"The Psychology of Salvation" was first published in 2008 in the independent journal *Quaker Theology*. Interpreting the early Quaker view of salvation—conversion of heart—through contemporary psychological concepts of schemas and cognitive dissonance, the essay seems appropriate for this time of pandemic (summer of 2020) when many are rejecting the advice of medical experts and refusing to protect themselves and others.

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SALVATION**

Recovering, Reframing, and Reclaiming
the Early Quaker Experience

by

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**Returning to Our Roots**

As it continues to lose its historic identity as a distinctive Christian movement, contemporary Quakerism becomes increasingly diffuse, a condition leading to diminished vitality, commitment, depth, community, and influence. Throughout the range from Christocentrism to nontheism, Friends express various views of what Quakerism is about, what its essential principles and practices are. Withering in this identity crisis, Quakerism is at risk of losing the unique spiritual power that has made the Religious Society of Friends a respected and effective influence for equality, justice, peace, and compassion. I propose that we can best resolve this crisis by returning to our roots, recovering the heritage bequeathed by our founders, and reframing that heritage in contemporary terms that can speak to theistic and nontheistic Friends alike.

The first Friends returned to their own roots in biblical religion in a bold and revolutionary way. Their religion derived from a brilliant and radically\(^1\) metaphorical exegesis, or interpretative reading, of scripture, and it led them to lives of great spiritual depth and power.\(^2\) But their belief system, as creative as it was, retained too many naively literalistic elements to be tenable for many of us today.\(^3\) We simply cannot reproduce the mindset of mid-17th-century Friends. Nor, however, can we afford to allow continued erosion of our foundations. As a religious society shaped by both our history and the unprecedented development of human thought and knowledge since our founding, we need to continue to grow into the future—from the roots that give us our Quaker identity. An essential element of that task is to examine the first Friends' reported religious experience, the experience that created our religious society; to express it in concepts that are meaningful for us today; and to draw out its implications for faith and practice in our times. In hope of contributing to that project, this essay will focus on understanding the original Quaker experiential process of salvation—that is, of spiritual conversion and development—in contemporary terms.
Because the Quaker process of salvation is an inner process that has profound and highly visible effects on behavior, it can be described with concepts from the science of psychology. To express our religious experience in such terms is not to deny a place to those who believe in God, but to return to the very early Quaker insight that, as contemporary thinker John D. Caputo puts it, "[T]he event that stirs within the name of God can take place under other names, which complicates the distinction between theism and atheism." James Nayler, whose writing will be our principal source as we investigate the early Friends' experience, stated the similar position of the first Friends powerfully and unambiguously:

Thou asks further whether the name of Christ may be known to all the world by the [L]ight within them, without Scripture or tradition? I say, yea, and by nothing else without it, for the name of Christ consists not of letters and syllables, but in righteousness, mercy and judgment, &c., which name none can know but by the [L]ight of the [W]orld, though many of you read your Bibles who are the greatest enemies to his name, such is your knowledge as appears by your practice.

The first Friends insisted that "knowledge," or religious experience, and practice must arise together and nurture each other. Consequently, they rejected the more commonly accepted understandings of God and religion, and the corresponding interpretations of scripture, which had led to much evil. Approaching religion and the Bible with critical but open minds, those Friends came to experience God as the dynamic principle of love within them, a principle that reshaped their psyches and their conduct. Consistent with that, they interpreted scripture as applying to inner events evidenced outwardly in behavior. As we interpret their reported religious experience in psychological terms, then, we are continuing along the path they traversed. In moving forward on that path, we can develop a conceptual basis for a twenty-first century Quakerism that can trace its legitimacy, through organic development and consistency of essential experience and practice, to the religious experience of the first Friends.

In thus rediscovering and reaffirming that, as indeed the early Friends asserted, salvation is an inward process of reorientation and transformation that is independent of belief (but not, as we shall see, of faith), we will confirm that the essential elements of that experiential process remain accessible to us today, whether or not we hold theistic belief. And we will see that our lives as Friends, individual and corporate, can be re-centered and renewed through a thorough commitment to the essential Quaker experience of salvation.

**Our Principal Source Text: Love to the Lost**

Our primary early Quaker source text will be *Love to the Lost* by James Nayler (1618–1660), the leading Quaker in London as the Quaker movement took hold in the mid-seventeenth century. Nayler is best known for his imitation of Jesus' reported "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, and for the resultant trouble that his action brought upon him and the movement. But he is also known for his deep,
love-centered spirituality and his skill in writing, both in evidence in his famous final statement ("There is a spirit that I feel that delights to do no evil ..."), and for his clear, structured presentations of Quaker theological thought.

In the opinion of historian Rosemary Moore, Nayler was "the most competent Quaker theologian," and Love to the Lost "the most comprehensive Quaker theological work" of the early years of the movement. Love to the Lost is, for its day, an admirably succinct and clear piece of Quaker writing that, unlike Barclay’s better-known Apology for the True Christian Divinity (1676), flows directly from the early experience and does not attempt to bend it into a more mainstream Christian form or otherwise dull its radical edge. Love to the Lost is an accessible gateway into the unique spiritual world of the first Friends.

We will supplement that primary source with additional material from Nayler and with quotations from two other very important first-generation writers, George Fox and Isaac Penington.

A Contemporary Tool: The Concept of Schemas

In order to facilitate a psychological understanding of the experience described by James Nayler and other early Friends, we will borrow the concept of schemas from learning theory and psychotherapy. Schemas can be defined as interlocking subliminal principles of interpretation, generally acquired early in life, that organize our experience. In performing their organizing activity, schemas filter and color our experience automatically and effectively, transparently shaping our thoughts and feelings, our interpretations of new experiences, and our behavior.

Schemas can be thought of as patterns of connections in the brain. The human brain comprises a network of interconnected, interoperating regions. Those regions have electrochemical pathways, like intranets, and are connected to other sections by other pathways, like the Internet. Pathways are formed and reinforced by cycles of external stimuli (interactions with the world) and internal stimuli (emotions, thoughts, feelings, memories, and physical responses such as release of hormones, change in heart rate or respiration, etc.). Thus schemas possess a kind of physical reality. They form a networked processing template that gives us a strong feeling of "rightness" about our perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Our schemas are integral to our sense of identity and can feel to us like our core self.

Schemas are, therefore, resistant to change. Even to uncover and acknowledge them can be very difficult, because schemas shape the mind that would search for them: a schematic network can be, as the Zen saying has it, "Like the eye that sees but cannot see itself." Further, schemas may seem to have vanished, only to be triggered later by some stimulus: it is possible that schemas never totally disappear. But we can learn to detach ourselves from habitual modes of thinking and feeling sufficiently to observe them. And new connections can be made and reinforced over time, so that
impulses coming from unwanted schemas can be modulated by the higher brain centers and perhaps even bypassed.

While psychotherapy tends to concern itself with schemas that are obviously maladaptive, original Quakerism calls into question the rightness, the healthfulness and virtuousness, of our normal, adaptive schemas, and it challenges us not only to examine those schemas but also to modify them radically. As we shall see later in more detail, the early Quaker experience of salvation can be described as a process of "conversion" or (in New Testament Greek) *metanoia*, which denotes changing one's mind, reforming one's way of perceiving and thinking, and thereby being transformed.

Our thesis is that, in psychological terms, the biblically-shaped experience of the first Friends implies, first, that the characteristic of commonsense, "normal" self-centeredness constitutes a pervasive schematic bias in the psyches of most human beings, and, second, that Quaker conversion/salvation is a process of detaching from that self-centered bias—the "fallen nature" of "the first Adam"—and adopting a new, love-centered orientation—the "pure nature" or spirit of Christ, "the second Adam." Successfully negotiating that process can lead to so profound a change in self-concept that one feels as if a new self has been born, a self that enjoys hitherto unimaginable freedom, depth, power, joy, and peace.

The Heart of Quakerism: A New Orientation

Christian concepts like "being born again" are a part of our culture, but their import here is often so different from their import for the first Friends that we are in danger of reading grossly incorrect meanings into early Quaker works when encountering those concepts there. The first Friends conceived attaining salvation as becoming a radically different human being, one whose life is godly because his or her controlling orientation to life is shaped by "that of God" within. The "old man" (the fallen Adamic nature) must become "the new man, which ... is begotten of the divine nature; and as is his nature, so is [sic] his works...." Reading scripture with eyes free of the distorting lenses of traditional interpretations, the first Friends came to understand salvation as the acquiring of a new nature, the pure nature of God. At this point, therefore, a little theology is in order; specifically, the essential early Quaker understanding of God.

