "holy experiment" may henceforth be viewed as emerging through Penn's efforts to allow colonial Pennsylvania to benefit from lessons learned abroad the hard way. Yet in his endeavour to safeguard the basic political principles, developed in the course of the struggle for religious toleration in England, he was led to wonder whether these could be applied in a new situation so different in many ways. Through a combination of circumstances, which some would deem providential, Penn had secured the grant to a land across the seas. Here he hoped to settle his own family, and spend out his days.

In a letter to the Lord Culpper, written from Chester, Penn had said:

I am mightily taken with this part of the world: here is a great deal of nature, which is to be preferred to base art, and methinks that simplicity with enough, is gold to lacker, compared to European cunning. I like it so well, that as plentiful estate, and a great acquaintance on the other side have no charms to remove; . . . I am like to be an adopted American.<sup>1</sup>

In his cherished status as "an adopted American", William Penn hoped to plant and nourish his doctrine of political authority: the establishment of a government "of which God is recognised as the directing power to be consulted and obeyed by a human society of equals in whom there is a spark of the divine". Here the political principles stemming from such a doctrine of authority were to become incarnate in a colony of the Empire.

The principle of religious toleration was to be worked out through laws which would guarantee the right of every man to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience. Settlers in the New World would not have to go through the intolerance, the injustices which had loomed so large in the life-experience of the Proprietor himself. There would be no enforced support of anything resembling a state-church. Authority came from God; it was to God that man owed allegiance. His religion was a private affair.

Again, the principle of nationalism stemmed from Penn's doctrine of authority. Of course, Penn had no thought of breaking away from the mother country. He held the province as a fief of the Crown. In a sense Penn was a feudal sovereign. All laws were ultimately subject to a veto in England. Yet the seed of nationalism was at work, and was not long in taking root. The pride of local citizenry in the colonial endeavour, the awareness that England

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<sup>1</sup>Dated the 5th of the 12th month, 1682, and found in "Inedited Letters of William Penn", by J. Francis Fisher, Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Vol. IV, Part I (Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1840), 174.

was now "far away", the daring which comes to men who find, perhaps for the first time, that they are in a position to challenge the old order of things - all these factors thrust home to the inhabitants that theirs was indeed an "experiment", whose ultimate outcome would largely be the result of their own making. Penn himself was acting as though he were the benevolent father or elder of a democracy. This double role, feudal lord and paternal democrat, did not go together. A test of war was inevitable, between Penn and the colonists. For a moment, and it was a short one, Penn's presence made his autoeracy invisible, and the King's government did not interfere. But the growing pains of a new nation heralded the birth of the nationalistic spirit. Penn's doctrine of political authority was to be tested in a struggle both between Crown and Proprietor and between Proprietor and colonist.

Another principle which evolved from Penn's endeavours in England, and which formed part of the pattern of political authority in the New World, was the principle of property. The various qualifications attached to the securing of property in the colony; the property qualifications for voting; the many provisions dealing with the estates of widows and orphans; and the careful securing unto himself of basic property rights within the boundaries of Pennsylvania marked the Quaker concern for the business and economic rights and responsibilities of the individual. Property was important. It could, and often did, mean the difference between success or failure - both for the individual and for his society. The authority which came from God found itself placed in the hands of men of property. There was, then, a close relationship between authority and property. The exact nature of this relationship was worked out in the midst of the "holy experiment".

Along with religious toleration, nationalism and property recognition came a new appreciation of the dignity of the human individual. Inasmuch

as political authority came from God, no man could deprive another man of his basic rights as a creature made by the Creator. The status of minorities was to be respected. The Quaker understanding of the Inner Light in every man led Friends to have a respect for the worth of the human soul which was all too rare in that day and age.

The above principles are the main articulations of Penn's doctrine of political authority as viewed by the present writer. The doctrine was to undergo a series of severe, in some cases heartbreaking, trials. Penn was to show the marks of a wise legislator by the adaptation<sup>at</sup> of his system to existing circumstances and by relinquishing - though not without misgivings - a part of his prerogatives when a new situation of things in the colony rendered it desirable. The ultimate success or failure of the experiment, however, was to depend to no little degree on the firmness of the foundation laid down in the beginning. And in this regard, William Penn scored a significant triumph.

We turn now to an examination of the implementation of Penn's doctrine of political authority by a study of the laws, frames and constitutions of his colonial projects. The picture will not always be pleasant. The experiment in the New World involved a thorough testing and re-testing. In the process views changed and shifted. But as a result, new truth on the problem of authority arose, for Penn's day and for our own.

### The Jerseys

The first Jersey document with which Penn himself was concerned was that entitled, "The Concessions and Agreements of the Proprietors, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Province of West New-Jersey, in America", dated 3rd March, 1676. Eleven years before, Berkeley and Carteret, who on June 23rd and

24th, 1664, had received the region by deeds of lease and release from the Duke of York, had promised the settlers in "Nova-Caesaria" religious freedom with some limitation. This limitation was contained in the eighth item of the concessions of Berkeley and Carteret. It permitted the legislature to set up and maintain a religious establishment, "giving liberty beside to any person or persons to keep and maintain what preachers or ministers they please."<sup>1</sup> This earlier document was drawn up by a group of men, not one of whom was familiar with the country or its inhabitants for whom they legislated. Although the terms were liberal, and the laws tolerant, the whole was based upon theory.

1. "The Concessions and Agreements . . . .," 1676

Penn's Concessions were, of course, more far-reaching than those of Berkeley and Carteret. These Concessions were drawn up after the return from America of Coale, Burnyeat, Fox and Edmundson - all men of intelligence and experience who, we know from their journals, reported the character of the country and the situation of the settlers then beginning to come in, to William Penn and his advisers. The Concessions were placed for signature by the subscribers in London, and were probably later taken to Yorkshire, as the grouping of signatures would lead one to fancy, for the same purpose. As Amelia M. Gummere has written: "There breathes in the great charter for New Jersey, whose anonymous author is beyond doubt William Penn, a spirit of religious and political freedom that is even more marked than when, seven years later, he came to draw up the famous 'Frame of Government' for his own

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<sup>1</sup>"The Concessions and Agreements of the Proprietors of New Jersey", Archives of the State of New Jersey, First Series, Vol. I (Newark: Daily Journal Establishment, 1880), 31.

Pennsylvania".<sup>1</sup>

It soon becomes clear to the reader of this document that Penn, in placing the source of authority in God, was quick to safeguard the rights of the individual in religious and governmental matters. Chapter XVI of the Concessions declares:

That no men, nor number of men upon earth, hath power or authority to rule over men's consciences in religious matters; therefore it is consented, agreed and ordained that no person or persons whatsoever within the said province, at any time or times hereafter, shall be any ways upon any pretence whatsoever, called in question or in the least punished or hurt, either in person, estate, or privilege, for the sake of his opinion, judgment, faith or worship towards God, in matters of religion. But that all and every such person, and persons, may from time to time, and at all times, freely and fully have, and enjoy his and their judgments, and the exercise of their consciences in matters of religious worship throughout all the said province.<sup>2</sup>

This remarkable paragraph indicates clearly the desire of Penn to incorporate into the life of the colony the principle of religious toleration. Having himself experienced the injustices of persecution for conscience's sake, Penn desired that those who were to settle in the New World would be enabled to do so in the awareness that their religion was their own affair, not to be tampered with by any governmental agency or force.

The political responsibilities and privileges of settlers were provided for in a number of conditions. For example, provision was made for a General Assembly, duly elected by the residents of the province, "which body of Deputies, Trustees or Representatives, consisting of one hundred persons . . . .

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<sup>1</sup>"The Early Quakers in New Jersey", Book IV of The Quakers in the American Colonies, by Rufus Jones (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), 365; Catherine Owens Peare, William Penn, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1957), 174, notes that "while Penn, the lawyer and visionary, may have drawn the first draft, Lawrie, Lucas, and many more of the 151 signers of the document, certainly had a voice in the final form".

<sup>2</sup>"The Concessions and Agreements of West Jersey", Archives of the State of New Jersey, First Series, Vol. I (Newark: Daily Journal Establishment, 1880), Chap. XVI, 253.

shall be the General, Free and Supreme Assembly of the said province for the year ensuing and no longer".<sup>1</sup> Any bribery, or corrupt election practices were forbidden.<sup>2</sup> Ballot boxes, rather than mere vocal voting, was to be the rule, "for the prevention of all partiality, and whereby every man may freely choose according to his own judgment and honest intention".<sup>3</sup> In every Assembly, every respective member was to have liberty of speech,<sup>4</sup> and when debate on any particular measure was closed, and the question agreed upon, "the doors of the House be set open, and the people have liberty to come in to hear and be witnesses of the votes, and the inclination of the persons voting".<sup>5</sup> How important such a provision was in order that political responsibility might be affixed! A two-thirds vote of the quorum or more of the delegates if assembled together was to be determinative in all cases coming in question before them "consonant and conformable to these Concessions and Fundamentals".<sup>6</sup> Chapter XXXIX further stipulates that the Assembly shall "enact and make all such laws, acts and constitutions as shall be necessary for the well government of the said province, (and them to repeal) provided that the same be, as near as may be conveniently, agreeable to the primitive, ancient and Fundamental Laws of the nation of England".<sup>7</sup> During the periods of adjournment and dissolution of the Assembly, a panel of ten men, elected by the Assembly, was to serve as the managing body of the province.<sup>8</sup> Each member of the Assembly was to be paid during the time of the sitting of the Assembly the sum of one shilling per day, "that thereby he may be known to be the servant of the people", and this sum was to be paid by the inhabitants of the proprietary or division that elected

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXII, 263.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXIII, 263 f.,

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 264.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXVI, 265.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXIV, 264.    <sup>7</sup>Ibid., 266.    <sup>8</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXVII, 265.

him.<sup>1</sup> This latter provision further solidified the relationship Penn proposed to exist between elected representatives and their constituents. The "power of the purse strings" may often be used to ensure political responsibility!

Echoes of the famous Penn-Mead Trial could be heard in those provisions which dealt with legal proceedings. To prevent the misuse of political authority, safeguards were offered the colonists. Chapter XVII notes that "no proprietor, freeholder or inhabitant of the said province of West New Jersey shall be deprived or condemned of life, limb, liberty, estate, property or any ways hurt in his or their privileges, freedoms or franchises upon any account whatsoever, without a due trial, and judgment passed by twelve good and lawful men of his neighbourhood".<sup>2</sup> Summonses, writs and attachments were all to be duly processed and served,<sup>3</sup> and after provision for three justices who were to sit with the jury, one reads that "the said justices shall pronounce such judgment as they shall receive from, and be directed by the said twelve men in whom only the judgment resides, and not otherwise".<sup>4</sup> Thus was the function of the jury established and protected henceforth in American law.<sup>5</sup>

It is not difficult to see why Penn made so much of jury stipulations and legal proceedings. These were essential safeguards to the misuse and abuse of political authority. As such, the role of the jury has had an essential role to play in the development of law in our Western world.

As we indicated earlier, one of the principles deriving from Penn's doctrine of political authority was the principle of property, with all the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXXV, 265.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 253.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., Chap. XVIII, 254 f.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Chap. XIX, 255.

<sup>5</sup>Provision also was made for the legal validity of "affirmations" (Ibid., Chap. XX, 256); and for "open court" trials (Ibid., Chap. XXIII, 257).

privileges pertaining thereto. There were numerous allowances for the property rights of those proposing to settle in West-Jersey. All lands were to be carefully surveyed, and all grants certified to the register, to be recorded.<sup>1</sup> Generous provisions were made for the bestowal of land upon new arrivals, provisions whose design could not but attract many to the New World.<sup>2</sup> The general oversight of land distribution was to be in the hands of duly-elected Commissioners.<sup>3</sup> Further arrangements were made for the securing of estates of the deceased, and for the taking care of orphans.<sup>4</sup> In connection with property questions, it was announced that there would be a good understanding and friendly correspondence between the proprietors, freeholders and inhabitants of the province and the Indian natives.<sup>5</sup>

When one knows the state of civil oppression and religious persecution in England at the time, one can fully appreciate the historical significance of this Quaker activity in West New-Jersey. As Bancroft observed, Penn "dared to cherish the noble idea of man's capacity for self-government".<sup>6</sup> The Quaker leader re-affirmed his fundamental belief in this capacity by man in a letter written by himself, Gaven Lawrie and Nicholas Lucas, September, 1676, to those proposing to settle in the colony. The letter contains a plea for harmony and unity among all those planning to come to the New World: "as our eye has been single, and our heart sincere to the living God, in this as in other things, so we desire . . . that nothing which hurts or grieves the holy life of truth

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Chap. II, 243; cf. Chap. V, 248 f. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., Chap. IV, 244 - 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Chap. III, 243 f. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., Chap. XXIX, 261 f.

<sup>5</sup>See the provision for "mixed" juries, Ibid., Chap. XXV, 259 f.

<sup>6</sup>George Bancroft, History of the United States, II, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1852), 380.

in any that goes or stays, may be adhered to; nor any provocations given to break precious unity".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Penn was expecting too much of man; his doctrine of political authority apparently called for "super-human" effort on the part of the colonists if it were to succeed in the wilderness of America.

A storm was not long in brewing, which was to serve as a preliminary test of Penn's political outlook. The crucial question arose: are the colonists of West New-Jersey merely landowners and tenants, or are they citizens of a self-governing political community? Apparently Penn and his fellow-proprietors answered this question in the latter sense. However, the agent of the Duke of York, Governor Andros, asserted that the settlers were merely landowners, under the political jurisdiction of New York. Andros further declared that the settlers were subject to the payment of taxes and customs-duties levied by the governor of New York, and with no right to set up a representative legislature of their own. During the years 1679-1680, when Penn was striving for the election of Sidney to Parliament as a champion of toleration and parliamentary government, and when the Duke of York had retired to Scotland in the midst of the excitement over the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Bill, Penn prevailed with the Duke, in August, 1680, to release all his powers of sovereignty over West New-Jersey to its proprietors. The chief argument which he used was that such a concession on the part of the Duke would prove to Englishmen that their future King was swayed by justice and generosity. Even more important, to himself, Penn knew that his doctrine of political authority could never be successfully tried as long as there remained a divided issue of sovereignty in the colonies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Archives of the State of New Jersey, First Series, I, 234.

<sup>2</sup> For illustrations of the sovereignty issue involved in the power of taxation, see Samuel M. Janney, The Life of William Penn (6th ed., Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1882), 160 - 162; Thomas Clarkson, Memoirs of the Private and Public Life of William Penn, I (Philadelphia: Isaac Peirce, 1814), 201 f.

Another frame of government for the colony, passed in 1681, need not contain us here. Mention, perhaps, should be made of the provision that "Liberty of conscience in matters of faith and worship towards God, shall be granted to all . . . and that none of the free people of the said Province shall be rendered incapable (sic) of office in respect of their faith and worship".<sup>1</sup> Certain other articles tightened the political authority of the colonists. Without the consent and concurrence of the General Assembly, no law could be made or enacted, nor could the Assembly be prorogued or dissolved without its own consent. All officers of state, or trust, were to be nominated and elected by the Assembly and were to be accountable to it. Since political authority involves the power to wage war and to keep the peace, of significance is the provision that for no governor or Council was it lawful "to make or raise war upon any accounts or pretence whatsoever, or to raise any military forces within the Province aforesaid, without the consent of the General Free Assembly for the time being". Thus, originally as in Pennsylvania, so long as the Quakers predominated in the popular Assembly, any war-party executive was blocked. The significance of this for the doctrine of political authority is of such importance that an entire chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the issue of "war and peace" (Chapter XIII).

2. "The Fundamental Constitutions for the Province of East New Jersey in America, Anno Domini, 1683."<sup>2</sup>

Some of the provisions of the documents noted in the preceding section

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<sup>1</sup>"The Province of West New Jersey", Article X, found in F. N. Thorpe, The Federal and State Constitutions, Vol. V (Washington, 1909), 2565, and quoted in W. W. Comfort, William Penn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 136. Cf. Articles IV, V, VI, VII and III.

<sup>2</sup>Archives of the State of New Jersey, First Series, Vol. I, 395 - 410.

are more liberal than those found in "The Fundamental Constitutions for the Province of East New Jersey" of 1683, to which we may now turn. By this time, Penn was the proprietor of Pennsylvania, and this fact must always be kept in mind in a consideration of the form of government of East Jersey. The twenty-four proprietors had already named Robert Barclay as governor, and he remained in England, governing the province by deputy. This new frame of government, much less democratic than the old Concessions, was signed by sixteen of the proprietors, Penn's signature not appearing. The new code was distinctly lacking in directness and simplicity, and could hardly have done anything to improve the government of the colony or to lessen the complication growing out of the numerous proprietary rights in the provinces. Fortunately, it appears that the document was never really enforced. As an illustration of the tension arising from these conflicting interests as they bear on the problem of authority, the document merits our attention.

Article XVI reads:

All persons living in the Province who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and Eternal God, and hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and quietly in a civil society, shall in no way be molested and prejudged for their religious persuasions and exercise in matters of faith and worship; nor shall they be compelled to frequent and maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

So far we see the Quaker testimony against a State Church and against tithes; but the same article further provides:

that no man shall be admitted a member of the Great or Common Council, or any other place of public trust, who shall not profess faith in Christ-Jesus, and solemnly declare that he doth no ways hold himself obliged in conscience to endeavor alteration in the government, or seeks the turning out of any in it or their ruin or prejudice, either in person or estate, because they are in his opinion heretics, or differ in their judgment from him.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 405.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 405 f.

Who is eligible to hold public office? Are those who disagree with us a threat to the authority of government? Who is to decide when a change in government is advisable, and on what grounds? The seeds for such questions lie within such a provision as quoted above. Such questions are very much with us today, as the issue of "Communists in government" bears testimony.

For the government of the province there was to be a great Council, consisting of the twenty-four proprietors or their proxies, and one hundred and forty-four others to be chosen by the freemen of the province. Until such time as the province was ready for such a number of representatives, temporary delegations were to be chosen.<sup>1</sup> To be eligible to vote, property requirements were put into force.<sup>2</sup> Legal safeguards regarding trials were prescribed, similar to those in the Concessions of 1676.<sup>3</sup> These include a jury of twelve men, as near as it may be "peers and equals, and of the neighborhood, and men without just exception"; that witnesses in court "shall there give and deliver in their evidence by solemnly promising to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, to the matter in question". Here we have, with the usual penalty for perjury, that legal substitution of the affirmation for the oath, for which Friends, and Penn in particular, so long contended. This same substitution was allowed for a sufficient engagement of all the officers of the state from the governor down to the justices of the peace in their affirmation of loyalty to the King of England and to the Proprietors.<sup>4</sup> Provision was made for the defence of the colony, with the stipulation that those who, for consciences' sake, were unable to bear arms would be respected for their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Article II, 396 f.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., Article III, 397.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Articles XIX, XXI, 406 - 408.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., Article XXIV, 409 f.

position.<sup>1</sup>

There is much significance in these early laws of the Jerseys as they shed light on the doctrine of political authority. Penn's business here involved him directly for the first time in the creation of an ideal commonwealth in America and doubtless whetted his appetite for still greater initiative than he could exercise as only one of several trustees. Many of the Concessions antedate similar liberal provisions for Pennsylvania, and the laws made in both of the Jerseys struck familiar veins in the "holy experiment". Penn had incorporated certain inalienable privileges to be enjoyed without further sufferings: freedom of conscience and worship; popular government through the concurrent approval of all laws, including taxation, by the General Assembly; guarantee of trial by jury and freedom of the accused from unjust fees and court abuse; no state religion or exaction of tithes; validity of Quaker marriages; and the acceptance of an affirmation for an oath in law and in declarations of loyalty. The "holy experiment" thus came near to being performed in New Jersey. But, as has been suggested, Penn's hands were not quite free in the lands east of the Delaware.

Like Maryland, New Jersey was at first a proprietary colony, but several other proprietors were involved. Though Penn did not visit New Jersey at the time, he had property interests there and must have thought quite continuously of America from 1676 onward.<sup>2</sup> Though he was prevented from spending more than four years in his beloved "woods" of Pennsylvania, for the rest of his active life he was deeply involved in colonial affairs. In this concern, Penn sought,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Article VII, 402.

<sup>2</sup>Penn, of course, had long before been aware of the New World. Indeed, we have Penn's own statement, in a letter to Robert Turner, 12th of the 2nd month, 1681, speaking of America: "I had an opening of joy, as to these parts, in the year 1661 at Oxford" - Clarkson, Memoirs, I, 225.

and received, the grant to the colony of Pennsylvania. Would he find there a real chance to put his doctrine of political authority to work? Would the principles stemming from that doctrine find in the wilderness of his grant a place to take root? The way is prepared for a consideration of the governmental documents of early colonial Pennsylvania.

### Pennsylvania

In the two decades following the Charter in which King Charles conferred the power to make laws for Pennsylvania upon William Penn, subject to the advice and consent of a representative Assembly, the Province had no less than four written Constitutions, called Frames of Government or Charters. The first Frame of Government, of May 5th, 1682, was issued by the Proprietor in England. It remained in effect less than a year, being replaced by the second Frame of Government on April 2nd, 1683. This was suspended in 1693, when Penn was deprived of his province. Pennsylvania was governed then as a royal province, under Governor Fletcher of New York. After Penn's restoration, the second Frame was put into force for a time. Then doubts arose as to its legality, and Governor Markham resumed Fletcher's pattern of government until he and the Assembly agreed upon a third Frame, known as Markham's Frame of Government, on November 7th, 1696. When William Penn returned to his colony late in 1699, he immediately began to plan a final settlement of constitutional difficulties. The result was the Charter of Privileges, adopted on October 28th, 1701. This, the last Constitution of provincial Pennsylvania, remained in effect until the American Revolution, longer than any other Constitution of Pennsylvania down to the present time.

This thumb-nail sketch provides us with the setting for the material to be considered in this section. But our subject rightly begins with the

origin of the first Frame of Government. In endeavouring to ascertain the origin of this Frame, one must have recourse to a volume of the Penn MSS in the Pennsylvania Historical Society entitled "Charters and Frames of Government". In this volume are preserved a number of documents which show the attempts of Penn and of his friends or associates in the project of colonisation to form a system of government which, while embodying all that was valuable in the older systems of the world, should also contain several novel provisions. Here are to be found rough drafts not only of frames of government, but also of the "Laws agreed upon in England", to which we shall refer shortly. It is almost impossible to arrange these embryonic schemes of government in anything like a logical order because of the fact that many of the sentences are crossed out and rewritten, sometimes in the same, sometimes in different handwriting. Again, with one exception, no dates or names are attached by which a clue to the authors might be secured. However, a careful study of the contents of this manuscript volume would suggest a certain general order of development.

The document with which Penn's own views are first defined is that called the "Charter of Liberties" or "The Fundamental Constitutions" of April 20th, 1682. His understanding of political authority is clouded in this manuscript by some rather loose moralisings about the nature and end of government. They apparently proceed from the assumption that the interests of governors and the governed are the same. An attempt is then made to define government as a "constitution of good laws wisely set together for the good ordering of people in society". Then the proprietor, pursuing, as we shall see, the same line of thought as in the preface to his first Frame of Government, insists that government is but a means to an end: the public good. This being so, it becomes necessary to consider what frame of government will "preserve magistracy in reverence with the people, and best keep it from being

hurtful to them". An error in this will injuriously affect all succeeding generations. According to Shepherd, the trend of Penn's thought was "that the proprietary system should be modified by ideas from other systems, particularly the Jewish, permeated by a strong Christian and humanitarian spirit".<sup>1</sup>

In the first proposition appears the statement of what Penn considered to be the highest purpose of government, a statement which probably embodied the deepest conviction cherished by the Quaker mind concerning the subject. It was that government should secure to every person the "free enjoyment of his religious opinions and worship, so long as it did not extend to licentiousness, or to the destruction of others, that is to speak loosely or profanely of God, Christ and the Scriptures, or religion, or to commit any moral evil or injury against others." In this liberty of conscience every person should be protected by the civil magistrates. All authority came from God. In every man was a spark of the Divine. The purpose of man was to have fellowship with the Father. To have this fellowship, man must be free to worship as the Light directed. To assure this freedom all other authority, including political authority, must be dedicated.

Similar provisions with regard to religious toleration appear later in the "Laws agreed upon in England", in the "Great Law" passed at Chester, December 7th, 1682, and in the "Charter of Privileges" of 1701. Closely connected with Penn's insistence on the moral nature and purposes of government was his demand that laws for the prevention and correction of vice and injustice should be vigorously and impartially executed. In the remaining provisions of this earlier manuscript, Penn passes from the higher and more general consider-

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<sup>1</sup>William Robert Shepherd, History of the Proprietary Government in Pennsylvania (Vol. VI of Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, ed. by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University), (New York: Columbia University, 1896), 232. Cf. also 231 ff.

ations to the specific details of government. In some respects these propositions appear not to have given satisfaction. On the other hand, they have been appraised by other critics as more nearly representing Penn's views than did the later Frame of Government.<sup>1</sup> It is to this latter document that we now turn our attention.

1. The Frame of Government, April 25th, 1682

When William Penn sat down to write a frame of government and a constitution for his new province, he had plenty of available inspiration. Anyone with his interests would be familiar with the outstanding efforts to create an ideal government: the Old Testament, Plato with his ideal Republic, Lycurgus and his laws, Rome, Venice, the French absolute monarchy, the government of the Netherlands - all these were doubtless present in Penn's mind before he had any occasion to make use of them. In England there was More's Utopia (1516), Hobbes's Leviathan (1651), and James Harrington's Oceana (1656). A detailed examination of Penn's resulting efforts would reveal the possible origin of this or that idea which he incorporated in his own work.<sup>2</sup>

We come now to the most significant of all the early documents connected with the proprietary history of colonial Pennsylvania: "The Frame of Government" of 1682. This "Frame" was essentially Penn's preliminary statement of principles underlying the laws or constitution to be adopted. Here he could incorporate his own idealism and optimism before becoming involved in the necessary details of government operation. Like the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States, the Frame could state the basic principles of justice which Penn had absorbed from his studies of history, and could lay the foundation upon which he should proceed to build. This document then, and especially the preface to it, expresses Penn's own conception

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 236 ff., especially n.1, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>W. W. Comfort, William Penn, 132; cf. Peare, op. cit., 230 f., especially the reference to Aristotle's influence.

of government and political authority more clearly than does any other single declaration.

At the same time, the Quaker leader knew that he must choose carefully and determine wisely what would be practicable. He was in a difficult situation. There was involved the inherent difficulty of reconciling his idealism with the conflicting interests of the Crown, with his own proprietary privileges, and with the growing demands of the settlers. Penn was the actual owner of the land and could make his own laws to govern it; but he held the land, as it were, in fief to the Crown, and his own laws must not conflict with the fundamental laws of England. Therefore Penn was aware that his task was to devise a government whose laws should be consonant with those of his home country, and still rest lightly upon a colony of lovers of religious liberty, in a wilderness three thousand miles away. Moreover, his laws must satisfy one fundamental condition, and that condition was a new one in human history: these laws must conform to the Quaker philosophy of life. In this situation Penn issued his scheme of government with fear and uncertainty, but he enunciated the principles on which it was based without hesitation or questioning.

