

# Walk Cheerfully Over All The Earth

**Eldora Spiegelberg**

The 1991 Jonathan Plummer Lecture

Presented at

Illinois Yearly Meeting

of the

Religious Society of Friends

McNabb, Illinois

July 28, 1991

## **Introduction of Eldora Spiegelberg**

Eldora Spiegelberg joined the Saint Louis Monthly Meeting in 1966. From a life already devoted to service for others she joined the Meeting believing that the Quaker way of expressing concern and resolving conflict is the outward manifestation to the world of that inward grace which one tried to attain in the Meeting for Worship.

She has unsparingly given her time and energy and has received many honors and awards from the Saint Louis Community. She frequently finds herself in areas of conflict and has often said that her father's maxim of maintaining irrepressible goodwill helped her to keep a healthy balance in her life.

Eldora is the daughter and granddaughter of Congregational missionaries to Bulgaria where she was born and brought up. After attending the American College there for three years, she studied for a year in Germany and Switzerland to perfect her speaking ability in German and French, attended Beloit College in Wisconsin for four years, and earned a Masters of Arts degree at Oberlin College in Ohio. She trained and worked for six years at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Pittsburgh and spent twenty years in Appleton, Wisconsin, where her husband taught at Lawrence University. There they raised their two daughters, Gwen and Lynne, and Eldora worked in the public schools, first as a psychometrist and then as a play therapist with emotionally disturbed children, under the supervision of psychiatrists.

Her present involvements with schools are serving as a story-teller in the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program in inner city schools and on the board of the Parents as Educators Program in University City, Missouri.

Eldora has served on the national board of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and several times as the president of the Saint Louis Branch where she coordinates the annual International Women's Day and Hiroshima-Nagasaki observances. She serves on the Program Committee of the American Friends Service Committee and works in its office three afternoons a week. She is also a long-time member of the board of the Saint Louis Campaign for Global Security (formerly the FREEZE) and is a committed World Federalist.

In 1980, Eldora was invited to give the Rachel Cadbury lecture in Ann Arbor on "Erich Fromm's Message for Modern Friends," and she led a workshop on the same topic at that year's Friends General Conference Gathering at Berea College. Recently, as a new member of the Older Women's League (OWL), she has impersonated Jane Addams in its popular Women's History Skit before a wide variety of audiences.

She retired from her job as a school psychologist and parent coordinator of a pre-school project in 1980 and is now devoting herself full-time to working for peace, human rights, and criminal justice.

Eldora's unfailingly positive attitude and unceasing efforts to support social justice have been a model for Saint Louis and Friends. Whether she was singing Bulgarian folksongs to First Day School classes, doing tedious committee work, or making announcements in Meeting, Eldora would always be smiling, and always seemed certain that with God's help, all problems could be solved.

## **Walk Cheerfully Over All The Earth**

When the title "Walk Cheerfully Over All the Earth" was assigned to this Plummer Lecture which I had promised to deliver, my thoughts turned automatically to various kinds of Quaker journeys. I examined the total passage from George Fox's Epistle from which, I assumed, the title had come: "Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever ye 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." Why had "all" been added to my title, I wondered, and "Earth" been substituted for "world"? Were the planners

of IYM afraid that whoever gave the lecture might be somewhat provincial and include only the United States or the so-called "first world" in the lecture, and did "earth" seem somehow more ecologically correct than "world" since "Earth Day" 1981?