Early Quakerism was an intensely biblical and highly practical religion of salvation in the present. Consequently, its theology was also thoroughly biblical and oriented to the practical matter of attaining salvation here and now. In keeping with those values, Friends rejected theological speculation. George Fox, for example, wrote, "As for the word trinity, and three persons, we have not read it in the Bible...." Speculation only distracts us from the need for transformation, makes us captive to thought, and puffs us up with intellectual pride. It is but "the wisdom of men in the fall," and by associating truth with thoughts, mental images, or "notions," it leads us away from the living, practical truth of
salvation. "But since the mystery of iniquity began to work, the world's teachers and professors having lost their indwelling in the body of Christ, are run out into the imaginations...." 21

So while the Friends did believe that all essential facts about God and salvation were contained in the scriptures, they interpreted scripture in a metaphorical, "spiritual" sense, even reading narratives of purportedly historical events as applying to present inner experiences. 22 Friends insisted that the scriptures must be read in "the same Spirit by which they were written," 23 and that when so read would reveal their "spiritual meaning" 24—pointing not to any thought, belief, or intuition but to the true gospel; not to words about God but to the Word itself, the living spiritual Christ, the inwardly present "power of God." 25

Religious truth, then, is the very life and power of God. 26 Therefore, our understanding of the nature of God is crucial. The first Friends found that the Bible offered clear, concise definitions of that nature, definitions that were consistent with their own spiritual experience. In images taken directly from scripture, the Friends defined God in dynamic and practical terms as life, light, and love. 27

God as life, light, and love is personified in Christ the Word, known experientially in the inner process of salvation, which is our return to the original goodness of creation "fresh from the Word." 28 Spinning out themes from the prologue to the Gospel of John, James Nayler sees the creation of the world as a type or figure of the re-creation of human nature.

"[T]he first beginning of God in the world is light: God said, "Let there be light," and it was so. And this light God saw that it was good. This is that which was in the beginning with God, [namely,] the Word ... who is the life, which life is the light of men. So none can see the life but with the light, which from the life comes, which to the life leads all that come. So this that was in the beginning is given to keep in order all the creation. That is good, but the darkness comprehends it not, though it shine in it; so all that abide in the darkness are destroyed, not discerning the life, to order and govern the creation in the light." 30

The Word, the Christ-light within, "that of God in every one," 31 is that spiritual life which we first encounter as a light that leads us to itself. As in the beginning of the original creation, so in the beginning of the new creation, which is the re-creation of the human being: "the first beginning of God" in the heart is in the form of light that illumines our condition – "death, darkness and blindness" 32—and our potential—"the life and image of God" 33—and leads us from chaos and darkness to order and light. 34 "[T]he first appearance of this [light] in the creature shows the darkness, and captivity that is in the darkness; till which the creature never comes to see the wretched condition that man is in, who is without God the life; nor till then will the creature be willing to stand still to see God's salvation, but is full with vain hopes, conceits, and imaginations." 35 ("To stand still" in the light is an important part of the salvation process for Friends; we will return to it later.)
As we saw in Fox's comments on the doctrine of the trinity, Friends insisted that God is one. Light, life, and love are, therefore, one. The light that reveals and leads us is love's light, and the life to which it leads is the life of love. "Now God so loved the world that he gave his Son into the world, a light to condemn sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of God might be fulfilled in the creature.... And this is the love of God to sinners, to condemn sin and take it away by the light and life of Christ; and to all that love with this love, this is the end of it." To love with the love that is God is to be of the nature of God, and therein alone is salvation. "The love of God is but one, and in one, nor can any receive it but who receive that one, [namely,] the Son of God; and this [love] cannot stand with self, or any changeable thing; for God is that love, and none can dwell in it but as he dwells in God: so it's pure and perfect." Whoever loves with God's love has—demonstrably, and regardless of belief—the salvific spiritual life of Christ the Son.

But what is God's love? Nayler's reference to perfection, a prominent theme in early Quakerism, recalls Matthew 5:44-48:

> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

In that passage, perfection, the biblical Greek for which connotes attaining the purpose of one's existence, is equated with love, and love is identified as caring for all, even the evil ones who harm you and others. The Christian scriptures state that this perfect love is the very nature of God, who seeks the good of all. The Friends' goal was to become at one with that universal love, to "be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). As the author of the First Letter of John put it, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

To be able honestly to say, "as he is so are we in this present world, and not of this world, even as he is not of this world"—but of the nature of perfect, or unselfish, love—was for the Friends the practical and essential meaning of salvation. To be saved is to be one whose basic bias is toward universal love, which is the opposite of "the world's" orientation to self. To begin to turn to that new orientation is to enter the process of metanoia.
Cognitive Dissonance and Metanoia

There is no denying that the world is a place of injustice and suffering. And there is no denying that human beings play a significant role in those evils. Many of us do deny, however, that we ourselves are implicated in them, that we are active, if often oblivious, perpetrators. Others hold the belief that we are too evil or hopeless for redemption. And still others believe that "we are what we are," that we should accept whatever evil we do as "human nature" because our nature cannot be changed, or because, they posit, good and evil must always be in balance: "the poor you will always have with you."\(^{41}\) In one way or another, most of us deny that it is necessary or possible for us to exist in a radically different, much less harmful and more beneficial way.

All such forms of denial stem from what is experienced as a commonsense, sane, "normal" worldview. That commonsense denial is an important factor in religion and the spiritual life: as the first Quakers saw clearly, religion and spirituality, although in many forms vociferous about the evil inherent in human nature, arguably serve for most adherents as a prime defense against the truth that the basic orientation of their lives should and can be changed. The first Friends understood that function of religion, and they rejected it firmly. They insisted that the normal orientation or worldview, which each child acquires from "the world" of biological inheritance and social conditioning, is inaccurate, self-centered, and harmful. For them, salvation is a process of schematic transformation—of conversion, \textit{metanoia}—that begins with the acceptance of that truth.

But is conversion, as defined by those Friends, even possible? From their own experience, the Friends knew that it is. Each person, they tell us, has a "day of visitation," a period of time during which the heart glimpses the possibility of living in and for God/love rather than self.\(^{42}\) In psychological terms, we can describe such periods as times of "cognitive dissonance."\(^{43}\) Although the \textit{schemas} are effective at filtering out or co-opting incompatible elements of experience, their effectiveness is not perfect. Life presents us at times with experiences that get through the filters and challenge the validity of our schemas. Such experiences create in us a dissonance, a tension between our beliefs and new information. Cognitive dissonance is particularly strong when the conflict involves our self-concept.

We will discuss in a later section how such dissonance might be triggered. Whatever the trigger, cognitive dissonance is a key factor in change. But there are two principal methods of reducing such dissonance. The easier method, the one which most of us employ, is to restore cognitive consistency by re-asserting our belief system—in this case, to reaffirm the subliminal self-centered bias that colors our schemas. We assimilate the challenging information into our existing schematic system in as harmless a manner as possible, finding a means of removing the threat—by "pleading for sin"\(^{44}\) through arguing from scripture, for example, that all are sinners.\(^{45}\) Rather than allow our schemas and ourselves to be changed, we "change" the troubling facts, a tactic seen today, for example, in the transparently defensive arguments of creationists. As we will see in detail below, Quakers saw that kind of evasive tactic in the accepted Christian teachings about sin, justification and righteousness, and salvation.
The alternative, which most of us can accept only when such assimilation fails, is to allow our basic schematic orientation to be modified in order to accommodate the new information.\(^46\) That was the transforming experience the Friends had found and to which they sought to awaken others.

**Salvation from Sin: Schematic Accommodation**

According to traditional Christian doctrine, if human beings are to be saved or rescued from death, they must be saved from sin.\(^47\) The reason for that is implicit in Paul's statement that "Wherefore, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...."\(^48\) Paul ties death to Adam's\(^49\) sin that resulted in his "fall" from Paradise—and ties our fate to Adam's because we inherit his now-fallen nature. But a crucial question is what it means to be saved from sin.