As a statement of Penn's doctrine of political authority, then, the Frame is of the utmost importance. In order to facilitate a better understanding of the doctrine itself as contained in this document, we shall consider the material under three subdivisions: the origin of government, the sovereign powers of government, and the limitations of government.

First, then, with reference to the origin of government. In the preface to the Frame Penn begins:

When the great and wise God had made the world, of all his creatures it pleased him to choose man his deputy to rule it; and to fit him for so great a charge and trust, he did not only qualify him with skill and power, but with integrity to use them justly. This native goodness was equally his honor and his happiness, and whilst he stood here, all went well; there was no need of coercive

or compulsive means; the precept of divine love and truth in his bosom was the guide and keeper of his innocency. But lust prevailing against duty, made a lamentable breach upon it; and the law, that before had no power over him, took place upon him and his disobedient posterity, that such as would not live conformable to the holy law within, should fall under the reproof and correction, of the just law without, in a judicial administration.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that Penn's political ideas here, like those of the leading theorists of the age, postulated a state of nature anterior to the emergence of society. They rested upon the familiar notions of divine law and of the jus naturale implicit in much of the political writing of his time. In this first Frame, more notably in the preface, from which we have just quoted, we see one view of social origin; his ideas about men in the pristine age vary in later writings. The explanation in this first Frame clearly followed the story given in the earlier chapters of Genesis. God chose man His deputy to rule the world and endowed him not only with "skill and power, but with integrity to use them justly". Primitive man, according to this theory, was essentially happy. Thus, in 1682, Penn accepted Locke's view of the original state of nature. Like Locke, too, the Quaker believed that before organised society appeared justice was a matter of private vengeance and that the cause of the ruin of the primeval happiness was sin. This innocency, wrote Penn, was destroyed by "lust prevailing against duty", when, in the words of the earlier printed draft of the first Frame, man "leant his ear to another voice and followed his lust and did the thing he was forbidden of God".

In the preface, as we have seen, Penn referred to the divine or "holy" law, which to him was the law of nature. His explanation made no reference

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<sup>1</sup>"Frame of Government", Charter to William Penn and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania, ed. by George Staughton, Benjamin M. Nead and Thomas McCamant (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, 1879), 91. Called hereafter Charter and Laws.

to any human consent to law; yet the passage appears as part of a discussion of the state of nature which represents humanity as essentially good, though, of course, disobedient. Penn thus traced the origin of society to God, explained its growth through a divinely guided patriarchate - but ultimately derived its political organisation - as did Locke - from human consent. This will become clearer as our development proceeds; we mention it here in order that the reader may be aware of what to expect. A mystic would have no intellectual difficulty in assuming a divine direction of which the earthly agent was the will of man. A Quaker could believe in God as the source of society and in the human race as the means chosen by Divinity to work out His plans.

If the origin of government is found in human consent, what then are the sovereign powers of government? Penn followed his opening paragraph in the preface with material from the Epistles of Paul to Timothy. Having placed his conception of the "divine right of government" over against the Stuart conception of "the divine right of kings" Penn went on:

This settles the divine right of government beyond exception, and that for two ends; first, to terrify evil-doers; secondly, to cherish those that do well; which gives government a life beyond corruption, and makes it as durable in the world, as good men shall be. So that government seems to me a part of religion itself, a thing sacred in its institution and end. For if it does not directly remove the cause, it crushes the effects of evil, and is as such (tho' a lower yet), an emanation of the same Divine Power, that is both author and object of pure religion; the difference lying here, that the one is more free and mental, the other more corporal and compulsive in its operation: but that is only to evil-doers; government itself being otherwise as capable of kindness, goodness and charity, as a more private society. They weakly err, that think there is no other use of government than correction, which is the coarsest part of it: daily experience tells us, that the care and regulation of many other affairs more soft and daily necessary, make up much the greatest part of government. . . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 92.

Penn discussed the hands in which governmental power had been placed. "I know," he wrote, "what is said by the several admirers of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, which are the rule of one, a few, and many, and are the three common ideas of government, when men discourse on that subject." He went on: "But I choose to solve the controversy with this small distinction, and it belongs to all three; any government is free to the people under it . . . where the laws rule, and the people are a party to those laws, and more than this is tyranny, oligarchy, and confusion."<sup>1</sup>

But lastly, when all is said, there is hardly one frame of government in the world so ill designed by its first founders, that in good hands would not do well enough; and story tells us, the best in ill ones can do nothing that is great or good. . . . Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them, and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too. Wherefore governments rather depend upon men, than men upon governments. Let men be good, and the government cannot be bad; if it be ill, they will cure it. But if men be bad, let the government be never so good, they will endeavor to warp and spoil to their turn.<sup>2</sup>

If Penn's views of the origin of government, in society, lack strict logical consistency, the reader must be prepared for the fact that his views about the ultimate powers of sovereignty will exhibit the same characteristic. He repeatedly ascribed supreme political power to God. Government, as the organ of the State, must have its source in the will of God. Yet political organisation derived from human consent. The law was added to man because of his transgression. Human political authority was thus not wholly "sovereign".

How could these limitations of sovereignty be expressed? Penn was aware of the criticisms which would befall any man who endeavoured to draft a constitution, but driven on by "the power of necessity" he produced the Frame and Laws,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 92 f.

to the great end of all government, viz: to support power in reverence with the people, and to secure the people from the abuse of power; that they may be free by their just obedience, and the magistrates honorable for their just administration: for liberty without obedience is confusion, and obedience without liberty is slavery. To carry this evenness is partly owing to the constitution, and partly to the magistracy; where either of these fail, government will be subject to convulsions; but where both are wanting, it must be totally subverted: then where both meet, the government is like to endure. Which I humbly pray and hope God will please to make the lot of this of Pennsylvania. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

In the preliminary "Charter of Liberties", already referred to, Penn had declared as the "first fundamental" for the government of his country "that every person that does or shall reside therein shall have and enjoy the free possession of his or her faith and exercise of worship towards God". This document, however, did not guarantee freedom of religion for atheists, nor did it contemplate free speech for those who lacked proper respect for the Christian faith or doctrine. Penn evidently believed in the necessity for some restrictions upon the right of religious expression. Interestingly enough, in the first Frame there is no provision dealing with the freedom of conscience. Why Penn thought at one time that the "free possession of his or her faith and exercise of worship towards God" was important enough for the inhabitants of Pennsylvania to be guaranteed as "the first fundamental of the government thereof", and then issued the Frame in its final form without any mention of this vital matter does not appear. Perhaps reflection convinced him that such a provision would more properly be in statutory than in constitutional form. Yet such a conclusion does not really harmonise with the Quaker's reiterated insistence that the right of freedom of conscience was fundamental in nature. To the present writer it is rather an example of the restrictions which Penn's doctrine of authority placed on sovereignty, both individual and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 93.

corporate.

Indeed, Penn's Frame, looked at closely, was not so frankly democratic as it seemed. The document consisted of some twenty-four articles, ranging from a consideration of the governmental offices and assemblies, through the execution of laws, the location of towns, school provisions, etc. While it was true that the constitution was not cast-iron, it could be changed only with the assent of the governor, or his heirs or assigns, and of six-sevenths of the legislators of both houses.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, suffrage was not universal. To be a voter you had to be a freeman or an artificer; that is, you must have purchased at least a hundred acres at a penny an acre, and have cultivated ten; or you must be paying "scot and lot".<sup>2</sup> From these illustrations one can see that the Frame is built up on more of a purely traditional concept of authority: political power was in the hands of the few rather than the many.

What shall we say then of Penn's doctrine of political authority as expressed in this first Frame? His argument was surely intended to prove that the nature and essence of authority were divine: let kings and statesmen be as bad as they may, they actually represent a divine principle. Power originally proceeds from God. The plain fact is that Penn's life gives the lie to the position which believes that not only good power is divine but simply power.<sup>3</sup>

Might we not find ourselves on firmer ground by considering that in drafting the government he wished to establish in Pennsylvania, Penn refused

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Article 23, 98.

<sup>2</sup>This occurs in the "Laws agreed upon in England", law 2, Charter and Laws, 99.

<sup>3</sup>C. E. Vulliamy, William Penn (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 161. Note Vulliamy's sharp criticism of Penn here.

to defend any particular form, democratic or other? Our understanding of the Quaker's doctrine of political authority at this stage would lead us to think so. In the preface Penn had warned his readers that he would say little with reference to particular frames and models, for "the age is too nice and difficult for it; there being nothing the wits of men are more busy and divided upon".<sup>1</sup> That Penn reaches in his dicta a very high level of political principles is evident when one compares his ideals with those of other men of his day. Many were, as he said, seeking for the solution of the great problem of government, but no one struck out higher truths than these. Granted its inconsistencies; Penn's doctrine of political authority as enunciated in the first Frame formed the basis for his "holy experiment".

2. The "Laws" of May 5th, 1682 - The "Great Law" of December, 1682.

Appended to the Frame of Government, and bearing the date of May 5th, were certain "Laws agreed upon in England", which dealt with the liberties of the individual, and therefore did partake of the character of a bill of rights. A number of the laws, which total forty in number, are worthy of fuller consideration as they illustrate the political principles which stemmed from Penn's basic understanding of authority.

As might be expected, the principle of religious toleration was very much in evidence. Law Thirty-five of the "Laws agreed upon in England" declared as follows:

That all persons living in this province, who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God, to be the creator, upholder and ruler

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<sup>1</sup>"Frame", Charter and Laws, 92.

of the world, and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever.<sup>1</sup>

A provision such as this, completed while Penn was still in England, served as an effective incentive to colonisation on the part of a vast number of persons even then undergoing persecution for their beliefs.

However, the religious qualifications for the suffrage and for office-holding were more strict in this Constitution than in that of the Jerseys already considered. It was provided in Pennsylvania that all office-holders and those who had the right to vote for the same "shall be such as profess faith in Jesus Christ";<sup>2</sup> at the same time Law Thirty-five, quoted above, protected the colony against anything resembling a state-religion. Thus, too, was the possibility of the transfer of the odious tithes to Pennsylvania denied. The legality in election of office-holders was further safeguarded when it was held that any bribery or promises of reward in money or in kind in connection with an election was to be punished upon both parties concerned.<sup>3</sup>

Legal protection against the inroads of misplaced authority was provided for: all courts were to be open, and justice neither "sold, denied, nor delayed";<sup>4</sup> persons were permitted to plead their own cause in court;<sup>5</sup> all court pleadings and processes were to be short, and in English;<sup>6</sup> legal fees were to be moderate in accordance with a fixed scale;<sup>7</sup> all prisons were to be at the same time workhouses, one in each county;<sup>8</sup> Penn, remembering

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<sup>1</sup>Charter and Laws, 102 f.    <sup>2</sup>Law Thirty-four, Ibid., 102.

<sup>3</sup>Law Three, Ibid., 99.    <sup>4</sup>Law Five, Ibid., 100.    <sup>5</sup>Law Six, Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Law Seven, Ibid.    <sup>7</sup>Law Nine, Ibid.    <sup>8</sup>Law Ten, Ibid.

his own experiences, specified that "all prisoners shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, unless for capital offenses";<sup>1</sup> all persons wrongfully imprisoned or prosecuted were to receive double damages against the informer or prosecutor.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, the ancient Quaker testimony against "tale-bearing and detraction" is discovered in Penn's law "that all scandalous and malicious reporters, backbiters, defamers and spreaders of false news, whether against magistrates or private persons, shall be accordingly severely punished, as enemies to the peace and concord of this province".<sup>3</sup> All prisons were to be free as to fees, food and lodging.<sup>4</sup> Finally, provision was made for affirmation instead of oath-taking in court.<sup>5</sup> These laws referring to courts and prisons all reflected directly the sufferings of Friends in contemporary England. Here one may see the first steps in the development of the famous Pennsylvania prison system, in which the Quakers had a great part.

The authority of government was also aimed at the moral life of the experiment. Law Thirty-seven decreed that all the grosser forms of immorality should be severely punished, and also that "all prizes, stage-plays, cards, dice, may-games, masques, revells, bull-baitings, cock-fightings, bear-baitings, and the like, which excite the people to rudeness, cruelty, looseness and irreligion, shall be respectively discouraged, and severely punished".<sup>6</sup> The Sabbath was to be observed, people abstaining from their daily labour, "that they may the better dispose themselves to worship God according to their understandings".<sup>7</sup> Such laws were the Quaker counterpart of the New England Blue

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<sup>1</sup>Law Eleven, Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Law Twelve, Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Law Thirty, Ibid., 102.

<sup>4</sup>Law Thirteen, Ibid., 100.    <sup>5</sup>Law Twenty-six, Ibid., 101 f.

<sup>6</sup>Law Thirty-seven, Ibid., 103.    <sup>7</sup>Law Thirty-six, Ibid.

Laws against idle and dissipating practices, and the reaction against those worldly amusements which Penn had already flayed thirteen years earlier in "No Cross, No Crown".

The "Laws" end with the statement that "there shall be at no time any alteration of any of these laws, without the consent of the governor, his heirs or assigns, and six parts of seven of the freemen, met in Provincial Council and General Assembly",<sup>1</sup> and that all other matters not provided for were to be referred to the determination of the same authority.<sup>2</sup>

The first charter, or "Frame of Government", of the new province, together with these "Laws agreed upon in England", were published by Penn, in England, on the 5th of May, 1682. The whole was made subject to the approval of the first Provincial Council held in the province. The first Assembly, which met at Upland (Chester), took action upon these laws, or "printed constitution", so styled. There is no record of the final action of the Assembly, in their regard, but references to them in the future are of such a character as to prove their confirmation.

On the 18th day of November, 1682, the Proprietary issued his writs to the sheriffs of the respective counties, requiring them to summon freeholders for the purpose of electing representatives in General Assembly. This was the first proclamation of the first election held by the freemen of Pennsylvania. No members of Provincial Council were chosen, nor was the Council organised until the 10th of March, the year following. Seven persons from each county were ordered to be elected as representatives to an Assembly. The freemen acted with due discrimination and made good selections. The Assembly met at Chester upon the day appointed, December 4th, officers elected, and rules of

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<sup>1</sup>Law Thirty-nine, Ibid.      <sup>2</sup>Law Forty, Ibid.

the House adopted.

On the third day of the session, the Assembly received from the Proprietary copies of the "Printed Laws" ("Laws agreed upon in England") and of the "Written Laws or Constitutions" (the ninety bills proposed to this Assembly by Penn, and out of which were moulded the sixty-one chapters of "the great body of the Laws"). The printed laws were to receive the first consideration, and the written laws to be taken up afterwards. In the House, upon the introduction of these measures, a debate arose as to the propriety of placing both the printed laws and the written laws in force for a time, that is, until the next sitting of Assembly. It was also debated, in case this should not be done, which of the two should be in force. Upon these propositions, at this time, the Assembly seemed to have reached no definite conclusion; but both the printed and written laws were subsequently considered, and undoubtedly passed, the printed laws, at least, substantially as they came from the Governor. During their consideration, Law Thirty-nine, noted above, was objected to, and it was proposed by the Speaker that the sentence "six parts of seven" should be erased, and so remain until the next session of Assembly. This was carried in the affirmative.

There is no reference to any other objections to these printed laws, except that a debate was entered upon touching the powers granted to the "Free Society of Traders", in the Thirty-first Law, and a committee of two was appointed to confer with the Governor upon the subject. In any event, the printed laws were accepted virtually without change by the action of the House in proceeding to consider the written Constitution of laws, comprising ninety chapters.

Each of these laws was acted upon separately, and many alterations and amendments were proposed. Of the whole number, one was negatived; seven

passed over without vote; four suspended "until next session"; eight "suspended"; seven amended and passed; nine "corrected, with interliniations", and passed; and fifty-seven passed as received from the Governor. This makes a total number of seventy-one laws passed out of the ninety submitted. Of this number, only sixty-one were engrossed in the Council's law book, becoming known as the "Great Law, or Body of Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania". For some reason upon which the records fail to throw any light, ten were unrecorded and unaccounted for. In recent times part of the mystery has been cleared away. The clues have been found in both a double set of records, and a careless numbering of the record by the clerk.<sup>1</sup> The laws omitted dealt with such matters as criminal punishment, marriage, servants, estate matters, and court procedures.<sup>2</sup>

The Assembly adjourned on December 7th.

#### The "Great Law" of December, 1682

Mention should be made here of a number of the laws which together constituted the "Great Law" passed at this meeting of the Assembly. The laws to be considered shed further light on Penn's understanding of the role and function of government in his province. The Preamble to this collection of laws was as follows:

Whereas, the glory of Almighty God and the good of Mankind, is the reason and end of government, and therefore, government in itself is a venerable Ordinance of God. And forasmuch as it is principally desired and intended by the Proprietary and Governor and the freemen of the Province of Pennsylvania and territories thereunto belonging, to make and establish such laws as shall best preserve true Christian and Civil Liberty, in opposition to all unchristian, licentious, and unjust practices (whereby God may have his due, Caesar his due, and the people

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin W. Schlegel, "The Text of the Great Law of 1682", Pennsylvania History, XI (October, 1944), 276 - 283.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 280 - 282.

their due) from tyranny and oppression on the one side, and insolence and licentiousness on the other, so that the best and firmest foundation may be laid for the present and future happiness of both the Governor and people, of the Province and territories aforesaid, and their posterity.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the above purposes, Penn, "by and with the advice and consent of the deputies of the freemen . . . and by the authority of the same" declared the "Great Law" to be in effect in Pennsylvania. Here again we see Penn had defined government as a "venerable Ordinance of God"; and at the same time there was the assumption on the part of the Proprietor that the interests of governors and governed were the same. Political authority would have hard going in such waters.

As was the case in the earlier "Laws", certain individual rights were protected by law.

That no person, now, or at any time hereafter, living in this Province, who shall confess and acknowledge one Almighty God to be the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world, and who professes, him, or herself obliged in conscience to live peaceably and quietly under the civil government, shall in any case be molested or prejudiced for his, or her conscientious persuasion or practice.<sup>2</sup>

Thus freedom of worship was upheld, and cases of abuse of this privilege were to be handled swiftly, and punished accordingly.<sup>3</sup> Office-holders and all that had the right to elect deputies to the Assembly "shall be such as profess and declare they believe in Jesus Christ to be the son of God, the Saviour of the world".<sup>4</sup> Provision was made for varying degrees of punishment for swearing, profanity, blasphemy of one sort or another;<sup>5</sup> it was also stipulated that the Sabbath should be properly observed.<sup>6</sup> The remainder of the

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<sup>1</sup>"The Great Law", Charter and Laws, 107.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 107 f.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 108.    <sup>4</sup>Chap. II, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Chaps. III-VI, Ibid., 108 f.    <sup>6</sup>Chap. I, Ibid., 108.

provisions of the "Great Law" need not concern us here, being devoted to more technical civil and criminal legal matters.

Both the "Laws" and the "Great Law" were attempts to incorporate in a practical way some of the principles enunciated in Penn's first Frame. As such they are important to our central problem of political authority because in them one sees foreshadowed the future struggle between Crown and Proprietor - even more, the struggle between Proprietor and colonists. In theory Penn was a feudal lord. In fact he was the executive of a democracy. The two characters were incompatible with each other. With this fact in mind we can better understand the character of the efforts made to sever governmental powers from territorial rights. Both the people and the Crown laid claim to the former. Penn, as Proprietor, was caught in the middle. The first test of his doctrine of political authority was not long in coming. It gains our attention in the very next section.

### 3. The Frame of Government of April 2nd, 1683

Penn had arrived in his colony on October 27th, 1682. A temporary Assembly met on December 6th of that year, and we have seen already some of the action of that body, notably the acceptance of the "Great Law". In accordance with the provisions of Article Two of the first Frame, a general election of the freemen of the province was ordered by Penn, to be held on the 20th day of the 12th month, 1682 (February, 1683), for the purpose of choosing seventy-two persons "of most note for their wisdom, virtue, and ability" to serve as members of the Provincial Council, to meet on "the 10th day of the first month next ensuing" (March, 1683).

Even prior to this time, however, Penn had seen the impossibility of carrying out the provisions of the Frame of Government relative to the number

of the Council.<sup>1</sup> He told his deputy-governor, Markham, that twelve persons must be chosen by each county in accordance with his writs to the sheriffs, but that later petitions might be sent to him to allow three of them to serve in the Council, and nine in the Assembly. In order to secure the rotation in office required by the Frame, Penn stated that the petitions should declare which one of the three persons was elected for three years, which one for two years, and which one for a single year. Hence it is probable that, if this violation of the Frame was not suggested by Penn himself, he was at least instrumental in bringing it about. Shepherd feels that "it is not unlikely that the whole thing was arranged before the Council met".<sup>2</sup> When the Council itself met, it "legalised" this action, and it was determined that the seventy-two members had full power to sit both as Councillors and members of Assembly in the manner designated. It was requested, however, of the governor, that this alteration of its provisions might not deprive the people of the benefits of the Charter; to which request, the governor replied, "that they might amend, alter, or add for the public good; and that he was ready to settle such foundations as might be for their happiness, according to the powers vested in him".<sup>3</sup> The status of the members elect having been thus definitely determined, though at the expense of a violation of Charter, at the very outset, the Council and Assembly of 1683 stood, ready for business.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Provincial Council was to consist of seventy-two members, elected by the freemen.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., 244.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, I, 58.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, the action of Council, in its first day's session, by which the seventy-two members elect had been permitted to constitute both Council and Assembly, seems not to have been universally satisfactory. See Shepherd, op. cit., 244; Charter and Laws, 485 f.

The first Frame of Government granted to the province by its Proprietary, was, in some important particulars, not suited to the existing condition of affairs. Serious objections to parts of it were already entertained by the people, and their representatives in the Assembly lost no time in giving expression to these objections, and taking such action as resulted in the adoption of a new Frame of Government, and a fundamental law, styled the "Act of Settlement". Both of these documents represented a shift in Penn's understanding of the doctrine of political authority as he came up against the realities of the colonial situation.

From the proceedings of this Assembly, we learn that the first objection made to the Frame lay in the number of the members of Council and Assembly provided for, namely, seventy-two for the Council, and not to exceed five hundred for the Assembly. It was claimed that "the fewness of the people, their inability in estate, and unskilfullness in matters of government" rendered it impossible for them to serve in so large a Council and Assembly. Immediately this may be seen as conditioning authority. A second objection was that the rights of the Assembly, in legislation, were too limited. They already possessed the right to confirm or reject measures proposed by the Governor and Council, but they desired, also, to have the right to originate measures. How else could the Assembly even speak of "political authority"?

It virtually having been agreed already by the Governor and Council that the number of members of Council and Assembly should be reduced, both branches having been organised previously in accordance with the popular demand, little difficulty was experienced in having the matter fixed for the future by an amendment to the Charter. By consent of the Council, a conference was held with the Assembly, in regard to the question concerning the Assembly's right to propose legislation to the Council. This conference resulted in no

concessions to the House, but to the guaranteed right of the Council to prepare and promulgate all bills upon which the General Assembly were to take action, was added a proviso, that the proposed bills should not be inconsistent with the powers granted by the King's Charter. The Assembly seems to have been impressed by the reception they received at the hands of the Governor on this occasion, and immediately upon their return from the conference, subscribed an oath of fidelity to him.

The feeling of the Assembly was not unanimous, however. The silence of some of the members brought home clearly to the Proprietor the realisation that the harmony he had hoped to see firmly maintained between himself and the people was soon to be impaired. The Proprietary, appreciating the force of the people's objections to certain parts of the original constitution, determined to submit to them a new Frame of Government, as he had full authority, by the King's Charter, to do; and also a bill for the settlement, in general, of points of objection to the methods of legislation originally proposed. By such measures Penn hoped to establish a more realistic interpretation of his doctrine of political authority.

After much debate, on March 19th the "Bill of Settlement" was passed, and put into effect. By the terms of this important enactment, the number of Councillors and Assemblymen desired by the people was allowed, to all intents and purposes, to be the Provincial Council and General Assembly of the province. The Council and Assembly, then already elected, was determined to be legally constituted for that year. Thereafter the Council was to consist of three members, and the Assembly of six, out of each county. This number was subject to future changes at the hands of the Governor, Council and Assembly, but was never to exceed the limitations of the Charter. In regard to the preparing and proposing of bills, it was enacted "that the Governor and Provincial Council

shall have the power of preparing and proposing to the General Assembly all bills which they shall jointly assent to, and think fit to pass into laws, in the said Province and territories thereof, that are not inconsistent with, but according to the powers granted by the King's Letters Patents, to the Proprietary and Governor aforesaid".<sup>1</sup> By this act, as seen, the Proprietary showed his willingness to serve the people, by conceding to them substantially what they asked.

The Act of Settlement was regarded as a temporary measure until the Frame of Government could be more closely examined, and its relation to the actual needs of the colonists ascertained. The next step of the Governor and Council, having determined the methods of legislation in a manner satisfactory to the Assembly, was to indicate to the larger body a willingness to accede to reasonable demands for changes in the fundamental law of the province, expressed in the Frame of Government. Such changes were designed to meet the objections of the people, and, at the same time, could not be infractions of the Royal Charter. To consider proposed changes a conference was held, at which the House, in a body, met the Council, in their chamber. The question was then directly put, by the Governor, to the Assembly, "whether they would have the old charter, or a new one?" The question was unanimously answered in the affirmative for a new charter. To this the Governor agreed, and thereby won the confidence and gratitude of the Assembly. Political authority was undergoing a shift in power and position in the "holy experiment".

It is thus to be seen that the request for a new charter came directly from the people, and not from the proprietor. Indeed, it is probable that the Quakers feared lest the presence of people who were not of their religion might

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<sup>1</sup>Charter and Laws, 125 f.

cause them to lose the power in the colony, and for this reason asked the proprietor to take back part of what he had given up. They relied, of course, upon their ability to maintain their influence over the good-natured proprietor. On the other hand, we have noticed that Penn was unwilling to be responsible for the advantage the people might take of the fact that the only opposition he could make to the passage of their bills was by his three votes in Council. This was probably the reason why the veto power was restored to him.

A lengthy consideration of the relative merits of the proposed amendments, and the existing provisions of the constitution, then ensued in the Assembly. In the various conferences held by the Proprietor with the Council, the several propositions of the Assembly heralded a growing shift in the balance of political power. A notable objection, made by the Assembly, was to the reservation in the new charter of the right of the Governor to continue officers appointed by himself, in office during life or good behaviour. Eventually it was agreed to allow him during his life to appoint officers, but at his death the Council and Assembly should have the right to make nominations in the manner prescribed in the first Frame. Desirous of offering to the Assembly a final opportunity of giving its opinion on an important matter after the new Frame had been read, the Proprietor asked whether it desired the maximum number of members to be increased to five hundred or to remain at two hundred, as already embodied in the new Frame. It was unanimously agreed that the number should be two hundred. On April 2nd, 1683, the Frame was duly signed by the Proprietor, members of the Council and Assembly, as well as certain residents of Philadelphia who were present.

