

**A STUDY IN
DOCTRINE *and* DISCIPLINE**

HENRY W. WILBUR

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INTRODUCTION.

The object of the study upon which we herein enter, is not to discover or formulate fixed and infallible doctrine to control thinking, and curb the individual conscience. Our purpose is rather to condense and codify, and possibly interpret, certain beliefs which have been held by Friends since the foundation of our Society, and particularly the doctrines held during the Society's formative period. In addition, to present such a view of the discipline as will lead to wider and more thorough understanding of our principles and testimonies, the manner of our worship, and the method of conducting our business, on the part of our membership.

In considering the doctrinal deliverances of Fox, Barclay, Penn and their associates of the seventeenth century, it is important

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that we keep certain facts in mind. These highly favored and undoubtedly inspired persons, were limited by the general knowledge of their time, touching many if not most of the matters which they treated. They were not able to rise entirely above the current superstitions of the age in which they lived.

The findings of modern science, and the development of the critical method touching both sacred and profane history, have modified many of the contentions, and qualified all of the deliverances of the seventeenth century writers. If the great Presbyterian Church were to attempt today to formulate a declaration of the fundamental faith of Calvinism, it is almost certain that the statement would not be couched in the terms of the Westminster Confession. If the Anglican Church, either in its English or American branches, should undertake to restate the grounds of religious faith, it is not at all likely that the language of the

Thirty-nine Articles would be employed. So today, Friends, in an attempt to state the spiritual truths of their faith, must use the seventeenth century material inherited from the fathers, not so much as the last word of the Society to the world, as a statement of general fundamental truth, vital in its essentials, but subject to varying interpretation and progressive application to human conditions. This rational view of even fundamental doctrine, will appear more plainly as this study proceeds.

THE INNER LIGHT.

We presume that all classes of Friends will substantially agree that the particularly distinguishing doctrine of the Society is its claim and conception regarding the Inner Light. Without this doctrine, and possibly our peculiar theory of worship and the ministry, the Society would have had little reason for existence in the beginning, and still less for continuance since. Going with this doctrine, and an essential part of it, is the belief in Immediate Revelation, elaborately set forth in the second proposition of "Barclay's Apology." No other affirmation that could be classified as doctrine, caused early Friends to be more misunderstood or involved them in more trouble with Prelacy in England, and Puritanism in America, than this. The first of the persecuting statues against Quakers passed in

Massachusetts, denominated them "a cursed sect of hereticks," "who take upon them to be immediately sent of God."

As a matter of right and necessity, we should go for the initial consideration of this doctrine to George Fox himself. While statements regarding the Inner Light are much more clear as to where the Light is to be found, than as to what it really is, every reference regarding this doctrine is less involved in mystery and less cumbered by obscure verbiage, than other statements regarding the beliefs of early Friends. There seems to have been a common agreement among seventeenth century Friends, that this light is **in** all men. It will be well to keep carefully in mind these two little words, "in" and "all," for in them largely rests the meaning which differentiates the Friendly doctrine from the popular notions about the nature and function of the Holy Spirit, whether considered as the third person in the trinity, or a mere

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manifestation or emanation of the Divine Spirit.

At a great meeting of "professors and people" at Mansfield in 1648, George Fox said, "I was moved to go after them, and bid them mind the Lord's teaching in their inward parts." At the Vale of Bevor during the same year he declared, "Now the Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that **every** man was enlightenel by the divine light of Christ." About 1652, he was at Firbank Chapel on a certain First-day. He tells us that he preached about three hours, directed **all** to the spirit of God in themselves." At a street meeting in Lancaster, he "directed them to the Light of Christ, the heavenly man, and to the spirit of God in their own hearts." In 1655 or 1656 George Fox was in the parish of Menheriot, in Cornwall, and had a meeting at the house of a Friend. On this occasion he called them "to the Spirit of God in themselves by which they might know

the Scriptures, and be led into all truth; and by the Spirit might know God, and in it have unity one with another.”

In 1663 George Fox was a prisoner in Lancaster Castle. One of his companions in durance vile was Major Wiggan, a Baptist preacher. It seems that Wiggan challenged Friends to a debate, and the details may be told in the language of the Founder himself. He says:

“Whereupon I got leave of the gaoler to go up to them. And entering into discourse with him, he affirmed, ‘That some men never had the Spirit of God, and that the true light which enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world, is natural.’ For proof of this assertion, he instanced Baalam, affirming, ‘Baalam had not the Spirit of God.’ I affirmed and proved, that Baalam had the Spirit of God, and that wicked men have the Spirit of God, else how could they quench it, vex it, grieve it, and resist the Holy Ghost, like the stiff-necked Jews? To this second assertion I answered, that the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into

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the world, was the life in the world, and that was divine and eternal and not natural. As he might as well say, the word was natural as that the life in the word was natural. And wicked men were enlighteneth by this light, else how could they hate it? It is expressly said they hate it; and the reason given why, was, 'because their deeds were evil;' and they would not come to it because it reproveth them; and that must needs be in them which reproveth them. Besides that light could not be the Scriptures of the New Testament; for it was testified of before any part of the New Testament was written; so it must be the Divine Light, which is the life of Christ, the Word, before the Scriptures were."

We here find George Fox doing what was common in his time, making arbitrary distinctions between what was considered divine and what was considered natural. Yet there is nothing in the early conception of the Inner Light which does not harmonize with modern thought regarding the solidarity of the universe, and the divine order of its government. One Lord and one

law mark the development and destiny of things material and things spiritual. It may be now asserted that the divine light in the soul of man is as natural as the blood that courses in his veins, or the vitality that pulses in his nervous system. May we not conclude that Quakerism, interpreted by the internal witness in the twentieth century, considers that the normal man is he who feels the Divine Light and seeks to follow it, while the abnormal man is he who hates the light, and seeks the cover of darkness to do deeds that are evil?