In what follows, we will focus on the Quaker reaction against the principal Protestant/Reformed conception of salvation, which remains current today. First, however, a brief look at the Catholic view is in order. For the Catholic tradition, salvation is mediated through the sacraments, the major rituals of the church. The sacrament of baptism is believed to transform the essential nature of the soul, but that "regeneration"\(^50\) has no practical effect on a person's basic orientation or behavior. The baptized person is, therefore, constantly in danger of falling into sinful behavior, and needs to receive sufficient strength through sacramentally-mediated "grace"—a spiritual commodity in the "economy of salvation"\(^51\)—to avoid seriously sinful acts, so that death finds one free from "mortal" (damning) sin. The possibility of sanctity in this life is acknowledged, but it is expected that almost all persons will fall short of that goal and will continue to sin throughout their lives. Consequently, and because the sacraments are considered to be the most efficacious means of securing the graces needed for salvation, metanoia and moral perfection do not hold the central position that they hold in Quaker thought. Friends rejected the idea of a spiritual transformation that changed nothing sensible, as they rejected the doctrines of sacraments (or any media) and commoditized grace as "popish inventions, whereby Christ is denied come in the flesh, the everlasting priest, and something set up instead of his way...."\(^52\)

Whether Catholic or Protestant, traditional Christianity exonerates God by placing responsibility for evil upon human beings. But it eases our personal feeling of responsibility by attributing our evil to an unfortunate inheritance—a depraved "nature," or essential being—from "our first parents."\(^53\) On the one hand, that doctrine seems to recognize that there may be a biological or, as we would say today, evolutionary basis for at least some of our selfishness. On the other hand, it projects responsibility for our selfishness onto those mythical parents—projection being, like denial, a defense mechanism, a means of reducing the stress of inner conflict.

Correspondingly, the traditional Protestant solution to sin and guilt also involves projection: it is claimed that our guilt for sin has been placed on the scapegoat\(^54\) Jesus, and that believers will be saved
from its effects after death simply by giving cognitive acceptance to that mythic substitution. In the meantime, righteousness is "imputed" to them now, which means that their actual unrighteousness is ignored by a legal fiction.\textsuperscript{55} In this system, salvation from sin means only that God overlooks the sins of believers because they accept a transaction between him and Jesus. In practice, believers continue in their fallen state, continuing to do evil in this life. That doctrine is summed up in the bumper sticker slogan, "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." In terms of cognitive theory, traditional Protestant Christianity eases the dissonance caused by the biblical call to moral perfection and real justice by assimilating it into its \textit{sola fide} ("by faith alone") doctrinal schema through a convenient interpretation of Paul's doctrine of imputed righteousness.\textsuperscript{56}

Quakers, however, denounced that as "preaching up sin" and called it a doctrine of the devil. "I know," wrote Nayler, "there are a people who have a desire to heaven more than to holiness; and they, lest they should spoil their carnal delights, have in their brain-imagination conceived a justification without sanctification...."\textsuperscript{57} "That is the devil's hope, which hopes not freedom from sin as much as freedom from hell."\textsuperscript{58} The Friends could accept neither the dodge of projection nor the cheap grace of imputed "righteousness" as a means of maintaining cognitive consistency: any schema that allows evil to be rationalized must be changed to accommodate Jesus' call to perfection through love. They argued that Paul's concept of imputation refers to an actual and effective, not merely nominal or fictional, infusion of righteousness through conversion into the nature of Christ—i.e., love. "[T]he creature becomes God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, by which he becomes free from the evil; dead to sin, but alive to God's righteousness...."\textsuperscript{59} Faith is trust in the reality and efficacy of that infusion, that re-creation of our sense of who we are and what matters most, and fidelity to its leadings. And faith leads to salvation, the moral perfection of the primary orientation to love, attained by joining with the life of God in the heart and expressed naturally in a life of justice, mercy, and peace.

Isaac Penington stated the Quaker case in his 1658 comments on Romans 4:3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Note that action and faith cannot be separated: justification comes "by receiving and exercising the faith," which means exchanging one's "own understanding," one's schematic bias toward selfishness, for "the living power and wisdom of God."

God promised him [i.e., Abraham] a seed; he believed God. God bid him sacrifice this type; he believed. This was it which was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now if he had not believed; if he had not received the gift, or not exercised the gift, could he have been righteous? So that Abraham was not justified by any work he did, or could do; but by receiving and exercising the faith in the seed: by going out of his country, kindred, and father's house, not of himself, but by faith, and by living to God, and obeying his [i.e., God's] voice in that land to which he was led; not in his own will or power, but in the faith. And by hearing the call of God, and receiving the faith, and living out[side] of self, out[side] of a man's own understanding, will, and power, in the faith and living power and wisdom of God, is the justification now: and they that do thus are children of Abraham,
born of the free woman; when as they who take up practices from the letter, without being ingrafted into the life, are but children of the bond-woman ... and cannot inherit that promise which belongs to the spiritual seed while they live in that state.\textsuperscript{60}

Nayler, too, made the Quaker case forcefully.

That righteousness which God accepts is but one, which is his own, perfectly fulfilled and manifest in the world in Christ Jesus the light and Savior thereof; which righteousness is not of the world, nor manifest to the world, nor in the world received, but by the world ever judged as unrighteousness, nor can the world inherit it, but only they who believe in the light of Christ, which God hath given into the world, to lead out of the world to Christ, where God's righteousness is. And there be many talkers of this righteousness, yet none inherit it further than by faith they receive the Son of righteousness, and with him his righteousness is freely imputed, or put into the creature, a free gift from the Father; and with this righteousness is the creature made righteous even as he [i.e., Christ] is righteous, even as the measure of Christ is received, and no further; and whose life is kept in the measure of him, as he is so are we in this present world, and not of this world, even as he is not of this world; and herein is boldness in the day of judgment, in that which is perfect. And all that is not perfect is self [i.e., the self-centered schematic bias]; and with the righteousness of Christ, denied in the light; which condemns all self-actings under what pretense soever.\textsuperscript{51}

So the Quaker riposte to the "forgiven" bumper sticker would be something like "Not perfect = Not forgiven," a condensation of Nayler's assertion that "no farther than the creature is in...perfection, can any...be blessed, but ... [remains] unredeemed, and hath no more of Christ, than what he hath of perfection; for perfection is of Christ, and imperfection is of the devil; and these are two contraries...."\textsuperscript{62} Or perhaps the Quaker slogan would simply be a reference to one of the biblical passages which Nayler would have had in mind: Matt. 5:48-"Therefore be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," or Eph. 4:13-"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...."

That Pauline image of the "measure"\textsuperscript{63} would serve to explain how perfection could seemingly coexist with imperfection in the Friends. "[F]or the least measure of God's righteousness is perfect," explained Nayler, "and all are in perfection who become servants to it, and thereby become free from sin."\textsuperscript{64} One might have flaws, but one's basic orientation had changed; one's heart had been set free from the self-centered orientation that is sin. Perfection is not so much an attainment as a deep-seated change of orientation, a profound conversion to love as the criterion of right and wrong and the center of one's life. To be perfect is to "have the mind of Christ."\textsuperscript{65}
Whether we understand salvation as rescue from physical death or not—and many of us today do not—we see that for the first Friends it is essentially rescue from spiritual death through *metanoia* here and now. Arguing from the evidence of scripture as well as their own experience, the Friends insisted that salvation is the moral perfection of a changed heart, of a basic orientation toward genuine righteousness *in this life*. It is to be saved from sin, in the sense of actually living God's love now instead of our own *ersatz* righteousness. Salvation is not a legal transaction between gods or divine "persons," not a nominal status conferred by belief or ritual, not a change that can be deferred until death, and not a matter of self-delusion: it is strictly our transformation into persons of practical godliness in the present. Penington puts the comparison succinctly in "The Scattered Sheep Sought After":

> And then [when thou art joined to this light] thou wilt come clearly to perceive, how that which thou hast called religion formerly (which flowed not from this principle) hath been but the invention of thine own imaginary mind (though thou fatheredst it upon the Scriptures, as most men do most of their inventions about doctrine and worship), wherein thou hast been in a dream of being changed, and yet remainest still the same in nature: and hast had a name that thou hast lived, but art still dead; a name of being sanctified, but still unclean; a name of being justified, but still condemned by the light in thine own conscience; which is one with him who is thy judge, and who will judge according to it: and so, as that which is real taketh place in thee, so that which hath been but imaginary will pass away.