A comparison of the provisions of the new Frame of Government with those of the old shows the following changes: the Council should consist of not less than eighteen members, three from each county, nor more than seventy-

two members, while the Assembly should consist of not less than thirty-six, six from each county, nor more than two hundred. The possession by the Governor of three votes in the Council was abolished. This would indicate that he was to have the veto power, but its exercise was limited by the provision that he should perform no public act without the advice and consent of the Council. The division of the Council into committees was abolished, but the Standing Council of one-third the entire members was continued. A number of other provisions, which need not concern us here, were included in the new charter. The significant thing concerning those provisions we have mentioned is the definite shift in political authority which was taking place. The voice of the people was being heard as never before.

This session of the General Assembly adjourned on April 3rd. A one-day session was held in Philadelphia, on October 24th, called by the Council, for the purpose of passage of eleven bills which had been prepared by the Council. The first meeting of the Assembly in full session under the new Frame of Government took place at Newcastle in May, 1684.

Historical events during the next dozen years were to contribute in no small measure to the more precise formulation of Penn's doctrine of political authority. These events were by no means entirely of his own making. The change in his understanding of authority was not easy for him to make. The "holy experiment" does illustrate, however, a political revolution in the making, as more and more of the power to control moved into the hands of the colonists themselves.

#### 4. The New Frame of Government of November 7th, 1696

An historical survey of the period from 1684 to 1696 would reveal many of the tensions and factors resulting in the re-evaluation in Penn's own thinking

on the subject of political authority. In the next few pages we shall take up some of these tensions and cross-currents of historical change.

Unfortunately, in August, 1684, the Proprietary felt obliged to leave the province and return to England. The dispute regarding boundary lines with Lord Baltimore was now at such a point that the Proprietary was absolutely needed in England to defend his cause before the Lords of Trade. At the same time, English Quakers were undergoing such bitter persecution at the hands of the government that Penn believed he ought to be in England to mitigate their sufferings. His long friendship with the King and the Duke of York made it more than likely that his intercessions at court would meet with success.

Penn's absence was injurious to the colony - and ultimately to himself. This again indicates that the problem of authority had not been properly solved as yet. While the colony prospered commercially after Penn's departure, it was disturbed by political, territorial, and religious disputes. The deputy-governor, Council and Assembly were unable to agree regarding the proper application of the Constitution, for the Frame of Government gave to the Council the power to frame bills and to the Assembly only the right to accept or reject them. The Council, which on Penn's departure was authorized to act as governor, was inclined to play the leading and dominant part, to the resentment of the Assembly, which for ten years struggled to obtain the right to initiate legislation. In 1685, and again in 1686, the Assembly protested because the Council did not issue bills in the name of the Governor, Council, and Assembly as the Charter required; and eventually adjourned in great wrath. This disagreement with the Council was accompanied by an unfortunate internal struggle.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The reference here is to the attempted removal from office of Nicholas More (Moore), chief-justice of the provincial court. Eventually, the matter was dropped entirely.

Penn was perplexed and angry, both because of the friction in the government of his colony, and of the inability of those whom he had left in command to rule wisely. His whole concept of political authority seemed in need of change. Unable to go to Pennsylvania, as he ardently desired, he determined to change the form of government. He revoked the executive functions granted to the Council, and appointed as governor five commissioners or councillors to watch over the Council and Assembly and prevent quarrels and disorders, and to compel all to do their duty under the charter.

The new arrangements worked no better than the old. Finally, in September, 168<sup>8</sup>, Penn made another and more important change: instead of allowing an elected Council or a board of councillors to act as governor, he selected an appointee of his own, one Captain Blackwell, a resident of Boston, son-in-law of Cromwell's associate, Lambert, and formerly treasurer of Cromwell's army. Blackwell came to Philadelphia in December, 168<sup>8</sup>, with a grim determination to organise an efficient government. As he was not a Quaker, he was soon opposed by the leaders of the Quaker part, chief of whom was Thomas Lloyd, master of the rolls and keeper of the broad seal. Unfortunate controversies followed until Lloyd became so excited that the governor had to adjourn the Council, and Lloyd and his followers remained behind and made so much noise and clamour that passers-by in the street stood still to hear. Such a state of things gave clear evidence for the crying need for a clear-cut pattern of authority within the colony itself.

When Blackwell asked for his own recall, Penn yielded too ready a compliance to the wishes of the opposition. He placed the question of the future government in the hands of the Council, and agreed that he would accept any governor that they might select, or he would be content if the Council itself acted as governor. Burdened with cares in England, Penn begged his

people to "avoid factions and parties, whisperings and reportings and all animosities", and to put their "common shoulder to the public work". The Council, assuming the governorship itself, chose Lloyd as president, and made one more unsuccessful experiment. New questions arose: the inhabitants of the lower counties, differing in blood and religion from those of Pennsylvania proper, began an agitation for separate government that ended ten years later in their separating from Pennsylvania and having a legislature of their own. Penn had earlier connected both the territories and the province in legislation and government, considering them as one people. But the inhabitants of the territories, conceiving that public appointments ought to be more evenly distributed, as it respected them, than they appeared to be began to think in terms of separate establishments. The lines of party dissension began to appear. Unless some clear-cut lines of political authority were to appear soon, it seemed that Penn's colonial endeavours would soon collapse into a ruin of internal disorder and revolt.

In 1691, owing to the apostasy of George Keith, a schism took place among the Quakers which brought grief to members of the society everywhere. The tales of petty informers in England, who took pleasure in persecuting Penn, now that he had lost much of his influence in court through a series of false charges, labelling him as a Jesuit and a Jacobite, found support in the exaggerated accounts of the bickerings and quarrels among Penn's colonists in America.

These quarrels were to no small extent responsible for the royal order of William III, in 1692, depriving Penn of his proprietorship. The ostensible reasons why Penn was deprived of the control of the government of Pennsylvania by the Crown appear in the body of the commission granted by William and Mary on the 20th of October of that year, to Colonel Benjamin Fletcher, to be

Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of Pennsylvania, etc. The reasons may be briefly summarised as follows: first; that the province had fallen into disorder and confusion, owing to great neglects and miscarriages in its government; second; that in consequence of this misgovernment, the public peace and administration of justice were broken and violated; third; that no provisions for the defence of the province against its enemies had been made, in consequence of which not only the province alone, but the adjacent colonies were in danger of being lost to the Crown of England.

Behind these more formal reasons for the action of the King and Queen was undoubtedly a suspicion of Penn, engendered by his intimate connection with the administration of the late King James, and augmented by the misrepresentations of the Proprietary's personal enemies. How completely the rights of the Proprietary and the existing constitution and laws of the province were disregarded in the appointment of Colonel Fletcher can be gathered from the terms of his commission, which empowered him to govern both New York and Pennsylvania, under the same plan of government, with equal powers and prerogatives in both provinces. Thus Penn lost the government and jurisdiction over his province, without, however, being deprived of his right as Proprietary. The new governor was invested with the power of negating all laws, and none was to be in force unless approved by the King. For a time this "solution" to the problem of political authority prevailed.

The government of Pennsylvania remained under the Crown of England from April 26th, 1692, to March, 1695. At last the affairs of the Proprietor were beginning to assume a more favourable aspect in England, and gave promise of a speedy termination of the late troubles. The existence of a less antagonistic feeling between the Crown and the Proprietor, manifested in a desire, on the part of their Majesties, that Penn should be restored to the enjoyment

of his rights. This feeling, at length, on the 20th of August, 1694, culminated in the issue of Letters Patent by the King and Queen annulling the commission formerly given to Fletcher, so far as the province and territories of Pennsylvania were concerned, and completely restoring Penn to the enjoyment and control of the same, as absolute Proprietary. With the restoration, however, Penn faced once again the problems of political authority stemming from the colonial situation.

As his presence in England was still necessary, upon assuming his suspended rights, Penn appointed William Markham, the present Lieutenant-Governor, to be his deputy, or governor under him. On the 26th of March, shortly after the receipt of his commission and instructions, Markham met the old Council at Philadelphia, and formally announced to them the recent change in government, and the Proprietary's behests to him as deputy. Markham's instructions were to conduct the government "according to the known laws and usages thereof".<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that he interpreted this to mean the laws and usages of the former proprietary government, and endeavoured to conform his acts thereto as nearly as might be. As writs for an election were issued and returns were made by the sheriffs of the several counties of members of Council elect, we know that his Council was elected by the people, and not chosen arbitrarily by the governor, as under Fletcher, and also that the old charter representation from each county was observed. For a time it appeared that a compromise on authority was in the making.

The Council met for the first time on May 25th, and soon after, a grand committee consisting of all the members of Council was constituted for the purpose of revising the laws of the province, in order to repeal those which

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, I, 474 f.

could not properly be continued, and to prepare new ones. But since doubt had arisen as to whether the appointment of Fletcher had not affected the validity of the Frame of Government of 1683, the majority of the Council and later of the Assembly took the view that a legislative act was necessary to re-establish its validity. Hence the grand committee of Council presented to the Governor a bill "relating to the new modeling the government". During the sessions of two days the bill was discussed, but without agreement. Markham thought that the Frame of Government had been temporarily superseded by the administration of Fletcher, and that, when the government was restored to the Proprietor, the Frame immediately went into force again. For this reason he refused, without advice from the Proprietor, to pass any act to confirm it. Then he ordered the proposed bill to be laid aside, and appointed a committee of six, one from each county, to prepare "a new frame and model of government, that should not be construed as a confirmation of the old frame". But this select committee in preparing a frame of government, met with no better success than did its predecessors, and was compelled at last to report that it had failed to come to any agreement.

Markham now proceeded to inform the Council that, in attempting to lay aside the charter granted by the Proprietor, which had been so thankfully accepted, and in trying to "make a more easy frame", much valuable time had been consumed to no purpose. Before long it was found needful to summon an Assembly, consisting of thirty-six members, the number required by the Frame of Government. The governor immediately called attention to the fact that the custom enjoined by the Frame, that the Council should propose and the Assembly accept or reject bills, had lately fallen into disuse. He himself, however, was much opposed to making any change in the Frame without the consent of the Proprietor. Meanwhile the Council had prepared no bills for the

consideration of the Assembly. Hence, a grand committee of the two bodies obviated this omission of a constitutional requirement, by deciding that, in the present emergency, "it might be lawful to proceed to legislation without the promulgation of bills". It was also agreed that, as both bodies were created by the people, bills might be prepared and proposed by the Assembly as well as by the Council. In regard to an act of settlement that had been suggested, the Governor was requested to, and accordingly did, appoint from both houses a joint committee of twenty-four. These actions on the part of the colonists indicate that they were moving toward a formulation of political authority, and were not content to sit idly (on their hands) while Penn's deputy fluctuated in the midst of indecision.

Markham's objection to the report of the joint-committee resulted in the creation of another grand committee of all the representatives, who were instructed to draw up another act of settlement. To the report of this also the Governor was strongly opposed. Several representatives urged that the act of settlement, as it then was, contained nothing more than had previously been granted by Penn himself. Markham replied that their purpose seemed to be to force him to yield to the passage of this "charter of privileges", otherwise another measure of importance could not be carried out. Furthermore, in justice to the Proprietor, he felt that he could not pass it. At last, seeing that a change of sentiment on the part of the representatives was highly improbable, on September 27th, he dissolved both the Council and the Assembly.

The action did nothing to dispel the central problem of authority. Indeed, this arbitrary dissolution of the General Assembly of 1695 was looked upon by the representatives with surprise and dismay. They felt their desires in no way indicated a belief that the charter had in any way been forfeited or lost. Markham saw fit to construe their action into an expression of

dissatisfaction with the manner in which he had attempted to restore the proprietary government. The clause in his commission authorising him to govern the province "according to the known laws and usages thereof", he had interpreted to refer to enactments prior to 1693. Now he concluded to act upon a different interpretation. Discarding entirely the Frame of Government of 1693, he assumed the methods of government adopted by Fletcher. No writs for choosing members of Council and Assembly were issued at the time appointed by the Frame, and every effort was made by the Governor to dissuade the people from holding the election. Thereupon he appointed a Council of the same number of persons as was the custom in Fletcher's administration. This arbitrary handling of authority only served to add further fuel to the flames of self-government burning in the hearts and minds of the colonial settlers. They awaited an opportunity to express themselves. The opportunity was not long in appearing.

Urgent business in the shape of demands from Fletcher, based on orders from the Crown for assistance in fortifying the frontiers of New York, necessitated calling an Assembly. Accordingly writs were issued for the election of the same number of representatives as was chosen in the former administration. The Assembly met, October 26th, 1696, and sent the Governor an earnest remonstrance against his dissolution of the former Assembly, and his appointment of the Council. Failing to obtain a satisfactory answer to its protests, the Assembly kept Markham in suspense as to its answer to his instructions from Fletcher. At length the Governor's patience became exhausted, and, with the consent of the Council, he called the Assembly to a conference with him. From this conference stemmed the formation of a joint committee of Council and Assembly which, after an exhaustive consideration of the subject, agreed that it was practicable to raise money in obedience to the orders from the Crown,

provided the Governor was willing to pass an act of settlement, and so to construe its passage that it should not in the future work injury either to the rights of the people or of the Proprietor, and provided further that the Governor would agree to issue writs for the election of a full number of representatives in Council and Assembly. This proceeding should be subject, however, to the approval or disapproval of the Proprietor. Through their ability to control the purse strings, the colonists seemed destined to secure for themselves an ever larger share of political authority.

Summoning the Council and Assembly to a joint meeting, the Governor announced to them that he had considered the report of the committee, and had drawn up "some heads of a frame of government", containing certain amendments and alterations of the old charter. He desired the members to consider his suggestions and, if favourably inclined, to draw them up into a bill, which he would then consider whether to pass into an act or not. To evince its appreciation of the Governor's spirit of concession, the Assembly soon afterwards presented to him not only the new act of settlement or Frame of Government, but also a bill for raising money to meet the demands of New York. When these had been passed, the Governor declared the Assembly dissolved.

"Markham's Frame of Government", as the act of settlement passed this year is generally called, made some important changes in the existing political system. The reason for their being made was declared to be the fact that the former frame "was not deemed in all respects suitably accommodated to present circumstances". Hence provision was made that two members of Council and four members of Assembly should be chosen from each county annually on May 10th. The conditions of suffrage were specified. Affirmations in lieu of oaths should be allowed in all cases where the taking of the latter would involve an infringement of religious liberty. A stated compensation should be given

to members of the Council and Assembly. Both the Council and Assembly should have the power to propose bills, each for the consideration of the other, and copies of such bills as the governor passed, should be sent to the Privy Council as the royal charter commanded. The Assembly was slowly growing into a position of dominance in political authority.

To the Assembly, further, was accorded the right of sitting on its own adjournments until dissolved by the governor and Council, of appointing its own committees, of redressing grievances, and of impeaching criminals. The governor and Council should also possess the right of summoning it at any time during the year. The governor or his deputy should preside in Council, but was prohibited from performing any public act without its advice and consent. The act could not be altered or amended without the consent of the governor and six-sevenths of the freemen in Council and Assembly met, but the Proprietor could at any time bring its existence to an end by expressing his will to that effect through an order under his hand and seal. Nothing was said in the Frame about the appointment of officers or the use of the ballot, but in conclusion it was provided that neither this nor any other act should preclude or debar the inhabitants of the province and of the Lower Counties from enjoying any of the privileges and immunities which the Proprietor "did formerly grant, or which of right belong unto them, the said inhabitants, by virtue of any law, charter, or grants whatsoever, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding".<sup>1</sup>

Since a number of persons "expressed their dissatisfaction both with the proceedings and dissolution of the Council and Assembly in October 1696, insisting that their chartered rights were given away thereby, and that all the

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<sup>1</sup>Charter and Laws, 245 - 253.

laws passed the last Assembly are void . . . with such like objections that are made use of to obstruct the proceedings of this Assembly, . . . and bring the government into confusion",<sup>1</sup> it was enacted in 1697 and 1698, that both Markham's Frame of Government and the laws passed in accordance therewith, should be legally binding in every respect. As an illustration of political tendencies within the province, the importance of this document can scarcely be overestimated. It demonstrates the processes at work towards resolving the tensions arising from the issue of authority. These tensions had arisen as a result not only of the relations existing between the home country and the colony but also because of Penn's proprietary relationship to the colonists. An unfortunate choice of administrators, the factor of long distances from England, economic control of the fortunes of peace and war, and the growing recognition by the colonists of their own political power - these processes were all at work in bringing about a recognition of the supremacy of the popular will. Notably enough, William Penn himself neither approved nor recognised officially the Frame of 1696.

##### 5. Two Plans of Wider Scope

At this point it may very well be in order to depart from our consideration of Pennsylvania proper to take a brief look at two other Penn documents, both of which shed further light on his doctrine of political authority. Indeed, inasmuch as these two plans by Penn were never put into effect, never underwent the changes and modifications which practical application would demand, it may be said of these proposals that they indicate a more accurate or "pure" interpretation of Penn's understanding of political

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 261. Cf. 268.

authority than do some of the constitutions of Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the two documents present a "wider" interpretation by the Quaker leader on the purpose and meaning of government. Here he was dealing not with one colony, but with several, or with nations.

Penn published plans for the substitution of international arbitration for war in his "Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe", and produced a statesmanlike "Plan for the Union of the Colonies". In addition to our own concern for these documents as illustrative of Penn's doctrine of political authority, they are also of more purely historical importance: inspired by religious and humanitarian motives, the first is the most impressive proposal for international co-operation made by anyone before the League of Nations; of the second it has been said recently that all the matters placed by this plan at the disposition of a central body found their place in the Articles of Confederation a century later.<sup>1</sup>

a. "Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe", 1693

The great plans for world peace have come from a strange assortment of pens.<sup>2</sup> The Quaker founder of Pennsylvania stood on giant shoulders.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>See Comfort, William Penn, 152, n. 18.

<sup>2</sup>See J. H. Powell, "William Penn's Writings: An Anniversary Essay", Pennsylvania History, Vol. XI (October, 1944), 241 f.

<sup>3</sup>"We are like dwarfs, sitting on the shoulders of giants, in order that we may see things more numerous and more distant than they could see, not, certainly, by reason of the sharpness of our own vision or the tallness of our bodies, but because we are lifted and raised on high by the greatness of the giants."

I owe this quotation to Professor Bruce Metzger's Guide to the Preparation of a Thesis (Princeton Pamphlets No. 4: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1950), p. 2. Dr. Metzger traces back the nucleus of this saying to the twelfth-century philosopher Bernard of Chartres. It reappears in various forms during succeeding centuries, being used in favour of both sides

awful devastation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century national wars brought new motives and new problems to those who dreamed of peace. In 1693/94 Europe was wallowing in the sixth year of a great war. England, led by her Dutch king, was the spearhead of opposition to Louis XIV and had committed the resources of all her empire to the struggle. In forced retirement in his home country, Penn wrote the little essay that in spite of certain quaintness stands as one of the bold and significant books in the history of peace thought.

Realising the novelty of his proposal and the temerity with which he would be charged for venturing to advocate it, by way of preface Penn wrote a modest apology, pleading that "they must want charity as much as the world needs quiet to be offended with me for so pacific a proposal. Let them censure my management, so they prosecute the advantage of the design; for, until the millenary doctrine be accomplished, there is nothing appears to me so beneficial an expedient to the peace and happiness of this quarter of the world".<sup>1</sup>

To persuade the civilised Europeans of his generation to try the experiment which he had tried to put into practice on a small scale among the Swedes, Hollanders, Englishmen and Indians in the wilds of his American colony, Penn analysed in masterly fashion the horrors of war as Europe had perennially experienced it, and the causes which inevitably led to it. The logic in his "Essay" proceeds in quite the modern way. The great aim of statesmanship is to prevent war. Peace and security can be attained best by justice, and none

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of the so-called "Battle of the Books" or "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns". Cf. F. E. Guyer, "The Dwarf on the Giant's Shoulders", Modern Language Notes, XLV (1930), 398 - 402, and Gilbert Highet's chapter on "The Battle of the Books" in his monumental volume, The Classical Tradition; Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), especially p. 267.

<sup>1</sup>Penn, Works, II, 838 f.

of these by war. As individuals have developed society, local governments and national states, so states must develop an international government. As the peoples of Europe have developed parliaments, so must Europe have its "Sovereign or Imperial Dyet, Parliament, or Estates".

Let us see first what some of the provisions of Penn's plan were, before moving on to a consideration of their implication for the doctrine of political authority as well as some of the problems they raised.

All the fifteen states of Europe, including existing enemies as well as allies, were to have ninety representatives in the diet; the number of these Penn specified for each nation, giving to England only half as many as the German Empire (six, as against twelve), and including the Mohammedan Turks and distant "Muscovites" - "as seems fit and just". The number of representatives, each to have one vote, Penn based on the "yearly value of the several sovereign countries"; and this value he believed could be estimated on current statistics as to "the revenue of lands, the exports and entries at the custom houses, the book of rates and surveys that are in all governments to proportion taxes for the support of them". To prevent quarrels over precedence, he made the ingenious proposal of a "round room with divers doors to come in and go out at". He advocated a three-quarters vote, instead of unanimity; a large penalty for absence; no "neutralities in debate"; and the use of Latin (for "civilians") or French (for "men of quality").

The diet was to meet yearly. Before it were to be brought "all differences depending between one sovereignty and another that cannot be made by private embassies before the sessions begin". Evidently, Penn believed in some form of sanctions: moral, diplomatic, economic, or military - perhaps all four. This issue of sanctions is still very much with us today, and we should gladly learn what William Penn had to tell us about it. Unfortunately

the obscurity of his statements on the subject gives us small comfort.

If any of the sovereignties that constitute these imperial states shall refuse to submit their claim or pretensions to or to abide and perform the judgment thereof, and seek their remedy by arms, or delay their compliance beyond the time prefixed in their resolutions, all the other sovereignties, united as one strength, shall compel the submission and performance of the sentence, with damages to the suffering party, and charges to the sovereignties that obliged their submission.<sup>1</sup>

Penn apparently was confident that such concerted pressure would succeed with any aggressor, because "no sovereignty in Europe having the power and therefore cannot show the will to dispute the conclusion". He overlooked, it seems, a possible alliance of "aggressors". A more realistic approach to political authority perhaps would have led him to modify his hopes here. However, Penn was clear on two important points.

In the first place, he realised that no sanction could succeed unless the armaments problem were solved. "Nor is it to be thought," he wrote, "that any one will keep up such an army after such an empire is on foot, which may hazard the safety of the rest. However, if it be seen requisite, the question may be asked, by order of the sovereign states, why such a one either raises or keeps up a formidable body of troops, and be obliged forthwith to reform or reduce them."<sup>2</sup> What Penn could not foresee was that huge armaments would continue to be maintained down to our own time, either for national "defence", or for the enforcement of international obligations.

In the second place, it was clear to Penn that the claims of "sovereignty" should not be permitted to block international justice, or to prevent national disarmament. Internal sovereignty, he argued, would remain intact. If the reduction of armaments be called a lessening of the sovereign power of states,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 841.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 844.

"it must be only because the great fish can no longer eat up the little ones". Here Penn speaks to our own time.

Let us simply pause for a moment to point to an early formulation of these great issues of our day: practical means of peaceful settlement, as a substitute for war; disarmament, so that these peaceful means shall have a fair chance to succeed; the yielding of imperial and super-national sovereignty to the rights and welfare of the nations as a whole. These surely are standards which occupy much of the twentieth century's best diplomatic minds. But neither such worthy standards nor practical politics formed the real basis of Penn's "Essay". This he found in the necessities of men and the will of God. "Europe, by her incomparable miseries, makes it now necessary to be done." Penn believed heartily that man's extremity is God's opportunity: "The voice of Heaven and judgment of God", he declared, are against war and for peace. "Christians, that glory in their Saviour's name, have long devoted the credit and dignity of it (Christianity) to their worldly passions, - invoking and interesting all they could the good and merciful God to prosper their arms to their brethren's destruction."<sup>1</sup> "Cedant Arma Togae is a glorious sentence," he wrote; "the voice of the dove, the olive branch of peace; a blessing so great, that when it pleases God to chastise us severely for our sins, it is with the rod of war that for the most part He whips us; and experience tells us none leaves deeper marks behind it."<sup>2</sup> Far from being an oracle of doom, such words serve to bring us a lesson for our own day: peace is not wholly of man's making. No less than the authority of God is necessary to bring it about.

It was quite natural that criticisms should be levelled at Penn's plan.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 845.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 844.

It was charged that he proposed that the same parliament should act both as a legislative body to establish rules of international law and also as a judicial body to decide disputes arising among the states. Yet it must be remembered that Penn lived at that period of the world's history when the importance of separating legislative, executive and judicial powers was not fully recognised. This fact surely sheds further light on Penn's own understanding of political authority. Then again, Penn's plan has been criticised as probably going beyond what was reasonably possible even at this date, if it be construed to mean that compliance with a decree of the parliament should be enforced by the united strength of all the nations other than the one refusing to obey. We have already discussed this point in the paragraph dealing with sanctions. Finally, Penn's proposals have been declared undemocratic. It has been pointed out that the delegates at the diet represented not the people of the member states but the princes or the sovereigns. The "Essay" has been called the "work of an idealist rather than that of a responsible statesman".<sup>1</sup> Still another has asked whether, when Penn wrote in this work, "Government is an expedient against confusion; a restraint against all disorder", if he did not notice that he had changed considerably from the time when he had composed his first Frame?<sup>2</sup>

However, when all is said and done, Penn's reasons for wishing the peace of Europe are illuminating, for they illustrate not only the idealism but also the practicality of this Quaker statesman. He did not propose a super-state or federation which would have control over the domestic affairs of the nations sending delegates to the parliament. Further the relief

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<sup>1</sup>Beatty, op. cit., 111.

<sup>2</sup>Dobrée, op. cit., 324. "And we wonder if, when he went on frankly to accept the theory of the social contract, he realised that he had become a Hobbist in politics?"

which the overburdened populace would experience, from the reduction of armaments, requires no further comment.

Penn, who was often an intensely practical man, realised that his plan raised a question in the minds of many of his associates: was the device consistent with his principles as a member of the Society of Friends in view of the fact that he clearly proposed the use of the combined strength of all other powers against the one seeking a remedy by arms? It was, of course, apparent without discussion that the only way the strength of the other powers could be combined against the one seeking to support a claim or pretension by force of arms would be to use arms in opposition. From a study of Penn's proposals it seems clear that Penn's own conception of the function of the nations in this respect was purely that of restraining evil-doers. He made this clear by drawing the analogy between national and international governments.

The Society of Friends has never questioned the propriety of the restraint of criminals, recognising that this is necessary for the maintenance of order and internal peace, although it has criticised the methods used as, for example, capital punishment. However, even if capital punishment be abolished, the restraint of evil-doers sometimes, and, in fact, not infrequently, causes life to be taken. Such restraining actions are the marks of governmental authority. Penn recognised this, and he applied the same principle to international relations. Hating war, recognising its essential wrongness, and desiring above all things its abolition, he yet fully recognised that the preservation of order in the world and the prevention of war required the use of force. Whether his views in all respects met the approval of the members of the Society is not altogether clear; in all probability they encountered varied opposition. Nonetheless on this matter of preserving the peace, Penn

showed that he had learned one important and vital lesson in any doctrine of political authority: authority, to be effective, must have the means of asserting itself. True political authority can develop only in an atmosphere free from suspicion, turmoil and war. The achievement of such an atmosphere is, in itself, an exercise of the proper authority under God.