TESTIMONY OF PENN AND BARCLAY.

There is a passage in William Penn's "Reply to an Unknown Author," which rationally and clearly deals with this matter of naturalism. The "unknown" charges that the Inner Light of Friends is simply a natural manifestation. Penn replies as follows: "Yet, if by natural may be meant, that

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every man that is born into the world has a portion of this Light, or illuminating principle, to direct him in the way to blessedness, I should not very much quarrel at the word; it being, in fact, natural to all men to have it; because all men that are born (from which the word nature springs) as certainly have it as that they are born into the world."

This assertion simply acknowledges that Divinity is resident and universally operative; the author of all things internal and external, visible and invisible.

It is the affirmation of the universality of the Light, and that it is in men, not outside of them, that gives the doctrine its distinctive quality. This was well, if quaintly stated, by Isaac Pennington, in these words: "In what sorts of earth is the heavenly seed found? In all sorts; in thorny ground, stony ground, highway ground, and good ground. God's inward lightnings enlighten the inward world throughout, so that

God hath not left any man without a witness in his conscience against sin."

Early Friends were not a little troubled by the charge of infallibility which this doctrine brought them, and later Friends have not always made it clear that infallibility is not consistent with limited and finite insight. Penn's "unknown author" or critic made what might seem this troublesome query: "Why did not all men know the light, if they had it?" Penn made this crisp rejoinder, which cannot well be improved: "All have reason, but all are not reasonable, all do not see it. So all have the light, but all do not obey it. It is not the light's insufficiency, but man's disobedience, that renders him incapable of the knowledge of divine truth."

Touching the matter of infallibility, Penn makes this further statement, speaking of men generally: "They are perfect only as they completely follow the light, and no farther. For it is not opinion, or speculation, or notions of what is true, or assent to, or

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the subscription of articles or propositions, though never so soundly worded, that according to their sense, make a man a true believer, or a true Christian, but it is conformity of mind and practice to the will of God."

"Barclay's Apology" is a severely theological and philosophical treatment of what he considered Quaker doctrine, although the disposition to consider this book an absolute authority is undoubtedly decreasing. But Barclay makes the basis of the revelation internal and not external. He declares in his Second Proposition, that "the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed." He claimed, however, that the inward revelation could not "contradict the outward revelation of the Scriptures, or right and sound reason." It is further declared by Barclay: "Yet from hence it will not follow, that these divine revelations are to be subject to the test, either of the out-

ward testimony of the Scriptures, or of the natural reason of man." Penn more clearly and vigorously stated the independent character of the inward revelation when he declared that the Scriptures "cannot savingly reveal Christ to a soul; neither can they give us the soul and substance of those things that are hereby declared. They are an exact map or picture of things, but not the things themselves." In his estimation, "it is the office of the divine light within man, or light within, or witness of God," to work an apprehension and acceptance of spiritual truth.

The inference from all this is, that instead of man measuring his conception of truth by the authority of the Scriptures, he must test the truth, and also the Scriptures, by the divine witness in his own soul. In other words, truth can only be apprehended by the spirit of truth, and revelation is only understood by the spirit which brings forth revelation.

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It is easy to see how this doctrine became a "hard saying" to the generation which conceived that the spirit of revelation ceased with the writers who gave us the last book of the New Testament canon. It is not so easy for the traditional Friend, who likes to lean on the authority of the "first spreaders of truth," in the seventeenth century, to see that the logic of the doctrine of immediate revelation has projected itself into the twentieth century, and will be a live issue while human life and human thinking continue in the world. If the revelation of Scripture must pass in review before the searching eye of the Divine Spirit in man, then the deliverances of the founders of our Society, and the whole collection of "ancient" Friends, must be brought face to face with the spirit of truth in the souls of men today. Immediate revelation is not simply a doctrine for favored men and women, and for particular times and climes, but a law of the human spirit for all men and all time. The tempta-

tion is to consider the inward revealings as fixed and final. But we shall have occasion further on to deal with inspiration as a progressive rather than a plenary matter.

THE DOCTRINE'S ANCIENT ORIGIN

There was no claim to originality made by the early Friends touching the theory of the Inner Light. George Fox believed that he was dealing with a distinct doctrine of primitive Christianity. Barclay made numerous citations from such worthies as Augustine, Clement, Tertullian, and even Athanasius and Gregory the Great, to prove that they, at least, believed in immediate revelation. In his Third Proposition, Barclay says, "So we distinguish betwixt a revelation of a new gospel, and new doctrines, and a new revelation of the good old gospel and dictrines; the last we plead for, but the first we utterly deny." It may well be admitted that there are many old truths that need to be re-stated if not re-

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discovered, but to infer that there are not laws, even for the material universe, to say nothing about the spiritual world, which may yet be revealed to men, is to unduly magnify the little that we know, against the infinite extent of what we do not know. To still more arbitrarily assume that there is not a world of truth beyond anything that we can now think or dream, in store for men, is to limit the divine purpose toward the universe.

Barclay took a wide range in considering the universality and extent of the existence and operation of the Divine Light. He even insists that the "heathen" of the ancient world were partakers of this bounty, and asserts that "they had knowledge and discovery of Jesus Christ inwardly, as a remedy in them, to deliver them from the evil seed, and the evil inclinations in their own hearts." Seneca said, "There is a Holy Spirit in us that treateth us as we treat him." Cicero called it an "innate light," and Clem-

ent of Alexandria declared that "The Divine Power hath filled the universe with the seed of salvation." Barclay says, "Hence Justin Martyr stuck not to call Socrates a Christian, saying, that 'all such as lived according to the divine word in them, which was in all men, were Christians, such as Socrates and Heraclitus, and others among the Greeks.'"