Weeks and months flew by as I idly pondered these questions and tried out this or that approach to the subject suggested by the title, but absolutely nothing "grabbed me." Obviously Fox predicated the ability to "walk cheerfully" on having fulfilled his injunction to "preach among all sorts of people and to them" by our lives and our examples. But why would the Planning Committee have chosen *me*, rather than someone like Kara Cole or some "weighty Friend" in IYM with missionary zeal and experience to develop that theme? No, I reasoned, it must have been "Walk Cheerfully" in the title which they expected me to address, and I tried to figure out what would make it possible to "walk cheerfully" anywhere today in a time so full of "gloom and doom," nuclear threat, environmental degradation, resurging wars, you name it. I really prayed to be led to a theme which would illumine this problem and gradually some promising "coincidences" started happening, which are often the answer to prayer in my experience. First, my best friend, who had recently been initiated into the Episcopal lay order of Julian of Norwich, sent me a little volume of daily reading excerpts from *The Revelations of Divine Love* by this fourteenth-century mystic. Here was certainly someone so full of joy that she wrote about it endlessly in words like: "It is God's will that we should rejoice with him in our salvation, and that we should be cheered and strengthened by it... He delights in us forever, as we shall in him, by his grace." Yet Julian not only never walked anywhere to speak of, but lived in a cell or anchorhold attached to a church, from one of whose windows looking out on a busy road, she gave comfort, counsel and love to hundreds of others who sought it on their pilgrimages.

Then, some time after I had started reading Julian for my daily devotions, I happened to watch a mystery program on our educational channel in which a rather stuffy English clerk is imprisoned and condemned to death for allegedly killing his faithful wife. His jailor, who is impressed with his courage and stoicism, finds out that it comes from years of reading *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, which he requests his lawyer to bring to his cell. As soon as the program was over, I rushed to my bookcase and, to my surprise, immediately put my hands on a little volume that my husband had given me years before. On the flyleaf he had written: "For Eldora, as an antidote against too much neo-orthodox absolutism [I was attending a Presbyterian church at the time] and fuel to keep the Inner Light burning while the church lights are dim, August 1954, Herbert." What a find! Could Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus of the second century A.D. have anything to say to my theme, I wondered?

Paging through a bit, I came upon the following passage: "The benevolent power at the heart of the universe orders all things for the best, hence we must remember Him in every action and follow cheerfully wherever He may lead, including departure from this life." Yes, he certainly qualifies, I thought, but did he walk over all the earth? Well, he certainly got further from home than Dame Julian. In fact his translator-biographer writes "... when death for which he prayed overtook Antoninus it found him at Vienna, exhausted by the toils of war and the cares of state, but unforgetful of his own precepts." He was actually disdainful of people who thought they had to travel to "get away from it all." He wrote: "Men are continually seeking retreats from themselves, in the country, or by the sea, or among the hills... All this is sheerest folly, for it is open to thee every hour to retire into thyself. And where can man find a calmer, more restful

haven than in his own soul? Most of all he whose inner state is so ordered that he has only to penetrate thither to find himself in the midst of a great peace -- a peace that, to my mind, is synonymous with orderliness."

So I had discovered and rediscovered these two great, but very dissimilar resources for the spiritual life and decided to somehow construct my lecture around them, but how? Would it interest my listeners to hear about this woman and man of so many centuries past, and wasn't I in danger of giving them just a string of quotes? Well, I decided to risk it, because both my "witnesses" were probably little enough known to most of you, my hearers, (as they were to me) to arouse your interest and because, like us Friends, they both knew "experimentally" that all is well and thus were able to "walk cheerfully" in a world as threatening to them as ours is to us.

I turn to Julian first, although she lived twelve centuries later than Marcus Aurelius, partly because we know so little about her that her story is shorter than his. We do know the exact year of her birth, 1342, but not of her death, which was well into the fifteenth century, making her at least 74, quite an advanced age, considering that there were three outbreaks of the bubonic plague during her lifetime. We do not know her real name even, for she took the name of St. Julian's Church to which her cell was attached. Although she called herself "unlettered," the fact that she was educated at all probably means that she came from the increasingly affluent group of Norwich merchants and professionals. She didn't know Latin, but she probably spoke and wrote French, and the fact that many of her ideas were current on the Continent at the time suggests that she had access to manuscripts circulating there. She never quotes the Bible, but was certainly familiar with it and adopted ideas especially from the Gospel of John and Paul's Epistles. She undoubtedly was schooled at the Benedictine Convent of Sorrows which owned the Church of St. Julian's in Norwich, and she had probably become a Benedictine nun when she cloistered herself for life there.