Did Penn's "Essay" have any effect upon developing world opinion for the avoidance of war? It is difficult to say. There is no doubt that his proposals were widely read at the time they were issued; they were considered by many to be highly impracticable. Yet the thoughts which he expressed have appeared in many writings since then,<sup>1</sup> and the principles he advocated are infused in many plans now being made in an effort to prevent the recurrence of war in the future. Perhaps it is this fact alone which enables us to look favourably upon this document aimed at international peace and good-will.

b. "Plan for the Union of the Colonies", 1697

A few years later Penn turned his thoughts to the problem of authority as it centred around inter-colonial relations. In February, 1696, he presented to the Board of Trade his scheme for a general union of the American colonies. This is the first proposal, so far as it is known, of a federation of all the American colonies, and it is further interesting as showing beyond any question that at that time Penn realised the necessity for the use of force for self-defence and in the preservation of the peace. The remarks on this latter subject which the present writer made near the end of the preceding section apply here as well.

Penn's plan was made under the stress of the third of Louis XIV's wars of aggression, or King William's War as it was called in America. William III,

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see A. Ruth Fry, John Bellers (London: Cassell and Co., 1935), "Some Reasons for an European State", 1710, pp. 89 - 103, especially 92 - 96.

to promote this war, appointed in 1696 a committee, The Lords of Trade and Plantations, which promptly advised him to pool all the military resources of the colonies under the command of a captain-general, who should also assume the powers of the governors in those colonies into which his military activities might lead him in person. To meet this threat of a military dictatorship, Penn appeared before the Lords of Trade, on December 11th, 1696, as a proprietor of East New Jersey. After protesting against the collection of customs by New York on goods sent to Jersey, he spoke also of the quota required from the neighbouring colonies for the defence of New York. He said that he conceived the best way of regulating it would be, by stated deputies from each province, to meet in one common assembly. At the request of the Board, Penn promised to draw up a scheme more fully in writing, and in conformity with his promise, on February 8th, 1696 (1697), he submitted his "Plan for the Union of the Colonies".

The plan included seven proposals. One was the creation of a provincial congress to meet once a year, and more often if necessary, during the war then in progress and at least once in two years during peace. Each of the ten colonies contemplated in the plan was to be represented in this body by two deputies "well qualified for sense, sobriety, and substance". The presiding officer was to be the King's commissioner, appointed particularly for that service. A central meeting place was to be selected. As Penn thought that "in all probability" the sessions would be held in New York, he suggested that the governor of that colony might also be designated as the King's high commissioner. This officer was to be the "general or chief commander of the several quotas (from the constituent provinces) upon service against the common enemy" in time of war. The most interesting of these proposals was the sixth, in which Penn outlined the general functions of this continental congress.

"Their business," he wrote, "shall be to hear and adjust all matters of complaint or difference between province and province." Such matters would be the flight of persons from one colony to another to "avoid their just debts though they be able to pay them"; the defeat of justice through the escape of offenders from one province to another; the prevention or adjustment of injuries suffered in commerce; and the consideration "of ways and means to support the union against the public enemies". Moreover, he argued, that the congress could fix the quotas of men and money more easily and fairly than could "any establishment" made in England, "for the provinces, knowing their own condition and one another's, can debate that matter with more freedom and satisfaction and better adjust and balance their affairs in all respects for their common safety".<sup>1</sup> Such an understanding of the authority of the colonists, if put into effect, would easily undermine the traditional relationship which was held to exist between mother country and colony.

The fact that this plan was not accepted is no reflection on the far-sighted statesmanship of its author. In the light of succeeding history, particularly the record of the so-called "critical period", Penn's suggestions seem to contain much practical sense. He definitely recognised and offered a solution for two of the difficult problems which demonstrated the inadequacy of the Articles of Confederation: intercolonial or interstate commerce and national defence. He hinted at an answer to the vexing problem of public finance. Thus William Penn may be numbered among those English and American statesmen who, before 1787, vainly tried to solve the great questions answered by the American federal system, the establishment of limited government in an imperial order. What was learned at this latter date on the problems of

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<sup>1</sup>The plan is re-printed in William Hull's William Penn, 236 f.

political authority owed much to the earlier labours of the Quaker leader.

In this "Plan", as was the case with his "Essay", whether "Penn violates . . . his personal conscience by proposing military defense of the colonies upon a cooperative basis" is basically still a matter of conjecture.<sup>1</sup> In any event, he could not speak for all Pennsylvania and his Quaker convictions alone, but had to submit a plan which might secure the adherence of all concerned. He doubtless knew that he was proposing to the Lords of Trade "all that the traffic would bear".<sup>2</sup> This fact would seem to qualify our earlier claim of the document to be an expression of Penn's "pure" thought on authority; for in reality the "Plan" incorporates the views which Penn himself was forced, by circumstances, to admit as expressing a more realistic doctrine of political authority.

Though he did not see his plan adopted by the English authorities, on his second visit to Pennsylvania the Proprietor sought by voluntary action of the provincial governors to forward the cause of colonial unity. His relations with other proprietors and governors were by no means uniformly harmonious. Now, however, as much of his correspondence shows,<sup>3</sup> Penn evidently felt that in order to secure effective enforcement of the acts of trade it would be necessary to have great intercolonial co-operation. The same conclusion was true with reference to matters of defence. Again the Founder of Pennsylvania appears as more than the idealistic builder of the great Quaker commonwealth. He must be counted as a far-reaching, far-seeing statesman, who fostered in its infancy the spirit of intercolonial co-operation within the British Empire.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 238. The quotation is from W. W. Comfort, William Penn, 152.

<sup>2</sup>Comfort, op. cit., 152.

<sup>3</sup>See Beatty, op. cit., 88 ff.

The same spirit was to lead later to a break with the mother country, England. This action itself was a clash between two opposing views on authority.

6. "The Charter of Privileges", October 28th, 1701

We return now to our consideration of William Penn's doctrine of political authority as it developed in the midst of his "holy experiment". During Penn's long absence from America, the Proprietor was continually harassed by standing grievances, some of which we have had cause already to examine: the desire of the territories first to be associated in the government of Pennsylvania, and later to be separated from it; the insistence of the popular Assembly upon the right to initiate legislation, regardless of the charter reservation of this power to the Governor and Council; the difficulties about providing subsidies for military defence of Pennsylvania and the adjoining colonies; disputes about the requirement of oaths in legal matters; the reluctance of the people to pay their quitrents, upon which Penn counted to reimburse himself for the heavy expenses of government; the inadequacy of his deputy governors appointed by himself; the danger that the Crown, egged on by the Anglican Church party, would take over the government of the province again, as it had already done for two years; and later, the temptation in days of encouragement to sell the government to the Crown. All of these grievances indicate the tensions resulting from unresolved aspects of Penn's doctrine of political authority.

A clear-cut solution to the situation in Pennsylvania seemed slow in coming. The disheartening reports which crossed the Atlantic were the main causes for anxiety in Penn's mind during the unexpectedly long absence from his province which he was compelled to spend in England from 1684 until 1699. There was a well-nigh irreconcilable opposition between his own financial

interests as Proprietary, his feudal obligations to the Crown, and the democratic aspirations of the people represented by their Assembly - aspirations with which in spirit Penn was not unsympathetic. These opposing interests threw the issue of authority "into the melting pot". The problem was very much in Penn's mind when he was finally able to return to America with his wife and daughter in 1699. Fifteen years had elapsed since his last visit. Physical and political conditions in the province were much altered since 1684; Philadelphia was now a young city. Meetings had been settled, roads opened, estates laid out in the adjoining counties, prosperity had come, and most important of all, democratic demands had come to a focus. The "Charter of Privileges" of 1701 was the fruit of this visit, and remained the law of the province until 1776.

As soon as possible after his return Penn began the work of reconstructing the government. But he speedily encountered opposition in the person of David Lloyd, who for many years was the most prominent member of the Assembly, and who was at this time also the attorney-general of the province. Scarcely had the Proprietor begun to consider the course he must adopt to reconstruct the government, when several persons complained to him that by the act of 1696 they had been deprived of the benefit of the old Charter. Calling them before the Council, Penn held with them a long conference, at the close of which he desired them to present to him in writing "such expedients that might be an accommodation between the old charter and the late frame". At the same time he advised them to be careful and moderate in their proceedings. They therefore requested him to issue writs for the election to Council and Assembly of the number of members provided for in the Frame of 1683. The legislature thus convened might with him settle the government - which in reality meant a settlement of the issue of authority.

Urgent orders from England, however, caused the Proprietor, on January 25th, 1700, to reconvene the dissolved Assembly of 1699, but at the close of its session, he promised that in future he would follow the old method of election. In a speech to the newly elected Council in April,<sup>1</sup> Penn said that some persons had the idea that, because it was his Council, it was not representative of the people. He stated that the ablest men had always constituted the Council, and that he believed the chief duty of that body in legislation was to prepare laws to be submitted to the Assembly. The speech gave evidence of a desire by Penn to return to the position of the Council-Assembly relationship which existed fifteen years earlier.

Following the address a member of Council then requested that a new charter be granted. Penn desired to know whether they thought the Frame of Government of 1683 had been <sup>made void</sup> vacated by that of 1696. The reply was made that they did not think so. The suggestion was thereupon made that what was useful in both Frames might be incorporated into a constitution that would be firm and lasting. Penn responded that the Frame of 1696 served till he came, but could not bind him against his own act. The Charter of 1683 was his gift, of which the acceptation of it by the people was sufficient testimony. In this regard the Quaker leader seemed insensitive to the fact that "times had changed", and the climate of political authority in 1700 was quite different from that of both 1683 and 1696. He agreed, nevertheless, that the Council should be formed into a grand committee to read both frames of government, keep what was good in each, and add to both what was best suited to the common welfare.<sup>2</sup> All the laws passed since the founding of the province were to be

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, I, 596 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., I, 597 f.

similarly treated. Eventually, however, the Council and Assembly joined together in a grand committee of fifty-four to prepare a constitution.

For over a year negotiations went on between Proprietor and Council and Assembly.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the Proprietor had endeavoured without avail to heal the breach between the province and the Lower Counties, and to reconcile the religious and political factions. News now came that a scheme was on foot in England once more to deprive the Proprietor of his government. In his opening speech to the Assembly, September 15th, 1701, Penn said:

The reasons that hasten your session is the necessity I am under through the endeavors of the enemies of the prosperity of this country to go to England, where, taking advantage of my absence, some have attempted by false or unreasonable charges to undermine our government . . . . having reason to believe I can at this time best serve you and myself on that side of the water, neither the rudeness of the season nor tender circumstances of my family, can overrule my inclination to undertake it. Think therefore . . . of some suitable expedient and provision for your safety as well in your privileges as property, and you will find me ready to comply with whatsoever may render us happy by a near union of our interest. Review again your laws, propose new ones that may better your circumstances, and what you do, do it quickly, remembering that parliament sits at the end of next month, and that the sooner I am there the safer.<sup>2</sup>

The Assembly was quite unmoved - or rather, it proceeded to make a series of demands which could not but exasperate the Quaker leader.<sup>3</sup> Finally, on October 28th, 1701, Penn signed the "Charter of Privileges" in its final form, and directed the keeper of the great seal to affix the same to it.

The end-result of the long, laborious evolution of the issue of authority presented an interesting comparison. In this document we find no trace of the spirit that dominated the earlier Frames. There is no Council

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<sup>1</sup>Shepherd, op. cit., 288 f.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, II, 35 f.

<sup>3</sup>Shepherd, op. cit., 291 f.

of the political romance type, with its parental authority and supervision. No rotation in office is mentioned, nor is there a word said about the use of the ballot. The governor and Council are, at least by implication, excluded from the power to propose matters for legislation, and no provision as to the family or estate of the proprietor is made. Indeed, the document shows but one clear thing: the advance of the Assembly from a mere ratifying body to a position equal with the governor in legislative power. It also shows the extent to which Penn was forced to make concessions to the popular will. There is ample evidence that he never liked it, and that, if he had dared, he would have vacated it.<sup>1</sup>

How the balance of authority had shifted - and thereby how completely the spirit of the earlier Frames had departed - may be seen by a recital of the provisions of the "Charter of Privileges". The reader will recall that by the first Frame the government was to consist of the governor and freemen, in the form of Provincial Council and General Assembly, while in that of 1683 the words "proprietor and governor" were substituted for the word "governor". Even in the act of 1696 it was declared that the government was to consist of the governor or his deputy, and the freemen in the form of Council and Assembly. These statements were to be found at the beginnings of each of the three documents, but in the "Charter of Privileges" the first clause dealt with liberty of conscience, and its wording was borrowed from previous enactments. Then, "for the well-governing of the province", not the governor and freemen in Provincial Council and General Assembly should be responsible, but an "assembly yearly chosen by the freemen".<sup>2</sup> It should be composed of four persons from

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<sup>1</sup>Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, IV, Part ii, 333.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, II, 56 - 60.

each county, and should hold its sessions at Philadelphia, unless the governor and Council should see fit to elect another place. It was to have power also to choose a speaker and other officers, to be judge of the elections and qualifications of its members, to sit on its own adjournments, to appoint committees, to prepare matters for legislation, to impeach criminals, and to redress grievances. In short, it was to have "all powers and privileges of an assembly, according to the rights of the freeborn subjects of England, and as was usual in any of the king's plantations in America!" There was now little question into whose hands the real authority had been placed for colonial Pennsylvania.

The Proprietor embarked for England in what was probably a very unenviable frame of mind. Before him was a contest with the Crown for the preservation of his rights. In the province he had been engaged in a contest for the same object with its inhabitants. In the latter case, he had suffered a defeat. His chances against the Crown were certainly not bright. The issue of political authority for William Penn seemed lost in a hopeless deadlock.

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In the years that followed, there was much in Penn's correspondence which carried evidence of his bitterness.<sup>1</sup> The severely critical assessors of Penn's "holy experiment" have used this fact to write off the colonial endeavour as a failure during the Proprietor's own life-time because of his chimerical Quaker ideas, and a success after his death only in spite of them.

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., "William Penn to Roger Mompesson - 17th of 12th month, 1704/5", Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, IX, 373 - 376; "William Penn to James Logan - 18th of 3rd month, 1708", Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, X, 271 - 274.

Critical biographers have also insisted that Penn was not a Quaker statesman; that this characterisation is a contradiction in terms; that it was only when he ceased to be a Quaker that he became a statesman, and vice versa; that all the failures and futilities of his career as a statesman were due to the dry rot of Quakerism; and that if he could have got farther away from Quakerism and stayed there, his "experiment" might not have been so "holy", but would have been a statesmanlike success.

Such criticism, declared William Hull, would be "merely to say that he would have been an entirely different man, and not William Penn at all. For the ideals of government which he sought to realise were precisely the ideals of Quakerism".<sup>1</sup> The very framework of the Society of Friends, with its insistence of a subordination of political citizenship to religious conviction and duty, was incorporated at many points in Penn's policy for Pennsylvania. Indeed, it was largely because of the invincible traits of the Quakers that Penn had so much trouble during his later years in trying to work out his doctrine of political authority in the wilderness of the New World.

As we have indicated in the opening section of this chapter, Penn's own position in the colony proved troublesome at times. As proprietor and governor of the province, he represented the Crown. Sooner or later Penn had to recognise the fact that he could not give up at pleasure the prerogatives of the Crown, with which he was entrusted. Moreover, the difficulty which Penn encountered among the colonists was not due to his formal position alone: his personality was also involved. He appeared to have been distinctly paternalistic in his attitude and tendencies.

His career as a religious teacher, and the awe with which many of his

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<sup>1</sup>William Penn, 239.

converts regarded him, would also serve to confirm this idea. He believed that he had a great humanitarian mission to fulfill. He thought his followers were with him heart and soul in the accomplishment of this purpose. In the execution of his plan, and within the self-imposed limits of his Frames of Government, Penn saw himself directing as a father, and his people rendering due obedience as children. In spite of his large experience with men, Penn did not really know them. He was not a strong judge of character. As a result, his feelings were hurt and he was mentally vexed and financially embarrassed by the many unexpected difficulties with his Quaker colonists.

Sidney Lucas has called the experiment "one of practical idealism, controlled by men of action who, if their heads were sometimes in the heavens yet had their feet firmly planted on the earth".<sup>1</sup> This suggestive description corresponds to Beatty's characterisation of Penn as a "political pragmatist".<sup>2</sup> The implications of such a characterisation for Penn's doctrine of political authority are essentially two-fold.

We may say, in the first place, that Penn was not completely conscious, apparently, of the extent of the concessions he was making. If he could have anticipated the ingratitude and obloquy with which later he met, it is doubtful whether his liberal tendencies would not have received a decided check, and been made to conform both to justice to himself, and to a correct view of the actual needs of the people.

At the same time, we must also acknowledge that Penn gradually came to realise that, beneath the superficial and unnecessary irritants which the colonists launched against him, there was a profound movement of democracy.

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<sup>1</sup>The Quaker Story (New York: Harper and Bros., 1940), 90.

<sup>2</sup>E.C.O. Beatty, op. cit., 41.

In adapting his system to existing circumstances and by relinquishing - though not without misgivings - a part of his prerogatives when a new situation of things in the colony rendered it desirable, Penn showed the marks of a wise legislator. As a Quaker, he shared fully in his inmost soul the conviction that democracy is God's will and man's possibility. All the things in this world, including government itself, are insignificant or irrelevant in comparison with the Spirit of God - the Inner Light - as revealed in the souls of men. The democratic process, then, was but the natural result of belief in continuing revelation.

During his life Penn had seen nothing but the failure of ideals in contact with realities. But the idea had enduring strength. Penn had made the daring experiment of basing the common life of men in a state on Quakerism. Through this experiment a new world was opened to the political thought of humanity, a world in which political life was subordinated not to power but to the spirit, not to men's will to dominion but to their voluntary submission to the ideas that are eternally valid. Individual liberty, self-subordination to conscience, respect for all men of whatever race or religion - these fundamental ideas, which Quakerism as a movement set out to carry into practice, became the general property of American civilisation.<sup>1</sup>

What was new in the Penn province was the conception of a democratic government evolving under divine guidance. Because an institution has a moral basis, however, it does not do away with the need of wisdom and skill in management. The moral basis for the doctrine of political authority in colonial Pennsylvania was defective in a number of points, which will come under consideration in the fourth part of our study. Nevertheless, from what was attempted there has stemmed many of the basic principles, civil and religious, which we have built into our own political edifice and thinking. Pennsylvania had become the most important colony before 1776, and Penn's

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<sup>1</sup>Otto Zarek, The Quakers, translated by E. W. Dickes (London: Andrew Dakers, 1943), 160.

principles are still there, for all to see and study.

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An over-all estimation of Penn's doctrine of political authority can be made only after one has examined something of the ethical aftermath of the "holy experiment". This is so because his political principles produced a harvest of practical insights for colonial issues - and for issues very much with us today.

PART IV

THE ETHICAL AFTERMATH:

A HARVEST OF PRACTICAL INSIGHTS

CHAPTER X

THE PRACTICE OF TRUTH

- A. The ethical implications of authority
  - 1. Attitudes towards the social and economic world
  - 2. The Puritan ethic as background for Quakerism.
  
- B. The implications of the Inner Light for ethics
  - 1. The organic character of society
  - 2. The responsibilities of society
  - 3. The importance of the social order in man's duties to God.
  
- C. The bases of Quaker ethics
  - 1. The supremacy of the individual conscience
  - 2. The belief in a moral order, a divine law of right, as against utilitarianism
  - 3. The transcendent importance of faithfulness in small details.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PRACTICE OF TRUTH

He is a wise man and a good man too, that knows his original and end; and answers it by a life that is adequate and corresponds therewith. There is no creature fallen so much below this as man, and that will augment his trouble in the day of account, - for he is an accountable creature. I pray God his Maker, to awaken him to a just consideration thereof; that he may find forgiveness of God his Maker and Judge.<sup>1</sup>

William Penn's doctrine of political authority issued in ethical considerations as applied to the problems of the day - still our problems for a large part. This concluding part of our study is devoted to an examination of a number of these ethical problems. As a result of our investigation we hope to show the further relevance of our study as it applies to our twentieth-century cultural situation.

Christianity has had to face a hard set of facts. Theories of society have been divided between those which regard the world of human affairs as self-contained, and those which appeal to a supernatural criterion. Modern social theory, like modern political theory, developed only when society was given a naturalistic instead of a religious explanation, and the rise of both was largely due to a changed conception of the nature and functions of the Church. The crucial period was the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its essence is the secularisation of social and economic philosophy. The synthesis is resolved into its elements - politics, business, and spiritual

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<sup>1</sup>The Friends' Library, ed. William Evans and Thomas Evans, Vol. XI (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1847), 446.

exercises; each assumes a separate and independent vitality and obeys the laws of its own being. The social functions matured within the Church, and long identified with it, are transferred to the State, which in turn is idolised as the dispenser of prosperity and the guardian of civilisation. The theory of a hierarchy of values, embracing all human interests and activities in a system of which the apex is religion, is replaced by the conception of separate and parallel compartments between which a due balance should be maintained, but which have no vital connection with each other.

There are, perhaps, four main attitudes which religious opinion may adopt toward the world of social institutions and economic relations.<sup>1</sup> It may stand on one side in ascetic aloofness and regard them as in their very nature the sphere of unrighteousness, from which men may escape - from which, if they consider their souls, they will escape - but which they can conquer only by flight. It may take them for granted and ignore them, as matters of indifference belonging to a world with which religion has no concern; in all ages the prudence of looking problems boldly in the face and passing on has seemed too self-evident to require justification. It may throw itself into an agitation for some particular reform, for the removal of some crying scandal, for the promotion of some final revolution, which will inaugurate the reign of righteousness on earth. It may at once accept and criticise, tolerate and amend, welcome the gross world of human appetites, as the squalid scaffolding from amid which the life of the spirit must arise, and insist that this also is the material of the Kingdom of God. To such a temper, all activities divorced from religion are brutal or dead, but none are too mean to be beneath or too great to be above it, since all, in their different degrees, are touched with

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<sup>1</sup>R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1948), 30.

the spirit which permeates the whole.

If a philosophy of society is to be effective, it must be as mobile and realistic as the forces which it would control. Had the Quakers met the onset of insurgent economic and social interests with a generalised appeal to traditional morality and an idealisation of the past, the weakness of such an attitude would be only too obvious. By the end of the sixteenth century the divorce between religious theory and economic and social realities had long been evident. In the meantime, within the bosom of religious theory itself, a new system of ideas was being matured, which was destined to revolutionise all traditional values, and to turn on the whole field of social obligations a new and penetrating light. On a world heaving with expanding energies, and on a Church uncertain of itself, rose, after two generations of premonitory mutterings, the tremendous storm of the Puritan movement. Confined to no single sect, and represented in the Anglican Church hardly, if at all, less fully than in those which afterwards separated from it, it determined, not only conceptions of theology and church government, but political aspirations, business relations, family life, and the minutiae of personal behaviour. It was not merely as the exponent of certain tenets as to theology and church government, but as the champion of interests and opinions embracing every side of the life of society, that the Puritan movement came into collision with the Crown. In reality, as is the case with most heroic ideologies, the social and religious aspects of Puritanism were not disentangled; they presented themselves, both to supporters and opponents, as different facets of a single scheme. The clash was not one of theories - a systematic and theoretical individualism did not, by and large, develop till after the Restoration - but of contradictory economic interests and incompatible conceptions of social expediency.

Here is the background for the approach of the Society of Friends - and especially William Penn - to the social and economic problems of their day. If it be agreed that several groups in society are concerned in seeking their liberty, there must logically grow a negative virtue common to them all, the wrong of compulsion and intolerance as between them. This is important as a beginning, for as it allays suspicion, so it enables an intercourse of judgment and emotion between them. If men are willing to learn from each other it makes their diverse experiences preparatory to a finer synthesis in society. The Society of Friends, in an age when the divorce between religion and social ethics was almost complete, met the prevalent doctrine that it was permissible to take such gain as the market offered, by insisting on the obligation of good conscience and forbearance in economic transactions, and on the duty to make the honourable maintenance of the brother in distress a common charge.

The Quakers were facing the facts of the seventeenth century. They brought their God right into the world. They "were not attacking the accuracy of contemporary beliefs, but were questioning the relevancy of them." Such beliefs, the Quakers held, were the "products of the great gulf fixed between God and man, the darkness of which had aroused the suspicions of man." Friends were so in favor of liberty of conscience as to want to make it possible. "If the ship of conscience were subject to every breeze of theological fancy the journeys of men would be both erring and conflicting. . . . If the virtues of the conscience were dependent upon theories of or deductions from God's contemporary intercourse with man, liberty of conscience would be impossible." It was in reality a forward step the Quakers were proposing in human progress. "When the mind of man was cowed by the problems of the infinite and hereafter, the significance of social life would be emphasised accordingly." Perhaps, as Belasco has suggested, "the Quakers represent, in fact, the Stoic decision

to limit men's horizon to the world they lived in."<sup>1</sup>

Under such a set of circumstances, it was inevitable that the values in society would alter accordingly. In the past it had been too often the case that the social order was forgotten in the zeal of a man to become "right with God". It now fell upon the Quakers to demonstrate the importance of the social order in men's duties to God. In their struggle for religious toleration, the Friends had already shown that though compulsion would not make men sin, it might prevent them from becoming virtuous. Now the whole philosophy of pacifism was linked with the social order. "As all laws and governments," remarked Penn, "design the benefit of the people governed, that there be harmony and agreement with all parts thereof, so everything that causes disagreement must be expelled."<sup>2</sup> The cause of conflict must be taken out of the social system. Unless this were done, the ravages on conscience would continue to be made. To the Quakers, "the divine significance was not in the virtue of the conscience, but in the virtue-making of the conscience. This could only advance according to the light of the age; so they felt no fear in breaking down the idols of the old order, for they were, in fact, at work in building up the new. To carry on this work was to them the very struggle to become virtuous."<sup>3</sup>

Compulsion was a wrong to God. The society which necessitated it was wrong too. On the other hand, that which encouraged unity and harmony in society was a favour to God.

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 69.

<sup>2</sup>"Commentary upon the Present Condition of the People of the Kingdom", 1677, quoted in Belasco, op. cit., 70.

<sup>3</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 70.

There is something more than faith in the claim that there is an unconditional relation between freedom and universal acceptability. The powers of the isolated or self-conscious man count for least. He achieves most who can give himself over to the task he has in view. The protest of reason or conscience weakens him fundamentally and distracts him from the achievement which he has sought. As an ideal, the freeing of the enlightened conscience of men means its mutual reaction, so as to have complete control over their lives, conduct, the character of the work they do, the nature of the environment, society and institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Freedom, therefore, is "a question of finding out the conditions that need to be satisfied and fulfilling them. It is really a question of building up a society that can best express those that make it up."<sup>2</sup> Man is never man in isolation. In society a man has a double role to play. He is, on the one hand, an individual, and his individuality must never be lost sight of in the fulfillment of life's purposes. But while there is room in society for individuality, there is no room for rampant individualism. For man is also a social animal. The expression of his individuality is naturally outward or social.