We are told of a book translated from the Arabic, which gives an account of one Hai Eben Yokdan, a lonely dweller on a desert island. From this book Barclay quotes: "That the best and most certain knowledge of God is not that which is attained by premises premised, and conclusions deduced; but that which is enjoyed by conjunction of the mind of man with the supreme intellect, after the mind is purified from its corruptions, and is separated from all bodily images, and is gathered into a profound stillness." This leads Barclay to affirm with great positiveness, that the Divine Indwell-

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ing "is that universal evangelical principle, in and by which salvation is exhibited to all men, both Jew and Gentile, Scythian and Barbarian, of whatsoever kindred or country he may be." To know "Christ in them," is, from Barclay's standpoint, the supreme knowledge for all men.

HISTORIC PERSON OR INNER PRINCIPLE

This brings us logically to consider whether or not the early Friends distinguished between the person of Jesus and the Spirit of Christ. It has to be admitted that the theological language of the seventeenth century did not leave nice distinctions regarding this matter always clear, and the terms we now use do not so very much better present the claims of an internal, spiritual saving principle, as distinct from popular ideas about vicarious salvation, based upon the death of Jesus. We are forced in this connection to admit that the proneness of men to higggle about words

and definitions, has caused most of the trouble, the misunderstandings, and the petty divisions, to say nothing about the painful persecutions that have taken place in the history of the world, in the name of religion.

Barclay makes an effort to sustain a distinct affirmation that the Light was not identical with the person of Christ. He says, the words, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you," "could not be understood as Christ's person." The new spiritual birth, Barclay declares, "cometh not by the outward preaching of the gospel, or knowledge of Christ, or historical faith in him." In his estimation it is possible for men to have wide knowledge of the historic Christ, without the Spirit of Christ possessing the heart and ruling the purpose.

William Penn in his "Reply to a Nameless Author," says, "I distinguish between an historical and a spiritual discovery of Jesus of Nazareth." Again, "If by Jesus

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of Nazareth he only means what he took of the Virgin Mary, and will not consider him as the Eternal Word, but as man, like to us in all things, sin excepted, he is not the light within that we declare of and worship."

George Fox himself made the freest possible use of all the terms applied to Jesus, using them in that semi-mystical sense, which, while not always definite, leaves little warrant for believing that he went no deeper into the spiritual verities than belonged to the popular conception of Jesus.

LATER TESTIMONY OF THE LIGHT

Job Scott was born at Providence, Rhode Island, Tenth month 18, 1751, and died on the 22d of Eleventh month, 1793, at Ballitore, Ireland. He was not a birthright member of the Society, but joined by conviction about 1770, and began speaking in meeting in 1774. He taught a Friends' school the larger part of his adult life, and

was evidently a more than ordinarily intelligent exponent of what he considered Friendly doctrine. Coming midway between the primitive and modern period in the history of the Society, what he said is of a more than ordinarily representative character. His ministry was performed before the period of intolerant unsettlement came to the Society, so that his soundness or unsoundness cannot be a matter of dispute. His Journal abounds in what would even now be considered trite and strong sayings in dealing with the matters that impressed him. That he exalted the office of the Inner Spirit is abundantly evidenced in all his writings, yet his language is quite unlike that employed by other representative Friends, either of his own or an earlier period. We make a few extracts as samples of the sentiments he held, and of the literary style employed in expressing them. He says, "Thou mayest think Christ can do something for thee, without the Spirit. If

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thou dost think so, thou hast not yet learned the A, B, C, of religion." "Some may be surprised and query, 'Were the heathen under the new covenant?' I answer, that so far as the law was written in the heart, and conformed unto, among the heathen, Jews, Mohametans, Negroes, Indians, or any other race of men whatever, they were so far under the new covenant." Again, he says, "Men were ever prone to idolatry—speculative faith, speculative salvation, and an outside knowledge and opinion respecting Christ, now pass current for gospel faith and salvation. The only real salvation of souls was always the spirit of man united to God, the fountain of divine life." The necessity of internal spiritual communion and experience is strongly set forth in this quotation: "The death of Christ is nothing at all to thee, savingly, further than thou hast the living, saving efficacy of it sealed to thee. . . . Thou mayest imagine and dream a thousand things about faith, regen-

eration and imputation; but unless the Holy Spirit change, and give thee to feel and know salvation, in and for thy own soul, thou would be just as much benefited by imagining that Joseph of Arimathea, or any other person had purchased thy salvation, and by imputation of what he had done, God would at some future time save thee." We close the extracts from this eighteenth century preacher as follows: "The gospel is no upstart thing of only about eighteen hundred years' standing." "The Christian religion did not then first commence when Christ first appeared in that prepared body that was born of the virgin Mary. . . . The union of God and man in the one spirit has ever been, and ever will be, the alone, full rest and complete satisfaction and enjoyment of souls."

Elias Hicks and Job Scott were contemporaries, except that the former lived to be eighty-two, and the latter died at forty-two; the one having been born in 1743 and the

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other in 1751. A study of doctrine could hardly be comprehensive, which did not include a consideration of the views of Elias Hicks, touching the vital doctrines and testimonies of the Society, not to say religious doctrine in general. What he thought and said about the Inner Light is of special interest and importance in connection with the deliverances of the early Friends on the same subject.

