

Holding in the Light--Message for 13 September 2015

Greeting: Dear Friends—Inazo Nitobe, a Japanese diplomat who studied at Johns Hopkins and became a Quaker in 1884, later serving as the chief Japanese delegate to the League of Nations, founder of the Friends School of Tokyo wrote in 1909:
I ask for daily bread, but not for wealth, lest I forget the poor.
I ask for strength, but not for power, lest I despise the meek.
I ask for wisdom, but not for learning, lest I scorn the simple.
I ask for a clean name, but not for fame, lest I contemn the
 lowly.
I ask for peace of mind, but not for idle hours, lest I fail to
 hearken to the call of duty.

First Hymn, no. 1 in the blue book “Dearly Beloved Friends”

James Naylor wrote in 1659: “Art thou in Darkness? Mind it not, for if thou dost it will fill thee more, but stand still and act not, and wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee. Art thou wounded in conscience? Feed not there, but abide in the Light which leads to Grace and Truth, which teaches to deny, and puts off the weight, and removes the cause, and brings saving health to Light.”

From **2nd Peter Chapter 1, vs 19-21: 19** “We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

From **Psalm 36, vs 5-9**: 5 Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

6 Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep.

You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.

7 How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

8 They feast on the abundance of your house;

you give them drink from your river of delights.

9 For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light.

2nd hymn “Lord, We Thank Thee for our Brothers” no. 160 in the red book.

Joys and Concerns

Dear Friends—As days quicken with the activities of fall and the new school year along with the new year of Rosh Hashanah—Hebrew for “Head of the Year” --let us not lose our way in the busyness of schedules and events. Bless us with time filled with light and hope and each other. Give us courage to pause and make known our needs and concerns. Give us love to hear them. Make us each part of the community of care that holds us all in the Light. May we be held as we also hold, in that blessed tension of strength and vulnerability. For with the Truth and the Source is the fountain of life—in your light, we see light. Amen.

Our third hymn is on the handout, an old campfire song “Pass It On”

Children are free to head downstairs in community of youth.

Message:

Dear Friends—We share a mystical tradition, one in which William Penn once observed that we are closest to true worship when we are silent, and yet again we are moved to words and shared song and prayer. Our blue hymnal notes at the top of our first hymn the postscript from the 1656 epistle from the Meeting of Elders at Balby, “Dearly Beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in Spirit, not in the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” The path of the Spirit we each are on, the Light that each of us experiences, each within our own perceiving power, are only approximated in our expressed words and deeds about that light and path. The trail marks and blazes that we share in our messages and loving actions are always actually on this side or that side of the path, while that deep center is in the unspoken.

I’ve given my message today the title of “Holding in the Light” both as a direct reference for what we do when we have a deep concern for someone and wish to send or engage blessings and support, but also in the sense of what we do for ourselves as we seek to live daily lives of faithfulness. Holding in the Light is also a form of personal navigation, as it was put in our reading from 2nd Peter “...until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” Like the blazed trail, not every step is marked, and the marks themselves, the true encounters with Spirit may be widely spaced and just off to the sides of our actual trodden path, so with the navigated sea where we tack according to the stars, our eternal guides, the glimmers of light, but stay ourselves on the surface of the sea. The sea is wide and our boats are small, but we are together.

When one is lost or disoriented, one common piece of advice is to stop moving, stay still, wait for the next sign or evidence, wait to be found. As James Naylor said, “...stand still and act not, and wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee.” So, in holding others in the Light, I would like to suggest that perhaps we are in effect helping that to happen, helping both them and ourselves notice where the Light is just then, perceive its direction. For in truth, the Light of God is always shining—it is constant and powerful, but we are at times under clouds, asleep, looking in the wrong direction. And because it is an inner Light, we cannot simply point to it in the outer world and say “There” in a visible sense, but we can perceive it in our hearts and say “Here”. This is what we pass on. We know it as a unity of perception that can be mutually felt, if not specifically articulated or demonstrated.

And so, as we seek to stay the course, to hold the path, we are all scouts and guides and pilots for each other, sounding the depths, climbing to the lookout, sharing the messages, writing the maps and spiritual guides, speaking our Truth, and holding in the Light. When we catch that spark or step into that broad warm glow, we can also illuminate the paths and journeys of others, including all of you, our Friends. Seeing and reaching the touchstones, we seek to thread that needle of the careful way. As in our opening prayer from Inazo Nitobe. (quote)

And as we sharpen our approximations with support and advice, testimony and ministry, we know there is no definitive prescription, no single formula or recipe for success, since every path and circumstance is different. We cannot know the way of others, nor can we contain or direct the Light or God, but we can share what we do know truly and deeply in our own hearts with love and concern. We can “abide in the Light which leads to Grace and Truth, which teaches to deny, and

puts off the weight, and removes the cause, and brings saving health to Light.” And be “carried along by the Holy Spirit”. We can notice and support each other on the way. Let us enter mutual communion with the inner guide and hold in the Light all that we can know from that place of rest and power.

Worship

Closing Hymn: no. 81 “Come Let Us Be Joyful” blue book.

Closing: Dear Friends—Hold us all, yourselves and others, in the eternal Light. Let us be joyful as life’s bright candle glows. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see Light.