



(Photo by Jim Burton)

Peace Pilgrim's Progress

NUMBER FIFTEEN

Peace Pilgrim, Cologne, N. J.

PENNSYLVANIA

I walked in Pennsylvania in the fall of the year. I began in the Lehigh Valley. I walked from Easton through Bethlehem, founded by the Moravians, with its star on the hill - through Allentown with its hanging gardens on the lamp-posts - through the Lehigh Gap with the Lehigh River - through mining towns, where there are flower gardens in spite of the scarcity of level ground, and where chimes seem to be the fashion - through friendly Hazleton, "Pennsylvania's highest city" - through Wilkes-Barre and through the foothills of the Pocono Mountains and into Scranton. Then as I traveled farther and farther west, visiting Williamsport on the Susquehanna River and Erie on Lake Erie, I noticed that the autumn colors became brighter and brighter. It was my first real visit to all these cities and also to the cities I walked through on my way to Pittsburgh but in Pittsburgh I found old friends, for I had visited there before. "The Smoky City," as Pittsburgh was once called, has cleaned up and turned run-down areas into parks and constructed bright new aluminum buildings. Then I went east, visiting the cities in Southern Pennsylvania along the way - the ones west of Harrisburg for the first time and the others for the second time - and ending in Philadelphia. "The Quaker City," as Philadelphia is sometimes called, because it was settled by the peaceful Quakers, has changed so much lately it is hard to recognize the downtown section - but the statue of William Penn, its founder, atop the city hall tower still stands higher than even the newest buildings. I wondered if other peaceful people like the Brethren and the Mennonites had been attracted to Pennsylvania because of its peaceful heritage. In several places in Pennsylvania I noticed the Amish people, with their picturesque clothing and customs - the children dressed the same as the parents. They still use horses for plowing and ride in horse-drawn vehicles, which are closed if they are married and open if they are unmarried. The men with their big hats are clean-shaven if single and wear a sort of Abe Lincoln beard if married. The women in their bonnets look out of their wagons and we exchanged curious glances and friendly smiles. How lovely is Pennsylvania in the Autumn. Sometimes I walked through a valley where there were houses decorated for Halloween and yellow pumpkins at roadside markets and old-fashioned corn-shock in the fields. Sometimes I walked along a mountainside with the autumn fields and woodlands spread like a patchwork quilt at my feet. The killing frost came very late, and the flowers were still blooming when I left Pennsylvania in November.

IN MEMORIAM

The shocking assassination of the late President Kennedy should point out to everyone what can happen in a society where little boys play with toy guns and big boys learn to use real guns - and the hero shoots the villain on television. One of the ministers I know asked all the children in his church to place their toy guns on the altar and promise never to play with guns again as a memorial to the late president.

THE WISH TO RETURN

I do not wish for the return of pigmentation to my silver hair. I accepted the change of the golden hair of my childhood to the reddish-brown hair of my youth without regret - so I also accepted my silver hair, and so I am ready to accept the time when my hair and the rest of my present clay garment returns

to the dust from which it came while my spirit goes on to a freer living. Each season of life is wonderful if you have learned the lessons of the seasons before. It is only when you go on with lessons unlearned that you wish for a return.

EXAMPLE

You can change one person - yourself. After you have changed yourself your example may inspire others toward change. You can help to change one nation - your own. After your nation has changed itself the example may inspire other nations to change themselves. Children are especially in need of good example - in fact, it is really the only way to guide them. They will do as you do, no matter what you say. I have lived in enough family circles to notice how children reflect the attitudes of their parents - and even pets sometimes reflect the attitudes of their masters. Inharmonious children need a good example - and this inharmonious world needs a good example, too.

DISARMAMENT

If any influential nation had the great spiritual strength and courage to lay down its arms and appear with clean hands before the world tribunal, the world would be changed. I see no evidence that any influential nation has such great spiritual strength and courage. Therefore disarmament will be a slow process, motivated by the wish to survive. There will undoubtedly be a series of agreements - like the nuclear test ban agreement. There could be a series of good examples - like the Peace Corps, which deals with war prevention. How wonderful if we could get nations competing to set the best example in the direction of disarmament.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

Concentrate on giving, so that you may open yourself to receiving.

Concentrate on living according to the Light you have, so that you may open yourself to more Light.

Get as much Light as possible through the inner way. If such receiving seems difficult look for some inspiration from a beautiful flower or a beautiful landscape, from some beautiful music or some beautiful words - but that which is contacted without must be confirmed within before it is yours.

Accept as truth only what your own "inner light" confirms as truth - following guidance from this high source only.

The path of the seeker is full of pitfalls and temptations, but the seeker must walk it alone - with God.

Keep your feet on the ground, and your thoughts at lofty heights, so that you will attract only good.

Upon all who suffer I look with deep compassion, helping them if I can. Upon all who cause suffering I look with deep compassion, knowing the harvest of sorrow that lies in store for them.

All difficulties in your life have a purpose. They are pushing you toward harmony with God's will.

Difficulties with material things often come to remind us that our concentration should be on spiritual things instead of material things.

Sometimes difficulties of the body come to show that the body is just a transient garment - that the reality is the indestructible essence which activates the body.

Whatever happens to you is ultimately for your best good.

After you have found inner peace spiritual growth takes place harmoniously. It takes place harmoniously because you - now governed by the higher self - will to do God's will and do not need to be pushed into it.

Children need roots somewhere while they are growing up, and parents might do well to choose the place where they want to raise them before they have them.

You cannot leave a situation without spiritual injury unless you leave it lovingly.

Perhaps you cannot fully understand the callings of others - it is enough if you understand your own calling. Just know that all who work to bring harmony into this out-of-harmony world work together - whether they are together or apart.

Your motives must be good if your work is to have good effect.

In a conflict situation you must be thinking of a solution which is fair to all concerned instead of a solution which is of advantage to you. Only a solution which is fair to all concerned can possibly be workable in the long run.

We can all spend our lives going about doing good. Every time you meet a person think of some encouraging thing to say - a kind word, a helpful suggestion, an expression of admiration. Every time you come into a situation think of some good thing to bring - a thoughtful gift, a considerate attitude, a helping hand.

Every good thing you do, every good word you say, every good thought you think vibrates on and on and never ceases. The evil remains only until it is overcome by the good, but the good remains forever.

God is always with you - you are within God and God is within you - you cannot be where God is not.