In a sermon preached in the North Meeting House, Philadelphia, Eleventh month 16th, 1824, we find the following: "There is no outward comforter, no outward teacher, that can do the work for us in any way, or give us a knowledge of what the will of the father is; for nothing else can do it but the divine teacher within, the light and spirit of God." In the Trenton Meeting House, Twelfth month 12th, 1824, Elias Hicks among other things said: "A saving belief in God is based on internal evidence. Therefore everyone of us has the same light and

life, according to his necessities, as Jesus Christ had according to his proportion. And there is nothing that ever saved any one under heaven, but the light; and this is God in the soul, revealing himself by his own nature and essence." In Hester Street Meeting House, New York, Fifth month 22nd, 1825, his reported sermons make him say: "Well, then, we see that every rational, obedient soul under heaven is a son of God. But nothing else can answer to make them so but being led by the spirit of God." In Wilmington, Delaware, Eleventh month 19th, 1826, he gave utterance to these words: "Moses, the prophets, Jesus Christ, and all of his apostles and faithful disciples, never did and never could go any farther than to recommend to the light within the spirit of God, which Jesus said should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them, or all that was necessary for them to know."

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It by no means follows that all or any Friends in any branch of the Society, unqualifiedly endorse the utterances made by Elias Hicks on this or other subjects which he treated. Still, it would seem that there is substantial unity of thought on the part of all of the Friends quoted in dealing with the fundamental doctrine of the Society. This leads us to remark, that the differences which have diverted and divided the Society did not hinge on this primary doctrine, nor upon any interpretation of it, but arose over doctrines regarding which there had been wide diversity of opinion, and often real indifference, from the first appearance of Friends in the seventeenth century down to date.

INNER LIGHT OR HOLY SPIRIT.

The question is not infrequently asked, "What is the difference between the Friendly theory of the Inner Light, or Christ within, or the Spirit, and the evangelical doc-

trine of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the trinity?" The main sources of information touching the Holy Ghost, are to be found in the existing, if not the accepted creeds of Christendom. The Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Apostles' Creed, furnish the framework for that dogma, which human ingenuity has elaborated into a voluminous doctrinal literature, seldom read or studied, except by theologians, and students of religious history.

It is hardly possible to consider the office and function of the Holy Ghost, without examining the doctrine of the trinity. The Athanasian Creed declares: "And the Catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost." The first of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, and the Protestant

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Episcopal Church in America, makes this affirmation: "And in unity of the Godhead, there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Touching the third person in the trinity, the fifth of the Articles of Religion says: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." The articles from which these quotations were made were formulated and adopted by a convocation which met in London in 1562. What is commonly called the Westminster Confession, the creed of the Presbyterian Church, was the work of the Westminster Assembly, more or less continuously in session from 1643 to 1649; a time contemporary with the most fruitful period of the ministry of George Fox. In regard to the trinity the Westminster Confession says: "In the Unity of the Godhead there be three per-

sons of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

These extracts may not be very clear in their meaning, and the literature elaborating these doctrines is not of the most enlightening sort, yet out of it, it is possible to get enough definite information to show that between the theory of the Holy Ghost and the doctrine of the Inner Light or the Spirit of God in the soul of man, there is a wide distinction which amounts to a very great difference. A few sentences from Philip Schaff's voluminous "History of the Christian Church," will help to intensify and make plain this difference. The evangelical position regarding the Holy Ghost largely rests on the theory of the "procession;" this theory being one of the things

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which divided the Greek and Roman churches. The Greek Church held the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father alone, while the Church of Rome, with equal tenacity and pertinacity, affirmed that the "procession" was from both the Father and the Son. It will be seen that evangelical Protestantism took over the Roman rather than the Greek theory.

As to how the Spirit proceeds, and what he does, we quote from Schaff. "The Spirit proceeds when he is sent on his divine mission to glorify the Son, and to apply the redemption to man." Again quoting from Schaff: "The temporal mission of the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, beginning with the day of Pentecost, and continuing ever since." Schaff further says: "The Saviour speaks of the office and work of the Spirit rather than his being and essence. Nevertheless, there is a difference which must not be overlooked. In the procession the Spirit is active; in the mission

he is passive." This is an admission that the needs of theology are such, that a step beyond the statement of Jesus has to be taken, to sustain the doctrine under discussion.

It will not be hard for the reader to gather from the foregoing testimony, that the Holy Ghost of the creeds is a person; that he exists outside the individual soul; that he may or may not come into the soul to perform a mystical office, in accordance with his relation and function as the third person in the trinity, and as part of the elaborate plan of salvation, beginning with the dogma touching the fall of man and passing on to the vicarious sacrifice in the death of the historic Jesus on the cross outside of the gates of Jerusalem.

A reference to the utterances of the early and later Friends, from Fox, Barclay and Penn, to the later deliverances of Scott and Hicks, will show that the Spirit to

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which they referred, is an internal, vitalizing, saving principle, which does not have to be brought in from the outside; that however it may be defined, and in what terms it may be described, it is the saving Spirit which was in the world before Jesus was born, and has appeared unto all men. The Friend is not tempted to unravel the mystery of the trinity, to understand how distinct substance and personality may be one personality. There is nothing in the Friendly theory of the Light Within, inconsistent with holding any of the varying beliefs about the nature of Jesus, or the divinity of Christ, and hence the spiritual unity about which Friends talk, and which they to a certain degree experience, consists in each individual acknowledging and relying upon his apprehension of the Indwelling Spirit, and carries with it no requirement as to uniformity of doctrine or conformity to creed. One might believe in the trinity in its extremest sense, and still

be in touch with the Friendly fundamental, although it may be said more or less advisedly, that it is doubtful if any considerable number of Friends during the first hundred and fifty years of the history of the Society, believed in the personal and mathematical trinity.

AS TO PERSONS AND SUBSTANCE.

