

ART. V.—THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

VERY fittingly does the contemplation of this most interesting sect close the series of studies of the various Protestant Nonconformist bodies, which have appeared in the CHURCHMAN; for the "Friends" as they call themselves, the "Quakers" as others call them, occupy a unique position both in the religious life of our country and in public estimation. Regarded quite as much in the light of a social institution as of a religious denomination, there is no denying that they have impressed the popular imagination, and appealed to the popular attention in quite a different way from the Methodists or the Congregationalists, for example.

These have been regarded as exhibiting certain phases of religious feeling or emphasizing certain aspects of Church organization, but scarcely at all as influencing in any conspicuous degree the common workaday life of our ordinary speech, or dress, or social customs. Not so with the familiar figure who to-day greets us on every hoarding, in his broad-brimmed hat, his knee-breeches, and his straight-cut collar, recommending the wholesome nutriment of "Quaker Oats"! There is, we repeat, a picturesqueness which has fastened on the popular fancy which gives to the "Friend" a position of homely romance to which no other dissenting communion can lay claim.

The place the Friends have filled in literature, especially of the lighter kind, is proof of this. From Charles Lamb to Charles Dickens the Quaker has furnished food for satire and raillery, sometimes delicate, sometimes broad. His quaint garb and quainter speech, his repute for business acuteness, the peculiarity of his assemblies for worship, his abstinence from ordinary gaiety, his very passion for peace, have been seized upon as affording opportunity for the witticism or the proverb, and stamped the Quaker's image deep on the ordinary man's mind, whose knowledge of his religious tenets is as slender as the Quaker's brim is broad. All this indeed would have been confined perhaps to the few who have come into close contact with him; but when men in the street passed people clad in attire as distinctive as a Blue Coat Boy's, whose very gait bespoke them as peculiar, an interest was aroused of a very special character. This interest is one most creditable to the "Friends." It is their unworldliness which has impressed the ordinary man for the most part. It is indeed true that the very opposite charge is often brought against them, and they are accused of extra sharpness in business transactions, and special skill in amassing money.

This, however, is probably but one form of that cynical doubt of integrity which always marks the man of the world. In connection with this observation about business, it is singular how certain branches of manufacture have almost entirely settled in Quaker hands—the cocoa industry, for example, and also, we believe, the manufacture of biscuits. The names of Fry, Cadbury, and Rowntree, in the one case, and of Huntley and Palmer in the other, at once suggest themselves.

It is very remarkable, in view of the universality of the name they popularly bear, that two quite different explanations are given of its origin. By some it is said they were called "Quakers" because they themselves trembled when under the influence of the Spirit; by others, because they were in the habit of calling on those whom they addressed to quake in fear of the judgment of God. In either case, we feel that they gave the impression of being deeply conscious of the reality and solemnity of the "powers of the world to come."

The time and the circumstances of their origin are full of significance and instruction. It was in the stirring tumultuous days of the Civil War, which rent our land into two opposing camps—religious and political—that George Fox, the founder of the Society, arose, and startled society by his preaching and his doctrine, which he attested by the sacrifices he made on their behalf. He was born in humble, though not in indigent, circumstances at Drayton-in-the-Clay, in Leicestershire, in 1624. That he was sincerely anxious to know God's will and to do it there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. After describing his mental struggles and efforts to find peace, and the various methods of relief recommended to him, he says: "I saw there was none of them all that could speak to my condition. 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. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition—viz., that I might give Him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, Who enlightens, and gives grace and faith and power," with much more to the same effect. As a natural result, Fox felt himself called to go forth and proclaim abroad the message of spiritual illumination he had found so precious to his own soul. "Now," he says, "when the Lord God and His Son Jesus Christ sent me forth into the world to preach His everlasting Gospel and kingdom, I was glad that I was

commanded to turn people to that inward light, spirit and grace by which all men might know their salvation and their way to God: even that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth, and which I infallibly knew would never deceive any." Thus did George Fox proclaim the truths which had so powerfully affected himself. His preaching met with varying success. Often enough he was treated with brutal violence, cruel persecution, and imprisonment. Of one thing, however, all who heard him were convinced, and that was that to him "to live was Christ." But we may not linger on the thrilling story. To do so would interfere with the purpose of this paper, which is to describe the Society as a religious organization, rather than to trace the steps by which it has become one of the recognised Christian communions of our land. It is impossible, however, to forbear mention of the illustrious names of the more prominent members of the Society who from time to time have lived and worked for God and their country in England and America. The names of William Penn, of John Howard, of Caroline Fry, of John Bright will spring to remembrance at once. Nor can we ever forget the splendid part played by the Society of Friends in the cause of freedom, of religious toleration, of prison reform, and of popular education. In these important matters they were for long, far in advance of their age. It is no small credit to them that, by their efforts and sacrifices, the whole tone of public feeling has been transformed and a mighty social change effected.

