

time with a humbler spirit, more deeply, leaning more upon God.

2. We have need of patience in our dealings with other people. It will help us to be patient with others, especially with those whose good we are seeking, to remember what trouble we are having with ourselves. And again, after all, we do not know what they have to contend with. We are all of us mysteries and secrets to one another. Often we do each other a great injustice.

A Scottish professor called upon a student to stand up and 'construe.' 'Hold your book in the other hand,' said the professor. The student went on reading, apparently paying no heed. 'Do you hear me, sir?' The student ceased reading, still holding the book as before, but now having his head cast down. 'Sir!' shouted the professor. Whereupon the student raised his other arm—from which the hand had been cut off! It is said that the professor did all that a man can do who has done an irreparable thing. He rushed from his desk, and going down on his knees before that maimed lad, in the sight of all the class, pleaded, 'Will you ever be able to forgive me?' We had better take the deep and holy view of our fellow-men.

3. Finally, we have need of patience with God. Let us try to think of the task which God has upon His hands. What is that task? It is to save all souls, and this without interfering with their personal freedom. Here are some words from Milton: 'Many there be that complain of

Divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, He gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing: else he had been a mere artificial Adam as he is in the motions (puppet shows). We ourselves esteem not that obedience or love, or gift which is of force. God, therefore, left him free, set before him a provoking object even almost in his eyes. Herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did He create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these, rightly tempered, are the ingredients of virtue.'

For men like ourselves the darkness and tragedy of the world have no power to unsettle our ultimate confidence. Our faith in God does not rest upon the aspect of transitory things. Our faith is our loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is the acceptance by us not only of His moral rule, but also of His insight, of His report, of His interpretation and point of view. Our faith is our approach to His faith. And it was His faith that this world, though it was permitted to crush Him, was all the while God's world; and that, though men nailed Him to the Cross, and though there were found amongst them those who mocked Him in the agony of death, it was still our high calling to live greatly, to face and overcome the darkness in things in the power of His perfect confidence in the Heavenly Father's blameless will.¹

¹ J. A. Hutton, *Discerning the Times*.

The Quaker Faith.²

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WHAT is it that distinguishes Quakerism from other forms of Christianity? Principal Graham, in his important work, *The Faith of a Quaker*, suggests that it is the Quaker Meeting for Worship on a basis of silence. He says: 'This habit of worship is what a chemist would call the essential oil of Quakerism. Where it is abandoned the Quaker faith is abandoned too' (p. 241). Can it then be that the very essence of Quakerism, which has protested against all forms and ceremonies, is

² An essay by another Quaker suggested by Principal Graham's book, *The Faith of a Quaker*.

to be found in a form? Our author recognizes this difficulty, and goes on to show that silent worship is not a form—at any rate not an arbitrary form—but the natural outcome of the central Quaker conviction, that God's approach to His human children is within. Let me continue the quotation: 'It is a rash and dangerous thing to say that any external habit of religion is a sure test of the presence of its essential spirit, and the statement comes of a family of bad ecclesiastical dicta. Nevertheless it is true here. For contemplation, meditation, collectedness, inward purgation, are

the very processes of the mystical experience of the soul.¹

Further explanation of the form, purpose, and meaning of the Meeting for Worship is then given, and is followed by a description of how the ministry arises in such a meeting.

'Our meetings are much more than a convenient plan by which the ministry of several may be substituted for the ministry of one; they are a well-considered provision for the silence of the outward, inasmuch as that is a condition for the inward to find a voice' (p. 244). 'When the souls of many sitting in silence are being oriented together the effect of communion may be felt. . . . Each spirit collects itself . . . inwards to the trysting place of the Eternal. Revaluation takes place. . . . We take stock spiritually. . . . Grudges and hatreds come up for judgment; prayers for patience are put up. Often humility and penitence cover the whole man. We make contact each for himself with the Real and Eternal, and thereby gain strength over temptation and sin. . . . This is what Friends call a "living silence." . . . Out of the silence arises the ministry' (p. 242).

What of the ministry?

'Ministry, as understood by the Society of Friends, is not simply a function of the outward will or conscious purpose, nor represents only the thought of the ordinary superficial brain of everyday use; but it comes from a deeper stratum of our being, has its origin in, and derives its piercing and convincing power from, a level of personality deeper than the streams of current consciousness' (p. 242). This was strikingly the case with George Fox, 'the message reached the deep in his hearers' hearts, because it came from the deep in his own' (p. 244).