In the famous Chancery trial in New Jersey, between the two branches of the Society, following the misnamed "separation," as recorded in "Foster's Reports,"* we find a considerable statement of doctrine. Thomas Evans was an important witness for the so-called Orthodox party, and underwent a searching examination and cross-examination touching doctrine in general and that of the trinity in particular. The questions asked had to do with the existence of "distinct persons" in the Godhead, and the question propounded to

* Foster's Reports, Vol. 1, page 292.

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Thomas Evans was finally answered by him in this manner: "I have already stated that the Society of Friends do not believe that there are distinct and separate persons in the Godhead." He had previously said: "We have always denied that the Deity consisted of distinct and separate persons; and while we have believed that there were three, have as uniformly maintained that those three are one." This is simply a statement of an impersonal trinity, and involves an apprehension of manifestation rather than substance.

The language of Thomas Evans undoubtedly conforms to that generally used by seventeenth century Friends, when referring to the trinity at all. It was not an unusual thing for them to refer to "the three that bear witness in heaven," but their conception of the trinity was always in the mystical and not the mathematical sense, although it need by no means be inferred that there is no mystery about the

mathematical trinity. It should also be remembered that it was much more common to use severely theological terms two hundred and fifty years ago than it is now. William Penn, who wrote "The Sandy Foundations Shaken," in 1663, which was an ingenious and elaborate refutation of the commonly accepted doctrine of the trinity, later in his life referred to the mystical trinity in the words of apparent approval. In "The Key," written 1692, in speaking of the charge of Unitarianism made against Friends, he said: "But they are very tender of quitting scripture terms and phrases for schoolmen's, such as 'distinct and separate substances,' from which people are apt to entertain gross ideas and notions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." It was evidently his desire to avoid such a reference to these matters as would leave room for considering a material body and parts in the conception of the Infinite. This led to the charge often made against the early

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Friends that they were opposed to the trinity. This fact places Friends in our day who are similarly accused in very good company.

It seems practically conclusive that if there was ever anything like a trinitarian controversy really inside the Society of Friends, it was not during the first century of its existence; and that is not saying that Friends in those days thought exactly alike regarding this doctrine. What controversy of moment hinged on this subject did not receive its principal intensification from the preaching of Elias Hicks, but rather from the position held by Joseph John Gurney. This forceful English Friend evidently entertained notions regarding the trinity in substantial accord with the articles of Episcopacy and the confession of Presbyterianism. At various points in his "Essays," he took pains to affirm the "personality of the Holy Spirit." His acceptance of the "processional" theory, hereto-

fore referred to, was identical with that of the creeds, as the following will show. "The Father is the first; the Son is the second; the Holy Spirit is the third. The Son is subordinate to the Father, because he is of the Father—the only begotten son of God. The Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son, because he is the Father's and the Son's. The Father sends the Son. The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit." *

Many Friends of different shades of thought both in England and this country, would undoubtedly have much unity in this rather mystical statement made by Whittier: "God is One; just, holy, merciful, eternal and almighty Creator, Father of all things. Christ the same eternal One, manifested in our humanity and in Time; and the Holy Spirit, the same Christ, manifested within us, the Divine Teacher, the

* Gurney's Essays, pages 112, 113.

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Living Word, the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

This is in line with the utterances of Penn and Evans already quoted. In the main it appears that Friends have always preferred to think of the trinity, when it vitally concerned them at all, as standing for different manifestations of the Divine Spirit, rather than a combination of distinct persons in one being.

It is true that in his letter to the Governor of Barbadoes, George Fox apparently used pronounced trinitarian terms, in a way that amounted to a paraphrase of the Apostles' Creed, if not an endorsement of it. Yet it is hardly thinkable, and surely not warranted, to suppose that Fox considered this letter in any sense a creed, specifying what Friends must or should believe. This view is held by Rufus M. Jones, who says: “The letter took the form of a declaration of faith, and is often referred to as an authoritative statement of the belief of Friends.

It was, however, not written for that purpose, and is not by any means a full statement of their belief. It does not even mention the principle which held the leading place in Fox's teaching and preaching." *

There should never have been any bitter controversy inside the Society of Friends over the trinity, or any of the other speculative doctrines of the Christian sects. These matters were not made a test of fellowship in the formative and forceful period of the Society, and are not anywhere essentials of real spiritual unity.

The fundamental Friendly doctrine of the presence of the Spirit of God in all men, and the consequent conception of a resident, rather than a non-resident divinity in the universe, with all of the large hopeful views of life and destiny which go with this conception, is having wide confirmation in our

* George Fox; An Autobiography, vol. 2, note on page 492.

time. The reverent apostles and exponents of that type of modern science which does not indulge in materialistic dogmatism, and who are furnishing a more rational basis for religious faith, are simply restating and adapting the principles set forth by Fox, Penn, Barclay, and their associates. Sir Oliver Lodge, in his little book, "The Substance of Faith," sums up the findings of the real student in the domain of both nature and religion, in these words: "The Christian God is revealed as the incarnate spirit of humanity; or, rather, the incarnate spirit is recognized as a real intrinsic part of God. 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.'" These words, having in them the ring of genuine Friendly truth, may well close our study of the doctrine of the Inner Light.

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CONCERNING THE MINISTRY.

The Friendly theory of the ministry and worship logically grew out of the fundamental doctrine of the Society, which we have been specifically considering up to this point. It was impossible to graft the doctrine of the Inner Light on to the organic stock of any branch of the seventeenth century church. Because of this fact what was known as the "good order of Society," began its course of development, resulting in the peculiar form of worship and the unique type of ministry characteristic of the Society.