There is implied the building up of that which experience has shown is capable of binding men into unity. While there is unity there can be no conflict; and where there is no conflict there is no infringement upon the individual conscience. There follows the building up of a social conscience which can give full and rich expression to the individual conscience, and the suiting of the material and organisation of society accordingly. This can only be done by trading on the common points in men.<sup>3</sup>

Sweeping implications follow. This point of view assumes, at the outset, the organic character of society. "Every man being endowed with light was to take his part in it."<sup>4</sup> From this initial premise the Quakers were brought face to face with conditions of society, and, in trying to rouse the conscience of society, the constructive work is important.

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 72. <sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 73.

If men could be aroused to see how grievously the conditions of society fell short of the practical virtues they all professed, the stress and importance given them would heal the divisions of men. We appreciate, therefore, the methods thus employed. They appealed to the common culture of Christianity, elucidating the appeal, however, with some rays from the inner light. They showed that if the moral judgments of men were to be taken into account, it presupposed that men were equally to be taken into consideration.<sup>1</sup>

The organic conception of humanity was found in the fact that the privileges of the light in men made this unity imperative.

An organic conception of society, however, assumes certain responsibilities. These responsibilities included a stand toward the problem of minorities in society, the economic problems of the concentration of power in the hands of a few, poverty, lust for possessions, etc.; as well as the outlawry of war. With these responsibilities the concluding chapters of our study will be devoted.

To this conception of society, with all that it involved, the Quakers brought the implications of the Inner Light for ethics. In the practice of truth, men were to be persuaded of the right course to follow not through external pressures, but rather through the guidance of the Light itself.

If social relations and conditions did not conform to what the Quakers thought was right, the perpetuation of the evil and indifference to their removal implied that they\*did not wish to resist what they thought was wrong. But men were passively responsible for all the conditions of society unless they had proved that the full exercise of their powers could not rectify them. Passive resistance herein was an intense form of persuasion, for, while it avoided violence and compulsion which active resistance implied, it, on the other hand, indicated the profound disapproval of the individuals. So long as men accepted the benefits of such a society, they were responsible for its conditions. A man is responsible for his actions, and society thrives on the benefits it distributes. Even imprisonment is a benefit received if it safeguards the individual from death. The testimony of death, though it dissolves the responsibility for the evil, does not

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 74.

thereby make the man virtuous. Here, in fact, is the powerful significance of making virtue dependent on the inward allegiance of a man. If there is no such thing in society as a good in itself, society thereby undergoes the criticism of a million eyes. If society permits within itself flagrant evils and injustice, the individual becomes responsible for them when he is convinced of them, because only then do they exist. Consequently, a system of society in which the individual accepts benefits puts him in the continuous necessity to reform it. His struggle towards virtue depends in no small degree upon the success with which he has impressed his standard upon the social fabric. Such vitality and intercourse as this is good to society.<sup>1</sup>

It was from this context that the Quakers approached many of the social evils of their day. Violence, threats, force -- none of these weapons were to constitute the arsenal of their attack. Instead the Friends appealed to the conscience of society by agitation and persuasion. Of course, they were by no means completely successful; and it was only when the idea of a rigid, written revelation gradually weakened and a personal morality grew up as in the post-Kantian nineteenth century era that the appeal such as the Quakers made would begin to take effect. In the seventeenth century, therefore, the chief interest for most students of political theory and social thought is the evolution of their ideas rather than the specific influences they brought to bear. However, in colonial Pennsylvania, we again see the attempt to put theory into practice, of ideas into action. Once again the success or failure of the experiment provides a precious clue not only with reference to the conditions under which it was performed but also in regard to the validity of the underlying theory itself. The Quakers attempted early to educate the minds of the people to the existence of social ills and attempted to arouse a social conscience that agreed with their contention. It was in the belief in the liberty of conscience, the working of the Inner Light in

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, *op. cit.*, 86f. The "they" referred to, and indicated by an asterisk \*, are other Christian sects who could not seem to rise to the appeal for social reform.

every man, that the Quakers found equipment for the duty of social reform.

The extent of Penn's democratic ideas we have seen in the various constitutional documents of Pennsylvania. But Penn never failed to realise that the mere technique of government, though important, does not cover the whole ground. In its most perfect form the democratic machinery cannot assure that the effect of the "laws" thus propounded will be the same as anticipated. How, in any case, can a representative system express the interests of society where the power is so unevenly distributed? Men are as units, but they yield unconsciously to the desires of those who have the power: no plan of representation can alter the fact that the government, as a result, expresses the powerful interests of society, consciously controlled by, perhaps, a small minority. The devising of laws proceeds accordingly: but when obedience is expected, it is then that all the unawakened interests of society rouse themselves as from a dream, and find that obedience is not compatible with their liberty.

Penn's concern for liberty of conscience naturally led him to work out the implications in society. His religion would therefore drive him into society - or rather, keep him in society - and he would continuously weigh the thousand interests that composed it. When discord arose in society, it was obvious that a new distribution of power was being worked out in which the character of impersonal interests had not yet been settled. The possession of power is proved by its results: but when there is dispute and difficulty, authority is in doubt. The tendency to give rights to those who have had power only makes them less willing to go when they are asked. To remove the source of disagreement obviously hurts no one, but rather encourages the freedom and authority of society.

Penn came to see, perhaps somewhat unhappily, that those who have power, in order to maintain it, must associate themselves with the personal interests

of those below them. This diffusion of power in society is necessary for those who already possess it. It is such a process as this which is responsible for the development of political authority. The owners of power have alone that discrimination of dealing with the environment which makes their conduct so important to political authority. They can destroy the good things they have, and that is the pity. It is the assertive interests of those who have power which has built up the authority of the State. That restraint which comes of the desire to make the best deal acts as the necessary discipline for the upgrowth of social power. Those who are cautious are not willing to gamble with their winnings. They think out methods by which they can more coherently express the power which they possess. Inevitably these rules accrue to the advantage of all; even the stability secured is an achievement. The sanctity of contract, the rights of private property, arise from these interests, and to society they are of permanent value. Since power is, and has always been, on the move, those who are superior will take into account, as the implication of their assertive interests, the growing demands of others in society. To the ignorant the restraint seems a sign of weakness; in reality, the authority of the State - in this case, that of colonial Pennsylvania - would have been impossible without it.

In order to keep clearly before us those basic principles of the Quaker approach to the problems of society, particularly as they relate to the "holy experiment", it may be well to mention three closely associated bases of Quaker ethics. Here moral and theological views have a necessary and logical relation.

The first of these principles is the supremacy of the individual conscience. This principle has been mentioned in many another connection, but its importance to this study cannot be minimized. It is the logical

result of the doctrine of the Inner Light. The right of a person to determine his own duty is a necessary corollary of the oft-expressed principle that there is a conscious revelation of God's will, apart from the unconscious enlightenment of a Church or State. On the other hand, it was early seen that some organisation was a necessity, and that the plan of organisation itself was as much a product of divine direction as the commands to the individual could ever be. God was at work through society, and this fact would indeed not limit the spiritual opportunities of any individual.

The second principle was the belief in a moral order, a divine law of right, as against utilitarianism. It was difficult to define the moral law, and still more difficult to apply it; but in the evolution of society certain principles have grown up based on the constitution of man and his relations to his fellows. They are more elusive than many physical laws, but they exist, and when men square their actions by them, they do good, and advance the interests of society. If they thwart them, they do evil and retard progress, and this is independent of their motives in selecting a given course of action. That they think they see some collateral good to come from a bad action, may excuse the short-sighted doer, but does not avoid the general bad consequences of the immoral act. These laws may or may not all be written on the sacred books of the various religions. If so, it is but a record of them, not their origination. Sometimes, they are embodied in the civil law, and sometimes, without doubt, the students of international law have found them.

The third principle, one which has done much to develop the Quaker character, has been the transcendent importance of faithfulness in small details. It is every-day obedience alone which creates strength to meet great emergencies. New light dawns upon the waiting soul when it uses the light previously received. Spiritual strength, as all other strength, comes from exercise. Unfaithfulness

in a little matter checks the whole current of divine inflow, and life and growth are not possible till the obstruction is removed. So the whole power of conscience is brought to bear on each minute item of conduct.

It was upon such bases for Christian ethics that William Penn approached the many problems, social and economic, as proprietor of Pennsylvania. There was much give-and-take between the settlers and himself; there had to be, if the experiment were to have any success whatsoever. Estimations of the effectiveness of his approach vary widely. It has been both praised and damned.<sup>1</sup> But this much is sure: political history is barren and unintelligible without social and economic history.<sup>2</sup>

William Penn, and the Quakers, emphasised the character of social and

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Beatty, op. cit., 300 f. says: "William Penn's theories as to the nature of society and the relations of the individuals to the group approach the modern liberal ideology more nearly than do either his political or economic ideas . . . . the aristocratic landholder was often evident, even when the equalitarian seemed to speak most clearly. In things social, possibly religious creeds have a wider and less impeded way than in other areas of thought. . . . The Quaker faith is related more closely to the social than to either the political or economic phases of life. In Penn's social theories, as elsewhere, the aristocrat is never completely lost; but in applying his ideas he was equalitarian and humanitarian to a more notable degree than in other fields. In his social philosophy the voice of the Quaker spoke with less hesitation and more consistency than anywhere else." Cf. "William Penn, Pragmatist", by E.C.O. Beatty, Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Society, Vol. XXIX, Nos. 1-2 (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1940), 30 - 37; 107 - 116. Wilson Armistead, Select Miscellanies . . . of the Society of Friends, 1st ed., 2nd series, Vol. 5 (London: Charles Gilpin, 1851), 39: "William Penn considered the service of the community either in a civil or religious capacity or both, as his stated occupation; and to that object he devoted the energies of a powerful mind, and in a great measure sacrificed the comforts of an ample estate." Guy Franklin Hershman, "The Pennsylvania Quaker Experiment in Politics, 1682 - 1756", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. X, No. 4 (October, 1936), 220, says: "Quakers dared to combine the ethical position of the Anabaptists with the Calvinist attitude toward the social order. . . . They challenged the distinction between private and public morals by lifting the latter to the level of the former. This was the heart of the holy experiment. And this was where it failed."

<sup>2</sup>Cf. George M. Trevelyan, English Social History (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), "Introduction", p. vii.

economic activities by reference to an ideal which was held to express the true nature of man. Of that nature and its possibilities Penn and his associates were thought, during the greater part of the period discussed in these pages, to hold by definition a conception distinctively their own. They were committed therefore to the formulation of a social theory, not as a philanthropic gloss upon the main body of its teaching, but as a vital element in a creed concerned with the destiny of men whose character is formed, and whose spiritual potentialities are fostered or starved, by the commerce of the market-place and the institutions of society. Stripped of the eccentricities of period and place, Quaker philosophy had as its centre a determination to assert the superiority of moral principles over economic appetites, which have their place, and an important place, in the human scheme, but which, like other natural appetites, when flattered and pampered and over-fed, bring ruin to the soul and confusion to society. Its casuistry was an attempt to translate these principles into a code of practical ethics, sufficiently precise to be applied to the dusty world of warehouse and farm. Its discipline was an effort, too often corrupt and pettifogging in practice, but not ignoble in conception, to work the Christian virtues into the spotted texture of individual character and social conduct. That practice was often a sorry parody on theory is a truism which should need no emphasis. But in a world where principles and conduct are unequally mated, men are judged by their reach as well as by their grasp - by the ends at which they aim as well as by the successes with which they attain them. The prudent critic will try himself by his achievements rather than by his ideals, and his neighbours, living and dead alike, by their ideals not less than by their achievements.

In such a spirit we turn in the remaining chapters of our study to a

consideration of three of the most burning ethical issues of Penn's day, and of our own: the problem of minorities, the problem of economics and the state, and the problems relating to war and peace. The ultimate effectiveness of William Penn's doctrine of political authority perhaps may best be measured only after we have examined the harvest of practical insights which formed the ethical aftermath of his colonial project. These insights must be judged by what they proposed as well as by what they accomplished.

CHAPTER XI

MINORITIES: ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIANS AND SLAVES

- A. "William Penn's Experiment in Race Relations": the Indian situation
  - 1. Reasons behind the experiment
    - a. Considerations of policy: the historical context
    - b. The Christian doctrine of human brotherhood: the Inner Light
    - c. The Quaker ideal of pacifism
  - 2. The success of the experiment: general conclusions on Penn's Indian policy
    - a. Achievements
    - b. Shortcomings
  
- B. The problem of slavery
  - 1. The historical context of the issue
  - 2. The policy:
    - a. Acceptance of the institution of slavery
    - b. Unique features of the policy
    - c. A growing concern against the practice of slavery.

## CHAPTER XI

### MINORITIES: ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIANS AND SLAVES

For the sake of social authority, those of formal state must consider the interests of the oppressed in society. As people who themselves knew the status of "minority", the Friends were keenly aware of the particular problems which beset any group falling under that designation. In colonial Pennsylvania, the two largest groups which the Quakers encountered were the Indians, and the slaves. William Penn's doctrine of political authority found expression in the policy which was evolved towards those two groups.

#### The Indian Situation

Nothing is more important or more interesting in the history of Penn than his approach to the American Indians. It is in this approach, fully as much as in his plan for internal government, that he shows both the nobility and the limitation of his outlook.

Penn was a man of conciliatory and loving spirit, but he was also a man with a policy, and pre-eminently a man with a theory. His view of the Indian was romantic in one way and practical in another. By virtue of a document signed at Whitehall he might claim almost unlimited powers over the native people in his provinces. But these people, though savage, were numerous; the white man was only on the fringes of their country; Indian hostility was a thing to be dreaded. On the other hand, everything was to be gained by a friendly agreement. The Indians were men, they were brothers, children of God; let them be treated with generosity and with understanding. A rapid,

peaceful expansion of the colony would inevitably depend upon the proper treatment of the Indians. The white man, to be sure, was taking away the property of the Indian; but he might do it decently. There might be, at least, a simulation of purchase. God was giving the land to the white man, His favoured people. This would have to be explained; but there was no reason why it should not be explained courteously, even pleasantly.

There was thus in the mind of Penn a deep sense of humanity side by side with extremely rigid views on the subject of invasive colonisation. He never questioned the right, his positive duty, to dispossess the natives and to acquire land as rapidly as he could for his Christian people. But he had realised for a long time the immense importance of the Indian problem; it was a problem which he treated more seriously and more intelligently than any other colonial governor.

Before he became interested in West Jersey in 1675, and received Pennsylvania from Charles II in 1681, William Penn was aware of the inadequacies of the colonial Indian policies up to that time.<sup>1</sup> In order to assert his authority as proprietor he might very well have been expected to follow in general the familiar English strategy of driving the Indians from his colony. That New Jersey in a small way, and Pennsylvania in a large one were shining exceptions to the general rule of violence between Englishmen and natives, was almost entirely due to one fact: namely, that William Penn and most of his early colonists were members of the Society of Friends, friends in fact as well as in name. It was this that distinguished them from other colonisers and other colonists. The Quakers brought with them a unique point of view and a

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<sup>1</sup>See the excellent article by Thomas E. Drake, "William Penn's Experiment in Race Relations", The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. LXVIII, No. 4 (October, 1944), 372 - 387. The present writer has borrowed freely from Mr. Drake's presentation.

manner of life which made warfare both unnecessary and unknown between them and the American savages. Penn himself was a man and a coloniser of genius. But it was Penn the Quaker who became the coloniser, and it was Penn's Quaker colonists who helped him to put his Quaker ideals into practice. In so doing they brought home to the world the benefits of a concept of authority which recognises the worth of the individual.

Quaker interest in the Indians and a Quaker way of dealing with them had developed some time before Penn became involved in American affairs. From many conversations with those who had already been in the New World Penn gained practical insights into the problems relating to the colonist relations with the Indians. Penn was sure in his own mind - before he had ever seen an Indian - as to the proper policy for dealing with the red man. According to the rule he had already laid down in West Jersey's "Concessions and Agreements", he instructed the Quaker emigrants to Burlington, New Jersey, in 1677-1678 to buy their lands from the Indians before occupying them. By so doing he completely disagreed with the accepted theory as to the clear title of Europe's monarchs to the lands of the New World, as he protested when discussing the claims of the Duke of York in New Jersey, saying, "The soil is none of his, 'tis the natives by the jus gentium, by the law of nations."<sup>1</sup>

The Quaker leader followed this basic assumption that Indian land titles should be fairly and freely purchased when he outlined his first "Conditions and Concessions" for the settlement of Pennsylvania, dated July 11th, 1681. In this Penn agreed with the advice of his enlightened friend, Henry Compton, Bishop of London, but his Quaker policies assured him of both the morality and justice of the policy.<sup>2</sup> He also set down the rules which were to govern the

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel M. Janney, The Life of William Penn, 174.

<sup>2</sup>See, Charles P. Keith, "The Bishop of London and Penn's Indian Treaty", The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XXXI, No. 4 (1907) 384 - 392.

relations between his settlers and the Indians in the new American province. In brief they were, that the Indian trade should be carried on in the open market in order to prevent imposition and detect fraud, and that punishments for the crimes of Indians and whites should be equally laid, with mixed juries of six white men and six Indians to guarantee justice in cases involving individuals of both races, that the Indians should have the same privileges of planting and providing for their families which were enjoyed by the English settlers, and should be free to come and go among the whites without fear of molestation. These basic principles Penn adhered to throughout his life, although experience taught him that the mixed-jury scheme was impracticable. He likewise found that few of the Indians cared to settle down and cultivate the soil in the prosaic manner of the English. Otherwise he never lost faith in the wisdom and the expediency of his liberal Indian policy.<sup>1</sup>

The approach by Penn to the Indians themselves was direct and personal. In three early letters sent through deputies or commissioners, and in person thereafter, the Proprietor addressed the Indians as one who would speak to intelligent and friendly white men. As a basis for authority, Penn invoked the name of the great God who made them all, who ruled men's hearts with the law of love, of doing good to one another. He then moved on to cite his authority to possess Pennsylvania by the charter from the King, but he sought the Indian's consent as well. He told the red men that his commissioners were directed to purchase such lands as the white men needed, and to enter into a firm league of peace which Penn and his people would take care to preserve forever in justice and goodwill. Above all, he promised on behalf of himself and his colonists to refrain from angering God and bringing trouble upon them

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<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that Penn was free from the temptation to relax his high and novel standards - see Drake's article, op. cit., 378 f.

all by indulging in the injustice and bloodletting which was the way of some of the English. Finally, he sent gifts in token of his peaceful intentions, and signed himself in Quaker fashion, "your loving friend, William Penn".<sup>1</sup> It appears that Penn treated the Indians as he himself liked to be treated, expecting the best of them and usually getting it.

The relationship between the Proprietor and his Quaker colonists with the Indians has been the subject of much admiration both here and abroad. But tradition is more fertile than fact as to many of the details involved in the colonial policies toward the natives. Still, the facts which can be pieced together from the few documents which have survived, from accounts of contemporaries, and from Penn's own writings, confirm the spirit if not the letter of the popular story of the friendly intercourse which took place between Governor Penn and the Indians. Through various consultations Penn and the natives established a league of friendship which was not broken either by the Indian tribes or by the Pennsylvania government for many years after the Founder's death. Land was purchased from the natives, not in one grand treaty, but at various times and places, and then only as fast as was necessary. The purchases were measured conservatively, from creek to creek and back into the country, by "walks" in genuine Indian fashion, leisurely stopping for rest and food, and travelling a moderate distance rather than the eighty-six miles in a day and a half which the white runners covered in the later and infamous "Walking Purchase" of 1733. We see here again the Quaker faithfulness in small details which was so important as a basis for their ethic.

In 1683, a spring tour of the province gave Penn ample opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup>Penn's three letters to the Indians, dated October 18th, 1681, April 21st, 1682, and June 21st, 1682, are printed in the Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Vol. VI (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1858), 251 - 253.

study the character and habits of the Indians, to find out whether his expectations as to their culture and attitudes had been correct. He described what he found on his visits and sojourns with the Indian chiefs and their people in his famous "Letter to the Free Society of Traders",<sup>1</sup> which came from his pen later that year. His experiences amplified his knowledge of the ways of the Indians but in no way weakened his confidence that they were children of God who were worthy of absolute justice and genuine love. Their habits were strange, their culture "rude". They might be, Penn thought, descendents of the ten lost tribes of Israel. But whatever they were, they were human beings, keen in their sense of right and wrong, faithful in their engagements, generous with their friends, and ruthless with their enemies. What, concluded Penn, could be more just or more wise than to treat them lovingly and honourably as befitted a Christian and a Quaker!<sup>2</sup>

William Penn was thus guided by his Quaker faith in dealing with the Indians, just as he built his whole commonwealth on Quaker principles. And the results justified his faith, judging by the Indians' response. As one of them said to Penn when they gathered in Pennsbury to bid him farewell on his return to England in 1701, the Indians "never first broke covenant with any people", for they made their treaties not in their heads but in their hearts.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This letter, dated August 16th, 1683, and printed in London the same year, was reprinted, together with other manuscripts and deeds involving Penn's relations with the Indians, in A.C. Myers' William Penn: His Own Account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, 1683 (Moynan, Pa.: 1937), especially 53 - 96.

<sup>2</sup>Penn was no weakling with the Indians. He was as firm in demanding right conduct of them as he was quick to punish the trespasses of white men. He also recognised the difficulties which alcohol introduced into the delicate relations between white men and red; see Drake, op. cit., 381 f.

<sup>3</sup>Janney, op. cit., 446.

Their friendship for Onas or Miquon, the Iroquois and Delaware names for William Penn, and their fidelity to their agreements with him stood firm until his death and long after.

The Pennsylvania Friends shared Penn's views as to the proper treatment of the Indians, as is shown by the early minutes of their Yearly Meeting and by the laws of the Quaker-dominated Assembly. As long as they controlled his province, they kept Penn's pledge to the Indians. However, the increasing pressures of imperial politics, the short-sighted avariciousness of Penn's sons, and the growth of non-Quaker settlements on the Pennsylvania frontier gradually weakened the influence of the Quakers in the provincial government. In 1756, in order to avoid responsibility for fighting the war which had broken out with the aggrieved Indians, the Friends retired from the Assembly, and gave up their political attempts to direct Pennsylvania's Indian policy along peaceful lines. But as long as the Quakers directed the affairs of Pennsylvania their policy was Penn's policy, and Penn's policy was Quaker. The relationship established between white man and red man in colonial Pennsylvania stands out as one of the most practical results of the "holy experiment".

#### General Conclusions on Penn's Indian Policy

The basic principles of the Quaker faith, as Comfort analysed them - a belief in the Light Within, a faith in the universality of God's grace for men of all colours and conditions, a sense of obligation to seek the perfection to which Christ called his followers, and a conviction that God's will is revealed continually and forever in sensitive human hearts<sup>1</sup> - these basic tenets of the Society of Friends produced in practice the Quaker way of life.

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<sup>1</sup>W. W. Comfort, William Penn, 89, 133.

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of the Quaker way, it had conditioned Penn's whole attitude toward the Indian problem. It was not a perfect way, indeed, but it was a way of friendliness and peace in the course of man's long search for God's kingdom. It revealed that God was the Source of all true authority, for all men irrespective of the pigment of their skins. Why, then, did not the initial success of the policy continue? Why did Penn's Quaker way fail to build a more enduring peace between the English and the Indians? The failure arose from several causes. Some of these were inherent in the times and the peoples involved; some arose from the imperfect application of their ideals by Penn and the Friends themselves. A consideration of these causes will shed further light on the nature and effectiveness of Penn's understanding of the doctrine of authority.

William Penn and the Quakers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were white men and Englishmen, with all that this connoted as to social attitudes and racial prejudices. They had the same sense of destiny, of racial superiority even, as other Englishmen, and they confidently expected that the Indians would adapt themselves to English customs, with resignation if not with alacrity. By providing them with ample land to support themselves in white-men's fashion, and by assuring them equal treatment and justice in their white-men's world, Penn and his followers hoped to make the transition of the Indians from savagery to civilisation as quick and as easy as possible.

However, in dealing with primitive American Indians, the Quakers were dealing with a people completely different in culture and point of view, but just as ethnocentric and fiercely proud in their own way, and as little willing or able to change their culture quickly as were the English. The religion and culture of the white man, Quaker or non-Quaker, held no attraction for the Indians. A collision between the two races - one with an aggressive,

agricultural-commercial civilisation, the other still in the warlike hunting stage - was as inevitable as it was tragic. One race or the other had to yield, for they could not both occupy the same country and continue to follow their different ways.

This does not mean that there were no points of contact whatsoever. The Indians recognised a similarity between their own Great Spirit and the Christian God; still, they were not much drawn by the theology and practice of the Protestant faith of any Englishman, of whatever creed or practice. Again, Quaker missionary efforts among the Indians, conducted in colonial times on a voluntary, individual basis, rather than with the effectiveness of an organised enterprise, were quite successful in obtaining a respectful hearing from the Indians; nonetheless, they were completely unsuccessful in converting the red men to Quakerism. In point of fact, no single Indian adherent to the Quaker faith is recorded throughout the entire colonial period.

It should be noted further that there was no racial amalgamation or fusion of culture between the Friends and the Indians. To the exclusiveness of race which has so peculiarly marked the English, the Quakers added their own jealously-guarded sectarianism, prohibiting their members from "marrying out" of the Society upon pain of expulsion from the group. Inter-marriage between Friends and Indians did not take place.

Just as strong as that of other English settlers was the Quaker pressure on the Indians of Pennsylvania to give way, to sell out and move west when the whites desired it. True, its instruments were those of persuasion rather than of violence. But when the inevitable issues of land-occupancy were drawn, there was no compromise. Moreover, in contrast to the flaming evangelism of the Quaker founders, Friends of the second and third generation relaxed into the quietism which was to characterise the Society of Friends in the

eighteenth century. Their failure to proselytise among the non-Quaker whites in Pennsylvania, to convert them to the Quaker faith and the Quaker way while admitting them to the colony in ever increasing numbers, made violent clashes with the Indians eventually inevitable. If the Quaker way was a product of the Quaker faith, then Friends could hardly expect that even in Penn's "holy experiment" the Scots-Irish, notable warriors of the Lord, would cease to follow their Presbyterian way, nor that the practical-minded Churchmen who came to the colony would not call for the help of the imperial armed forces whenever they thought it was needed. "If the Indians got in these people's way, they would certainly attack them, in the name of God and of the King."<sup>1</sup>

We have learned in our day that a colonial power is safe as long as its rule seems to pertain to the order of things. As soon as its rule deviates, however, trouble may be expected. Penn's Indian relations were therefore peaceful as long as Penn and the Quakers were in command. In turn, the Quaker peace policy paid good dividends for all while Penn's Quaker ideals were scrupulously followed. By the middle of the eighteenth century the pushing of the Indians over the Alleghenies, under threat of force and without fair compensation, brought ill-feeling and retaliation. Relations between settler and savage deteriorated rapidly thereafter. Quaker energies were subsequently directed into unofficial efforts to pacify the Indians, through gifts and acts of individual reconciliation.