The above quotations indicate that ministry is not from the minister alone, nor even from the minister in conference with his Lord, but from the whole group together waiting upon God, and together being brought into harmony with Him and with each other. This is what 'Friends' mean when they speak of ministry 'arising in the

¹ Perhaps it is necessary here to explain that Quakers do not use the words 'mystical' and 'mysticism' in the narrow sense often given them by theologians, particularly German theologians. They mean direct inward communion with God, not the *via negativa* of the Quietist philosopher. The works of Professor Rufus M. Jones are the best guide to the Quaker view of mysticism.

meeting,' and of 'the exercise of a meeting.' There is common thought, common striving, and common experience in a Meeting that is held 'in the life.' And it is this which finds its expression in one utterance after another, often in so markedly harmonious a manner, that not infrequently strangers dropping into a 'live meeting' have supposed that there had been careful arrangement of speakers and subjects beforehand. (Though the harmony is far deeper than could have been produced by any human arrangement.) For this reason the Quaker preacher does not prepare sermons with the deliberate intention of delivering them at next Sunday's meetings. 'We should not prepare sermons, but we should prepare ourselves to be ready to preach when bidden to do so' (p. 251). How, then, does the sermon come? Principal Graham in answer dips into his own experience and tells us how it comes to him.

'It comes by waiting. When I sit down in meeting I recall whatever may have struck me freshly during the past week. This is in part, initially at least, a voluntary and outward act. . . . It means that the will is given up to service; and it is quite possible to stop everything by taking an opposite attitude. So thoughts suggest themselves—a text that has smitten one during the week—new light on a phrase—a verse of poetry—some incident private or public. These pass before the door whence shines the heavenly light. Are they transfigured? Sometimes, yes; sometimes, no. If nothing flames, silence is my portion. . . . Again, there are times when the initial thought strikes in of itself from the Inner Man beyond the will. These are times to be thankful for. . . . When the fire is kindled the blaze is not long. In five minutes from its inception the sermon is there, the heart beats strongly, and up the man must get' (pp. 245-6).

I have quoted somewhat largely from the chapter entitled 'Silence in Worship and the Workshop of the Ministry,' because 'Friends' manner of worship is the natural outcome of their great conviction that God makes Himself known to each one inwardly. It is this same experience that is normative for the whole of Quaker life and practice. For a statement of what it has meant in life, the reader of *The Faith of a Quaker* should turn to Book II., which, all too briefly, tells of four notable servants of God—Fox, Penn, Pennington, and Barclay—whose lives were founded upon it.

Of its practical bearing, as it has moulded the life and practice of the Society of Friends, there is no better statement than Books III. and IV. of this work. There the so-called 'distinguishing views' of 'Friends' are comprehensively set forth, and the practical results of the inward experience are emphasized. Throughout the whole of these sections two facts are constantly kept before us; first, that the 'Seed of God' the 'Inward Light,' the 'Divine Voice' is at work within every one; secondly, that it is as a man follows the Light, obeys the Voice, allows the seed to germinate and grow in him, that he becomes what God meant him to be, that he is being saved, to use the New Testament phrase. Thus Quakerism is fundamentally evangelical, in the best sense of that much abused word, in that it recognizes that the working out of salvation can only be the result of God working within, and that not the man who has the light is right, but he who follows it.

A mistaken notion often prevails that, because Quakers maintain that there is in every one something of God, they therefore hold that there is no need of a Saviour, and make light of sin. Such an attitude neither follows logically from their premises, nor is it as a matter of fact any more widely held amongst them than in other branches of the Church. On this point Principal Graham says: 'We regard sin as a law in our members from which we are to be redeemed by being crucified with Christ to the lusts which war against the soul' (p. 98). 'Sin is separation from God; and He [Jesus Christ] came to conquer sin' (p. 30). Quakers generally would concur in these statements, as also in the solemn words on the terrible nature of sin contained on page 44 in a passage too long to quote. When the Quaker says that the light of God shines in every heart, he does not hide from himself that the greatest moral difference may yet exist between one and another. He who receives the light and follows it is led into ever clearer truth; he who disregards it may finally become unable to recognize it, and fall into ever deeper corruption.