The primary theory of the ministry was that spiritual truth could only be made manifest to the soul of man by the revealing and quickening of the Spirit of Truth in him. In the somewhat elaborate exhortation "To Friends in the Ministry," issued

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by George Fox, in 1654, very little detailed advice is given. He exhorts them to receive their power from the Father. "All Friends that speak in public, see that it is in the life of God," he says. There is some good advice about "waiting to receive the power." Reliance upon the Light was a repeated exhortation. The reason for this was obvious, and was expressed by Fox in one of the clearest sentences to be found in his entire writings. He says, "With this light you come to reach the light in every man, which Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world withal; and here the things of Christ come to be known." More simply stated, the inspired best in the speaker is always able to reach the best in the listener. This is a concise and helpful course in homiletics for all persons who speak the truth to men.

The Tenth Proposition of Barclay deals with the ministry. The following question and answer sums up his whole argument:

“What maketh and how cometh a man to be a minister, pastor or teacher in the Church of Christ? We answer, by the inward power and virtue of the Spirit of God.” It is held in the Tenth Proposition, and confirmed by the authority of Luther, that for any class of men to assume an authoritative and arbitrary ministerial function, was a form of wickedness. On the contrary, every good Christian (woman as well as man) is a preacher. It is affirmed that there is no distinction of laity and clergy in the Scriptures. While all are preachers who are endowed with the gift, there may be differences of power and efficiency in the service. There seems to have been a well-defined determination on the part of early Friends to avoid the creation of any thing that would savor of a priestly class.

CONCERNING THE MINISTRY.

Two motives seem to have influenced the Friendly position regarding the min-

istry, in addition to its claimed spiritual qualification. One was the feeling against creating a professional class, and the other the revolt against pay for ministerial service. The first position grew naturally out of the theory of spiritual leading which was the minister's essential qualification.

Objection to the monetary consideration was partly a matter of principle, and partly a matter of polity. If the primary qualification was voluntary and spiritual, intellectual ability and training were at the best only incidents of the gift. The gift itself cost nothing, and called for no monetary reward. Spiritual insight being freely received, it should be freely exercised.

In the seventeenth century the clerical scramble for "holdings" in the English Established Church had become repulsive if not scandalous to a certain type of Christian conscience. To avoid the possibility of creating a separate priestly class, and that the minister might not be bound even indirect-

ly, by obligations to those to whom he ministered, seem to have been the operating causes which developed the Quaker theory of a "free gospel ministry." It would appear, however, that those who consider the word "free" as referring to the absence of pay, have grasped only a part of the real Friendly theory. In fact, there are reasons for believing that the chief objection of George Fox to a professional ministry was not the monetary consideration. During his American visit, when he was about closing his labors in Rhode Island, he says: "John Burneyate and John Cartwright, being come out of New England into Rhode Island before I was gone, I laid this place (Shelter Island) before them, and they felt drawings thither, and went to visit them. At another place, I heard some of the magistrates said among themselves, 'If they had money enough, they would hire me to be their minister.' This was where they did not well understand us and our principles;

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but when I heard of it, I said, 'It was time for me to be gone; for if their eye was so much to me, or any of us, they would not come to their own teacher.' For this thing (hiring ministers) had spoiled many, by hindering them from improving their own talents; whereas our labor is, to bring every one to their own teacher in themselves." There are several important points in this most suggestive extract. It will be noted that Fox says nothing in condemnation of the proposal to "hire" him, so far as the pay part of it was concerned. His keen insight went deeper than that. Hiring a minister had its principal danger in that it tempted people to depend on him; to let him do all of the public service, while they neglected their own spiritual obligations and forgot that their real teacher was the spirit in them, and not the minister set over them. His gentle hint that a talent in the ministry may be improved by exercise, is as rational as it is true. The history of our So-

ciety, however, has demonstrated very clearly that depending on the minister to make a meeting, is not an evil entirely confined to cases where the ministry is paid and professional. Not a few of our meetings have been pauperized as to a vocal ministry, because the members leaned too heavily on the preacher, instead of "improving their own talents."

It is interesting and suggestive to note what George Fox says regarding John Burneyate and John Cartwright. He helped them develop a concern to visit the Friends on Shelter Island. Feeling that these ministers could help the islanders, he was not above suggesting the need, and the way to meet it. This illustration of the fact that the call for service may come indirectly as well as directly, by inspired suggestion as well as by individual call; that in fact, it may originate in a meeting desiring to be served, as well as in a minister de-

siring to serve, is a Friendly moving which deserves recognition and sympathy in our time.

CHARACTER OF INSPIRATION.

A tendency gradually crept into the Society to localize inspiration, the acknowledged original basis for the ministry. This led to the feeling that inspiration was arbitrarily poured into the recipient from the outside, and that it was confined to the time and place where the ministry was immediately performed. In short, that the inspiration of the preacher was plenary, which resulted in an assumption of approximate if not actual infallibility and authority made on behalf of the minister, and sometimes inferred by him. This conception was not in entire accord with the spirit of the Quaker theory.

The office of the quickening spirit is to intensify the message, and give it carrying power; to put fervor and freshness into dry

words; to clarify and sanctify the gifts and endowments of the individual, and the acquired wisdom which he may possess. It does not seem to be the function of inspiration to furnish words or phrases, or to take the place of that equipment for service which under the divine plan, has to do with the education of the faculties, and the schooling of all the powers with which men and women find themselves endowed. These are matters which the individual must do for himself, as surely as he must feed and clothe his body.

Real inspiration may come anywhere, and at any time; it may keep from the hour of its first inception, until the time for it to perform its office work has fully come. It is an error, bordering on superstition, to assume that the inspiration which comes between meetings, if kept for the meeting when it comes, is a type of preparation too unfriendly to be tolerated. There may be as much reason and necessity for trying

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inspiration, as for trying the spirits to find out whether they are of God.