But, turning from these subsidiary questions relating to the more secular position of the Society, we must fix our attention on the characteristic feature of their religious attitude—their attitude, *i.e.*, to the Church of England and the leading Dissenting bodies. What was it in both, two hundred years ago, which seemed amiss or defective, and as calling for reform and improvement? What, in other words, was it then, what is it now, which they set before them as an ideal in regard to faith, practice, and worship? The answer is simple and impressive: It was *spirituality*. Truly a grand, even a magnificent, ideal, you will say. And as we recall the days in which Fox lived, the deadness of the Church and the ceaseless doctrinal controversy of the sects, one can little wonder that a holy soul, inflamed with the ardour of Divine longing for close personal intercourse with God, should exclaim with the Psalmist: "My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled: and at the last I spake with my tongue."

We must ever remember that though Quakerism was the particular form which the movement took in England and

America, it was really but a part of the very old and very widespread tendency which is termed Mysticism. The central principle of this movement was, perhaps one should say is, that "the knowledge, purity, and blessedness to be derived from communion with God are not to be attained from the Scriptures and the use of the ordinary means of grace, but by a supernatural Divine influence, which influence (or communication of God to the soul) is to be secured by passivity, a simple yielding the soul without thought or effort to the Divine influx." It is true that the *more orthodox* Friends render a very large measure of deference to Holy Scripture as a guide and teacher. Nevertheless, in doing so they are inconsistent with their own principles. But some may ask, How did this conviction, in the modified form in which Fox clung to it, lead him to separate from the Church whose creeds and confessions are so full of the spirituality of religion and the direct action of God the Holy Ghost upon the soul? We answer that had the Prayer-Book been understood and taught by the clergy of his day — had the broad clear statements of the Nicene Creed, *e.g.*, been impressed upon his mind by those whom he consulted—possibly George Fox's influence and burning zeal might have been devoted to breathing a new spirit *into* the Church, instead of forming a new sect *without* her. This doctrine or tenet of the "inward light," as it is the main distinguishing feature of the Friends' belief, needs somewhat full and careful treatment. When the sect first arose they were frequently suspected and accused of heresy with respect to the great fundamental truths of Christ's religion: His Divinity and humanity, His redemptive work, justification by faith as the only means of salvation. So much was this the case, that in 1689, in the reign of William and Mary, an Act of Toleration was prepared "which exempted Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws designed to force them to conformity," and which had a confession of faith attached to it, *drawn up with the idea of excluding the Quakers from its provisions*, on the plea "that they were not Christians."

In connection with this, George Fox says: "Though I was weak in body, and not well able to stir about, yet so great a concern was upon my spirit on behalf of truth and Friends that I attended continually with many Friends at the Parliament House, labouring with the members that the thing might be done comprehensively and effectually." The Confession of Faith so drawn up was accepted, and a perusal of its statements amply proves the soundness of their faith on essential points. Again, the question forces itself upon us,

Why, then, was the charge so frequently reiterated? Nay, why is it that even now the impression is still prevalent in many minds that the Friends are tainted with Socinianism? One reason may be, no doubt, that this is so because a certain section of the Quakers—perhaps we should say certain individuals among them—have held and taught what is practically deism. It is only right to say, however, that these have been formally disowned by the orthodox Friends in their representative capacity.