Penn's Quaker peace with the Indians worked well as long as it was tried. The pity of it was that it was tried so little and by so few. This is, perhaps, the inevitable destiny of a faith so radical and so logical as Penn's Quaker belief in the love of God and the brotherhood of man. Even in

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<sup>1</sup> Drake, op. cit., 384.

Penn's day, the Friends lived their high principles in only a limited, tentative way. They too were unable to practise at once and completely the best that they preached and knew.

When the Indians in Pennsylvania heard of the death of William Penn, their friend Onas, they sent to his widow a message of sympathy, accompanied by a gift which, it appears, consisted of "materials to form a garment of skins, suitable for travelling through a thorny wilderness". This expression of sympathy, no doubt, was intended to symbolise the difficulties that would lie in her path since she was without the beneficent guidance of her husband, and their desire that she might pass through them in safety.<sup>1</sup> At his death, then, seventeen years after he had left forever all direct contact with the Indians, they themselves supplied the final testimony of their high esteem in this touching tribute to Hannah Penn, the widow of their friend.

#### The Problem of Slavery

Our procedure in this section will be similar to that above: following an historical account of the relations between the colonial settlers and a "minority group", we shall conclude with some general principles evolved as a part of the ethical aftermath of Penn's doctrine of authority.

At the time when William Penn founded Pennsylvania, the Negro race were held in bondage in every colony south of Rhode Island, though not in large numbers. In Virginia, where they were most numerous, they did not, even thirty years after their introduction, form more than one in thirty of the inhabitants. It is questionable, indeed, whether the Negroes at that time were more numerous than the whites who were held in bondage for crime, or

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<sup>1</sup>Janney, op. cit., 547 f. Cf. Comfort, Remember William Penn, 121.

under covenant for a term of years to defray the cost of emigration. In England, the evil of Negro slavery, before the rise of the Society of Friends, seems to have attracted but little attention; and down to the close of the seventeenth century, very few, excepting Friends, had raised their voices against its atrocities. It would appear that Christianity had been satisfied to live with the fact of slavery over the centuries.

The Quakers, however, brought back into the world the concept of the dignity of man, of the worth of the human individual. The philosophical climate of the times in which they lived, with its emphasis on the social contract, was to form the foundation for the spirit of Enlightenment. Christianity, it was held, had maintained an imperfect understanding of the ethical implications of the Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, the traditional Christian groups had too often and for too long ignored or turned their back upon the fact of man's inhumanity to man. Was not man made in the image of God? Did not every individual have within him the "Inner Light", the spirit of the living God? If so, every man was a child of God.

The evil of slavery, it is evident, was seen by some of the most eminent of the early Friends. It appears, by a provision which William Penn made with the Free Society of Traders, that he participated in the feeling, and, like George Fox and William Edmundson, would, after the lapse of a few years, have set the bondmen free. "If the Society should receive blacks for servants," it was agreed, "that they shall make them free at fourteen years, and upon condition that they will give unto the Society's warehouse two-thirds of what they are capable of producing on such a parcel of land as shall be allotted to them by the Society, with a stock and necessary tools."<sup>2</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Albert Schweitzer, Civilisation and Ethics, trans. by John Naish (London: A. and C. Black, 1923), especially chapters VI-VIII, 66 - 108.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Hazard, Annals of Pennsylvania, 1609 - 1682 (Philadelphia: Hazard and Mitchell, 1850), 541 - 554.

this first impression is tempered by the insertion of the statement: "if they agree not to this, to be servants till they do".<sup>1</sup>

During the early progress of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, many of the settlers had lands but were not supplied with labourers, as in the mother country. In many instances families were without servants. By English law, the African Company had the monopoly, and also the right, of importing slaves into the North American colonies, and no power, as will be shown, rested with William Penn or the legislature of his province, to prevent it. The colonists were also in great ignorance of the cruelties employed in procuring the Negroes; and, with others, Friends in America fell into the practice of keeping slaves.

Although the Society of Friends were thus drawn to sanction the system of slavery, their conduct towards the Negro differed widely from the general practice. Not only were their slaves treated with much care and kindness, but great pains were also taken for their moral and religious culture. No flogging houses, no branding nor spiked collars, were allowed by them - no harrowing severance of husband and wife, and of parents from children. They at least sanctioned no law to keep them in ignorance of divine things. So different, indeed, was the conduct of Friends from that of most others towards their slaves, that in the West India islands it excited alarm and jealousy among the planters and gave rise to persecution. In 1676 an act was actually passed in Barbadoes to prevent the Quakers from bringing Negroes to their meetings.

Even in the early days of Pennsylvania, and with slavery under its mildest form, some of the citizens were favoured with clear views on this important subject. The most prominent of these were the Friends of German-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 553.

town, emigrants from Kreisheim, in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

William Penn himself deeply lamented the state of degradation to which the African race had been reduced by the wrongs and cruelties of their bondage, and was anxious to raise them in the scale of society. In no more effectual way did he consider this could be accomplished, than by bringing them under the influence of religion. In the first month of 1700, during his second visit to America, he brought the subject before the Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia. "His mind," he said, "had long been engaged for the benefit and welfare of the negroes,"<sup>2</sup> and he exhorted and pressed his brethren, to a full discharge of their duty in every way regarding them, more especially in reference to their mental and religious development. The Monthly Meeting was not backward in responding to the humane feelings of the governor, and it was concluded, once in every month to hold a meeting of worship specially for the Negro race.

The attention of William Penn was next directed to an improvement in their social condition, and for this purpose, with the full sanction of the Colonial Council, he introduced into the Assembly two bills. The first provided for a better regulation of the morals and marriages of the Negroes, and the second, for the modes of their trial and punishment in cases of offence. The lower house did not pass the first measure. As for the second, this act exhibited a marked discrimination against Negroes. It provided not only for more severe penalties for blacks convicted of certain offences against the

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of these steps in Germantown, and the effect on other parts of the colony, see James Bowden, The History of the Society of Friends in America, Vol. II (London: W. and F. G. Cash, 1854), 192 - 195.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Proud, The History of Pennsylvania, I (Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, Jr., 1797), 423.

law than for whites convicted of the same crimes, but it also established a means of trying the Negroes quite different from the procedure laid down - evidently for white men - in the same code, entitled "the law about trials by twelve men". Instead of the grand jury provided by the latter, two justices of the peace "particularly commissioned by the proprietary and governor" and "six of the most substantial freeholders of the neighborhood" might lawfully "hear, examine, try and determine all such offences committed by any Negro or Negroes within this government . . . ." <sup>1</sup> One can hardly help but draw the conclusion, as does Beatty, that "William Penn did not believe in the equality of whites and blacks before the law". <sup>2</sup>

During the greater part of his active life William Penn believed in - or at least, accepted without adverse criticism - the institution of Negro slavery. He owned Negro slaves himself. Writing in the summer of 1685 to Harrison, he said: "If the black that is the fisher be there still, let Jos. Cart (?) have him at full price, for the man will expect it from me". <sup>3</sup> Penn later wrote to the same correspondent concerning a gardener whom he was sending to America "to train up two, a man and a boy, in the art". <sup>4</sup> As for these apprentices, he said: "It were better they were blacks, for then a man has them while they live". This argument, of course, is among the commonly employed economic justifications of Negro slavery. Penn wrote a few weeks later: "The

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<sup>1</sup>Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania, II (Harrisburg: Clarence M. Busch, 1896), 77f., 128 f. Cf. chapters 61 and 93 of this 104 chapter code.

<sup>2</sup>Beatty, op. cit., 185.

<sup>3</sup>"Penn to Harrison", July 11th, 1685, Penn MSS, X, Dom. and Misc. Letters, p. 13. The passage quoted appears in a postscript bearing the date, August 3rd, 1685.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., October 25th, 1685, p. 18.

blacks of Captain Allen I have as good as bought; so part not with them without my order".<sup>1</sup> His Cash Book for the estate at Pennsbury shows that among his domestics was a Negro woman named Dorcas.<sup>2</sup> In his will of 1701 he wrote: "I give to my blacks their freedom, as is under my hand already"; but in his final will, dated May 27th, 1712, no mention is made of Negro slaves.<sup>3</sup>

It was evident nonetheless that a feeling adverse to slavery was gradually gaining ground among the legislators in Pennsylvania, and efforts for its suppression were reiterated in the Assembly. In 1705 an act was passed prohibiting the bringing of Indian slaves from Carolina into the province; and, in order also to lessen the number of blacks, in the same year a duty on their importation was imposed, which was renewed in 1710. In the following year a more important and decided movement took place, which promised to go far to meet this great evil. The Assembly, chosen at the memorable election of 1710, and consisting almost wholly of Friends, now passed an act absolutely prohibiting the importation of Negroes for the future, under any condition - an act which gave great satisfaction to William Penn.<sup>4</sup>

Penn personally did not take much part in the suppression of slavery. We agree with Drake that "at best, Penn had equivocated on the slavery question".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Dec. 4th, 1685, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>This MS Cash Book is preserved in the library of the American Philosophical Society.

<sup>3</sup>Janney, op. cit., 438. In the Grenville Penn Book is a draft of a will in Penn's hand, dated Aug. 21st, 1707. No reference appears to slavery in it. His last will and testament was dated on May 27th, 1712. A contemporaneous copy of this document is preserved in the Penn Deed Box in the MSS Division of the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>4</sup>William Hepworth Dixon, William Penn (London: Chapman and Hall, 1851), 428.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas E. Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 23.

In him, as in many other Quakers, there was a "confusion of ethics" over the problem of slavery.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the only significant movement against slavery in the colonial period took place among the Quakers,<sup>2</sup> and it is to the Quakers during the eighteenth century that the earliest effective efforts to abolish the institution must be credited in those colonies where their influence was strong.

In the light of these facts, Penn's attitude toward the minority problem must be judged by its grasp as well as by its achievement. A product of his times and of his own favoured social position he surely was; what limitation was involved in his outlook derived its strength from his circumstance. Yet Penn's Quaker theology knew little of such man-made distinctions: all men were children of the Creator. As a man in authority, the Quaker Founder of Pennsylvania knew that the strength and security of his position would depend to no little degree upon a recognition of the individual worth of the inhabitants of his colony - be they slave or free. And bit by bit he and those who came after him came to realise that it is only free men who can give and sustain such authority as is needed to govern, and to govern wisely.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4. Cf. Bowden, op. cit., II, 176 - 221; and Edward R. Turner, The Negro in Pennsylvania (Washington: The American Historical Association, 1911), ad passim.

CHAPTER XII

ECONOMICS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STATE

- A. The Quaker economic ethic
  - 1. General principles:
    - a. The intimate association of God with man
    - b. The practice of persuasion
  - 2. The Quaker outlook as affected by these principles.
  
- B. The Quaker economic ethic at work in colonial Pennsylvania
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CHAPTER XII

ECONOMICS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STATE

The political authority of a state inevitably makes its influence felt in the economic life of a nation. The Society of Friends believed that if government was ordained by God, then one could not leave unquestioned the morality of its ordinances. Within this general belief, the Quakers were on their way to evolving new views of an authority grounded in a basic economic ethic. Under the impulse of this ethic, there was an extraordinary absorption and success in commercial undertakings. Given the identical phenomenon of unusual economic success under markedly different outward conditions in England and Pennsylvania, it becomes apparent that the fundamental explanation for this fact must be sought in something inherently characteristic of Quakerism and thus common to Friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Where shall we find it except in their religious and social philosophy?

It is a commonplace of recent historical writing that an intimate relationship existed between certain of the distinctive ideas of Protestantism and the rise of modern capitalism. Fortunately it is unnecessary here to venture into the disputed realm of priority or to take a position on the moot question of whether the Protestant ethic in some way generated modern capitalism or whether it represented merely an accommodation to or rationalising of a pre-existing capitalistic spirit. Discussion of this problem has been carried on primarily with reference to the Calvinist wing of Protestantism. It would seem desirable to determine how far this line of investigation may be carried with respect to Quakerism.

### The Quaker Economic Ethic

What were the basic principles of the Quaker economic ethic? How did these principles affect the Quaker outlook on the economic and social climate of their day? The answer to each of these questions demands our investigation.

In associating God intimately with man, Quaker religion was expressed by developing the best in man, since the practice of religion came thereby to love the best in man and obeying what were the best judgments of man. Since God, to be real rather than a tradition, was that which the best in the world - as man considered - gave him an idea of, then the introduction of new thought and new ideals from age to age would prepare a new synthesis and a new impression. "Liberty of conscience" was, therefore, vital, for without it men closed their ears to the commands of God and shut their eyes to what God was: thus to banish God from life was revolting to religion. Here is the point of connection for Penn's doctrine of political authority with the economic ethic.

Persuasion was necessary to the whole philosophy of Quakerism. The sin of compulsion and oppression, marks of an unjust authority, could only be removed by the method of persuasion, or better, "convincement". Penn and his fellows found that poverty, like violence, was a form of persecution, for it prevented men expressing the best that was in them. They found, according to the light of the age, that the moral conduct which their best judgment told them was right was not being practised in society. This involved their responsibility, since possibly they were the sinners if they only were aware of the sin of it.

It follows that the method of social reform was to the Quakers the means of enabling the poor man to live the life the Quaker thought right, not

because he had the power but because the poor man felt the urge. We can now take an estimate of the position reached. Considering their whole position, over the long run, importance must be ascribed chiefly to the new ideas the Quakers propounded in the seventeenth century, and the implications follow naturally.

The implications of this outlook are plain: agreed that there are in society men of any number of moral persuasions, they would each of them particularly be conscious of certain evils, the very consciousness of which made them feel responsible for them. There would, as a result, be a healthy intercourse and interchange between them. The synthesis which emerged would have taken into account the whole experience of society. The social conscience would grow according to the interchange of experience, judgment, and emotion in society. The rules of society, following the demands of the social conscience would have no a priori significance; they possessed validity by expressing, as a realistic analysis would show, the judgment of those who had built it up in the way shown. This centre of allegiance, by discouraging intolerance in particular, would enrich society from time to time with the new ideas that gradually made their impression. As we shall soon see, this, in fact, was what took place in the "holy experiment", but at the expense of the more traditional concepts of authority, and not without a great modification on the part of William Penn's own views on the subject. This was necessary if the "holy experiment" were, in time, to become a "holy community".

Translated into practical terms, what did these principles of the Quaker economic ethic mean for the outlook by the Society of Friends towards the day-to-day life of their time? Quakerism as it arose in the middle of the seventeenth century cannot be understood unless it is seen as one of the variant expressions of the dominant and all-pervasive Puritanism of the age.

Atypical in many respects, it shared with Puritanism a common substratum of religious and social ideas and habits of mind, some of which were not wholly compatible with the peculiar doctrines which differentiated Quakerism from Puritan orthodoxy.

The Quakers adopted the New Testament ethic of the Anabaptists, but instead of rejecting the gross world of human appetites and passions, insisted that it was the material out of which the Kingdom of God was to be fashioned. This combination of the ethical position of the Anabaptists with the Calvinist attitude towards the material world was the distinctive feature of Quaker social thought.<sup>1</sup>

With the Puritans, Friends looked upon the material world of daily toil and daily bread as God's world in which men were called to do His will. William Penn, for example, believed that God's will - the only true authority - could be carried out more faithfully on the wharves and in the warehouses and counting-rooms of Philadelphia than in the monastic cell or the hermit's cave.

This self-same authority was manifested through all channels of life. The Puritan concept of the "calling" as the task of life to which every individual was summoned by God was taken for granted by the Quakers. No lawful occupation was too gross or too menial to be included among those appointed by God for his service: "The perfection of Christian life," declared Penn, "extends to every honest labour or traffic used among men."<sup>2</sup> Every Quaker minister or "public Friend" followed a mundane calling, although the frequent absences occasioned by their travels in the ministry prevented them from pursuing their temporal vocations with the same assiduity as the full-time merchant, shop-keeper, or farmer.

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick B. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 53. The present writer is much indebted to this excellent and interesting work.

<sup>2</sup>"No Cross, No Crown", Works, I, 295.

Similar to the old Hebrew conception was the belief that if one kept one's inner eye single to the Lord and laboured diligently in one's calling, then one could expect that God would show His favour by adding His blessing in the form of material prosperity. Conversely, business success could be regarded as a visible sign that one was indeed living "in the Light". The virtues of industry and frugality were held in high repute among Quakers. Idleness was looked upon with horror as the breeder of vice and a vain conversation, and Friends regarded diligence in a warrantable calling as a religious duty. Frugality was most often recommended on religious grounds as essential to that austere simplicity of life which Truth demanded. Occasionally, however, it was justified on more "practical" grounds as tending to increase one's capital and credit.

Thus by God's blessing the faithful and diligent Friends, living austerely in accordance with the "simplicity of Truth", almost inevitably accumulated wealth for the "honor of God and good of mankind". Of course, prudence, honesty, and a strong sense of order were other virtues which contributed to Quaker business success. Friends became known for their extreme caution in business undertakings. If a Friend were so imprudent as to be forced into bankruptcy without prospect of meeting his obligations, he stood in danger of disowment by the Meeting. Thus prudence had its spiritual as well as its temporal sanctions. Because Quaker businessmen were known to be scrupulously honest, people were glad to deal with them. Paradoxically, it was probably an aspect of this very virtue of strict truthfulness that gave Friends the opposite reputation for slyness and dishonesty. Cherishing such a respect for the truth in its stark simplicity, Quakers were characteristically taciturn. It is not difficult to understand how the uncommunicative Quaker, who found that it "paid" to be close-mouthed, could come to seem secretive and

subtle, and how consequently the traits of slyness and dishonesty could be built into the legend of the Quaker businessman.

The basic principles of the Quaker economic ethic, and the outlook on life which it fostered, were soon ready for transplanting across the Atlantic. Here, in a new land, under circumstances quite different from those in the mother country, William Penn and his colonists were to face the economic problems associated with the "holy experiment". Penn's understanding of authority involved the application of the powers of government toward a settlement of many of the issues raised. His political philosophy underwent still further testing in the process.

#### The Quaker Economic Ethic at work in Colonial Pennsylvania

The economic motive surely lay behind many of the emigrants coming to Pennsylvania. Economic and religious motives were inextricably intermingled and each determined the nature of the other. In England, the weapons of religious persecution were often economic in nature. In the New World the hope was held out for better times.

The majority of Quakers in England from whom the first settlers of Pennsylvania were drawn were persons in moderate or humble circumstances, some of them on the edge of destitution. The greatest number were men who worked with their hands for a living, and an extraordinary variety of crafts were represented in the infant community. A smaller number were merchants, a nucleus which came to dominate the economic and social life of the community and played an important role in its religious and political life. Most of these merchants came not directly from England, but from the other American colonies, where for a period of years they had had an opportunity to exercise their talents in mercantile pursuits with somewhat less hindrance from

persecuting authorities than in Great Britain.

Colonial Pennsylvania soon became a beehive of economic activity. Between the Delaware and the Schuylkill the Quakers created a city of red-brick houses and shops that was eventually to become the capital of a new nation. They developed a commerce that became the envy of the older American ports. Keeping the peace with their Indian neighbours, they enjoyed and enabled others to enjoy a calm and comfortable prosperity such as few regions of the earth have ever known for so long a period.<sup>1</sup> But all was not entirely serene. Beneath the surface a crucial issue was brewing, an issue concerned with the problem of the exercise of political authority in economic activity.

#### 1. The Basic Problem: Individualism vs. Government Intervention

We have already indicated something of the success which attended the Quaker economic activity in Pennsylvania. But if one phase of the Quaker ethic promoted economic individualism and the accumulation of wealth, there were strong countervailing tendencies in the direction of corporate responsibility and criticism of the acquisitive spirit. The aim of the Quaker settlers in coming to Pennsylvania was not primarily the improvement of individual fortunes but the establishment of a society penetrated by religious values and firmly controlled in the interests of the community. All the affairs of life in the Quaker colony were to be ordered for the greater glory of God. This was the very motivation of authority. The secular government was looked upon, especially in the early years, as an appropriate agency for promoting distinctive Quaker ideas of the social order.

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<sup>1</sup>Into a consideration of the economic life of the colony as such, this study cannot go. This has been the subject of a number of volumes, and the reader may examine these at his leisure. For example, see Tolles, op. cit., and Beatty, op. cit. For a work dealing more with England, see Arthur Raistrick, Quakers in Science and Industry (London: The Bannisdale Press, 1950).

In their conceptions of the role of mutual aid and corporate discipline, the Quakers possessed principles which counteracted those elements in their thinking that promoted economic individualism. These principles by their remarkable persistence prevented the Quaker economic philosophy from developing into the typical bourgeois capitalist pattern. In the midst of great material prosperity, the Quaker merchants retained a measure of the radical equalitarianism and social concern which had characterised the teachings of Friends in the days of their lowly origins. Although this residual strain of social radicalism tended to be sublimated increasingly into individual philanthropy, it was always posited upon a solidaristic conception of society. Political authority was seen to have its benevolent aspects. Springing out of a genuine sense of human brotherhood, charity was always regarded by the Friends as a religious duty, never as a more benevolent gesture on the part of the rich.

The Quakers had other than normal governmental channels through which to work their principles of economic ethic. Although in the first chapter of the "Great Law" it was specifically provided that Church and State should be separated, nevertheless, in the earliest days of the colony, when almost all the inhabitants were Friends, it was the Monthly Meetings which often exercised the functions of civil administration. As the civil government became more competent, there was a separation of functions, but since Friends dominated the legislature long after they had become a minority in the population at large, the laws of Pennsylvania for many years were shot through with their moral and religious concepts. It was the Monthly Meeting, however, which, more than anything else, was the outward embodiment of the "holy community". In addition to nourishing the religious life and guarding the morals of its members, it functioned as a dispenser of poor relief, a loan office, a court

of arbitration in economic matters, an employment agency, and a source of advice to new arrivals on the management of their affairs.<sup>1</sup>

This exercise of the more benevolent aspects of authority revealed the basic issue which confronted the economic life of the colony: was unbridled individualism to be allowed to work out its own salvation, or were the instrumentalities of political authority to be utilised in the achievement of economic well-being? If the former, what guarantees were there of the ultimate outcome? If the latter, how much governmental intervention should be permitted, and in what areas of the community life? The man who supplied material for the answers to these questions was the Proprietor himself, William Penn.

## 2. The Problem as Approached by William Penn

William Penn was a figure unique in many ways to be sure. Nonetheless he was one who represented or personified the Quaker ethic in so many ways. Although Penn actually spent less than four years on this side of the Atlantic, Quaker thinking on most subjects varied relatively little from place to place, so that the ideas of English and American Friends down to at least the Revolution can be regarded as practically interchangeable. Furthermore Penn was by far the most articulate and quotable of all the early Friends on many of the questions of individual and social ethics as they related to the problem of authority. Finally, in so far as there were differences of opinion among Friends relative to participation in the affairs of the "world", the Pennsylvania Quaker merchants and their colleagues deliberately followed the lead of their colony's founder. In a real sense, the experience of these people represents

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<sup>1</sup>See Tolles, op. cit., 65 ff.

the working out, for better or worse, of many of the ideas for which William Penn stood.

In order to correctly understand the approach of William Penn to the issues raised by the relationship between governmental authority and the economic life of the "holy experiment", we must first try to pinpoint as specifically as we can the position of Penn himself as a landed proprietor. Following this, we can best illustrate the Founder's policy by reference to three of the major problems faced by the Quaker ethic: the problem of property, the problem of poverty, and the problem of trade. Only then shall we be able to adequately estimate the changes which took place in Penn's own understanding of authority.

William Penn's social and economic ideas, like his political theory, were deeply influenced by the Inner Light. But like social reformers before and since his time, Penn had to wrestle with the eternal dilemma of libertarianism as opposed to deontology. Will simple knowledge of the truth suffice to make men free and does freedom make men moral, or must some be their brothers' keepers? Even in primitive surroundings, remote from the debauching artificialities of civilisation, can man be altruistic without some measure of authoritarianism? No formal philosophising by Penn on this subject has been discovered. If a judgment may be hazarded from his practical policies, it must be recorded that he did not believe that pure freedom would be entirely sufficient to exorcise the old Adam.

Penn could not escape from himself. The same conflicting and sometimes mutually contradictory forces that combined to influence Penn's political thinking entered into the formation of his economic philosophy. He was an aristocrat in intellect, in academic education, and in early associations. More important perhaps for his economic views, he was a landholder, the possessor

of a patrimony in Ireland which was sufficient to support him during his entire mature life and the proprietor of a great, though not profitable, feudal domain in America. These facts explain the basic conservatism more pronounced in his economic thinking than in either his political or his social philosophy. Yet this economic conservatism both influenced and was influenced by Penn's doctrine of authority.

The Quaker leader's economic philosophy differed from the democratic liberalism of the eighteenth century, for its essential characteristic was not individualism but paternalism. Penn accepted, in common with many men of his own generation and later ages, the doctrine that society is served more satisfactorily under some form of paternalism than under a regime of pure *laissez faire*. He must be numbered among those who have believed in a "planned society". It has been shown in another connection that he accepted the theory that human nature is depraved, and he held that "compulsion some way or another" was necessary to oblige perverse sons of Adam to follow the righteous course. It is but a short step from this belief to the conviction that, aside from the negative function of restraining man's wickedness, government has the positive function of promoting righteousness and the public welfare. If he believed in the theory that government is best which governs least, as he indicated in his famous "preface" to the first Frame of Government, he reserved that theory for government in its purely political activities. Indeed, he illustrated his paternalistic policy a few months after he received the Charter for Pennsylvania in the "Conditions and Concessions" of July 11th, 1681. There is set forth a series of regulations which show clearly that in his opinion government, economically considered, had other than merely police functions in their narrowest sense.

Penn's philosophy, then, was that of the landed proprietor attempting

through paternalism to achieve a form of economic democracy. His ideal was a commonwealth of happy and contented people. He wished for a substantial equality of economic opportunity, but he insisted strongly upon property rights. He stood for individual freedom; yet he provided for governmental intervention in economic affairs. Landholding and agriculture under Penn's paternalistic regime were subject to regulation quite as definitely as were industry and commerce. There is decidedly an issue to face in a dualism which amounts at times to a dichotomy with reference to authority in theory and in actual practice. Let us see how this issue appeared as Penn came to grips with three major problems: property, poverty, and trade.

A domain vast as that granted to William Penn would, almost of necessity, have given its lord the conservative respect for property characteristic of the landed classes. In Penn, however, that attitude was probably born before he became proprietor of American soil. Throughout his career, especially when he was insisting upon fundamental rights, he placed property among the inviolable appurtenances of English nationality. In this respect most of the Quaker merchants were in unity with Penn: property, along with liberty, was held to be the birthright of every Englishman. They agreed with the Founder's definition of property as "an Ownership and undisturbed Possession: That which (men) have, is rightly theirs, and no Body's else".<sup>1</sup>

The arrangements in the Charter granted to Penn as to land and the wealth thereof were essentially feudal in character. They indicate, of course, the Quaker's acceptance of the theory that the proprietor had the right to a

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<sup>1</sup>"England's Present Interest", Works, I, 675. Of course, Penn did not always use the term "property" in the same sense. On one occasion he defined it as an element or part of "ownership", and according to this definition the term would mean real property (Ibid., 682). More frequently he used the word in a wider sense, meaning the right and title to life, liberty and estate. This included not only real and personal property, but much more.

permanent interest in the soil. As in all feudal regimes, social distinction rested upon land-holding. In the province of Pennsylvania at this time, as we have seen, the suffrage itself was dependent upon the payment of taxes and the tenure of land. Though feudalism and democratic ideas of land tenure are in most respects antithetical, Penn, the feudal lord, had some quite democratic theories about the holding and inheritance of land.<sup>1</sup> If democracy can exist in a feudal regime, suffrage based on land tenure would probably be basic for such a system.