Individual inspiration may not be for every individual that hears it, neither is it the last word of the Spirit to men. Others will receive further light, while the continued inspiration will come short of a full deliverance of eternal truth. All will be more fully benefited and blessed, when all in sincerity and with sympathy for human need, give the message which comes to them, which is simply their contribution to the life of a meeting in which all are in some way ministers.

CONCERNING WORSHIP.

The Friendly theory of worship is entirely in harmony with the fundamental conception of the divine relationship, and the call and qualification for the ministry. Its basis is communion with the infinite Spirit, and its initial movement always individual. From the standpoint of the Friend, listening to preaching, to the singing of hymns, or to vocal and formal prayer, does not constitute worship. Any or all of these exercises may be incidents of worship, but they are not the thing itself.

The whole matter is thus summed up by George Fox, in a paper issued in 1661; "Christ's worship is free in the Spirit to all men, and such as worship in the Spirit and the truth are those that God seeks to worship him; for he is the God of truth, and is a Spirit, and the God of the spirits of all flesh.

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He hath given to all nations of men and women breath and life, to live, move and have their being in him, and hath put into them an immortal soul. So all nations of men and women are to be temples for him to dwell in; and they that defile his temple will he destroy." In regard to public worship, he insisted that meetings "should be held in the power of God," and that they "should be set up in wisdom."

Barclay, in his Eleventh Proposition, lays down the following theory of worship: "All true and acceptable worship of God is offered in the inward and immediate moving and drawing of his own Spirit, which is neither limited to places, times nor persons. For though we are to worship him always, and continually fear before him, yet as to the outward signification thereof, in prayers, praises, or preachings, we ought not to do it in our own will; but when and where we are moved thereunto by the stirring and secret inspiration of the Spirit of God in our hearts."

It is evident that the early Friends believed that they were restoring the simple form of public worship which obtained in the apostolic church. The Friendly theory, therefore, neither forces nor forbids forms of expression in meetings for worship. The worship itself is personal and internal; an attitude of the human spirit towards the Divine Spirit; resulting in an atmosphere emanating from the life, that makes for spiritual strength and unity.

Barclay discourses at considerable length upon the theory of silence, but in no sense claiming that silence is in itself a virtue. Rather it is a means to an end; the end being conscious internal communion with the Spirit of God. It was a preparation for the divine illumination, and whatever expression in the shape of the spoken word might come. Out of this theory and practice of silence have grown certain notions regarding mental emptiness, which are no real part of the fundamental Friendly conception. To stop think-

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ing is an impossibility; but to so direct and govern thinking, that the soul may be at one with the Divine, is possible, and is the central purpose of silence, whether in the meeting for worship, or the larger daily experience of life. There are few cases on record of our meetings in the early days being entirely silent. There were periods of silence so prolonged, as would, in our time be wearisome, and these were often followed by a period of preaching so extended, as would now be more tiresome than the silence. The thing for us to consider to-day is not an imitation of detailed methods as to time or manner of silence or sermonizing, but a live, present-day adaptation of the Friendly spirit of worship.

The records do not enable us to state definitely how much singing the early Friends had in their assemblies, but that it was not infrequent, is quite certain. Barclay treats the matter quite fully, and rather rationally. He says: "As to the singing of psalms there will not be need of any long discourse; for

that the case is just the same as in the two former of preaching and prayer. We confess this to be a part of God's worship, and very sweet and refreshing, when it proceeds from a true sense of God's love in the heart, and arises from the divine influence of the Spirit, which leads souls to breathe forth either a sweet harmony, or words suitable to present condition." This statement probably represents the positive testimony of early Friends regarding singing. It was accompanied by much vigorous condemnation of formal singing, and machine-made music of all sorts. George Fox tells us that on a certain occasion, when he and John Lancaster were under arrest, the latter "was moved to sing with a melodious sound in the power of God," while Fox on the same occasion was moved to preach, the one exercise being considered as much inspired as the other. John Wilhelm Rowntree, in his "Essays and Addresses" (page 98) tells us, that "a minute of 1665 in the manuscript Book of Discipline bids

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Friends not to quench or discourage 'Reverent singing, breathing forth an Heavenly sound of Joy with Grace, with the Spirit and with the Understanding,'” In view of all this, there does not appear to be any well-founded reason for the sweeping hostility to all music, which finally characterized the Society.

THE DISCIPLINE.

One of the first attempts at making anything that looked like a discipline for the Society, or any part of it, consisted of the rules formulated by Edward Burrough for the government of the gatherings of Friends in London. This was in 1662. A few years later, about 1668, George Fox prepared the nineteen articles, erroneously called "Canons and Institutes." There is practically no doctrine in any of the articles, the matters treated relating almost entirely to individual conduct, and the government of the Society's activities. The evolution of the Discipline of the London Yearly Meeting began its slow growth about this time. The minutes and epistles approved by the meetings in annual session, formed the nucleus from which was developed the two volume edition used by our English Friends, and published in 1906. In this

way, the discipline began to take on the deliverances which were more or less doctrinal, and became the model for similar writings among the Yearly Meetings, as they were established in America.

From 1672 until 1782, the London Discipline existed in manuscript form only. In the latter year, a large committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting collected and codified the various authoritative utterances put forth by the Society. Since then the rule seems to have been to take nothing from this book, but to make frequent additions to it, until statements regarding many phases of doctrine, practice and polity, are now bound up in its pages. It is interesting to note that while there are seventeen separate citations in the London Discipline under the general head of "Christian Doctrine," there are but three of them that had their origin during the seventeenth century. But one of these citations is credited to the eighteenth century, while thirteen of the doctrinal deliverances

found utterance in the nineteenth century. The seventeenth century extracts include Fox's Letter to the Governor of Barbadoes, a "Declaration of Christian Doctrine Given Forth on Behalf of the Society" in 1693, after the death of Fox, and a quotation from his Journal, bearing date, 1645. It is worth noting that the "Declaration of Christian Doctrine," set forth in 1693, contains no clear or adequate statement regarding the fundamental theory of the Society. Whether the promulgation of this "Declaration" as a creed, which must be accepted by all Friends, was responsible for the trouble which culminated in the so-called "separation" in this country, we are unable to say. That it is in some way responsible for the remnant of speculative theology which still remains in one of our disciplines, is more than likely.