Nor is it true that in speaking and thinking of the Inner Light the Early Friends in any way belittled the person and work of Christ. To them the Light was the Light of Christ, and the growing experience of Communion with God, into which they came by following the Light, was Christ growing in them. His 'work' in the days of His

flesh, and His spiritual work within the individual were by them regarded as inseparable parts of the same whole.

The difficulty in understanding the Quakers' position, which was felt by the Puritans amongst whom they arose, and which is still sometimes met with, especially amongst Christians of a strongly dogmatic and ecclesiastical bias, is, I believe, due to the fact that the Quaker and the dogmatist deal with religion from opposite ends. We may classify under four heads all the generally recognized elements of religion. First, there is Ecclesiastical Organization; that is, all that concerns Order, Priesthood, Ministry, and so forth. Secondly, there is Theology in the stricter sense, including creed, dogma, and speculative doctrine. Thirdly, comes Experience, the Communion of man with God, both individually and collectively; and fourthly, Conduct in its widest sense, the relation of man to man, arising from, and expressing, communion with God. The great difference between Quakerism and dogmatic Christianity is that the former recognizes the last two elements alone as essential. The Quaker pioneers did not hold a theological creed contrary to that of their Puritan persecutors. They issued both as individuals and as a community several documents strongly asserting their adhesion to the great body of Christian truth held by their opponents. But a theological creed was not what they lived by; and they knew it was not. They maintained that theological orthodoxy was not necessary to Salvation. To suppose that it was, as many of the Puritans of their day seem to have supposed, was by them stigmatized 'notional' religion. They knew that the essential matter was experience of God within, and the surrender of one's whole life to His control. United with this, a necessary result of it, and only of less importance than it, was the new attitude to all men, expressing itself in truer moral ideals and fuller moral achievement, and awaiting its fulfilment when all men should follow the Inward Guide, and so the Kingdom of God should come.

Quakers, in short, lay all the stress on experience and moral aim. Dogmatic Christians, such as those who treasure the Athanasian Creed, those who in times past have practised religious persecution, and even perhaps some at the present day who do neither, take as essential something which is a matter of intellectual apprehension rather than

of spiritual vision, of philosophical definition rather than of moral life. There are two important corollaries of this Quaker valuation of the different elements in religion. The first is that the unity of the Society of Friends is not founded upon a commonly accepted creed, but upon a common experience and a common aim. The second is that 'Friends' have a vital contribution to make to the pressing and apparently intricate question of Christian re-union, inasmuch as if Christians generally were to recognize that unity in experience and aim alone is essential, and that dogma and ecclesiastical organization are secondary matters in which wide differences do no harm, re-union would present no real difficulties.

A word or two more must be said on the first point. The motto 'In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity' represents the general attitude of 'Friends' to religious differences. They are tolerant therefore of varying theological expressions, for these in their estimation are non-essentials. On the other hand in experience and aim, which are regarded as essentials, a great measure of unity prevails. The book before us gives a good example of this. The second, third, and fourth books of *The Faith of a Quaker*, in which the author describes religious experience and its expression in corporate life and moral standard, are thoroughly representative of the best Quaker thought on these matters, because they deal with Quaker fundamentals. The first book, on the other hand, which is theological in the strict sense, contains many views which are far from being generally held amongst 'Friends.' The Society of Friends has no agreed theology.

With regard to theological beliefs it may, I think, be taken as generally true, that the nearer we come to experience, the nearer we approach agreement; and the more speculative we become, the more we differ. Out of several illustrations of this that might be taken from this book I select one, Principal Graham's treatment of the doctrine of the Person of Christ. It has been justly said his doctrine is neither Trinitarian nor Unitarian. Christ is divine, but man too is divine. The difference is in degree, not in kind. With such a doctrine many Quakers would disagree, but it is a speculative doctrine. I can imagine scarcely any disagreement with his statements about Jesus Christ which come more directly from experience, e.g. He is 'Saviour, Redeemer, and Founder of our Faith' (p. 50). 'He

is the Revelation of the Divine character' (p. 53). 'The Mission of our Lord was to reunite in family reconciliation, restoring love and order and peace in the Father's house, replacing the communion marred by sin. . . . He came to conquer Sin' (p. 30). In these statements we can all unite because Christian experience can check and confirm them; but when we attempt to define our Lord's person philosophically, so many factors other than experience enter in that sharers in the same experience begin to disagree.