Inasmuch as he was a landed proprietor of authority in Pennsylvania, the motives animating his defence of property in England differed widely from those inspiring his defence of property in America. The term "property" had a quite different meaning in the two cases.<sup>2</sup> In the battle for religious toleration Penn's was the voice of an oppressed people struggling for what they claimed as their rights against the lawfully established politico-ecclesiastical order. In America, in a sense, he reserved his attitude and spoke for the propertied groups whose position was guaranteed by the legally recognised social order. The people he opposed in the New World resembled in their economic situation rather the poor dissenters in England than the political and ecclesiastical rulers of the land against whom he had done battle in the Old World. Penn had been a rebel in England; in America he was combating the social and economic outcasts whose lack of respect for the vested rights of property was

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see Beatty, op. cit., 176 - 187. Here references are made to the "Concessions" of West Jersey, Chapter XXIX; the "Great Law", Article LIV; the "Charter of Privileges" of 1701, Section VIII. Penn's early draft of the first Frame contained a provision abolishing the principles of primogeniture, but the document as finally promulgated retained that ancient privilege of the first-born. If, as Shepherd thinks, the original proposals of Penn were modified to please the large land-holders, this alteration would be quite understandable.

<sup>2</sup>Supra., 341, n. 1.

causing the landholding class - and the Founder himself - much concern and even financial loss.

As we have seen so often, in reference to the life of William Penn, there appears here an inherent dualism with reference to the concept of authority. When Penn wrote as a Quaker, he took what he felt was the Biblical view of that sect in his attitude toward the propertied man and his obligations. Even at the height of his power and influence, he remained the active preacher and missionary. Yet at the same time, Penn displayed the position of a feudal lord. With all his preachments regarding humility, Penn loved the role of influential gentleman and was not always adverse to outward manifestations of that position. Probably he thought some display more or less necessary to maintain the authority and prestige of office and position. Jeremy Belknap refers to a remark which was made when Penn tried to collect quit-rents: "less of the man of God now appeared, and more of the man of the world".<sup>1</sup> It may well be that without the exercise of influence and prestige it would have been impossible to accomplish his aims. Political Utopias are not realised by those who love obscurity, peace, and freedom from the publicity of politics. Nevertheless, Penn's position as a landed proprietor led him to formulate a practical strategy which in turn implied a compromise on the basic principle of authority.

Property was not the only issue involved for William Penn in an application of the Quaker economic ethic. His economic philosophy differed from that of the usual landed proprietor in that it lacked great emphasis on the exploitive element. Bound up with this approach was a deep concern on the part of Penn and his followers over the problem of poverty. Their sensitivity

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<sup>1</sup>American Biography, Vol. II (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1798), 401.

to the needs of the poor arose from their conviction that every man was a vehicle of the Seed of God and therefore deserved the love, and, in the event of misfortune, the sympathetic help of all his fellow men. Nothing could have been further removed from the Puritan view of poverty as a crime and a disgrace, a visible sign of God's displeasure and a punishment for the sins of laziness and improvidence. The obligation of charity was a corollary of the venerable doctrine of stewardship; it was also a function of the basic Quaker conception of community and of the belief that all men were brothers and children of the one Father of Lights.

Common to this disapproval of poverty was a concern over cases of extreme wealth. Both conditions, it was felt, were likely to have an injurious effect upon the balance of the individual. If it was proper that men should follow their light, their freedom was unreal when their circumstances prevented it. The existence of extreme poverty side by side with excessive wealth might compel the poor towards any standard of conduct so as to live. They possess the light like other men, but they cannot express it if its dictates come into conflict with the interests of those upon whom they depend. Thus Penn and his followers were convinced that in the face of the dire need of men, poverty was a danger as well as an evil in society. They did not stress the need of economic equality, but they did emphasise the advantages of moderate living. They attempted to arouse society to a conception of its duty, that all individuals should be assured a proper standard. In "Fruits of Solitude" Penn wrote: "Hardly any thing is given us for ourselves, but the public may claim a share with us. But of all we call ours, we are most accountable to God and the public for our estates. In this we are but stewards; and to hoard up all to ourselves is great injustice, as well as ingratitude."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. W. W. Comfort, Remember William Penn, Appendix, "More Fruits of Solitude", fragment no. 221, p. 71.

Again, however, as the executor of authority, Penn found himself in a dualistic position. His position as landed proprietor and capitalist, his political authority as the chief law-enforcing agent under the Crown, his individualistic respect for ownership and for the sacredness of agreements - all these factors would insure his care for the interest of the creditor. On the other hand, his sympathy for the poorer classes of society, from among whom the majority of his own sect had sprung, would incline him to view with concern and friendliness the debtor's struggles. Moreover, among those classes which he pronounced fittest for colonising purposes were the economically submerged - or partially submerged - groups. Such persons would be likely to find easier conditions for debtors an additional reason for leaving the Old World. Yet the reason for this dualism in approaching the problem of poverty cannot wholly be laid at the door of Penn's own personal situation and outlook. The truth is that there was a conflict implicit within the Quaker ethic itself. On the one hand, Friends were encouraged to be industrious in their callings by the promise that God would add His blessing in the form of prosperity; on the other hand, they were warned against allowing the fruits of their honest labours to accumulate lest they be tempted into luxury and pride. Therein spoke the voice of the primitive Friends for whom the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount were commands to be literally obeyed by those who through the power of the Spirit had come into perfection of life. That the theory did not always correspond with the practice was evidence that the "perfection of life" had not yet made men perfect. The exercise of authority was still a strange combination of heavenly precepts and earthly decrees.

One other problem may be mentioned as illustrative of the attempt by William Penn to apply the Quaker economic ethic to his colonial project. This was the problem of trade.

The Royal Charter conveying Pennsylvania to the Founder listed among the purposes of the grant the extension of the British Empire. The "holy experiment" was essentially the building of a state. In the larger sense of the term, William Penn was a mercantilist - one engaged in creating out of the political community an economic community. He held optimistic beliefs about the potential productivity of his province, but he felt that favourable conditions must be guaranteed by the English government. They alone had the necessary authority to insure proper trade relations.

In the awareness of this fact, on the whole Penn approved and supported loyally the English system of regulating trade in the interest of the mother country. He also believed in locally self-sufficient units within the empire, and he sought to create a province that would be economically independent. He saw advantages in monopoly not only to private participants in the business but also to the general public. He believed in the theory that by legislation the government might create favourable conditions for trade. But the authority which a government or a governmental agency wielded for trade enforcement could turn into a dangerous weapon unless used wisely. Penn recognised the frequent shortsightedness of tariffs, and he was able to construct an argument which might have pleased a free-trader. He was willing to eliminate a tariff chiefly for revenue if in another way the "supply" could be furnished to government.

In the relationship existing between England and colony, and in his dual role as landed proprietor and paternal governor, William Penn found the problem of authority greatly complicated. Loyalty to the Crown and loyalty to his colonists placed upon his shoulders the responsibility of exercising his authority along two fronts. The ethics of duty forced him into a number of inconsistencies. One thing was sure: economic individualism was not to go unchecked. Government intervention was necessary for the general good.

Yet his Quaker religion told Penn that all the affairs of the colony were to be ordered for the greater glory of God. This should have been the very motivation of all authority. That it was not always so must be attributed to the dualistic situation we have described above. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

CHAPTER XIII

WAR AND PEACE

A. Basic principles of the peace testimony

1. A belief in liberty of conscience as a good in itself leads directly to a philosophy of pacifism
2. The Inner Light
3. The sacredness of human life and personality
4. No human authority could rightly usurp the claims of the Inner Light on man's allegiance
5. The implications for authority:
  - a. Duty
  - b. Compulsion
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B. Pacifism in Pennsylvania

1. Charter provisions for the defence of the colony
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3. "Police" vs. "military" matters: an uneasy solution
4. The charge of inconsistency: the delicate position of William Penn.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WAR AND PEACE

This concluding chapter attempts to relate the whole philosophy of pacifism with the social and economic order, as Penn's doctrine of political authority was brought to bear upon this important issue. Following a statement of basic principles, we shall proceed with an historical exposition of the idea of pacifism at work in colonial Pennsylvania. Once again new aspects of truth emerged from the experiment as a result of the tension between theory and actual practice.

#### Basic Principles of the Peace Testimony

Penn's efforts for religious toleration in England brought home to him a basic Quaker position: namely, that "a belief in liberty of conscience as a good in itself leads directly to a philosophy of pacifism." Or, to put it another way, that "liberty of conscience in the particular implied pacifism in the general."<sup>1</sup>

In conceiving of a continuous revelation of God to man, the foundation of the Quaker peace testimony lies much deeper than an interpretation of biblical texts. Rather the Quaker conviction for peace was the direct outcome of the central and foundational principle of the Inner Light. This was seen in three particulars: (1) The Inner Light was not a principle of merely individual guidance, whereby one man might be led in one direction

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 58. Cf. the whole section on "Pacifism", 58-67.

and another in a different direction, with no common and objective standard of life and conduct. The Light was "of Christ", and even as His life was one of love and peace, rather than hate and war, so those guided by the Light were to follow in His steps. Gentleness achieved a victory that force could never win. (2) The fervent belief that the Light was given in measure to all men raised all human personality to a new dignity. Not Christians only, but Jews, Turks, Indians, savages, had something of God in them-- something which could appreciate and could respond to truth and justice and goodwill. War was the open denial of the brotherhood of all mankind. Could a Christian take part in destroying human bodies that were, at least potentially, each one of them a temple of the Holy Ghost? The Christian must strive after unity; whatever cuts himself off from his fellow men so far cuts him off also from the bond of the Inner Light. (3) The Light being thus the final authority for the Christian, no human authority could rightly usurp its claim on his allegiance. Here was placed a very definite limit to the State's authority. Here appeared the conflict between religious and political authority.

As the Quakers saw it, the State was not all-powerful. It had a limited function, no matter how great it be. There are aspects of life withdrawn from its competence, and here one has in mind especially the religious conscience. The State should not exercise powers which may overcome these other aspects or the groups within the State which fulfill other functions. Power should be relative to function. The conflict between the Quaker position on war and the authority of the State arose because of the fact that in this one respect at least the State exercised without limit a power which far transcended the limits of its function. It had the

power of life and death over all groups within it--no less than over persons--because of its unabated right to make war and peace. The possession of this power was becoming intolerable. The State claimed its right to settle political disputes by force. In so doing it elevated political interests to complete supremacy over all other interests. In declaring war the State was thus able to put a particular political object above the general ends of the individual, of the cultural life, of the economic and social order. In this case it was questionable whether the political end of the State justified the means. One might well ask whether the function of the State justified its being entrusted by the community with means so formidable, so disparate, and so absolute. After all, citizenship was not the whole life or the whole duty of man. Each has a duty to the community, to himself. Why should the State be given a power which assumed that a man's duty to it was supreme and absolute?

The Quakers advertised to the world the implications of their philosophy. "They took up the disinterested attitude which marks the first step in the constructive work of the Quakers in social theory. They showed that granting liberty of conscience was a good, men had to do unto others as they would like to be done by."<sup>1</sup> The Friends, "eager to destroy persecution in religion, formulated principles of pacifism in general. . . . The whole argument rested upon the conviction that it was honour both to God and man when the virtues of society were of its own making and regard."<sup>2</sup> "All bloody principles and functions to us as to our particular we utterly deny; and with all outward wars, strifes, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 58.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 59f.

<sup>3</sup>Society of Friends, "Declaration Against Sedition", 1660, quoted in Ibid., 60, and n. 2.

It is a truth that where the means are out of proportion to the end the results bear witness to it. The history of nations reveals that the objects and ideals of warfare are often magnified to make them seem worthy of the cost. When, as seems inevitable, these objects are not attained, an equally inevitable disillusionment follows. So long as the limited State is permitted to wield an absolute power, or so long as, in spite of manifest facts, it is identified with the nation or the whole community, this situation must continue. The Quakers desired that men begin to perceive the limited character of the State, begin to understand that the State is a particular organization of society, one of the necessary mechanisms by which it is served. Once this was understood, then society could without grave difficulty find a way of limiting its power externally as well as internally. Thereby war--the exercise of which was the last-surviving form of absolutism--would be prevented.

This was the point of view which William Penn was to carry with him to the New World and, as a result, cause him to modify his own understanding of the use of political authority to preserve the peace. As a basis for authority, one can see clearly the difference between the Quaker emphasis on the inward revelation and the more traditional emphasis on outward or written revelation:

If, as with written revelation, a virtue exists apart from my conviction of it, then anyone who denies that virtue is sinful; and government was founded to exterminate sinners. Persecution would indeed be justified on the ground that the foreign element might so grow in power as to overwhelm those who had been charitable to it. The significance of virtue in written revelation is in what I do rather than why I do it. The first duty for me to do is perform. The second duty is to compel others to do the same, so that not only my performance is safeguarded, but others are made virtuous and God is glorified withal. If the significance of virtue is not in what men do but why they do it,

their duties to God are somewhat different. A man is not made virtuous by acting against his best judgment, so the use of compulsion becomes quite irrelevant. Compulsion might make men perform in the body but not in the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

This was the specific religious context from which the Quakers developed their principles of pacifism in general. What was true in the case of religion was held to be also true with regard to nations. Violence was denounced as "no fit arbiter of welfare, for it is not the equity of the cause but the power of the parties that is there considered."<sup>2</sup> By allowing the State almost unlimited power to wage war, the State would almost by necessity be always right because of the tremendous force at its disposal. "If compulsion was in itself invalid how much worse was it when the capacity to impose was unevenly distributed. It made the selfish interests of a few the criterion of justice."<sup>3</sup> It would, in effect, destroy the beneficent aspects of true authority.

As viewed by the Quakers, as society passed from its primitive cohesion to an oligarchical structure, war became an established thing, an institution. War involved a system of authority and subordination, and until this was created there could not be the practice of war. It implied--what it also caused--a sheer separation between one area of society and another, and a sheer antagonism of their conscious interests. As thus defined, war belongs to a certain stage of social development, corresponding to a mentality which regards social interests as rigidly inclusive and exclusive. Here authority also creates the ends of which war is the means. In particular it creates slavery.

The State took note of the fact that there could not be in any

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 59.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 60, and n. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 61.

community more than one centre of power without disruption. Therefore, under the impact of the power-impulse, the State assumed a most determinative form. It necessarily took to itself the sole right to exercise force, both within and without its borders. This strengthened its organization. It also confirmed its oligarchical tendency. A State constituted for war would quite naturally inculcate a discipline of unreasoning obedience, a tradition of "loyalty" and "duty", a spirit of subjection to the ruling class which would override all considerations of the real interests of the many. This was the reason war and democracy belong to different social stages. This is why the Quakers were so quick to turn within, to the Inner Light, as the source of true authority.

In this approach there was surely something of value to the development of the doctrine of authority in society.

The instinct towards violence or escaping its consequences comprises the nadir of human development. If it is imperative for the individual to become so strong as to impose on others in order to assert and defend himself, the outlook is not promising. There must be taken into account the fact that individuals need society to express themselves; instead they are fenced in to preserve their interest and opinions. The problem is not solved but made the more acute. When force means power, the human frame is driven to action through fear of punishment. The Quakers drove a wedge between the two and mirrored the distinction. To have given such mechanical precision to men's actions was to account them beasts.<sup>1</sup>

There is no freedom under such an authority. Mere force creates no rights and acknowledges none. It is a struggle of life and death, and its means are the agencies of destruction.

Through their own willingness to suffer for the sake of their beliefs, the Quakers demonstrated to the world of men and of nations that "the whole system of compulsion was based upon an impression which did not meet the facts of human nature."<sup>2</sup> It was natural for man to possess the

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

supernatural. Something of the Inner Light was in every man. An important means of understanding the ways of God and making possible His sovereignty was to leave man free from violence. But more was involved here than the development of the human individual as an individual. Society as a whole needed the atmosphere of pacifism if it was to function. If society were to safely digest the new ideas it encountered, some degree of pacifism was necessary. The Quakers found that "liberty of conscience meant nothing unless it enabled new ideas to enter society. . . . Already it was found that liberty of conscience in order to exist had to obey the laws of existence."<sup>1</sup>

The Quaker peace testimony was a remarkable evolution.

In the first stage it was shown that compulsion cannot make men virtuous even though it can make them conform to certain conduct; secondly, it was shown that force in conflict with an indomitable spirit cannot even compel a standard of conduct; thirdly, they discovered that a standard of conduct governed and inspired by fear of violence had a deteriorating influence on the individual and a disintegrating influence on society.<sup>2</sup>

Tempered in the crucible of human experience, a theory evolved to meet the needs of life. If one continued to divorce conduct from the positive inward guidance of the light, the whole foundations of morality as well as freedom might crumble.<sup>3</sup> Against the claims of power the Quakers set the claims of justice.<sup>4</sup> Power was means. But one could not think at all without relating means to ends. The Friends set themselves over against those who would exalt the State as a "power-agency, making the exercise of its power its characteristic expression, estimating the achievements to be won by domination as of supreme importance, and regarding coercion as the primary condition of social order." Such views they held as being "associated either

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<sup>1</sup>Belasco, op. cit., 67. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 63. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, the Quakers would deny the use of violence in a "just" cause, for the simple reason that justice is here a flimsy fiction. Justice has, like virtue, no a priori status, but derives meaning from the inward allegiance it achieves. Ibid., 60.

with the belief that human nature is essentially refractory and disposed to evil, and therefore needing always the bit and curb of political restraint, a belief encouraged by certain theological pre-conceptions," or else with "the aristocratic principle which treats the many as an inferior order whose mission is to serve the few."<sup>1</sup> In either case such views lay little stress on the common welfare and less on the common will.

If a man were to be truly a man, he could not in faith do an injustice to the leadings of the Inner Light within him. He had, further, to respect his fellow-man as an individual equally of value in the sight of God, and whose conscience could not be tampered with in the purely political interests of the State. Pacifism was not meant to be a sign of weakness or of lack of conviction. The sufferings of the Friends was proof enough of that. Rather, pacifism was held to be the natural outcome of the Quaker philosophy of life. Given a chance to express oneself in matters of faith and conscience, a man would be led quite naturally to wish the same thing for all men everywhere. If he is unable so to do, whether by reason of religious persecution or the threat and force of war, then both he and society become impoverished and are robbed of the experiences necessary to life. The progress of the individual as well as the progress of society becomes erratic, terminating in disaster.<sup>2</sup>

In reliance upon the Inner Light, in an appreciation of the sacredness of human life and personality, and on the practical grounds of the prosperity and growth of society--on these foundations rested the Quaker testimony for peace. And the principles we have outlined thus far, principles which we have already applied in Penn's struggle for religious toleration in England, were the same principles which he applied to his colonial experiment. Here, however, the principles took on a wider vision: that of relationships

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<sup>1</sup>R. N. MacIver, The Modern State (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1947), 426f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Belasco, op. cit., 64.

between one colony and another, between one nation and another. In attempting to apply the Quaker doctrine of peace, Penn ran head on into a conflict with the political realities of his colony. We are prepared now to examine some of the difficulties which he encountered in his endeavours to incorporate practically into governmental machinery the idea of peace.

### Pacifism in Pennsylvania

The Royal Charter granted Penn for the government of Pennsylvania conferred upon him all the powers of war, "as fully and freely as any captain-general of an army hath ever had the same". He was given power "to levy, muster, and train all sorts of men . . . and to pursue the enemies and robbers aforesaid, as well by sea as by land, even without the limits of the said province, and by God's assistance, to vanquish and take them, and being taken, to put them to death, by the laws of war, or to save them. . . ." <sup>1</sup> It might be inferred from such a sweeping grant of power that the English government would expect from Penn a corresponding measure of responsibility for the military defence of the colony. He, however, never wrote into his several constitutions any provision for military preparedness. The only safeguard of the colony was his conception of "justice" and, as has already been pointed out, this conception was often too subjective to be meaningful. This attitude brought upon him and upon his co-religionists much denunciation; they were charged with unwillingness to co-operate in imperial defence as well as with laxity and inability to check the piracy so common on the Delaware during the closing years of the seventeenth century.

Penn's pacifism did not extend to complete non-resistance. He believed

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<sup>1</sup>Hazard, Annals of Pennsylvania, 496 f.

in obedience to political authority, but only to the point where his religious creed was threatened. He submitted to Caesar; but Caesar must, in turn, allow him to submit himself to God in his own way. Though he never counselled the use of force to overthrow "unjust" measures or an "unjust" government, he vigorously opposed what he considered "injustice". He repeatedly indicated his belief in the resistance to, and suppression of, vice. If economic and social *laissez faire* be a concomitant of the Quaker doctrine of submission, Penn's paternalism accords but strangely with the tenets of his sect.

That the Quakers were conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, or to the exercise of military force to repel invasion or to quell insurrection, was well-known. Their policy of settling all difficulties by pacific measures has by some been criticised as tending to subvert the powers of government, for, as human nature with its vices and passions is generally constituted, compulsion is absolutely imperative for the security of the State. The exercise of such compulsion necessitates some form of military organisation. But the commonly accepted opinion of the Quakers in Pennsylvania seems to have been that the home government would afford them all needful protection against enemies external and internal. Still, most of them declared that they would not oppose the formation of military organisations by those whose conscience permitted them to do so; and some, especially toward the middle of the eighteenth century, were liberal enough to advocate openly the rightfulness of defensive war,<sup>1</sup> provided they were not required personally to assist in it. But as for many years the Quakers and their sympathisers formed the bulk of the more wealthy and influential among the population of Pennsylvania,

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<sup>1</sup> James Logan was the foremost of these liberal Quakers. His views on the subject of defensive warfare may be seen at length in The Pennsylvania Magazine . . . ., VI, 403 - 411.

their passive attitude greatly discouraged the establishment of a militia.

Colonial Quakers asserted, like Penn, that they were willing to render to Caesar his due, but if any contributions they might make were known to be intended for military purposes, an accusation of inconsistency in principle might be brought forward. On the other hand, if they remained strictly consistent and hence gave nothing to defend the province against its enemies, thereby compelling those who differed from them in religious creed to bear all the burdens, they might be justly charged with selfishness. When therefore the Crown sent to the Assembly orders to grant military supplies, the Quaker majority in that body was unwilling to offend either the Crown by a direct refusal, or the body of the Quakers by a compliance contrary to their avowed principles. The common mode of disguising the compliance at last was to grant money under the phrase of its being for the King's use, and never to inquire how it was applied. In fact had the Quaker system of government, lacking as it was in the means of securing by the use of oaths satisfactory judicial information and by force of arms adequate military protection, been carried to its legitimate conclusion, great confusion might have resulted.

Although there is no evidence that William Penn was at all pleased by the insertion of the above-mentioned clause in the Charter, still he was astute enough to see that it was for his interest to accept one power which was distasteful if thereby he could obtain so much beside that was to his advantage. Pennsylvania, furthermore, was a British colony. As such it could not presume to found a system of government which differed widely from that of its neighbours. A government according to Quaker principles then would not agree with the general plan of colonial administration. It had to be modified to suit the exigencies of the time as they became apparent.

The fact that Pennsylvania was exempted from the stringent measures

adopted by the King to extend his policy of absolutism to the colonies may be attributed to the intimacy between Penn and the Duke of York, later James II. But as soon as it was observed in England that the proprietary provinces were likely to become of considerable importance, the ministers saw how advantageous to the Crown would be the purchase of the governmental authority of the proprietors before they should become too powerful. If this could not be done, they thought the Crown ought to assume direct jurisdiction over the proprietary provinces. They based this opinion on the dictum that the Crown, which had a right to govern all its subjects, might deprive of their powers of government proprietors or corporations who had abused them.

In 1689, upon receipt of orders from King William to provide for the defence of the province against the French, and to send war vessels to the West Indies, Governor Blackwell and the Council decided to issue the proclamation.<sup>1</sup> In reply to the commands of the Crown, the governor suggested the establishment of a militia. The Quaker members of the Council naturally objected to the proposition, and gave Blackwell to understand that the King of England knew "the judgment of Quakers in this case before Governor Penn had his patent". For this reason, in spite of the arguments of the governor, they declared that, before they would give their consent to anything so contrary to their principles, they would suffer as they had done in England. Blackwell then inquired whether he should use his own discretion in the matter. To this inquiry, however, no definite answer was returned, and the governor declared that he would give an account of the affair to the King and the proprietor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, I, 302, 303 - 305.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 306 - 311.

Whether the threat of Blackwell was carried into effect is not known, but we have seen that, in October, 1692, the King placed the government of Pennsylvania in the hands of Governor Fletcher of New York. In May, 1693, Fletcher met the Assembly of Pennsylvania, and laid before it a letter from the Queen calling for assistance in fortifying the frontier of New York. At first his efforts to secure compliance with the letter met with considerable opposition, but a threat to dissolve the Assembly and to annex the province to New York brought the body to terms, and an act was passed levying a land tax nominally to support government, but really to give the assistance required.<sup>1</sup> A year later, Fletcher brought the Queen's letter before the Assembly again, asking for a definite reply to her orders. In reply to this demand the Assembly passed a bill similar to the act just mentioned. Fletcher refused to pass the bill, and finding that he could not gain his purpose, dissolved the Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The powers of government were eventually restored to the Proprietor. Before a committee of the Privy Council, however, Penn promised that he would speedily return, take care of the government, and provide for its safety and security. He also declared that he would send to the legislature of the province all orders from the Crown, and that he believed they would be obeyed. He agreed to appoint William Markham governor, and if the orders from the Crown were not obeyed, to submit to it the direction of military affairs. He further assented to the stipulation that all laws passed during the administration of Fletcher should be valid, and said that he would subscribe the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 370 - 385; Charter and Laws, 221.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, I, 459 - 472.

declaration of fidelity to the Crown. Thereupon, as the legislature of Pennsylvania had passed a bill to raise money for the Queen's service, the Privy Council expressed its willingness that Penn should once more assume the government.

The Council also told Penn that, at the request of the governor of New York, a quota of not more than eighty men should be sent to that province from Pennsylvania. Orders to that effect were sent in August, 1695. Penn also instructed Governor Markham to see that the orders were obeyed. But in reply to the appeal of the governor, the Provincial Council asserted that the matter was too important to consider without the aid of the Assembly. Markham called its attention to the fact that the Proprietor had promised to protect the province. "Will you," said he, "be willing that, if an enemy should assault us, I should defend you by force of arms?" To this some of the members of the Council gave an affirmative answer, but the Quaker members said "that they must leave every one to their liberty, and that Governor Penn's instructions therein must be followed, and it being his business, they had nothing to do with it."<sup>1</sup> From the Assembly, however, Markham received as much satisfaction as he had from the Council, and speedily dissolved it.<sup>2</sup> But in November, 1696, a series of concessions on his part led to another act to levy a tax for the assistance of New York.<sup>3</sup>

The attempts to enforce the laws of trade also severely tested the Quaker adherence to the principles of peace. During Penn's second visit to Pennsylvania, in January, 1700, he called a special session of the legislature.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 486 - 488.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 493 - 495.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 506 - 509; Charter and Laws, 253.