The cognitive dissonance of that teaching could lead to schematic accommodation through a fundamental change, a radical turning of the heart toward love.

**In the Beginning: Inheriting "the World's" Perspective**

As we have seen, Christianity has explained the need for salvation from sin as a result not of our evolution and socialization (which, of course, were not understood during the formative periods of Christianity and Quakerism as they are now) but of the sin and "fall" of the first humans, the negative effects of which supposedly are inherited by all human beings. Many of us have resolved the dissonance between that belief and our scientific understanding by modifying the belief: we now understand the fall narrative as a mythical etiology, a prescientific attempt to explain the human condition. In our scientific understanding, we might explain selfishness as our "inheritance" from evolution, as the product of a terrible struggle for survival against the ruthless, impersonal force of natural selection. But rather than be content with that explanation, we might also ask ourselves whether we are perceiving the issue through a distorting schematic lens.

Whatever self-centeredness we receive through selection-driven biological evolution is entrenched and elaborated by socialization. "What's wrong with you? Don't let them hit you! Fight back!" "When
someone gives you something, you don't give it away: that's ungrateful." "Look out for yourself; no one else will." These commands will be familiar to many of us: they and others like them are among the more explicit ways in which "the world's" values, the values of the normal self-centered schematic orientation, are implanted within us.

But even before verbal indoctrination can be understood by us, we are taught the same message in nonverbal ways, both direct and indirect, when as developing children we learn, from observation of and interaction with others, what it means to be human in a given society. We are created in the image of our caretakers and our society, shaped to be self-centered as they are (whether they acknowledge their character or not), to resist impulses of "abnormal" generosity and vulnerability, and to see life's basic parameters as they see them. Without needing to understand conceptually the nature and use of rationalization and other defense mechanisms, we adopt them from those around us as part of the worldview they impart to us, so we are well-equipped to maintain our core belief system through cognitive assimilation. And we are taught that above all we must present ourselves as "normal" within the definition of the circle in which we are formed; we must avoid the isolation and other undesirable consequences of having what Erving Goffman called the stigma of "spoiled identity."

That "normal" orientation is, then, instilled within us from very early on, etched into our brains. We naturally believe in it, and we tend to accept its judgments without question. It feels, in fact, like our essential nature, and indeed it is an integral and prominent part of who we are. But it is "inherited" through our parents and culture. Combined with the "selfish" biological drives which it both serves and exploits, and set in context of social expectations and constraints, it can feel like a sinful nature.

The classic Christian doctrine of "original sin" attempts to explain that phenomenon. The Friends rejected that doctrine—not because they didn't believe that all humans inherit a powerful proclivity to spiritual blindness and sin and therefore need redemption (they did believe so), but because the doctrine asserts that, along with the tendency to selfishness and sin, damnation-deserving guilt is transmitted from parents to children. The practical Friends, convinced that God is love and therefore is just, insisted that one cannot be guilty until one has actually done something wrong. Although we cannot be held responsible for the nature we inherit, they maintained, we are nonetheless responsible for what we do with that nature, because God has provided, within each of us, the means of redemption for it.

While the story of the fall, as told in the book of Genesis, functions more narrowly in traditional Christianity to "explain" the etiology of sin and death (and the need for redemption and the church), its imagery is central throughout the Quaker experience of salvation. We will devote a few moments to reviewing that story, as found in the third chapter of the biblical book called Genesis, in light of the first Friends' exegesis. (All quotations from Genesis will be taken from Young's Literal Translation unless otherwise noted.

After all other creatures have been created, the first human being, the man Adam (Adamah, earth), is formed by God in God's own image (that image is Christ, the Friends asserted: see Col. 1:15) and
placed in the Garden of Eden, or Paradise. There he is innocent and happy, and he has dominion over all other creatures, whose natures and needs he understands perfectly. Presumably, he is also immortal, although that is not unequivocally stated in the (composite) narrative. Wanting to give Adam a companion, God takes one of the sleeping Adam's ribs and from it creates the first woman, which leads Adam to make a statement, later applied to Christ and his saints by Paul,\(^72\) that will hold a prominent place in early Quaker thought: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." The Friends would claim so intimate a union with Christ that he became their flesh and bones and they became his.\(^73\) They became so fully centered in love as to "become of one heart, one mind, one soul, one Spirit, one flesh and bone, and blood, and one obedience, and one life, that it is no more we that live, but Christ that lives in us...."\(^74\)

But to return to the story of how that union was disrupted and why it needs to be restored: God has told Adam that he may eat the fruit of any tree except that of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and that if he eats that fruit, he will die on that very day (emphasis added: if the statement is true, then the death is spiritual): "for on the day of thine eating of it—dying thou dost die" (Gen 2:17). But a serpent, who represents "the god of this world\(^75\) who will blind the spiritual eye of the human race, soon appears. He tells Woman (Eve's original name) that eating the forbidden fruit will not result in death; on the contrary, "Dying, ye do not die, for God doth know that in the day of your eating of it—your eyes have been opened, and ye have been as God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5).\(^76\) They eat, and "the eyes of both of them are opened, and they know that they are naked" (v. 7). For the first time, Adam and Woman associate nakedness with evil and shame. Innocence has been lost; under the influence of "the wisdom of this world,"\(^77\) the young human being has begun to judge by outward appearance rather than by the inner guidance of the image of God within.

In falling under that influence, Adam and Woman have moved from their primal, other-attuned, ecological consciousness to a restricted, self-centered consciousness that we might call egological.\(^78\) According to the Quaker reading, Adam and Woman have fallen into the spiritual death of the "way of self-wisdom and knowledge,"\(^79\) attempting to usurp God's knowledge and role as the Light which shows us what is good and what is evil. Each person will now define good and evil in terms of his or her self-interest, often unaware of doing so. (Thus, Adam and Woman immediately deny their personal responsibility for what they have done, Adam blaming Woman and Woman blaming the serpent.) The "spiritual man,"\(^80\) the open and giving heart, the divine Christ-Light within, is lost in the darkness of "self-wisdom."

As Adam and Woman soon discover, with innocence are lost also Paradise and eternal life. But God first chastises the serpent, cursing him to go about on his belly and making a prediction that will become highly significant in traditional Christianity (as a reference to the "virgin" Mary) and, for a different reason, in Quakerism: "enmity I put between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he doth bruise thee—the head, and thou dost bruise him—the heel" (v. 15). The image of the "seed of innocency,"\(^81\) "to which the promise is,"\(^82\) and "which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16) and his Kingdom
(i.e., his powerful activity in the human heart: see Lk. 17:21), is one of the most important in Quaker thought and is used in fascinating ways by Nayler. In remarkable passages, Nayler even asserts that what has "fallen" because of our self-centeredness is the seed itself: "and so [the serpent] keeps the creature in self, that he regards not the seed of God, which is fallen under all this death and darkness...," and that the seed (which is in practical terms the orientation to love) must be "raised out of the grave." The image of God, our original Christic innocence, has been crucified by worldly wisdom, but it can be raised.

To return again to Genesis 3: now God, turning from the serpent, curses Adam and Woman to lives of hardship that end in death, including painful childbirth for the woman, whom Adam now names Eve, "for she hath been mother of all living" (v. 20). Before expelling them from Paradise, God, in a statement that appears to include a remnant of polytheistic or henotheistic religion, says "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever ..." (v. 22, KJV). Adam and Eve are then sent out of Paradise, and the way back to the Tree of Life is barred. "Jehovah God sendeth him forth from the garden of Eden to serve the ground from which he hath been taken; yea, he casteth out the man, and causeth to dwell at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flame of the sword which is turning itself round to guard the way of the tree of life" (vv. 23-24).

That sword of fire, always turning (or converting: the Hebrew word includes both connotations) as it guards Paradise, will also be an important element in Quaker theology. The turning sword is, according to the Quaker reading of New Testament passages such as Eph. 6:17 and Heb. 4:12, Christ himself, through whom our return to the wise innocence of Paradise is possible through conversion here and now: "by the light that's in the midst of all this darkness and death you may be led in again by the blood of the cross, through the fire and sword, into the garden of God..." How that process of return to innocence begins and proceeds, how "the seed of innocency," the Christ-nature that understands and responds to the nature and needs of other beings, is recognized, raised, and nurtured, will occupy our attention in the next sections.