In this country the disciplines in all of our Yearly Meetings existed in manuscript only until about the beginning of the nineteenth century. But the first printed editions were

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not for general distribution and use in the Society. This is particularly true of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. An edition of this discipline was issued in 1825, apparently by private subscription. A preface to this edition, in the form of an "Address to the Reader," contains the following statement:

"Hitherto the Books of which the following pages are an exact transcript, have been kept in the different meeting houses of our society, under the charge of the overseers and clerks; and how deeply soever we, as individuals of the same community may be interested in their contents, they have for the most part been kept as secret and as sacred as the books of the Hindoos.

"We have always been of the opinion that what is in itself good, cannot be too widely diffused, or too extensively known. We believe that the Rules of our Discipline, have this tendency; and so believing, we have taken the usual means of making them public by printing them; and we earnestly hope, that all our good intentions may be realized."

What persons constituted the "we" referred to in this "Address" we know not.

The publisher, according to the imprint, was J. Mortimer, and his address, 74 South Second Street, Philadelphia.

Most of the provisions of the disciplines of the seven Yearly Meetings of our branch of the Society are similar. They vary somewhat in phraseology, and especially in the use of theological terms, and in statements of what is at least an approach to doctrine. Entire harmony characterizes the deliverances of all of the disciplines touching a free gospel ministry, and the conduct and conversation of members. It should be remembered, however, that even the testimonies which form such a vital part of the discipline have been matters of growth and development.

The advice given as to the use of intoxicating liquor and tobacco has developed step by step, as more light and an awakened conscience dealt with these habits. The Philadelphia discipline of 1806, contained a chapter on "Moderation and Temperance." In this particular deliverance the exhortation is en-

tirely as to the use of drink, the practice of total abstinence not even being hinted. There is an advice cautioning Friends against giving rum and other strong liquors at vendues, as an inducement to more vigorous bidding. There was also a caution against importing and retailing distilled liquors, or being engaged in the distillation of such liquors. The unnecessary frequenting of taverns was discouraged, and Friends were advised not to engage in the business of keeping houses of public entertainment, or beer houses, and to be cautious about signing applications for such places.

The Baltimore discipline of the same year contained practically the same provisions, except the statements were more condensed, and less argumentative.

A chapter on "Distilled Spirituous Liquors," in the New York discipline of 1810, and the chapter on "Taverns" in the vital points, did not vary from the Philadelphia

discipline, while in part the same words were used.

Without doubt the position of the Society at that time was an advanced one, even for a religious body to take, on the liquor question in the opening years of the nineteenth century, and twenty years before the organization of the first temperance society. Even these testimonies were based on advices in the older manuscript disciplines which simply discouraged smoking on the public highways, drinking to excess, or in public places.

Touching all of the concerns which were not fundamental testimonies in the early days of the Society, we see that Friends have merely kept up with the spirit of progress, or at best have merely anticipated as a people what individuals have worked out in life and conduct. This is particularly true regarding slavery. There were many Friendly voices crying in the wilderness before the Society in its disci-

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pline set the seal of its condemnation on the great iniquity, and practically made slave holding an impossible condition of membership in the Society.

The point of it all is that our disciplines are not unalterable documents like the laws of the Medes and Persians, but represent a manifest development in full harmony with the growth of things in the world of life. In studying the discipline it is absolutely necessary that two view-points be taken. In the first place we must consider the conditions of thought and life at the time when the disciplinary provisions were first formulated. In the second place, we must look at all our testimonies and requirements from the standpoint of the present, in connection with right social standards and general need. While a forced disciplinary morality may be better than none at all, the function of the discipline is not to dominate the conscience in an arbitrary way, but to lead to that constant self-examination and genuine concern, which shall make

the individual conduct right from choice, and not because of fear or compulsion.

In a comprehensive study of the discipline, its application in the past should be considered. This can only be done thoroughly by consulting the records of monthly meetings.

Such examination will reveal the large place which disownment occupied at a certain period in the history of the Society. Unpleasant as some of these revelations may be, it is not possible to adequately understand present conditions, and the inherited obstacles which exist in many communities, without a pretty thorough understanding of what took place during the period when the internal work of the Society was so largely negative and repressive.

Happily the zeal for disowning members has nearly disappeared from our meetings, the word "disown" having been dropped almost entirely from our disciplines. It is worth considering, however, whether this reaction from

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austerity has not developed carelessness and indifference regarding certain lines of conduct which are required by the rules of the discipline. Concern and care regarding these matters were never more important than now. Dealing with human frailty and waywardness, in the right spirit, possibly with no thought of disowning the offenders, but with an eye single to their "preservation and recovery," is a constant demand upon the patience, the love and the sympathy of the concerned Friends in every meeting.

Many of the provisions in our disciplines are fine samples of splendid idealism. To completely live up to them would mean practical human perfection. To be unduly sensitive and exacting regarding these matters, for self, and especially for others, may mean a condition only a little less serious in its results, than indifference itself.

As we study the development of what we call doctrine, and the evolution of the discipline, we must remember that neither rep-

resents a finality. The healthy motive is the controlling desire to know the truth, and to secure that liberty which the truth brings. Always remembering that the discovery of new truth and the fresh apprehension of the truth which may be old, are essentials of progress for individuals, institutions, and even religious organizations.

