

COMMENTS ON REFLECTIONS INCLUDED IN ALONE WITH GOD

John Andrew Gallery's intimate essays share his doubts and everyday epiphanies as he reflects on a Quaker journey suddenly upended, but paradoxically often deepened, by the necessity of solitary Sunday morning worship in 2020. Gallery describes himself as a follower of Jesus and the essays return again and again to questions of how we can walk a spiritual path that brings us into harmony with God. He has a far-ranging spiritual curiosity and finds inspiration from refreshingly eclectic sources: Jewish rabbis, the Buddha, Edgar Cayce, Marcus Aurelius, and even Leonard Cohen and Louis Armstrong make an appearance as he pulls the wisdom of Jesus, George Fox, and Quaker teachings together to craft a life not of the world, but in it.

— **Martin Kelley / Senior Editor, *Friends Journal***

John Gallery's series of spiritual reflections was hard for me to set aside, even for an hour. Many of John's meditations sketch a natural phenomenon through which shines spiritual meaning: a blue-and-gray bird on John's apartment roof deck, singing at unexpected length and declaring God's message of a new day, a new opportunity to move closer to God; a vision of paddling around the last bend of a river and on into the fullness of a sparkling ocean, signifying progressing from life into a new state of death, filled with awe and joy in God's boundless love. John's meditations stand on the validity of his own unfolding spiritual experience, referenced with various religious scripture. Together the essays offer a gentle invitation to explore likewise for oneself "letting a spiritual sentence float around in one's mind in a non-intellectual way," while intending to trust God, serve other people, and be guided by love.

— **Susan Smith, Member, Rockingham Friends Meeting (Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative)**

In *Alone with God*, John Gallery invites us to partake of the insights he receives in worship. When he sits alone during the pandemic, he begins by visualizing and holding in the Light the members of his Quaker meeting. In the short essays that flow out of his experiences, Gallery reveals the essence of his spiritual path with God, a life guided by messengers who often unknowingly brought him divine directions about the path to follow, a life of learning to trust and let himself flow into the current, where God takes him. Gallery tells us where the guidance he has received has led him in his daily life, and he invites the reader to open both to

divine Mystery and to answers to his questions that might come to our own hearts when we, too, take time with God and listen. These short essays are full of useful questions, many beginning with reflections on Jesus, the guidance of George Fox, or the wisdom of another guide. In one or another of these reflections, readers may find some divine guidance meant for them.

— **Marcelle Martin, Author, *Our Life is Love***

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Gallery finds company and inspiration in the words and works of such renowned and diverse figures as Buddha, Jesus, Henry David Thoreau, Marcus Aurelius, Siddhartha, Abraham, and George Fox. In the silence of his solitary meetings, he is led to consider the weighty questions that arise in a spiritual search for deep understanding, and guidance for ethical living. Gallery writes in such a personal way that he pulls the reader in and makes one feel that one is a dear friend in whom he has confided and who gladly accompanies him on his journey.

— **Claire J. Salkowski, *Friends Journal* review of Pendle Hill Pamphlet 469.**