At this session an act against pirates and privateers was passed. This having been done the Proprietor dismissed the Assembly, and entered upon a series of measures to suppress the practices and injustices with which the colonial government had been accused. While engaged in these efforts, directed particularly against piracy, he met with considerable opposition, and lost much of the popularity he had formerly enjoyed.

In August, 1701, the Proprietor again summoned the Assembly to consider a letter recently received from the King ordering that Pennsylvania should contribute £350 sterling to aid in erecting fortifications on the frontier of New York. But on the ground that the inhabitants were already burdened with heavy expenses and that the adjacent provinces had done nothing, the Assembly decided to postpone further consideration of the letter. "In the meantime," said the Assembly, "we earnestly desire the proprietor would candidly represent our conditions to the king, and assure him of our readiness (according to our abilities) to acquiesce with and answer his commands so far as our religious persuasions shall permit, as becomes loyal and faithful subjects so to do."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Penn's efforts to prove that he had done his best to "take care of his government", the Board of Trade, March 27th, 1701, submitted to the House of Commons the following report.<sup>2</sup> It declared that it had often represented to the King how inconsistent with the commerce and welfare of Great Britain were corporate and proprietary governments. These provinces, said the Board, had not in general answered the chief design for which such large tracts of land and such privileges and immunities had been granted by the Crown. They had not complied with the laws of trade. Several of their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., II, 31.

<sup>2</sup>Penn-Logan Correspondence, I, "Appendix", 379 f.

governors had not been approved by the King, and had not taken the oaths required by the laws of trade. They had passed laws repugnant to those of England and prejudicial to English commerce. Some of them had refused to send to England a complete collection of their laws. They had denied appeals to the King in council. They were the refuge of pirates and other violators of the laws of trade. They had no regular militia, and were lacking in the proper means of defence. All these statements led the Board to believe that the condition of the corporate and proprietary colonies was one of confusion and anarchy. "To cure these and other great mischiefs in these colonies, and to introduce such administration of government and fit regulations of trade as may make them duly subservient and useful to England," the Board gave its opinion that charters should be resumed by the Crown - a proceeding that could best be effected by the legislature of Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Although a bill to this effect was twice read, a contentious session caused it to fail of passage.

Enough illustrative material has been given to make the point clear that the Quaker peace testimony ran aground in the midst of the political realities of Pennsylvania. Throughout its early history, Penn was in trouble with the home government over the Quaker refusal to contribute to the defence of the colony. Charges and countercharges, threats to take over the colony, endeavours of Penn to sell, followed one after another.<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent that Penn had not been prepared to make practical use of the powers conferred upon him as "any captain-general of any army" by the Charter of 1681. It is also evident that he regarded pacifism as one of those principles of religious faith which were fundamental to man and could not be

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 380.

<sup>2</sup>See Shepherd, op. cit., 495 ff.; Sharpless, Quaker Experiment, 185 - 225; Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, 424 - 6, 461, 464, 468 - 470, 477 f., 480; Janney, op. cit., 390-397; Penn-Logan Correspondence, I, 87 f., 118, 152, 227 ff., 285, 317 f.; II, 124 f., 159, 343 f.; Beatty, op. cit., 112 - 121.

violated by legislative act or royal edict. The pressure of events, however, sometimes forced him in this respect, as in others, into strange inconsistencies. Penn was obliged to steer a difficult course to keep his province free from war. Regarded as an example of a State existing without war and without soldiers, the "holy experiment" was not decisive, inasmuch as the province was a part of the British Empire and was defended by its armies and fleets.

The Quaker peace testimony stems from a definite affirmative attitude which from the first has called for an expression of love and goodwill toward enemies. Injustice, misrepresentation, extravagance, cruelty, and immorality alike could be most effectively combated and defeated by active demonstrations of love for those who are delinquent in these respects. War seemed to place a moratorium upon the virtues Quakers admired, and to bring in its train all the social vices which they abhorred.

The pacifism of William Penn was thus the result of deep conviction. Like other elements in his Quaker faith, it was one of the essentials for which he contended to the last in the negotiations over the surrender of his province to the Crown. He would not himself take part in war or suffer his Quaker sectaries to be forced into military service against their will. On the other hand, he was a practical man of the world. He did not often literally adhere to the doctrine he sometimes preached, nonresistance to evil. He refused to submit to what he considered injustice to himself or to the oppression of the people of his faith. He insisted, often belligerently, upon what he considered his rights. If he believed in turning the other cheek, he did not follow the policy in his many verbal or literary contests about theological differences. Moreover, he constantly urged his deputies in Pennsylvania to stand up for their rights. He realised that letters full of benevolence and the Christian spirit were not always sufficient to control beyond peradventure the savage

nature, either of red man or of white. He felt the necessity of adopting practical measures to reinforce the Christian sentiments which he thought should rule the affairs of men.

Though he did not explicitly declare that a nation might rightfully wage defensive warfare, he indicated strongly on one occasion, and hinted on at least one other, that for some causes such warfare would be just. He apparently approved of lawful force exerted by constitutional government. His plan for a union of the colonies certainly contemplated the eventuality of defensive war and made stated preparations for military action. Being a pragmatist in the field of international relations, he knew that war had been a human activity since time immemorial, and he saw no way of abolishing it, short of uniting the great nations of Europe against it. His league of European sovereigns involved the use of international pressures to enforce peace: it was no toothless agreement full of benign expressions with no sanctions to make its purposes effective. Though Penn did not describe the means by which the united will should compel a recalcitrant power to submit, it may be supposed that he did not mean the use of force except as a last resort. Nothing, however, appears in his plan to indicate whether the united will of the sovereigns was to stop short of war or of the use of force - if need be - to compel compliance. Penn's plan may have meant a "war to end war".

To Penn, it was by no means an ill to the authority of the State when it encourages obedience from a sense of duty. Man can disobey the rules of government for other reasons besides a sense of duty. When a sense of social duty, however, is encouraged in each individual, the likelihood of his disobedience will diminish considerably. The peace testimony here is in line with this point as raised in the three preceding chapters.

Passive resistance is the height of persuasion. How much more would a man be willing to sacrifice other interests if he finds the State on broad grounds satisfying his sense of duty to God and to society. A dangerous principle is admitted in the State when government seeks to impose its rules in the knowledge that it has the resources to compel obedience - this is true within a nation and between nations. The use of compulsion is always an evil. It will tend to fix the rules of the conscience and the plan on which it works. As a result the rules of the legislature will tend to be considered good in themselves. The authority of God in the conscience will then be a sham. The State itself will no longer be able to inspire obedience from a sense of duty. Modified by the realities of the colonial situation, William Penn's doctrine of political authority was designed to protect the individual from just such a fate.

The Quakers at the close of the seventeenth century obviously had an horizon very different from our own, and for this reason we are wary of drawing implications more in tune with modern ideas. Their concern for the individual made the Quakers under William Penn understand what is essentially a modern problem; and the testimony they brought to bear sheds no mean light upon our understanding of it.

## CONCLUSION

### I. THE SUBJECT: PENN'S DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

- A. Justification for our method of exposition
  - 1. Because of Penn's position as a man of affairs
  - 2. Because of the progressive character in the formulation of the doctrine.
- B. Justification for our order of material: experiment followed upon experience
  - 1. The primary principle of the Inner Light
  - 2. The testing of the principle in political life: the struggle for religious toleration in England
  - 3. The doctrine of political authority at work in colonial issues
    - a. The central pillar of the state
    - b. Inconsistencies of Penn's position
  - 4. Ethical implications of the doctrine of political authority.

### II. A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO PENN'S DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

- A. Contributions of Penn's doctrine
  - 1. Recognition of the true nature of our problems: ultimately theological in nature
  - 2. The real discipline of Christians grounded in inner motions of Spirit
  - 3. The reign of law or a community of obedience implied by this doctrine
  - 4. Responsible authority applied to ethical issues.
- B. The measure of Penn's doctrine of political authority: the classical-biblical view of authority
  - 1. Defects of the power-conception of the State revealed
    - a. The supremacy of power converts the instrument of government into the master of men
    - b. The conception of power which underlies this misnamed Realpolitik is largely mistaken

2. The shortcomings of the doctrine exposed
  - a. A confusion of state and community
  - b. A logical error to seek to interpret the unity of a whole as though it were exactly correspondent to the unity of its members or components
  - c. A faulty interpretation of the end or purpose of the social system.

### III. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PENN'S DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AS APPLIED TO IMPORTANT ISSUES OF OUR OWN DAY

- A. The growth of political power necessitates important changes in the social structure
- B. The inner sanction of morality; the relation of law to morality
- C. A new appreciation for the true Source of all authority.

## CONCLUSION

Plato wrote his Republic, Thomas More his Utopia, and John Locke his Fundamental Constitution, building up in theory ideal commonwealths. The last one was tried in practice and proved a failure. William Penn had the opportunity and the wisdom, a combination which comes to scarcely one man in a millennium, to rear in his study a theory of government on the broadest principles of right and justice, and to set it to work in a vast territory with friendly neighbours and a sympathetic population. These principles, by their inherent vitality, went far beyond the bounds of his commonwealth, and a great nation found in them the best expression of its aspirations and needs, and is living on them to-day.<sup>1</sup>

As our study has progressed, it is to be hoped that the method which was selected for presenting the material has been justified, William Penn was a man definitely involved in the affairs of the world. His own version of political authority was forged in the light and fervour of his own life experience, more especially in his colonial experiment. Of necessity this fact would seem to have placed an obligation upon us of following Penn through his own meandering process of discovery. With the realisation that such a procedure would itself prove too lengthy, we yielded to the method of exposition.

The method of exposition which we have followed, however, has endeavoured to respect the progressive character of the formulation of Penn's doctrine of political authority. To do less would inflict a great injustice upon the colonial Founder. As Penn struggled with the realities encountered, it must be remembered that the wisdom gained was conditioned at every step by the nature of the man who gained it. Penn was no "ivory-tower" visionary; he was a "man on the move". In the heat of events a "conversation" between experience

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<sup>1</sup>Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, 471.

and experiment took place. The Quaker leader was the kind of person who would get what he could in the way of progress by compromising in what he felt to be non-essentials, and was willing to work with those of views other than his own. This was not always an easy thing to do; he suffered more than once within his conscience for his actions. But he realised that if forward motion were to be achieved, a practical acknowledgment of the "give-and-take" realities of the world about him was necessary. He made mistakes and suffered for them. Here, however, is the significance of the statement: "Better for Penn if he had continued in seclusion, but worse for the world if he had".<sup>1</sup>

The method we have pursued may then justify to a certain extent the order followed in presenting the abundance of subject matter at hand. The experience of the Inner Light was primary in the life of William Penn. Being primary, this experience was bound to affect all that Penn did and thought.

To Penn there was something of God in every man. This Light of God which had been given man in different degrees was given as a spiritual teacher or guide to man's spiritual concerns. This office of the Light was performed by internal monitions and even by external objects of the creation. This latter thought allows for the fact that the soul is born and nursed in the shadow of external authority. Much of such external authority the soul may take on trust as belonging to the over-all scheme of things, part of which scheme the soul has itself already verified, and more of which she hopes to verify in the course of time under the leadings of the Inner Light.

Religion was to have pragmatic value. The necessity for the Inner Light was to have a direct influence upon the social attitudes of mankind.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Pound, The Penns of Pennsylvania and England (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932), 146.

The result of making the Light Within of first consideration is to make men question the validity of their actions. Penn's experience of the Light seemed to point to the conclusion that the Light was the ultimate and supreme authority, because its evidence is in itself. Other authority depends upon the Light. Penn claimed God for the individual. Without the Light he would not have demanded liberty for the individual. That which was divine in man was obviously good and must be released. To liberate man by means of the Inner Light was the same as enabling obedience to God. But was there not the danger that the Inner Light, taken as a sanctified prejudice in each individual, would prevent a realistic analysis of the conditions necessary for the achievement of man's freedom? The experience called for further testing.

Penn's foundation principle of the authority of the Light faced a severe test in the struggle for religious toleration which took place in England. This struggle involved Penn in political activity. Man, a creature who lived under the authority of God the Creator, was nonetheless a soul living within the bounds of a political community. This community also exercised authority over the individual. As Penn and his Society viewed the matter, the obligation rested upon those holding political authority to bring their principles of theory and practice into harmony with the Light within each man. When this was done, certain marks of true political authority were bound to follow.

First and foremost was the principle of religious toleration. Penn demanded a liberty of mind - the right to believe what doctrines a man wished - and a liberty of worship - the right for a man to act on his beliefs. Religion he felt to be the best bond of human society. Toleration was seen as beneficial to the Crown, to the larger interest of the nation, politically, economically and morally. A second principle of true political authority was the

principle of nationalism. National feeling, Penn believed, ought to cure religious disagreements. Government was indeed the mandate of God, but the all-important element was the purpose of that mandate: to achieve the good of the whole. In the mind of Penn, toleration was not an ideal separate from the stable government of the English monarchy. A third principle of true political authority was a high regard for property. As a conservative thinker, Penn sought to preserve the interest of a man of property in a political order based on property. He measured society by two criteria: toleration and security - the one economic but full of ethical content, the other ethical but big with political and economic implications. Finally, a mark of genuine political authority was a respect for man as man. Man was seen to be a creature of "interests". Civil interest was the basis of all civil government; national interest was the support of the nation. Personal interest was the foundation of a man's obligations to society. Only by understanding this could one attempt to understand a man's obligations to society.

These basic principles - religious toleration, nationalism, property, and human interest - were the marks of a true political authority exercised under the supreme authority, God Himself. At the same time, these same principles reflected grave implications for the doctrine of political authority in its own right. The function of the State in the Divine order, and the functions of the Church and of the individual Christian in the State were questions which confronted not only the Quakers but all the religious bodies in seventeenth century England. The result of Penn's labours on behalf of the Society of Friends in England did much to set the issues clearly before all who sought freedom to exercise their beliefs.

What Penn did in England produced the training and laid the foundation for the American experiment. Here was the "supreme experiment", the testing

in practice of the soundness and practicability of the doctrines whose advocacy had cost him so many years of thankless labour, social ostracism and relentless persecution on his native soil.

Penn believed that a religious commonwealth, in government as well as in citizenship, was not a contradiction in terms, and that a State based on and guided entirely by Christianity was a human possibility and a divine command. What was new in the Penn province was the conception of a democratic government evolving under divine guidance. The sacred rights of the individual conscience formed the central pillar upon which Penn was to build his state. It was the ineradicable conviction of the Quakers that conscience was God's throne in man that Penn translated into laws so different from some of those of the older colonies.

Yet the moral basis for the doctrine of political authority in colonial Pennsylvania was defective in a number of points. Men distrusted spiritual controls. In Penn himself there was almost an inherent "défaut de ses qualités" - an inability to judge of character sufficiently well always to choose able helpers. In fact, to be perfectly candid, Penn could not separate himself from his own ego. The personal inconsistencies of William Penn also had their part in a partial missing of the mark.

These inconsistencies found some basis in the nature of Quaker theology of the Light. The belief in a continuing revelation of God's will to those who gladly inquire and seek for it leads to a belief in evolution in the affairs of men. This fact alone enabled Penn to display the marks of a wise legislator by the adaptation of his system to existing circumstances. He relinquished, though not without misgivings, a part of his prerogatives when a new situation in the colony rendered it desirable. From the modification of his views on authority which the realities of the colonial situation forced upon him, Penn

derived a rich harvest of practical insight.

In an age when the divorce between religion and social ethics was almost complete, Penn brought God back into the world. The social order was important in men's duties to God. A social conscience was to be built up which could give full expression to the individual conscience. The doctrine of political authority was thus brought to bear upon a number of ethical concerns.

Society was seen to be of an organic nature; but this fact assumed certain responsibilities. The Christian at work and play in the State could not divorce himself from the number of social and economic problems with which any society is confronted: minorities, plenty versus poverty, war and peace. Government, being of divine origin, could not isolate itself from the struggle, but rather was to be the very means, the instrumentality, for bringing in a "better day" for society as a whole, and for the individuals who made up that society.

In bringing to bear political authority on ethical matters, Penn held to a number of basic premises. The first was the supremacy of the individual conscience, a principle which we have had occasion to see at work in many another connection. It is the logical result of the doctrine of the Inner Light. A second premise was the belief in a moral order, a divine law of right, as against utilitarianism. A third was the transcendent importance of faithfulness in small details. In bringing together these bases of ethical behaviour with his doctrine of political authority Penn was simply bearing witness to the truth that faith and works cannot be separated. The "world outside" makes little distinction between the two; faith becomes meaningful only when it is incarnate in relevant acts of service.

Claims to fame have strongest support when they represent contributions

to institutions and ideas. Not only have the greatest leaders left lasting physical reminders as the result of achievements definitely connected with their names, but what is more vital, some contribution to morality, to the idealism of the nation. It was William Penn's good fortune to create a commonwealth; it was his greater achievement, perhaps, to contribute to this society a complement of community ethics, which, however much ignored and distorted, still remain as a part of the spiritual possession of the American nation. Indeed, the greatest of Penn's achievements was his contribution to America of this ideal of a society dedicated to the principles of humaneness and righteousness under the sovereign authority of God. Thus more clearly did he envisage and more vigorously did he portray the ideal commonwealth than perhaps any other individual interested in American colonisation, and for this reason he may in justice be considered the greatest of the colonial founders.

As a young man William Penn saw visions, and as an old man he continued to dream dreams. Had it not been so, he and his people might indeed have perished. His greatness may be found not only in the things which he accomplished, but also in those which he attempted or promoted and left as unfinished business for posterity. Generation by generation since his time, the ideals which he cherished and partially realised more than two and a half centuries ago are being carried through in public and private life and, like all profound truths, are becoming the commonplaces of human thought and belief.

In these remaining pages, let us try to see how the experience and experiment of William Penn are suggestive of a great many insights which may be applied towards any consideration of the problems of political authority in our day. In so doing we must keep ever before our vision the limitations as well as the contributions of this first Quaker man of practical affairs.

In William Penn we find a man to whom religious experience was the key criterion for life and thought. By means of an inward "encounter", a "convincement" in early adulthood, the character and destiny of the future Quaker leader were determined in broad outline. Religion was to play a central role in everything he did from that time forth. Penn's outlook on man and on the world would never be the same from the moment he gave himself over to the Society of Friends. The crisis of Penn's day and age, as is the case of the twentieth century, is a crisis of authority. True authority in the last analysis is the authority of the God of Scripture; this being assumed, our problems are ultimately theological in nature.

However, this recognition of the true nature of our problems is not the only factor in the life of Penn which is suggestive for our times. There is also great significance to be found in the testing period which Penn's religious experience was forced to undergo. Any theory demands encounter on the battlefield of reality. In the process of doing battle, the basic principles underlying one's faith are brought clearly in focus, sharply defined, and corrected to meet the conditions of life. So it was in the case of William Penn during his struggle for toleration in England. Penn came to see that each person born into the world enters as a member of society which is what it is through the long heritage of the past. Whenever the community asserts its sway as final and absolute, it crushes the growth of the individual and partially destroys the very material out of which alone a healthy society can be built. Only as collective authority becomes persuasive may it hope to become a principle of order within the individual soul whose freedom it respects and fosters. Thus Penn came to see that the real discipline of Christians is not to be grounded in any external coercion but in the inner motions of the One Lord and the One Spirit. Surely, in our Western world of

today, we must do no less.

The doctrine of political authority which emerged as a result of Penn's work in England becomes further suggestive to us as it came to be applied in the "holy experiment". Let us be clear on this. The "holy experiment" will never again be made under anything like the conditions which existed at the close of the seventeenth century. It belonged to its own time, and in the same form will never be repeated. But the lessons learned from his work in the colony provide the student of William Penn with an awareness of certain facts of political life applicable to our own situation.

Following Penn's love of liberty, he found that the reign of law or a community of obedience was implied. The laws of a country invariably followed the distribution of power. Laws would not always appear in the will of the legislators. No institution - even that of Proprietorship - had the "right" to make laws; the formation of new laws depended on the attitude of those who are to obey. Law, which was essential to freedom, could be weak or strong. It was weak when there was disobedience or when obedience was difficult to enforce; it was strong when obedience was easy and enforceable. If those who have power increase instead of decrease the advantages which they contribute to those who are weak, their power will increase and not decrease. The more even distribution of power that results between the parties will not, however, be at the expense of the power of the one who had once been predominant: on the contrary, his power will have expanded, for he will have associated his interests with others who, equally with himself, defend them with all their resources.

Upon such a united front, an all-out assault may then be made against the basic economic and social problems of society. When this balance of political power is reached, the energies of all may be directed to the abolition

of injustice of every sort: discrimination against minorities, economic vacuums between the "haves" and have-nots", the awful injustice of war. The proper exercise of true political authority can do no less, if it be a truly responsible power.

But we have provided ourselves with a measure of Penn's thought on political authority. This measure, as we indicated in the INTRODUCTION to our study, is the classical-biblical view of authority. In applying this measure to William Penn we may see his contributions as well as his shortcomings in political theory and practice.

To begin with, Penn's doctrine of political authority revealed the menacing defects of the power-conception of the State. Perhaps it was by Divine intention that Penn should have appeared when he did and where he did. Seventeenth-century England was a crucial testing-ground for the expanding Church-State relationship, for the rising nationalistic feelings of the people, and for the appearance of the social contract theory of government. It was necessary that some-one or some-thing be projected unto the stage of history that these elements, uncertain and wavering, could be systematically brought into clearer focus. The rise of religious "sects", and the conversion of William Penn provided the necessary catalysis.

Two things became clear: first, that the supremacy of power converts the instrument of government into the master of men. In surrendering its power and many of its functions over into the hands of the State, the Church was in effect giving up its claims to the people's allegiance. Hereafter it was the State which laid claim to the loyalty of the people. Government was no longer seen as the servant of the masses; it had become the servant of few and the master of all. In the second place, it became clear that the conception of power which underlies this Realpolitik is largely mistaken. No longer is

government seen to be the instrumentality of God - rather it is of man. But as a result the interests of the individual cannot be understood by another, nor, on the other hand, are they necessarily understood by himself. Blind obedience is all that is expected; it is all that is received, until, at some moment, the blind lash out in fury at their oppressors, and civil war results.

Penn's doctrine of political authority made these truths clear. As measured by the classical-biblical view of authority, the Quaker leader's views are in harmony with what the best of Christian thought on these matters has produced down through the centuries. But by this same measure, the shortcomings of Penn's doctrine are also exposed. Let mention be made of three of the most glaring inadequacies.

In the first place, there is obviously a confusion between the State and a "community". The classical-biblical view of authority sees what Penn did not: namely, that we should avoid confusing the source of civil authority with its methods of application. The power wielded by the State over its constituent members in pursuance of its normal function and end leaves its constituted agents free to choose the means of its exercise. This they will do with a view to the temporal good of those who compose the human community, whether individuals or groups. True, the State, having supreme authority in its own sphere, must not act contrary to the natural or divine law, or encroach on the sphere of religious ecclesiastical authority in spiritual matters. But with Penn, civil authority became involved in religious and ecclesiastical authority practically in terms of a theocracy.

In the second place, in Penn's thought it was a logical error to seek to interpret the unity of a whole as though it were exactly correspondent to the unity of its members or components. The classical-biblical view of authority is at one with those who emphasise the more "spiritual" aspects of

the faith in opposing the Catholic attempt to canalise the Spirit in the historically continuous institution, but it agrees with Catholicism in condemning those who would repudiate all historical mediation. Transferring this truth to the political realm, one can see where allowance can and should be made for variant opinions and points of view within the particular political framework involved. Penn's ideal of a "state-community", with the contradiction that such terms involved already indicated, made him blind to the fact that the reality did not always correspond to the ideal. As gently as one can, it must be said that Penn himself experienced the fate that befalls the dreamer when he has to do with actualities. Perhaps what he lacked was the capacity for putting himself in another's place. His unbounded faith in human nature soon led to great personal misfortune. While the words of the various fundamental laws which are connected with his name shadow forth many ideas of recognised value, the working of these schemes in actual everyday practice proved that they were not suited to the task immediately in hand.

In the third place, Penn's doctrine of political authority came to result in an interpretation of the end or purpose of the social system which, while producing vital insights into pressing economic and social problems, yet implied too much of an idealised Civitas Dei. This was not, to be sure, an unworthy goal. But the interpretation of the goal was imbued with the viewpoint of the landed aristocracy. The State was in many ways taking the place of the Church of an earlier period; the spiritual foundation bore the same relation to the State as it did to the old Church; the social system was likewise geared to the preservation of much of the old, rather than a forthright exploration of the possibilities of the new.

Nevertheless, when these shortcomings in Penn's doctrine of political authority have been acknowledged by the measure of the classical-biblical view

of authority, it must be at once admitted that Penn was far ahead of his time in applying the lessons which he learned to the problems of his day, problems which we have stated to be those of the contemporary situation.

Penn saw that the growth of political power necessitates important changes in the social structure. These changes consist in the establishment or re-formation of social classes in terms of relative dominance and relative subjection. Inasmuch as possible with the social and economic structure of the times, Penn worked for a modification of this "relativity". He was not an out-and-out democrat. Yet he desired a "chance" for every man; anything less would be to deny the basic conviction of the Light Within. Oppression of minorities was to give way to fair treatment and ample opportunities; economic unbalance was not to mean economic hardship and poverty for the many, and wealth for the few; social development was to proceed in an atmosphere free from the fears and uncertainties of war. Political power was intrinsically related to economic and social power. The State cannot use its power unless it considers its members. Any interference with the process must rob the State of its authority and obedience. The State finds strength and not weakness in the personal interests and creative ideas of her members; they are acquisitions necessary for her very life.

If the position reached by humanity on these points both before and after Penn's time could be surveyed, one could measure the extent of his contribution. In his zeal and faith Penn started out by believing that his Quaker code was applicable to public as well as private affairs. Particularly appropriate for the individual, the view of the authority of the Light had never been applied to public affairs and to government. It broke down then, as it would break down now, because it demands more emphasis upon spiritual values than the world is yet ready to accord. Even more, it fails to acknowledge

the relationship between civil and religious authority which the classical-biblical view so rightly proclaims. A man of Penn's type will never gain all that he seeks; but he will lead men as far as possible toward his advanced position. Perhaps that is all that anyone in his place could have done.

Quakerism was clearly connected with the fundamental institutions of Pennsylvania. Some of these institutions are now the common property of free Englishmen and citizens of the United States. Such, however, was not the case of the seventeenth century. In his own day Penn was a pioneer in more ways than one. He was one of those men who perhaps in any case would have devoted themselves to the interests of human society and government. Possessing a lively faith, born of a personal religious experience, Penn offers an outstanding example of one who tried to apply this faith on the large state of human affairs. His work in Pennsylvania stands before the world not merely as a theory, but as an experiment: an experiment of a State based on the belief and practice of genuine religion. Political authority found its source and its strength in the power of the Living God.

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