**The Call of Salvation**

We have discussed the concept of cognitive dissonance and its relationship to conversion or *metanoia*: if deep change is to occur, somehow a powerful dissonance must be triggered; our well-established schematic network of core beliefs must be challenged by love. How might that happen in such a way that our response will be to open ourselves to a deeply transformative religious conversion?

One is through being confronted directly by another person. Nayler titled his essay *Love to the Lost: And a Hand held forth to the Helpless To Lead out of the Dark* because it was written "in love to the soul which lies in death." He speaks to "that of God" in us, to "that seed which is not of this world,
which savors spiritually and judgeth not according to outward appearance.” Like much Quaker preaching, *Love to the Lost* issues many challenges that could trigger cognitive dissonance in a relatively self-aware and biblically-literate Christian. One such, from the section entitled “Concerning Redemption,” is this:

[Thy] talk of redemption doth not deliver thee from [the prince of this world's] temptations; but into it [sic] thou falls, and commits the sin that is of his moving, and so art of the devil; but that which is of God [within you] lies under [your sinfulness], in death and captivity, and bonds of iniquity, and so thou canst not have power, nor the promise, nor salvation ... and so art not of the promised seed, but an enemy to it, and by thy lusts and pleasures and self-will art in Pharaoh's state and nature, keeping the seed of God in the house of bondage, and dost not pity nor regard the cries thereof, which cries against thy pride and excess, envy and wrath, and all thy wickedness by which thou oppressest the seed of God in thee...."

Reading that passage, such a Christian could experience powerful cognitive dissonance.

Another common source would be our reading of the scriptures. In the same teaching section of Matthew 5 in which we are instructed to be as perfect as God, Jesus challenges our self-centered orientation in no uncertain terms, turning on its head the commonsense reasoning of normal morality.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Mat. 5:38-42).

Although taught to assimilate such teachings, some believers (and even non-believers), reading them, may feel themselves to be addressed and challenged by God through them, and the dissonance previously avoided or resolved for them by their religious tradition may be activated.

Cognitive dissonance can also come from dissatisfaction arising from our life experience. Nayler addresses the possibility that we might find "something in thee that in all these worldly delights cry [sic] vanity and emptiness, and can find no satisfaction therein...." (That "something" would, for the first Friends, be Christ, the Word of God: as Jesus taught, hearing the word can lead to the birth of the Kingdom of God in us.) Or we might realize that we have harmed someone we love because of our selfishness: when "the hardness of heart comes to be felt" and we feel "trouble within," we may begin to feel a desire to become a better, more loving person. We may feel a longing for fulfillment of the promise Ezekiel (36:26) described: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."
Another important source of cognitive dissonance is the example of other people: we may be inspired to seek change by the life of someone who helps others despite personal cost. But whatever the trigger, this kind of cognitive dissonance can bring us to question our basic assumptions and to open ourselves to the possibility of a schematic shift from self to love. That experience is called by Nayler "feeling the measure of God"\(^{92}\) in our hearts. However small that "measure" of love may be at the time, if we recognize its beauty and potential, and if we begin to desire to be grounded in it, then we have entered the path of salvation.

**Responding to the Call**

The arising of selfishness-challenging dissonance is, then, our "day of visitation," our opportunity for a new beginning, our time for hearing and responding to the call of love. In psychological terms, it can be the beginning of the movement toward cognitive consistency through accommodation, through allowing the newly-appreciated truth of love's possibility to modify one's self-centered schematic bias. Nayler tells us that

> if thou find that which breathes in thee towards God for life and strength against all these vanities and all other evils, that which would follow God out of all the world, *if it had power* [emphasis added; see below]; I say, if such a seed thou find in thee, though it be the least of all seeds in thee, yet that is the seed of the kingdom [of God],\(^ {93}\) to which the promise is; and no further than that principle is raised to reign in thee above all that is contrary to it, no further art thou redeemed by Christ.\(^ {94}\)

Nayler's "if it had power" was later deleted by his editor,\(^ {95}\) but it is important for our understanding of salvific schematic change: that glimmer of light cannot grow bright in us unless we allow it to do so, unless we discern and stop whatever we are doing to keep it low. As we have seen, that is likely to be a difficult process, because it involves allowing our very sense of self to be changed. As Jeffrey Young, founder of Schema Therapy, wrote about what he calls Early Maladaptive Schemas, "It is disrupting to give up a schema. The whole world tilts."\(^ {96}\) When we talk about giving up a bias that feels essential to our identity, we might even say that the world turns upside down.\(^ {97}\)

But radical, thoroughgoing change is possible, despite the pervasiveness and tenacity of our self-centered bias: the first Friends testify to that. "And man's spirit in the fall is polluted, and his body;" wrote George Fox, "but as the light is believed in, and the mind changed, his spirit and body are sanctified, and so he becomes a child of the light...."\(^ {98}\) When our sense of disappointment and disillusionment with our present condition is profound, and when the vision of a new way of life based on love is seen as a real and inviting possibility, we can begin to change, to move toward accommodation of the Christic invitation. Transferring our belief and faith from normal, "worldly" wisdom to the light of love can be a wrenching, painful process—the first Friends, after all, followed
Paul in referring to it as crucifixion,⁹⁹ and the name "Quaker" may come from early Friends' experience of being physically shaken by that process—¹⁰⁰—and it may be even more difficult for us today because many Quaker communities lack the understanding of and mutual support for the process that the early Quaker movement provided. (We will address that concern briefly in our final section.) But the history of love in the world provides ample evidence that it is possible. How, then, do we move forward on the path?

One essential is that salvation not be seen simply as a matter of following our conscience. As the word itself implies (con–with, and science–knowledge: what we know together; our commonsense morality), conscience is what Friends would call "worldly wisdom": it is not what redeems us, but is itself in need of redemption.¹⁰¹ Conscience is subtly but powerfully shaped by the schematic bias; thus, George Fox speaks in a letter of "the evil spirit or conscience, or false dead faith, that which is ungracious, out of truth, and not in the spirit of God...."¹⁰² To follow a conscience informed by explicit or implicit rules of worldly wisdom, even as mitigated by the more humane forms of religion and ethics, is to attempt to achieve salvation "by works"—an approach that cannot effect fundamental change and that serves to cover and strengthen our self-centered ways.

And so self-works and God's works are manifest in the light. The one is that which men see, or hear, or imagine, and so set themselves to imitate the same in their own wills and ways, which they have conceived in their fallen wisdom and earthly minds, not in Spirit new born, but in the old letter, or tradition from men. But God's works are those which are from everlasting, before the will of man or the world's customs, and therefore must conform to neither; but everyone who into this work will come must deny the world and their own wills, and all that is in them must bow and conform to the motion of the Spirit and to its workings [within] (which is seen to such as in the light dwells)....¹⁰⁴

 Salvation requires, therefore, that we learn to discern and attend to something deeper than conscience, something that can properly orient and illumine the conscience; namely, the hidden light of love within us, which, as we have seen, Friends identified with the life and power of God. Only that can give us "a new heart" by leading us out of our self-centered schematic bias. For that reason, Friends spoke often of the saving power that lies hidden, and can act like the leaven of the Kingdom of God,¹⁰⁵ within the conscience. All of the following phrases, for example, appear in a sample of a few pages in Fox's journal: "the Spirit of God in thy conscience," "that of God in thy conscience," "the light in thy conscience," "the witness of God in thy conscience."¹⁰⁶

Friends also referred to that hidden saving element in the conscience as a seed, "the heavenly seed ... which leavens into a new lump, and bruises the head of the wicked seed...."¹⁰⁷ That seed "to which the promise is," is identical with Christ, the "image of the invisible God"¹⁰⁸ who is love. In another essay, What the Possession of the Living Faith Is, Nayler says that when we find that tiny seed of the Christ-
spirit, that "faithful and true witness, which is the beginning of the creation of God," in our hearts, we should "set it up" in ourselves as judge of right and wrong.

[B]ut if you know a just, a holy, a righteous principle of spirit in you that is of Christ, set it up, and you set up Christ, bow to the holy ghost, and you worship in spirit, and thereby you shall say that Jesus is Lord, set up his light in your hearts, and his day will arise in you ... honor God in your hearts, set him up in your hearts, let him be judge in your hearts....