What of the defects of Quakerism? Have I spoken too enthusiastically of its principles? Is there not another side? There is. Quakerism, which arose out of, and expressed, the visitation of the Holy Spirit, creating new lives in common men, has tried to live on tradition and to become the select spiritual club of a sort of religious middle-class aristocracy. In other words, it became lifeless and worldly, just as other Churches do. Without the incoming of the Spirit it can never be effective. We all need the life of God. Apart from this supreme need, which we share with all Christians, there is one defect which, I believe, largely accounts for the limited appeal which Quakerism has made. It is the reverse side of one of its chief excellences. Having recognized that creed and theology ought not to have the place generally assigned to them, 'Friends' have been satisfied to give them no place at all. Thus their ability to attract the more thoughtful people has been severely restricted. Principal Graham remarks more than once how their expression of truth in the early days did not appeal to the cultured seeker for God; and the same is often true to-day. Lack of clear and careful thinking as to the meaning and implications of their religious experience has greatly weakened their power of helping others to share that experience. Quakerism still awaits adequate theological expression. Because it is an attempt at a Quaker theology, one can be thankful for the first book of *The Faith of a Quaker*, while by no means entirely agreeing with all the views therein expressed. More work needs to be done by other thinkers. For example, is there a theory of 'the work of Christ,' the Atonement, which is reconcilable with the central Quaker conviction of the Light Within? I believe one can be found, but none hitherto current will do. The Society of Friends requires to think out its theology, and that not only for its own sake and for the benefit of

possible new adherents, but as a contribution to the great re-shaping of Christian Doctrine, which is a widely recognized need to-day.

If 'Friends' do this, and in the power of the Spirit proclaim their message in a way that can be

understood, the future apologist for Quakerism will no longer have to bewail the fewness of our numbers as does Principal Graham. For in the words of the late J. W. Rowntree, 'Quakerism will no more be the cult of a few, but the life of a multitude.'

Contributions and Comments.

Peace!

HARK to the voices without,
Voices that clamour and shout:

'There is peace in the world to-day!
Peace and goodwill among men!
Let the sword be a ploughshare again!
There is peace, there is peace!' they say.

Peace! is it peace they say?
Peace in the world to-day?

Peace among men and goodwill?
What are the flames that arise,
Reddening the eastern skies,
Blackening both valley and hill?

Red are the eastern skies
With murder and ruin and lies,
And a reek that is blown to the West:
Over and under the shout
Of the voices that clamour without
Comes the wail of a soul distress'd.

Hark to the voices within!
Louder and louder their din
Till they mix with the voices without;
There is war in the house and the home,
Merciless, fierce as the foam
That beats on the shattered boat.

Eyes full of brotherly hate,
Crowding of feet at the gate,
Hands that are greedy of prey:—
Hear you the words that they speak?
'Woe to the wealthy and weak!
There is war in the world to-day!'

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Some Notes on 4 Maccabees.

READING recently the high-flown, half-Stoic oration in which some Alexandrian Jew has

commemorated the martyrdom of Eleazar and his wife and seven sons at the hands of the tyrant Antiochus, I was struck with two curious approximations to the language of the *Odes of Solomon*, which deserved at least a secondary place among the parallels with which the Commentators adorn their margins. The first of these was the comparison of the endurance of the venerable Eleazar to the persistence of the rock that breasts the storm:

'For like some beetling crag Eleazar the father nerved his understanding to break the force of the mad waves of the passions' (4 Mac 7^o).

It will be remembered that the Stoic theme is the lordship of right reason over pains and passions: the figure employed is not unlike that which we find in the *Odes*:

But I stood unshaken like a firm rock
That is beaten by the waves and endures.

Ode Sol. xxxi. 11.

No doubt other parallels may be adduced for the language, which does not necessarily involve quotation in its coincidence of thought. But here is another more striking parallel from the chapter in which the final victory of the martyrs of the true religion is announced, and an imaginary monument is set up, inscribed with the legend of their endurance. The conflict in the arena, where the successive athletes, father, mother, and sons, meet and foil the tyrant is described; and it is affirmed that 'Piety has won, and sets the crown on the heads of her own athletes':

θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐνίκη, τοὺς ἑαυτῆς ἀθλητὰς
στεφανώσα.

The language reminds one of an obscure passage in the *Odes of Solomon*, where men fight for a *crown of immortality*, and it is said that

Righteousness hath taken the crown
And hath given it to you:

All the conquerors shall be inscribed in the Lord's book.
Ode Sol. ix. 10, 11.