Before this, at the age of 30, during a serious illness, Julian received sixteen dramatic "revelations of the love of God" which she called "Showings." She recovered after receiving the last rites and, as already mentioned, became an anchoress. Besides the window overlooking the road, her cell had one opening into the church, from which she could see the altar and receive the sacraments. The third window or door gave access to her two serving women, Sara and Alice. Tradition has it that she also had the companionship of a cat.

Julian's life spanned turbulent times, both within the church and the country. The popes abandoned Rome and fled to Avignon and the Great Schism lasted forty years, during which three rivals claimed the papacy. England and France were fighting their on again, off again Hundred Years War and the Peasant Revolt brought about the capture of Norwich Castle by a rebel who was later caught and executed. During Julian's lifetime, also, King Richard II was deposed, followed by Henry IV and Henry V. She must have been aware of some of these events, sequestered though she was.

Soon after her visions, Julian wrote a short version of her "Showings," but she spent the next fifteen or twenty years writing, editing and rewriting the extended version which we know today. England did not favor spiritual revelations by women, unlike the Continent, where visionaries like Mechtild of Magdeburg, Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena were revered and

admired. Julian felt she had to assert her right to speak as a woman. She wrote, "Because I am a woman ought I therefore to believe that I should not tell you of the goodness of God, when I saw at the same time that it is his will that it be known?"

Julian is considered to be the first English woman of letters and the first theologian to write originally in English. Thomas Merton writes of her, "... I think Julian of Norwich is with Newman the greatest English theologian. She is really that. For she reasons from her experience of the substantial center of the great Christian mystery of Redemption. She gives her experience and her deductions clearly, separating the two. And the experience is of course nothing merely subjective. It is the objective mystery of Christ as apprehended by her, with the mind and formation of a fourteenth century English woman. And that fourteenth century England is to me and always has been a world of light."<sup>1</sup>

Now to return to the second century and Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, to whom I shall refer from now on as Marcus Aurelius, even his English translator, John Jackson, characterizes his writing style as "in general unattractive" and his diction as "uncouth," this in spite of his having received the best education available to a Roman prince. As in Julian's case, he wrote but one work, and that one in his native tongue, although he cites Greek philosophers, so could obviously write and speak in Greek.

Born in 121 A.D. of Spanish origin, Marcus Aurelius was raised by his grandfather, a nobleman of Rome, both of his parents having died when he was a child. He studied Epictetus, the founder of Stoicism, and became the last great representative of his creed. He had the good fortune to be adopted by Antoninus Pius who succeeded Hadrian as emperor, and he himself succeeded his adopted father as emperor in 161 A.D. He had a tempestuous reign, beset by famine and pestilence, bellicose Parthian and German tribes, revolting generals and troublesome Christians, but he never forsook his lofty philosophy.

In the first book of his *Meditations*, he thanks all the benefactors and tutors of his youth. Only one is female, his mother, of whom he writes: "It behooves me to learn from my mother, piety and liberality; abstention not merely from ill doing but from the very thought of evil, simplicity and frugality and contempt for the luxuries of wealth." He finally thanks heaven for all the good relatives he was granted and for the fact that his children were all born normal, and that he married a wife "obedient, affectionate and simple."

Let us now contrast and compare the way in which each of these two writers addresses certain themes central to our spiritual life, to start with, *the existence of God*: It seems safe to say that Julian could not have even conceived of the possibility of questioning it, for had she not communed with God directly in her "Showings"? "Our Lord very humbly revealed words to me without voice and without opening of lips ... and said very sweetly: Know it well, it was no hallucination which you saw today, but accept and believe it and hold firmly to it and comfort yourself with it and trust in it, and you will not be overcome. These last words were said to me to teach me with perfect certainty that it is our Lord Jesus who revealed everything to me."

Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, having received no direct revelation of the divine, reasons thus: "... if God exists, to depart from the fellowship of man has no terrors, for the divine nature

is incapable of involving thee in evil. But if He exist not, or, existing, reck not of mankind, what profits it to linger in a godless, soul-less universe? But God is, and cares for us and ours. For He has put it wholly in man's power to ensure that he fall not into aught that is evil indeed; and if in the rest of things there had been anything of evil, this too would He have foreseen and enabled us to avoid."

The theme of *death* pervades the *Meditations* as it pervades the Stoic philosophy which sees it as a duty to terminate one's own life before senility sets in and one becomes incapable of making the decision. Marcus Aurelius points out over and over that, since "Each of us lives the present moment alone, this is all he loses [in death]," so from this point of view, it makes no difference whether one departs this life full of years or before one has had the chance to realize one's potential, because the future which those who die young never experience doesn't exist any more than the lived-out past of those who die old; both can only be deprived of the present moment.

No afterlife for the soul, any more than for the body, is envisioned by the Stoic. "Thou camest into the universe as a part of a whole," writes Marcus Aurelius, "thou wilt vanish into that which bore thee; or rather, thou wilt be transmuted and received afresh into its generative principle." "Traverse therefore this little moment of time at peace with nature, and reach thy journey's end in all content, as an olive that ripens and falls, blessing the nature that bore it and giving thanks to the tree whereon it grew."

Now Julian is so convinced of a blessed, eternal afterlife with God, that she never even mentions death. She proclaims: "And so I understood that any man or woman who voluntarily chooses God in his lifetime for love, he may be sure that he is endlessly loved with an endless love which makes that grace in him. For he wants us to pay true heed to this, that we are as certain in our hope to have the bliss of heaven whilst we are here as we shall be, certain of it when we are there." Even more joyfully she fairly sings: "Glad and merry and sweet is the blessed and lovely demeanor of our Lord toward our souls, for he saw us always living in love-longing, and he wants our souls to be gladly disposed toward him ... And so I hope that by his grace he lifts us up and will draw our outer disposition to the inward, and will make us all at unity with him, and each of us with others in the true, lasting joy which is Jesus."

Another main theme of spiritual life is *the attainment of true happiness and contentment*. From what has proceeded, it is very obvious that Julian's radiant faith abounds in joy, whereas Marcus Aurelius's philosophy provides at most serenity and contentment.

There is a wonderful account in one of her earliest "showings" that Julian was so gladdened when she realized that God overcomes all evil that she "laughed greatly" and all those around her, who had gathered because they thought she was dying, began to laugh as well. Julian went on to say that their laughter pleased her and that she wished all Christians could have seen what she saw so that they could have laughed with her. She had no use for mourning and wanted Christians to enjoy life. She explained: "It is not God's will that when we feel pain we should pursue it in sorrow and mourning for it, but that suddenly we should pass it over and preserve ourselves in that endless delight which is God."

Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, mentions emotions only in passing, for to him the goal of personal development is to reach a sort of imperturbable, unshakable equanimity, an inner peace and contentment. It is hard to imagine his laughing! But there is one emotional outburst in his writing which is so moving that I wish to quote it: "O my soul, my soul! wilt thou never attain to goodness, simplicity, oneness and nakedness, and shine through the bars of thy bodily prison? Wilt thou never taste the sweets of a character loving and affectionate. . . seeking no temporal respite for thy longer enjoyment, no pleasant places, no favored clime, no congenial society, but content with thy present state, delighted with all about thee, and persuaded that thou holdest all things needful in fee from heaven, that all is well with thee, and all will be well that God wishes, together with every gift he purposes to bestow for the conservation of that perfect Being, good,, just and beautiful, which gives life and continuance to all things, comprehends them all, and receives them all to itself on their dissolution that it may create others like to them?"

The last main theme of the spiritual life which both our "witnesses" address is *our relationship and responsibility toward our fellow beings*:

Julian describes God's care for all His creation in a visual image which is unforgettable: "And in this [the Lord] showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand ... I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought, what can this be? ... In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God preserves it. But what did I see in it? God is the Creator, the protector and the lover."