To "set up" that principle, then, as the light which judges the thoughts and feelings of our hearts, is our next step on the path of salvation. In practice, to set up that principle as judge means to begin consciously to examine our ways of thinking and feeling in light of our desire to be more loving, and in trust—in faith—that our schemas can be changed and that our aspiration to be a more loving person can be attained.

Such examination is possible only when we can begin to detach ourselves from our biased schemas. In the early Quaker parlance, we practice that detachment by "standing still," focusing on love and allowing it, and consequently our faith in it, to grow in us. "[B]ut as many as repent of their following this way of self-wisdom and knowledge, and come to stand still," wrote Nayler, "to such he shows his salvation." George Fox speaks of the concept of stopping and standing still in a number of his writings. His Epistle X elaborates the idea in useful terms:

Friends,—Whatever ye are addicted to, the tempter will come in that thing; and when he can trouble you, then he gets advantage over you, and then ye are gone. Stand still in that which is pure, after ye see yourselves; and then mercy comes in. After thou seest thy thoughts, and the temptations, do not think, but submit; and then power comes. Stand still in that which shows and discovers; and there doth strength immediately come. And stand still in the light, and submit to it, and the other will be hushed and gone; and then content comes. And when temptations and troubles appear, sink down in that which is pure, and all will be hushed, and fly away. Your strength is to stand still, after ye see yourselves; whatsoever ye see yourselves addicted to, temptations, corruption, uncleanness, &c., then ye think ye shall never overcome. And earthly reason will tell you, what ye shall lose; hearken not to that, but stand still in the light that shows them to you, and then strength comes from the Lord, and help contrary to your expectation. Then ye grow up in peace, and no trouble shall move you. David fretted himself, when he looked out; but when he was still, no trouble could move him. When your thoughts are out, abroad, then troubles move you. But come to stay your minds upon that spirit which was before the letter; here ye learn to read the scriptures aright. If ye do any thing in your own wills, then ye tempt God; but stand still in that power which brings peace.
"Do not think, but submit." Our thinking is contaminated by our controlling self-centered bias and is, therefore, not reliable: it seeks assimilation through rationalization and other defenses. But after we have become aware of that bias and the damage it does to ourselves and others, "after ye see yourselves," the best thing for us to do is to "stand still in that which is pure," to keep our focus on the love we have felt within us, using the allure and inherent power of that love to help us resist the strong pull of automatic bias, standing above habitual patterns of thought and feeling and subjecting them to the critique of the love that we want to be. In that way, we "submit" to love's leading even as Jesus did, "submitting to the moving of the Spirit of the Father that dwelt in him, by which alone he was guided and furnished to every good work."115

That intensely introspective process of searching, discerning, "standing still," and "submitting" requires profound silence, which is why Quaker worship traditionally has been defined as silent waiting. "So that the way to be well-pleasing to the Father," wrote Nayler, "is to wait in the light till you see something of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus moving in you, and then to that join ...."116 In the freedom from thought that is silence, we find the love in our hearts and then join with it, feel it as the center of our identity, and allow it to become increasingly dominant in us. In another epistle, George Fox spells out the process in terms that take us back to the story of the fall in Genesis.

Dear hearts ... wait to feed on the immortal food,117 and walk in the truth, and God Almighty be among you! And in it you will see him; stand all naked, bare, and uncovered before the Lord. And take heed of your [own will], for that (as Herod) slayeth the just, and shipwrecks the faith, and runs you into the flesh. Return back, and stay yourselves upon the Lord [in] every particular, to have your minds guided by his spirit; growing up in that which is precious and immortal, there is no feigned love.118

We recall that Adam and Woman were unashamed of their nakedness until they had fallen into the delusion of self-centeredness. Nakedness implies innocence: when we are willing to be inwardly "naked," to expose and acknowledge our selfish bias in the divine light of love, we pass through the converting sword, the "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart to whom all things are naked,"119 and "return back" to Paradise. To be honest with ourselves about our situation and to desire a new "heart of flesh" is already to have recovered a measure of innocence, to have begun to center ourselves in the perfection of love: "In the lowest shining of this light there is the judgment, and there is the king himself, who is not severed from the least degree or measure of his own light."120 To identify increasingly with love, to fix our inward gaze upon the love within us and to "return back" as often as we find that the old habitual bias threatens to "slay" the newborn Christ-spirit within us, is to be "growing up in that which is precious and immortal"; that is, it is to be engaged in the process of maturing out of a self-centered bias into the bias of the other-directed, "unfeigned" love121 that Jesus described in the sayings we have quoted. The culmination of that process was described by Paul in a passage often quoted by early Friends:
... till we may all come to the unity of the faith and of the recognition of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to a measure of stature of the fulness of the Christ, that we may no more be babes, tossed and borne about by every wind of the teaching, in the sleight of men, in craftiness, unto the artifice of leading astray, and, being true in love, we may increase to Him in all things, who is the head—the Christ (Ephesians 4:13-15, YLT).

The process of conversion and salvation, then, takes us through the steps of (1) being moved by cognitive dissonance to see and acknowledge our pervasive self-centered schematic bias; (2) "stopping," or detaching ourselves from that bias sufficiently to discover and "set up" love in our hearts as the new principal criterion by which we judge our thoughts and feelings; (3) "standing still," being "stayed" in that new orientation, resisting the continuing pull of the old schematic bias and focusing on the light of love in our hearts; and (4) maturing, continuing in the ongoing conversion and stilling process as we grow increasingly out of our original self-centered bias into the new orientation of universal love. It is, for many of us, a continuing process that may not be quite linear. Nayler describes that continuing process in exalted language:

And as the mind is stayed to wait for the kingdom of God in Spirit, the god of the world comes to be denied and resisted; and as the mind is stayed in the light from hearkening to the earthly [i.e., the Adamic], so that seed which lies in death [i.e., the crucified image of God in us] comes to hear the voice of the Son of God, and to receive life and strength from the [W]ord, whereby it is raised out of the grave and appears above the earth, to receive from the Father the dew of heaven, whereby it is nourished and refreshed. And as man beholds the seed growing, so he comes to see the new creation, & what he lost in the fall, and so is restored by the power of the word in the Son of God, into his dominion, power and purity, made able to resist the devil, to choose the thing that is good and delight in it, as before he delighted in the contrary: so come man to be reconciled to his maker in the eternal unity beyond what is to be expressed. The wisdom and power received from above, whereby the heart is set free from corruption and made able to escape the pollutions of the world, and to run the pure ways with delight, which is the glorious liberty of the sons of God, the resurrection from the dead, and the entrance into the everlasting rest.122

To experience the "resurrection from the dead" here and now, to be reborn from the darkness and death of selfishness into the light and life of love, is the joy of salvation.

The Quaker Meeting as Therapeutic Milieu

As we noted earlier, some Quaker communities today lack understanding of and support for the salvation process that we have described. Consequently, Friends today who embark upon the way of metanoia may find themselves in a position similar to that of the young George Fox, who went through
the process alone. Such Friends may take courage from Fox's report that it was precisely when he realized that no one could help him, that he could only look to the leadings of the God-who-is-love in his heart, that he broke through.\textsuperscript{123}

But earlier Friends generally did not undergo the process alone: they were supported by their Quaker communities, which found their reason for being in calling their members to salvation and in assisting them through the conversion process so that the Kingdom of God might be realized within and among them. In other words, the essential commitment of Quaker communities was to "answering that of God in every one," beginning with the communities' own members. In psychological terms, the community acted as therapeutic milieu, helping Friends to understand and accept their situation, set a goal for a healthier way of being in the world, work effectively toward that goal, and ultimately help others through the same process. We can do ourselves a great service by recapturing that commitment today. By developing and expressing a contemporary, tradition-rooted understanding of the inner, experiential meanings of Quaker images such as "Inner Light" and "that of God," and by returning to understanding themselves as communities of salvation here and now, our Quaker organizations, especially local meetings, can play an important role in the process of change.

As our communities embrace the role of therapeutic, or ministering, milieu, every aspect of our corporate life will be brought into the service of salvation, the orientation to and expression of universal love.\textsuperscript{124} The meeting community will help to begin the conversion process by creating cognitive dissonance and encouraging openness to it. Through its various means, it will gently help its members awaken to the self-centered nature of their schemas and to the damage that they do, no doubt inadvertently, as a result of that bias. It will hold before its members the goal of salvation, of metanoia leading to a life motivated primarily by love, as an achievable ideal. Having activated the dissonance-inducing recognition of what we are and what we can be, the Quaker community will then encourage conversion by providing the environment—silent worship—for understanding and resolving that dissonance through successful accommodation, and by providing as well encouragement, support, and guidance through vocal ministry, spiritual friendships, discussion groups, and other means.