But there must be some deeper and more solid reason for the mistake. It was probably that, while the teaching of the days in which Quakerism took its rise dealt almost exclusively with the aspect of Christ's redeeming work as a satisfaction for sin and a means of deliverance from its penalty and condemnation, George Fox and his followers dwelt with unceasing emphasis on the work of Christ by His Holy Spirit in the soul of man. What has already been described as the doctrine of the "inward light" was the burden of their teaching. On describing his preaching to certain persons, Fox says: "I directed them to the Divine light of Christ and His Spirit in their hearts, which would let them see all the evil thoughts, words, and actions that they had thought, spoken, and acted; by which light they might see their sin, and also their Saviour Christ Jesus, to save them from their sins." We can easily understand how repugnant to all unspiritual teachers of Christ's truth would be this call to living practical godliness. Too often had Christ's life and death been represented as an artificial contrivance whereby God's wrath against sin might be averted whilst men allowed themselves in its practice. To George Fox, whose whole soul was penetrated with the passion for union with God and the practice of holiness, such teaching was of necessity abhorrent. There is this difficulty in dealing with the Friends' doctrine of the "inward light," that, while the more orthodox among them in their teaching approximate closely to what is ordinarily held and taught by the Church of England, others, and among them some of their most prominent members, teach that which goes a good deal beyond the simple statements of the Creed upon the Holy Spirit's work, and savours largely of the mysticism which is so strongly characteristic of their whole system. In relation both to revelation and providence, they appear to hold and teach that there are many things in connection with Divine truth which the Christian needs to know, not contained in the Scriptures, and in which the "Spirit guides into all truth." Barclay, their great apologist, says: "The Spirit of God leadeth, instructeth, and teacheth every Christian whatever is needful for him to know, *e.g.*, whether he is to preach; and,

if called to preach, when, where, and what he shall preach; where he is to go, and, in any emergency, what he ought to do." The same unerring guidance may be looked for with regard to prayer, its occasions and its subjects. The Friends further maintain that as the Apostles went hither and thither supernaturally guided by the Spirit, so He guides *all* believers in the ordinary affairs of life, if they wait for the intimations of His Will.

It is easy to see how teaching and belief such as these have moulded the Friends' view of the Bible, the Church, the Ministry, and especially the Sacraments. Like other sects, "they are both right and wrong—right in what they affirm, wrong in what they deny." That the Holy Ghost is our Guide and Teacher, and that "as many are led by the Spirit of God, they, and they only, are the sons of God," the Church and Holy Scripture both emphatically declare. But that He exercises His influence, and manifests His power to individuals only and not also to the Church which He created as the organ of His activities, this we do *not* believe. We repeat that the Friends have gone astray by substituting half a truth for the whole. In their revolt against the narrow conception of God's revelation which confined it to the written word spoken through men long dead, while practically denying the force and vitality of a message, conveyed by and to the Church in every age, they fell into the opposite error. Because the Spirit was obscured or forgotten by Dissenter and Churchman alike in the seventeenth century, they sought to mend matters, not alone by asserting with all the power and passion of strong conviction the truth that had been hidden of the abiding reality of the Holy Ghost as a Living Person ever at work in the hearts and lives of men. In this they were surely right, and we can never be too thankful to them for their efforts and faithfulness in doing so. But they went on to deny the equally precious truth of God's working by visible and external means to accomplish His gracious and sanctifying purposes for men; in which we feel they went entirely wrong.

Fixing their attention on one side of truth, they closed their eyes to another, quite as precious and in some ways more necessary.

The passage of Holy Scripture to which "Friends" in their writings again and again refer is St. Luke xvii. 21 (A.V.): "The kingdom of God is within you." This text in the margin of the A.V. is rendered "among you," and in that of the R.V., "in the midst of you"—a rendering which certainly seems to suit the context better. But, apart from a particular verse of the New Testament, to underrate or reject all outward

means in public worship save the limited use of human speech as a vehicle of instruction, is to contradict the plain teaching of the Lord Himself and forget the very nature we possess, as well as the universal experience of mankind.

It may be true that there have been individuals capable of rapt personal intercourse with God without the intervention of external assistance from the senses. Such, perhaps, were À Kempis, Madame Guyon, and George Fox himself, but to expect all men everywhere to be able to do as they did is folly and extravagance. However true it be that the words Christ spoke "are spirit and life," it is equally true that we are to "glorify Him in *body* and spirit, which are His," and this because "He is the Saviour of the body."

The very fact of the Incarnation, the frequent use of means by our Lord in working His miracles, the audible and visible signs of His coming, and His operations afforded by the Holy Ghost at His outpouring on the Day of Pentecost, these are sufficient by themselves to prove the reasonableness, the Scripturalness—nay, we must add the *necessity*—of signs to enforce and to interpret the thing signified. Of course, to these general considerations must be added, in the case of the Sacraments, the express commands in God's Word for their observance, and the strong testimony to their efficacy and value.