Julian sees her mission from God as having to do only with her fellow Christians, the following description of her very first vision being the only exception I could find, whereas Marcus Aurelius seems to see all humans as needing service and compassion: "... the goodness which everything has is God. God showed me this in my first vision ... And I waited with reverent fear, rejoicing in what I saw and wishing, as much as I dared, to see more ... In all this I was greatly moved in love toward my fellow Christians, that they might all see and know the same as I saw, for I wished it to be a comfort to them, for all this vision was shown for all men."

Marcus Aurelius sees everything in the universe as interrelated and a necessary part of the whole creation and humans as differing from the rest only in having souls and intellects which enable them to love their creator and each other. He proclaims: "... there is one universe comprising all things, one God pervading all things, one substance and one law, and there is one reason common to all intellectual beings, and one truth ..." "The perception of this will strike home more directly the oftener thou sayest within thyself: 'I am a member of this composite whole of rational beings.'" "He goes on to make a rather astonishing claim, it seems to me: "It is a distinctive feature of man to love even those who go astray. And the way to attain this is to bethink thee, if thy fellow man stumble, that he is thy kith and kin, that he errs through ignorance and against his will, that in a little while you will both be no more, and, chief of all, that he has wrought thee no harm; for he has left the power that rules within thee no whit worse than it was before." In fact, Marcus Aurelius goes so far as to claim that "The first principle in man's constitution is community." And, finally, he states: "We have three relationships: the first, to the bodily vessel that surrounds us, the second, to the divine cause whence proceeds all that is contingent: the third, to our fellow man."

Now, having heard what Julian of Norwich and Emperor Marcus Aurelius had to say on these matters, I asked myself in true Quaker fashion, "What canst thou say?" Until I was well into my study of the two witnesses, I would probably have had to rely on my memory in order to describe my first, personal experience of a "revelation" remotely similar to theirs, (one which I've shared with some St. Louis Friends at various times.) But, by another lucky "coincidence", I came across a theme which I had written for "Freshman English" 57 years ago, entitled "A Walk With Myself" and signed "Elizabeth Asking" instead of "Eldora Haskell," prof's corrections, spelling mistakes and all! It describes an encounter between "Myself" (evidently my super ego or conscience) and "me", the self with which I identified. After describing the early spring evening and the homesickness it evoked in me, I tell of a rendezvous in the cemetery where we could commune after being alienated from each other for several months. Our last long talk had been on the steamer crossing the Atlantic, and "Me" had undergone considerable change since entering college, while "Myself" was presumably unchanged since our departure from Europe where we had grown up. I will sample parts of the essay for you, because it captures the experience very clearly even though my eighteen year-old English leaves much to be desired.

... we had promised to stick by each other in the new life we were about to enter upon. We had a tacit understanding that we believed in no deity, but accepted whatever we discerned as truth through pure reasoning. Now I have been weakening lately and letting myself slip back into the comfortable emotional ways of my childhood. Although I had been rationalizing my interest in religion as scientific curiosity, I was perfectly aware that I was but obeying certain primitive desires and habits within me. Myself had been true to our contract in the mean time, and said that it was time we examined ourselves and came to an understanding.

In front of an old monument she took my hand and bade me look up to the sky which had shed all its rose by now and was darkened by the double menace of night and sullen clouds. Here and there, through a rift the lighter heaven gleamed, and where a portion of it was still clear to the far east -- one or two stars. "Was all this created by a being beyond and separate from it?" she asked. I looked at the brightest of the stars for a long while. Man would never know how it had been created, or why it shone. I felt suddenly that some form of that which it was had existed and would exist eternally. In the face of ultimate reality, the simple and absurd explanations of primitive reason would be but a little farther removed from the truth than those of the most subtle and profound theory of science.

As I continued to gaze, something vague and strange began to dawn upon my mind, as if the stars were communicating with me from the remoteness of space: all that exists is; non-existence, more existence or less existence simply are not. They are a device of reasoning whereby man is able to grasp what is, much as "x" and "y" enable the mathematician to express his abstract theorems. They are the shadow by which we know the light; they are the means of manipulation for conscious thought and the conception of them was the dawn of reason. What is exists, unchangeable, homogenous,

everlasting, all comprising. Perfect knowledge consists in the understanding of this, and the perception of the unity under the infinite variety of its manifestations. "I am that I am" traced itself across the dark in great black letters...

Myself peered into my face. "Are you content, now that you have realized the depth of conception possible to your small human intellect? Can you be strong in a sense of infinite proportions, and withstand the little, mean theories of men which you have been borrowing to prop up your sagging morale?"

We moved slowly down the black, slushy walk between the graves. It seemed to me that I had been looking upward motionless for hours, and I suddenly felt chilly. Myself gripped my hand tighter in hers and kept it quite warm while the rest of me was cold. She would not let me go home yet, however, for her main thought had not yet been expressed... "Turn your thoughts inward to yourself, she said, "and seek for your "soul", that very you of you. Only when you have grasped it tightly will you be really strong. Possessing it, you have all; without it there is nothing in heaven and earth can help you live."

Down, down into that unsounded gulf I groped until at last, letting go of the floating matter I had caught on the way, I felt the sediment of my being deposited slowly and imperceptibly by the experiences and thoughts of the years. That was my soul, I knew -- and also Myself; in that moment we were one, for although in all else separate, we share the same soul.

Experience full of joy! Identification full of peace, understanding, and love! Myself had discovered the secret of the great mystics, sages, philosophers and seers of the ages. "Know thyself" had not been pleaded in vain, nor had "the kingdom of God is within you" been uttered falsely.

Possessing the priceless knowledge, I hailed and blessed existence, I exulted in being which had made it possible to me. All my strength went out in joy and gratitude to being.

Now my "soul" could talk to me directly, for it and Myself were one. It flashed to me the greatest comprehension of this extraordinary night, that which only the "soul" can grasp, but which I can hardly define to others: to know your "soul" is to identify it with all that exists, subject to universal law; but your ability to do this springs from the marvelous, unexplainable fact that you are conscious of being, of existing. Therefore, this consciousness of your own existence is the highest, the only, the true Good in life. From the contemplation of it arises a right sense of values, a just and sane attitude, a true love for all other beings. Connected up with the

changeless, the all-complete, the all-existing, you yourself are perfect, self-sufficient and entirely content.

I stepped over the hedge which came at the end of the path into which I had wandered, helped Myself jump across it, and we headed for the campus down the lamp-lit street. It was full night by now. The wind which was piercing me through and driving me homeward at a speed even greater than that which my inward lightness and joy would have caused, had cleared the sky from one horizon to the other, so that a thousand stars could send me their thoughts instead of one. "Now don't forget it all!" Myself said, as she bade me farewell at the door of the dorm. I was just in time for a popcorn party upstairs. We sat on the floor and the beds, licking our buttery fingers and discussing "necking" from several points of view. I could feel all the keener pleasure in the company and the laughter, for the knowing that Myself was around somewhere and understood about the "Great Good."

During all the years since that night I have been able to recapture something of the ecstasy of that experience when I meditate deeply. Another has been added to it which is even harder to put into words. In smelling and enjoying some flowers years later, I became intensely aware that they experienced an existence of their own; that every animal, every organism is in some way, inconceivable to me, sentient and exists, so to speak, for itself. This awareness also fills me with ecstasy, I don't know why. But it certainly helps me identify with Albert Schweitzer when, on the Ogowe River, watching a herd of water buffalo, the concept, "reverence for life" flashed on his mind.