Silent worship will function as a crucible of change, a time Friends devote to examining and stopping self-centered schematic bias and to discerning and submitting to love's leading. Vocal ministry will seek to further the conversion process by arousing cognitive dissonance, offering guidance and support, and deepening the silence in which the process of salvation unfolds. Meetings for business, whether of the entire community or of subgroups such as committees, will be oriented toward the awakening and expression of the Christ-nature rather than the proffering of personal opinion and the checking off of agenda items. Education programs and discussions will be directed toward those same goals as well. Whatever the activity, Friends' primary objective will always be to discern and respond to the love, to that of God, within ourselves and each other.
In thus committing ourselves, individually and corporately, to an understanding of the historic Quaker experience of salvation in a manner that can speak to Friends across the theological spectrum, we can indeed recover our roots, re-establish ourselves in the very heart and soul of our Quaker tradition, and move forward with a firm sense of identity, direction, and fidelity to our heritage.

NOTES

[1] The Latin *radices* (roots) is the origin of our word "radical." Stephen W. Angell writes that "If being a 'radical' means addressing the root causes,... Fox was a radical. ... Getting to the root meant rooting one's life and teaching in the 'wisdom of the Holy Ghost.'" Stephen W. Angell, "The Catechisms of George Fox," in *Quaker Theology #9, 5.2, Fall-Winter 2003.*

[2] George Fox and other early Friends may have insisted that their inner revelation was chronologically primary; however, as Fox's *Journal* makes quite clear, they were steeped in scripture well before those experiences, and the content of their experiences was undeniably scriptural. It is sufficient here to note that Fox's early period comprised a continuous interplay among inward and outward experience, cognitive reflection, and scripture, an interplay that led him to a new hermeneutical, or interpretive, key to scripture. "When I had openings, they answered one another, and answered the scriptures; for I had great openings of the scriptures; and when I was in troubles, one trouble also answered to another." (George Fox, *Journal*, in Vol. 1 of the 1990 reprint of the 1831 edition of Fox's *Works*—hereinafter referred to simply as *Works*—p. 73.)

[3] Just one example: convinced that they were the vanguard of the new creation predicted in the Bible, the Friends believed that their children would be born perfect and would never sin—see Richard Bailey, *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism* (San Francisco, Mellon Research University Press, 1992), p. 85.


[7] "There is a spirit which I feel, that delights to do no evil, nor to avenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thought to any other: if it be
betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring are the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty, and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief, and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens, and desolate places of the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection, and eternal holy life." From William Sewell, *The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers* (New York, 1844), pp. 202, 203.


[9] The more correct plural form is "schemata," but recent use of "schemas" by theorists has brought acceptance to that form. The concept of schemata was used by Jean Piaget in his work on childhood development and has evolved from there. For a good brief presentation of Piaget's ideas about schemata, as well as the concepts of assimilation and accommodation (mentioned later in this essay), see K. Bhattacharya and S. Han, S., "Piaget and Cognitive Development" in M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging Perspectives on Learning, Teaching, and Technology*.


[15] Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 84. "That of God" is, of course, a recurring phrase in early Quaker writing. See note 31, below, for a well-known example of its use.


[17] Salvation could also be described as recovering the lost innocence of the image of God in which we were created. In that mythic concept as well, the idea of partaking of the divine nature (see 2 Peter 1:4) was central.


[20] In one of many references to "notions," George Fox wrote "'Now the god of the world is called 'the prince of the air, who works and rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience;' and
wickedness, who is out of truth; and he works in them by his unclean spirit, and fills them with airy notions and conceits ... ." Gospel Truth Demonstrated, in Vol. 6 of Works, p. 20.


[22] Friends practiced the art of typology (an art legitimized by the New Testament itself; e.g., Romans 5:14, 1 Peter 3:20-21), of reading scriptural elements (characters, narratives, images, etc.) as metaphorical figures, or types, illuminating later events. Friends extended that art, reading scripture as referring to inner, psychic events in their own present experience.

[23] George Fox, Journal, in Vol. 1 of Works, p. 89. On the same page, he continued: "For I saw in that Light and Spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all must come to that Spirit, if they would know God or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, which they that gave them forth were led and taught by."

[24] See George Fox, Journal, in Vol. 1 of Works, p. 88: "They could not know the spiritual meaning of Moses, the prophets, and John's words, nor see their path and travels, much less to see through them, and to the end of them into the kingdom, unless they had the Spirit and light of Jesus; nor could they know the words of Christ and of his apostles without his Spirit. But as man comes thro' by the Spirit and power of God to Christ (who fulfils the types, figures, shadows, promises, and prophecies concerning him) and is led by the Holy Ghost into the truth and substance of the scriptures, sitting down in him who is the author and end of them, then are they read and understood with profit and great delight."

[25] George Fox, in an "awakening warning" to "priests and professors," states both that "Christ is the power of God" and "the gospel is the power of God"—which, he points out later, "was before the devil, or fall of man was." The gospel, then, is not teachings about Christ, but is the power of God-in-Christ working in the heart and in the world. In Vol. 1 of Works, pp. 285 and 388, respectively. Note that Friends consistently took the biblical phrase "word of God" to refer not to scripture but to the living Christ: see the beginning of the Gospel of John.

[26] "Christ, the light, the life, and the power" (George Fox, The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded, Vol. 3 of Works, p. 146): a Quaker rephrasing of "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) to emphasize that truth is not words but the Word, the transforming power of divine love in the heart?

[27] Examples of the biblical sources for those images include the following. Life: Deuteronomy 30:20, "for [God] is thy life" and Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Light: 1 John 1:5, "God is light" and John 8:12, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Love: 1 John 4:8 and 4:16, "God is love."

[28] "Fresh from the Word" is from "A Morning Song (For the First Day of Spring)," written in 1922 by Eleanor Farjeon and later known as the hymn "Morning Has Broken."
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:1-40)

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 54.

Perhaps the most famous occurrence of the phrase "that of God in every one" is in Fox's letter "to Friends in the ministry," from which it is often quoted out of context and given meanings—such as that "everyone is basically good"—that are foreign to Fox's thought. Here is the passage with some context.

"So the ministers of the Spirit must minister to the Spirit that is in prison, which hath been in captivity in every one, that with the Spirit of Christ people may be led out of captivity up to God, the Father of spirits, do service to Him, and have unity with Him, with the Scriptures, and with one another. This is the word of the Lord God to you all, a charge to you all in the presence of the living God; be patterns, be examples, in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you: then to the Lord God you shall be a sweet savour, and a blessing." From Vol. 1 of *Works*, pp. 288-289.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 50.

"In the beginning of God's preparing the heavens and the earth—the earth hath existed waste and void, and darkness is on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God fluttering on the face of the waters, and God saith, 'Let light be;' and light is." Genesis 1:1-3, Young's Literal Translation (YLT), 1862. Note the present tense: the creation and fall account in Genesis is actually written with present verb forms. Creation, then, can be seen as an unfinished, ongoing act, as can the fall—an interpretation that accords perfectly with early Quaker theology, which employed creation and fall as metaphors for inward religious experience.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 55.

This is a characteristic Quaker interpretation of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 74.

All biblical quotations will be from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

1 John 4:16b-17

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 57. See also John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...."
[41] Matthew 26:11. The verse appears to be a reference to Deuteronomy 15:11: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land."

[42] See, for example, Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 48: "So whoever thou art who shall receive these particulars following, or any thereof, and shall find anything which for the present thou canst not receive; be not hasty in judging that which yet thou knowest not, nor kick against that which comes contrary to thy will, lest thou put far from thee in thy will, that which therewith thou canst not call again, and the day of thy visitation pass over unawares, and in the evil day thou be made to cry out, 'How have I hated instruction, and resisted the day of healing!'" See also Robert Barclay, Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Proposition VI, argument XI: "First, That God, who out of his infinite love sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, who tasted death for every man, hath given to every man ... of whatsoever nation, country, or place, a certain day or time of visitation; during which day or time it is possible for them to be saved, and to partake of the fruit of Christ's death." Available on line at Quaker Heritage Press. Friends drew on many scripture references for this image; e.g., Jeremiah 5:17-18, Luke 19:44.