To a Churchman the Prayer-Book furnishes ample ground for his thankful obedience to the commands to practise Holy Baptism as the universal gate of entrance into Christ's Body the Church, and thankfully to appropriate the gracious gift of life and nourishment in the believing use of the other great Sacrament, the Blessed Supper of the Lord. But it will be worth our while to inquire into the strange error of practice into which the Friends have fallen with regard to the Sacraments. It has, of course, followed as a natural result of their rejection of everything external and material in man's intercourse with God. One of their own body thus expresses the matter: "The Friends believed that our Lord appointed no outward ordinance as of permanent obligation in His Church; and that though the Apostles practised *water-baptism* (*sic*) as a sign of admission therein, there is no evidence that it was meant to be perpetuated any more than other Jewish (?) rites, which were for awhile observed in the early Church. They believed that the one essential baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So in relation to the Lord's Supper, they discarded the sign that they might, as it were, with more intensity grasp the thing signified. To them it seemed that the actual partaking of bread and wine could no more be intended as a permanent observance than our Lord's great lesson

of humility when He washed the disciples' feet, and bade them do to one another as He had done to them, was meant to be in very deed repeated." In all this we see how their great central principle of the inward light given to every man to be his unerring guide had led them astray. Resolved to see only that side of the Gospel which asserted and insisted upon the *indispensable* necessity of spiritual communion with God, such as might be enjoyed by angelic or disembodied creatures, they treated with disdain the other part of man's nature, in which even now the Son of God sits enthroned in the Heavenly Courts. And here it is that we see, as elsewhere, the fulness and soundness of the Church's teaching. It would be impossible for the need of spiritual renewal as the essential part of baptism to be enforced with deeper emphasis than is done in the Church Catechism and the Baptismal Service. But then the Church does not presume to ignore the words of Christ's appointment, or to reject the example of His Apostles and the practice of His Church by omitting the use of that which is enjoined to meet the needs of our complex nature and help our struggling faith. In a word, the Quaker's mode of worship is incomplete, and it is so because it has failed to take into account all the fulness of spiritual life as revealed to us in the Incarnation. It has sought to be wise above that which is written, to explain away into figure and symbol what was meant for the acceptance of adoring faith as deepest reality and most certain fact. When St. Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ?" the Quaker, instead of welcoming the wondrous declaration with grateful heart, has set himself to deny the simple statement, and to refine away its strong assurance into a shadowy figure unconnected altogether with man as he is flesh as well as spirit. How much more sober in contrast to this nebulous teaching of the Friends is the wholesome doctrine of the Church Catechism! A Sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." Space forbids our going more deeply into this central tenet of the Quaker body, "the inward light" in its connection with the Sacraments.

But we shall find it interesting to note its bearing upon their assemblies for worship. They have carried the principle of plainness to its furthest point. There is nothing in them to appeal to the senses or awaken the imagination. All is plain to baldness. The one thing that is impressive is the unbroken stillness until a member happens to be moved by the Spirit to utterance. The following extract from Charles Lamb, marked

by all his exquisite charm, expresses the impression on an outsider of a Quakers' meeting. "Wouldst thou know what true peace and quiet mean? wouldst thou find a refuge from the noises and clamours of the multitude? wouldst thou enjoy at once solitude and society? wouldst thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species? wouldst thou be alone and yet accompanied? solitary, yet not desolate? singular, yet not without some to keep thee in countenance? a unit in aggregate? a simple in composite? come with me into a Quakers' meeting." Again, how touching in their quaint simplicity are the lines of Whittier, the Quaker poet of America:

And so I find it well to come
 For deeper rest to this still room;
 For here the habit of the soul
 Feels less the outer world's control;
 The strength of mutual purpose pleads
 More earnestly our common needs;
 And from the silence multiplied
 By these still forms on either side,
 The world that time and sunshine knows
 Falls off and leaves us God alone.

One more quotation in connection with the whole error of the Friends on the use of externals in religion from Bishop Westcott ("Social Aspects of Christianity") may fitly close this part of our article. Speaking of Fox, he says: "He had no sense of the action of the Holy Spirit through the great Body of Christ. He had no thought of the weak and immature, for whom earthly signs are the appropriate support of faith; no thought for the students of Nature, for whom they are the hallowing of all life. And so it came to pass that he acknowledged no gracious means for the personal appropriation of God's gifts, as he knew no stages in the popular embodiment of the truth. He disinherited the Christian society, and he maimed the Christian man."