I was thrilled recently to find a very similar experience to mine described in the spring issue of *Friendly Woman*, dedicated to the theme of "risk." "It all began," writes Jean Roberts of Eastside Monthly Meeting, "very suddenly at home one day as I was thinking back to a conversation with a friend at a yearly meeting. All at once, every atom of my being became conscious of and conscious with another way of perceiving the world... I felt love, not only for the earth and the people here but for everything I saw in the world. This feeling was an all-encompassing physical and mental force that engulfed my whole being. I would wrap my arms around myself because it seemed as if my body would explode from the intense physical pressure I felt inside me, yet that continuous presence of caring love kept me in constant contact with the world I knew. Time had another meaning. Eternity was in the moment." As a nurse, Jean is specially interested in the physical changes brought about by such "mystical experiences" or "spiritual awakenings." She draws our attention to at least three occasions when George Fox underwent striking bodily changes. I'm sure we all remember his mentioning that "the whole creation had a new smell" after his experience on Pendle Hill. He wrote in his Journal, just before he entered into his ministry in earnest: "I was very much altered in countenance and person, as if my body had been new moulded or changed."

But I see that I am departing from my original project, which was to show how we can "walk cheerfully over all the earth" inspired by the accounts of visionaries as diverse as a woman Christian mystic of the fourteenth century -- in love with God conceived of as Father and with Christ, often conceived of as Mother as well -- and a Roman emperor of the second century, in

love with philosophy and reason. And in bringing in my own experience and that of Jean Roberts I have tried to convince you that not only Quakers like George Fox, but also ordinary Quakers like you and me can have direct experiences of the Divine which can send us walking cheerfully over all the earth, or keep us living cheerfully at home, as long as we can dip into what Marcus Aurelius calls "a haven to which everyone can retire at will, an ever-flowing spring which can wash away the dross of life, which everyone has within."

It fills me with joy to realize that our Quaker tradition spans such a wide variety of experience and tradition, so that wherever our temperament, our life-journey, our ideological-theological background leads us, we can all unite in the knowledge that at the heart of our varied personal revelations there is love, joy, a desire to have all others participate in it, a freedom from any fear of death and a sense of total well-being and security.

It is as if we were all singing the same hymn in several different languages, whether with the Psalmist:

For the word of the Creator is faithful,  
and all God's works are to be trusted.  
The Creator loves justice and right  
and fills the earth with faithful love. (Psalm 33-5)

or with George Fox:

Therefore, all you that love the light within you, stand still in it, out of all your own thoughts, carnal reasonings, considerings and imaginations; and wait for the Power and Strength from God the Father of lights, so will the way of salvation be known and the true Power, Joy and Comfort to your souls which no man can give, but God alone does give it freely to all that wait upon him and obey him.

or with Marcus Aurelius:

To this power (the coordinating principle of nature) then, it behooves thee to pay all the deeper reverence, and learn to think that all is well with thee if thou but live and move in harmony with its will. For if it is so, then all is well with the universe.

or with Julian of Norwich:

And so our good Lord answered to all the questions and doubts which I could raise, saying most comfortingly: I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well; and you

will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well ... and in these words God wishes us to be enclosed in rest and in peace.

And so, Friends, "since love is lord of heaven and earth," how can we keep from singing and walking cheerfully over all the earth?

---

<sup>1</sup>*Seeds of Destruction*, 274-274.

#### *Bibliography*

*Praying with Julian of Norwich* by Gloria Durka, "Companions for the Journey," 1989 St. Mary's Press, Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987.

*Daily Readings with Julian of Norwich, Vol. I.* Robert Llewelyn, originally published as *Enfolded by Love* in Great Britain. Translation made by members of the, Julian Shrine, 1980 Templegate Publishers, 302 E. Adams St., P0 Box 5152, Springfield, IL 62705-5152.

*The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.* Translated by John Jackson in *The World's Classics*, 1906 reprinted in 1911, 1923, 1925, 1928, 1934, 1940, and 1942. Reset in 1948 and reprinted in 1951, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto.

*A Letter from George Fox* edited and introduced by T. Canby Jones, unpublished until he discovered it in Vol. 7 of the Swarthmore Manuscripts of Fox's writings, dated 1654.