[43] We are using a basic concept from cognitive dissonance theory, which was developed by Leon Festinger in A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957): the observation that, seeking to maintain cognitive consistency, when confronted with new information we tend to exhibit "confirmation bias," a preference for distorting the new facts (preserving homeostasis) rather than altering our way of thinking.

[44] Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 135: "You that are pleading for sin while you live, and holiness when you are dead, you will not then find it as you have conceited, but as you are found."

[45] A text commonly used for that argument is 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Friends countered by quoting the previous verse, 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

[46] The concepts of accommodation and assimilation go back to Jean Piaget. See note 9, above.

[47] "As sin is the greatest evil, being the root and source of all evil, Sacred Scripture uses the word 'salvation' mainly in the sense of liberation of the human race or of individual man from sin and its consequences."—Catholic Encyclopedia (1917) entry on Salvation.

[48] Romans 5:12. It is instructive to look at the same passage in the Geneva Bible, first published in 1560 and still popular at the time of the first Quakers: "Wherefore, as by one man sinne entred into ye world, and death by sinne, and so death went ouer all men: in who all men haue sinned." Note the phrases "ouer [i.e., over] all men" and "in who all men [have] sinned": the first Friends said that sin/death covers and obscures the life of God in us, and that normally we live "in" the spirit/schemas of Adam but that salvation means living in the spirit/schemas of Christ.
I speak here only of Adam, and not Adam and Eve, for two reasons. First, the term "Adam" represents unsaved humanity in New Testament and Quaker imagery. "Adam" will be contrasted with "Christ" as the two opposite ways of human being-in-the-world. Second, Adam and Eve are seen as a unit, because for Adam she is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," an identity-description applied, especially by the first Friends, to Christ and his saints as well.

The Catholic doctrine is summed up in the claim that by baptism "We are reborn from the state of slaves of sin into the freedom of the Sons of God" (Catholic Encyclopedia of 1917). Friends saw that the claim was not borne out by facts: baptized persons usually continue to live selfish, sinful lives.

"[T]he sacramental economy' ... is the communication (or 'dispensation') of the fruits of Christ's Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church's 'sacramental' liturgy." The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Two, Section One, # 1076.

Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 103.

See for example Aquinas on "the cause of sin."

See Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26.

This is very much a simplification; however, an exploration of the various doctrines of justification and sanctification would lead us too far afield. For our purposes, it is sufficient to understand that both Catholic and Protestant understandings of justification and sanctification were seen as unsatisfactory and inauthentic by early Quaker writers like Nayler. Rosemary Moore provides a brief introduction to 17th-century ideas about justification in The Light in Their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666.

See Romans 4. The Quaker view is that "imputed" means actually "put into the creature" (Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 57). Real, practical righteousness is given to the creature here and now through the indwelling Christ.

Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 118.

Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 73.

Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 69.


See also Ephesians 4:7: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 81.
[65] 1 Corinthians 2:16.

[66] "And this I say to all who desire to attain the resurrection from the dead and to be counted worthy thereof, consult not with flesh and blood about it, nor seek to comprehend it in thy reason, lest thou lose it and become brutish in thy judgment; but in the light wait, which shows the old man's deeds, that out of darkness thou may be led, to obtain the new birth and first resurrection; and as thou becomes conformable to that body which came down from heaven and ascended into heaven, so shalt thou see the resurrection, the form and power and purity thereof: but the woeful estate of the wicked, who die not in the Lord, who are talking of the resurrection but the old man still living, so live and so die, that resurrection is to eternal destruction. Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 100.


[68] "So far, most ... research on cooperation has focused on humans. As it turns out, humans are not as selfish and self-centered as we're sometimes made out to be," wrote cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff in The Emotional Lives of Animals (Novato, California, New World Library, 2007) p. 105.


[70] See, for example, Barclay's Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Proposition IV, IV: "That this evil and corrupt seed is not imputed to infants, until they actually join with it. ... And this is suitable to the whole strain of the Gospel, where no man is ever threatened or judged for what iniquity he hath not actually wrought: such indeed as continue in iniquity, and so do homologate the sins of their fathers, God will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Online edition: Quaker Heritage Press.

[71] In our retelling here of the story of the fall, all quotations from Genesis, except one taken from the King James Version (KJV) for clarity, are from Young's Literal Translation (YLT), which is careful to preserve not only verb tense but other word forms as well. On the significance of the present tense for Quaker theology, see note 34, above.

[72] Ephesians 5:30


[74] Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 90.

[75] Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 80.

[76] The King James Version (KJV) reads: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The YLT, however, translates the Hebrew elohim, which is plural, as "God," because elohim is used in the Hebrew scriptures to refer to the one God.
See 1 Corinthians 2:6: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world...." See also 1 Corinthians 3:19: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

I have borrowed the term "egological" from Mark Sacks, who uses it in a different, technical manner in his *Objectivity and Insight* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 52.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 91.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 135.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 53. The promise was made through Abraham in later sections of Genesis; Friends interpreted it in a thoroughly metaphorical sense as applying not to Israel but to Christ and all those "saints" who are one with him.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 52. His editor later changed "is fallen" to "suffers": see Quaker Heritage Press.

Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ...." Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." As we've seen, the word of God is always, for Quakers, the living Christ.


Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 52.


Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 115.


See, for example, Luke 8:1-15.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, pp. 55-56.

Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 127.

The Kingdom of God is succinctly defined by Jesus, in words borrowed from Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He did anoint me; To proclaim good news to the poor, Sent me to heal the broken of heart, To proclaim to captives deliverance, And to blind receiving of sight, To send away the bruised with deliverance, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19, Young's Literal Translation)

[95] See Quaker Heritage Press.


[99] Early Quakers often referred to passages such as Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

[100] A good discussion of the relationship of Friends' quaking and preaching is in Richard Bauman, Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers (Prospect Heights, IL, Waveland Press, Inc., 1983, reissued 1990), pp. 80-83. For a very different approach, the hypothesis that the Friends' quaking was caused by ergot poisoning, see Mary K. Matossian, "Why the Quakers Quaked: The Influence of Climatic Change on Quaker Health, 1647–1659" in Quaker History, 96.1 (2007).

[101] Similarly, the word "morality" is from the Latin mos, the plural of which has come directly into English as the word "mores"; namely, "customs," conventions that express a group's values. Morality is customarily accepted behavior; therefore, it, too, must be redeemed through illumination by the light of love.


[103] "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

[104] Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 93.

[105] "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened": 1 Corinthians 5:7. See also Luke 13:21.


[107] George Fox, Journal, from Vol. 2 of Works, p. 226. Recall that the "wicked seed" whose head will be bruised is the serpent, the personification of worldly, self-centered wisdom, who seduced Adam and Woman in Paradise.


[109] Nayler, Love to the Lost, p. 69.

[110] Typically, Nayler defines the biblical phrase "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11) in terms not of believing and "professing" in words but of changing one's heart.


[114] Fox frequently used the words "above" and "over" in that sense. Recall, for example, his famous statement, "In this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness." George Fox, *Journal*, Vol. 1 of *Works*, p. 80.


[116] Nayler, *Love to the Lost*, p. 64. We find a very similar exhortation in Penington's "The Scattered Sheep Sought After", p. 110: "...wait first for the rising of the Judge of Israel in your hearts, and in the next place wait for the joining of your hearts to him; both which are to be done by his eternal light, which manifests and gives his life."

[117] "The immortal food" recalls God's statement in Genesis, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live for ever..." Adam and Woman were barred from eternal life because they had sinned by usurping God's place as judge of good and evil. Christ, the Light and judge within, is both the remedy for sin and the food of eternal life: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me... (John 6:53-58). Deuteronomy 12:23 says, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." But it is precisely the life of Christ that redeems by changing the "nature" of those who receive it.


[121] The phrase "unfeigned love" may remind us of Nayler's famous "last testimony": see note 7, above.


[123] See, for example, Fox's famous statement that "When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I 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." From Fox, *Journal*, in Vol. 1 of *Works*, p. 74.
[124] John Woolman: "Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable, so that to turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives." From "A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich", in The Journal of John Woolman, with an Introduction by John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1871), p. 293. Available on line at Google Book Search.