Another imperishable truth Fox brought to light, and accentuated in his teaching about "the inward light," was that contained in St. John i. 9, which speaks of "the true light that lighteth every man," etc. In opposition to the crude and harsh Calvinism so prevalent at this period about election and reprobation, George Fox lifted up his voice with all his strength. In a passage quoted by Canon Curteis (Bampton Lectures), he says: "I was led to open to the people the falseness and the folly of their priests' doctrines. Was not Christ a propitiation for the sins of the *whole* world? He died for all, the godly as well as the ungodly." This was indeed a precious truth which needed enforcement. All the

while, moreover, it was enshrined in the Prayer-Book, and emphatically in the Catechism, where every Christian child was taught that "God the Son hath redeemed me and all mankind."

Space warns us that this article, however incomplete, must be brought to a close. Before doing so, it will be worth our while to sum up the obligations of English Christianity to this remarkable body of men. First of all, we place their insistence upon the necessity of *spirituality* in worship and in life, and their testimony to the reality and universality of the Holy Spirit's presence and influence in the Church and in the heart. The importance of this truth cannot be over-estimated. It is a truth of far-reaching significance, for it reminds us how that we are living under the dominion of a *living* Lord—that we have not been abandoned to the discovery of a Guide whose will and whose direction must be sought for only in the archives of the past; but One Whose abiding touch is to be perpetually felt in all the varying circumstances of life as it is lived to-day. With this, too, let us join Fox's protest against the immoral doctrines of salvation irrespective of character, together with its closely-related emphasis of the necessity of a holy life and practical righteousness. How greatly all this was needed in his own days history reminds us; and that these truths are recognised by ourselves is due in no small measure to the work done then by those earnest souls.

Of the less directly spiritual work they accomplished in the way of social reform no room remains to speak. But their testimony for strict veracity in connection with the taking of an oath, their undying protest against war, and against slavery and prison cruelty, must ever be remembered to their unspeakable credit. Let us thank God for the presence amongst us of a body of Christians whose very name is a synonym for integrity, and who present a type of character which in all its strength and singularity is conspicuous for its definitely English tone.

We close with the generous testimony of the Bishop of Durham: "No religious order can point to services rendered to humanity more unsullied by selfishness or nobler in far-seeing wisdom. Our prisons purified, our criminal law reformed, our punishments rescued, at least in part, from the dominion of vindictiveness, witness to the success of Quaker labours. Fox was the first who raised his voice against the evils of West Indian slavery, and after 150 years his Society was allowed to take a chief part in suppressing it. He claimed freedom for opinion in things pertaining to God, and little by little, through calm and patient endurance, his cause was won. He denounced war; and the doubt, the waste, the

threatening, which make an armed peace an almost intolerable burden, must even now be turning the hearts of many to that one experiment of Christian statesmanship which has not yet been tried—the policy of national brotherhood.”



ART. VI. — THE HIGH CALLING OF THE MAN OF GOD.¹

“But thou, O man of God . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”—1 TIM. vi. 11, 12.

WHEN St. Paul was writing his letter to Timothy, Timothy was acting for him as superintendent of the Church in Ephesus. The counsels which St. Paul gave him were addressed to him in that capacity, and not merely as an ordinary elder. St. Paul, after his release from his first captivity, had left him behind at Ephesus on a journey to Macedonia, and hoped soon to meet him there again. Probably on this later occasion Timothy was ordained by the solemn laying on of hands by St. Paul and the earlier elders of Ephesus to the work of the ministry, and subsequently commissioned by St. Paul to the presidency and superintendence of the mission at Ephesus. In the fullest sense of the word he deserves the highest designation which he, a human being, can bear—that of “Man of God,” which places him by the side of the chosen messengers of the will of the Eternal in the Old Testament. High, indeed, must he stand in our eyes if we look more closely at the difficult circumstances with which he had to contend at Ephesus. His connection with St. Paul, so far as we know from history, is from the outset unbroken, intimate, inexhaustibly happy for himself, and for the Apostle a source of refreshing and comfort in his trials. Not only does Timothy appear in this connection as the equal of the other co-workers and friends of St. Paul, but it is recorded that he surpassed them all. The Apostolic history shows us how closely he always walked in the counsels of his teacher, how diligent he was to spread the Gospel, how he renounced all, even harmless comfort, that he might not throw the least stumbling-block in the way of the kingdom of Christ. That noble feeling, that heart wholly given to God in Christ, binds

¹ A sermon preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, on St. Barnabas' Day, June 11, 1898, at the Consecration of C. H. Turner, D.D., to be Bishop-Suffragan of Islington, and Joseph Charles Hoare, D.D., to be Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong.