THREE LECTURES

ON

THE EARLY HISTORY

OF

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

IN

BRISTOL AND SOMERSETSHIRE.

BY

WILLIAM TANNER.

ALSO,

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO THE LIFE OF GEORGE FOX,

PREPARED FOR "FRIENDS' LIBRARY" BY

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The objects contemplated in the establishment of that association were to provide a library of biblical and religious literature, and ecclesiastical history, and to promote the delivery of Lectures upon subjects of a kindred character.

Bristol, 3d of Fifth Month, 1858.

The American Publisher has ventured to supply the deficiency referred to on page 88, by William Tanner, by prefixing to the "Lectures," with the kind permission of the author, Thomas Evans, "Introductory Remarks to the Life of George Fox," prepared for the commencement of the first volume of "Friends' Library."

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In tracing the history of the Christian Church from its earliest establishment, through the periods of its decline, until it reached that long and dark night of apostasy, which for ages preceded the Reformation, we find, that in proportion as the life and substance of religion decayed, a multitude of ceremonies were introduced in its place, little, if at all, less onerous than the typical institutions of the Mosaic law. This has ever been the result, when the ingenuity of man has attempted to improve or adorn the simplicity of spiritual religion. There is a natural activity in the human mind, which prompts it to be busy, and can with difficulty submit to that self-renunciation which the gospel enjoins. It is much easier for a professor of religion to be engaged in the performance of rites and ceremonies, than to yield his heart an entire sacrifice to God. Objects presented to the mind through the medium of the natural senses, produce a powerful impression, and are more easily apprehended, than those truths which are addressed to the intellectual faculties only, and are designed to subdue and control the wayward passions of the human heart. It is not surprising, therefore, that instead of that worship

of the Almighty Father, which is in Spirit and in Truth, and which requires the subjection of the will and activity of man, and the prostration of the whole soul in reverent humility before God, a routine of ceremonies and forms should have been substituted, calculated to strike the eye and the ear with admiration.

As the period of degeneracy was marked by the great amount and increase of these ceremonies, so, when it pleased the Most High to raise up individuals, and enlighten them to see the existing corruptions, and how far the professed Christian Church had departed from original purity, and to prepare them for instruments in working a reformation; one of their first duties was, to draw men off from those rites by which their minds had been unduly occupied, and on which they had too much depended, instead of pressing after experimental religion in the heart.

This, of necessity, was a progressive work. The brightness of meridian day bursts not at once upon the world. There is a gradual increase of light, from its earliest dawn until it reaches its fullest splendour; yet the feeblest ray which first darts through the thick darkness, is the same in its nature with the most luminous blaze. It makes manifest those things which the Divine controversy is against, and leads back to the state of gospel simplicity and purity, from which the visible Church has lapsed. And although the light may not be sufficiently clear

to discover all the corruptions, nor the state of the world such as to bear their removal, yet those holy men, who act up faithfully to the degree of knowledge with which they are favoured, are worthy of double honour, as instruments for correcting the growing evils of their day, and preparing the way for further advancement in the reformation.

It is interesting to observe, that the different religious societies which have arisen since the Reformation, all aimed at the attainment of greater degrees of spirituality and a more fervent piety, than was generally to be found among the sect from which they sprung. The idea, that forms were too much substituted for power, and a decent compliance with the externals of religion, for its heart-changing work, seems to have given rise to them all. Each successive advance lopped off some of the ceremonial excrescences, with a view of making the system more conformable to the Apostolic pattern. In the early part of the seventeenth century, considerable progress was made in this work, tending to prepare the way for that more full and complete exemplification of the original simplicity of the Gospel, which was exhibited to the world by George Fox and his coadjutors. It is no arrogant assumption to assert, that to whatever point in the reformation we turn our attention, we find the germ of those principles, which were subsequently developed and carried out by the founders of our Society, actuating the Reformers and leading them to

results, approaching nearer to those attained by FRIENDS, in proportion to the faithfulness and measure of light bestowed on the individual.

Opinions very similar to those held by our Society, on the subjects of the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, baptism and other ceremonies, superstitious rites, war, oaths, and a ministry of human appointment and education, were promulgated by individuals at different periods, antecedent to the rise of Friends, though not advanced as distinguishing tenets by any considerable body of professors.

The reformation from Popery under Edward VI. was but partial. Many of the errors and superstitions of that pompous and ceremonial religion were retained; partly because the dawning light was not sufficient to reveal their true character, and partly in compliance with the popular prejudice in favour of ancient institutions, and of a showy and imposing form of worship. There were, however, men of eminent piety and religious discernment, who perceived the degeneracy from primitive Christianity, which gave birth to those corruptions, and had since fostered their growth and promoted their increase, until they threatened to supplant vital religion.

On the death of Edward, the hopes which these had cherished, of further advances toward the original simplicity and purity of Christianity, were extinguished by the accession of Mary, and the barbarous persecution which followed. Many sealed

with their blood the testimony of a good conscience, and by faithfulness unto death, not only proved the sincerity of their profession, but prepared the way for those nearer approaches to Divine Truth, which have since been made. If the clearer spiritual light of the present day, unfolds to us some points in which the belief of these holy men was defective, it also places in stronger relief, as a noble example worthy of all imitation, the undaunted firmness and integrity of their characters, their love of Christ, and their devotion to his cause. It cannot be viewed in any other light, than as a Divine interposition in behalf of his suffering people, that this bigoted and relentless queen so soon closed her career, after a brief and inglorious reign.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, she found herself surrounded by Papists strongly attached to their religion, and zealous for its support. Her prudence dictated a cautious course in changing the existing order of things. Too great or sudden alterations, might have hazarded the peace of the realm, and even brought her crown into jeopardy. Elizabeth, moreover, was fond of magnificence in her devotions; and in this respect, the pomp of popery suited well with her inclinations. It is questionable, indeed, whether her preference for the Protestant religion was not as much owing to her affection for her brother, King Edward, and respect for the memory of her father as to any decided convic-

tion of its nearer approximation to the standard of Scripture Truth.

She restored the liturgy and order of worship as established by her brother, and strictly enjoined its observance, though many of her Protestant subjects conscientiously objected to some parts of it. The idol of uniformity, and the long-cherished idea of a catholic Church, to which the Papists had made such lavish sacrifices of human life, had strong attractions even for Protestants; and Elizabeth, as well as her successors, persecuted even to death, not a few of her pious subjects, in the vain attempt to coerce the consciences of men, and reduce them to one common standard.

The doctrines and form of worship revived by Elizabeth after the death of Mary, left the minds of many much dissatisfied. They desired a more thorough separation from the errors of Popery; a simpler method of church government, and a purer and more spiritual religion and worship. These were called Puritans; a name which, though bestowed on them with no good design, yet agreed well with those things for which they contended.

The Protestants who fled to Frankfort, during the persecution under Queen Mary, unanimously concluded to dispense with the litany, surplice and responses of the Church of England: that public service should begin with a general confession of sins, then the people to sing a psalm in metre in a plain tune, after which the minister should pray for

the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and proceed to sermon. These innovations on the established order of the service-book, led to warm disputes, which soon spread into England; and though at times the breach would seem nearly closed, yet the controversy was again and again renewed, and efforts made to procure further reformations from the errors of the Romish Church.

Soon after Elizabeth came to the throne, she appointed a commission to review the liturgy as established by Edward. The alterations made in it, were rather in favour of the Papists than the Puritans, by many of whom it was viewed as more objectionable than the old Service Book. It was, however, presented to parliament, and adopted as the national form of religion, by "The Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Service in the Church, &c." The same parliament passed an act vesting the entire ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the crown, and empowering the queen "with the advice of her commissioners or metropolitan, to ordain and publish such further ceremonies and rites as may be for the advancement of God's glory and edifying his Church, and the reverence of Christ's holy mysteries and sacraments."

The act of uniformity was the source of great mischief to the Church. Many conscientious ministers and others could not conform to its requirements, believing them to be opposed to the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. The rigorous enforce-

ment of the act, while it punished the bodies of men, and wasted their estates, did not convince their minds; but rather strengthened their opposition, and alienated their affections from the Church.

In the doctrinal views of the two parties, the Conformists and the Puritans, there was little avowed difference. The uneasiness arose chiefly from a conscientious objection to the assumptions of the bishops, the introduction of numerous unscriptural offices and titles in the church — the laxity of her discipline—the prohibition of extemporaneous prayer — the numerous festivals — the use of organs and other instruments of music in time of worship—of the sign of the cross in the ceremony of baptism—kneeling at the ceremony of the supper—bowing at the name of Jesus and on entering or leaving their places of worship—to the ring in marriage, as well as parts of the words spoken during the rite; and to the use of the surplice and other vestments by the priests during Divine service. Such were the principal grounds of difference in the commencement of the dispute; and though the Conformists affected to consider them non-essential, yet they insisted on them with a pertinacity, which increased the opposition and widened the breach, until at length it produced an entire separation, from which have sprung the various classes of dissenters.

That the Puritans were conscientious in their objections to the established religion, will not be questioned by such as are acquainted with the piety of

their lives, and the patience and fortitude with which they endured persecution for their religious opinions. Connected with these, was a steadfast resistance to the assumed power of the crown, as visible head of the Church, to prescribe to, and control, the conscience of the subject, in things not essential. Against this they manfully contended, while the reins of government were in the hands of their opponents. But when the revolution of civil affairs placed *them* in possession of the power, they too soon forgot the principles of rational and Christian liberty, for which they had formerly struggled, and exercised on others, the oppression and cruelty, which they had so much condemned in their own case.

Contending for their religious liberty, naturally had the effect to make them more jealous of their civil rights; and hence, during the subsequent reign, we find them standing forth, as stanch opposers of the encroachments of the crown.

That they were instruments in the hand of Providence, for carrying forward the reformation from the errors and superstitions by which Christianity had been overlaid, cannot be doubted; yet as this was a gradual work, accomplished by slow degrees, the corruptions not being all discovered at once, but progressively, according to the faithfulness of those engaged in the work; so others rose up and separated from them, who carried the reformation still further.

The first of these was the society of Brownists, who contended that the Church of England was not a true church, because of the Popish corruptions which she retained and enforced, and her persecution for the sake of religion — that the power of church government was in the members — that the ministry was not subject to human selection and ordination, but that any brother who felt engaged, might preach or exhort, and that prayer was not to be limited to prescribed forms. Their mode of discipline was congregational, every society being distinct and independent of the others; holding intercourse and communion, however, as brethren and professors of a common faith. The severe persecutions which they experienced from the government, induced many of this persuasion to fly to the continent, where they met with little better treatment. They appear to have been a zealous and sincere people, living with strictness and regularity, and preaching with much fervour and energy.

The spirit of inquiry was now abroad, and increasing in vigour and activity. Instead of receiving opinions on the authority of church canons or dignitaries, there was a growing disposition to bring them to the test of revealed truth. Many which had long been implicitly adopted, and transmitted from one generation to another, were now called in question and warmly debated. As early as 1617, John Selden published his History of Tithes, in which he contends that they are of human, not

Divine appointment. It was not to be supposed that those whose worldly interests were affected by such an opinion, would suffer his book to pass without severe animadversion; and as a readier mode of counteracting its effects than to resort to argument, the author was summoned before the High Court of Commissions, and, after various threats, compelled to recant his sentiments.

Another class of dissenters, which took its rise about this time, was the Society of Independents, which grew out of the Brownists. Its name is derived from the system of church government, in which each congregation formed a distinct body, regulating its own affairs, judging of the fitness of persons applying for membership, and of the propriety of expelling such as walked disorderly, independent of all others. Their doctrines agreed in the main with those of the other dissenters. During the times of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, they were distinguished by their attachment to toleration, which the Presbyterians denounced as "an hideous monster, the great Diana of the Independents." They were not, however, constant to their own principles; for, when they subsequently acquired the power, they exercised considerable severity toward both Friends and Baptists. They received the patronage and support of Oliver Cromwell, and are often mentioned in connexion with the history of Friends.

At a very early period of the Reformation, the

subject of water baptism appears to have attracted the serious attention of pious men, and their researches into it, led some of them to differ from the generally received opinions respecting it.

From Fuller's Church History it appears Wickliffe held "that wise men leave that as impertinent, which is not plainly expressed in Scripture — that those are foolish and presumptuous, who affirm that infants are not saved if they die without baptism; and that baptism doth not confer [grace], but only signify grace which was given before. He also denied that all sins are abolished in baptism; asserted, that children may be saved without baptism, and that the baptism of water profiteth not, without the baptism of the Spirit."

During the fifteenth century, there were a number of persons in England who denied the necessity of water baptism, and held "that Christian people were sufficiently baptized in the blood of Christ, and needed no water; and that the sacrament of baptism with water, used in the church, is but a light matter, and of small effect." Some of these suffered death by fire, for adherence to their principles; and for a long period afterwards, those who entertained similar views, were the objects of severe persecution. In the sixteenth century, the Society of Baptists or Anabaptists took its rise. They objected to infant baptism as unauthorized by Scripture, and rebaptized those adults whom they considered as believers and admitted to the privileges

of their communion. Besides their peculiar views on this subject, some of them held war to be inconsistent with Christianity, and doubted the lawfulness of oaths under the gospel dispensation. They also insisted that the gospel ought to be free, and denied the right of tythes or other compulsory maintenance for its ministers. They were generally persons of great seriousness of mind and strictness of deportment, searching the Scriptures diligently; and being wearied with the ceremonies and impositions of men, were desirous to practice that form of religion only, which they believed to be sanctioned by our Lord and his apostles.

Their views of the Christian ministry did not make it essential, that those who took part therein, should prepare for it by the acquisition of learning; but gave liberty for any to speak a word, either in doctrine or exhortation, who believed themselves called thereto and qualified by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some were zealously opposed to a hireling ministry, declaiming against it in their preaching, by which they subjected themselves to severe sufferings. Many of this persuasion were imprisoned during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and patiently endured their confinement, showing by their steadfastness under suffering, that they were actuated by motives sincerely conscientious. Of this class was the pious John Bunyan, whose imprisonment lasted nearly twelve years.

The first Presbyterian church established in Eng-

land, was in 1572. It consisted of Puritans, (then so called) who, among other things, dissented from the government of the church by bishops, &c., conceiving that by pastors and presbyters or elders, to be more consistent with Holy Scripture. They agreed with the Independents, in denying the *divine right* of the bishops to order and direct the congregation; but instead of leaving each distinct, with absolute control over its own members and officers, they associated several churches in one synod, and a number of these again united in forming a general assembly, which is the supreme ecclesiastical body.

This society comprised a much larger number of members than either of the others we have mentioned; and the part they acted in the revolution which drove Charles I. from the throne, and finally brought him to the scaffold, as well as in the affairs of government during the interregnum, rendered them sufficiently conspicuous.

The persecutions they endured, while the reins of government were in the hands of the Church party, we should suppose would have taught them moderation and charity towards the conscientious dissent of others; but no sooner were they placed in the seat of power, than they began to contend for *uniformity* in faith and practice; the moloch of Christendom, to which many of her choicest sons have been wantonly sacrificed.

So fierce was their opposition to toleration, that

after a long conference of a Committee of Parliament, for the purpose of making some agreement, by which the Independents might be accommodated in their views of church government, the scheme was necessarily abandoned; because the Presbyterians refused to concede anything. They who but lately had contended against the divine right of the bishops, were now urgent to make all yield to the divine right of presbytery. The ministers of Sion College pronounced toleration "a root of gall and bitterness;" others of the sect declaimed against it, as contrary to godliness—opening a door to libertinism and profanity, and that it ought to be rejected as "*soul-poison.*" Liberty of conscience was declared to be the nourisher of all heresies and schisms, and most of the sermons preached before the House of Commons, while the question was under debate, breathed the spirit of persecution, and incited the ruling powers to draw the sword against such as would not conform. The Presbyterians little thought that their own arguments would quickly be used against themselves, and the severity they had exercised upon others, returned with full measure into their own bosoms. This was lamentably the case after the restoration, when the Church of England having regained her power, exercised it with so little mercy, in the vain attempt to force men's consciences into a conformity with her prescriptions.

We have now noticed the principal sects which existed at the time our Society arose, and to whom

the reader will find allusion made in the writings of Friends. They were all strenuously opposed to the Roman Catholic church; and while King James I. and his son, Charles I., were both suspected of favouring that religion, as well as some of the dignitaries of the Episcopal church; the dissenters availed themselves of every opportunity to show their dislike to it. This contributed not a little to alienate their affections from the throne, and to widen the breach to which their persecution had given rise.

The violation of their natural and civil rights; the disregard of their often-repeated and respectful petitions, and the frequent breach of promises solemnly made, tended to make the Puritans suspicious of James, and induced them to watch with the most jealous eye, every encroachment of the crown. The house of Stuart were remarkable for arrogant and arbitrary assumption, in virtue of their prerogative. However the exigency of the occasions may extenuate some of their acts, there are others, which deserve no milder appellations than tyranny and oppression. Against these, the dissenters inveighed with boldness and vehemence, and, as is usually the case, the cry of oppression rallied to their side a host of partisans, until at length the king had lost the affections of a large portion of his subjects. Instead of pacifying them by some concessions, and soothing their incensed feelings by

gentleness and clemency, measures still more harsh and offensive were pursued toward them.

They were punished as factious schismatics — as enemies to the king and government, and inciters of the people to rebellion — were fined, whipped, maimed, imprisoned and banished—enduring almost every species of hardship and suffering which cruelty could suggest. It were no wonder, if men who had felt so severely the abuses of regal power, should be in favour of a form of government, by which it could be restrained within more just and reasonable limits, and the rights of the subject be more effectually secured.

The disputes between the Puritans and the Church party, which had been carried on with no little acrimony, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., increased in violence under Charles, and began to assume the most serious aspect, threatening to destroy the peace of the nation. The Puritans had augmented in numbers and importance, and the flagrant outrages committed upon them, produced commisseration in the minds of many, who yet were sincere in their attachment to the religion of the Church. So little regard was had to law or equity in the treatment of them, that their cause gradually became identified with the preservation of the constitution and laws of the country. To be a Puritan, was synonymous with an opponent of ecclesiastical domination ; of the tyranny and encroachments of royalty, under the convenient plea of prerogative ;

and to be the advocate of the rights and liberties of the subject. In this way politics and religion became blended, and afterward it was the policy of each party to maintain the connexion.

Beside the matters originally contested, new sources of dissatisfaction and other subjects of dispute, became involved in the controversy.

Many of the clergy of the establishment had become corrupt and licentious—they seldom preached — neglected their congregations and places of worship, and were engaged in practices, not only unbecoming the sacred character, but, in some cases, even scandalously immoral. They encouraged, rather than repressed the licentiousness of the times; and seemed much more addicted to mirth and amusements, than to the duties of the ministerial office. Their example, and that of the court, had a demoralizing effect on others, especially the lower orders of society.

In order to counteract the opinion that the reformed religion was severe and strict in its requisitions, James published, in 1618, a royal declaration, drawn up by one of the Episcopal bishops, stating, that "for his good people's recreation, his majesty's pleasure was, that after the end of Divine service, they should not be disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreations, such as dancing, either of men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreations; nor having May games, whitsonales, or morrice dances, or set-

ting up of May poles, or other sports therewith used, so as the same may be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or let of Divine service."

This was a source of great offence to the Puritans; and when the declaration was republished by Charles, and directed to be read in all the churches, many of the ministers refused to comply.

The license given by the indulgence, produced the results which might reasonably have been anticipated. The sports degenerated into noisy and tumultuous revels, with tippling, quarrels, and sometimes even murder. These disorders grew to such a height, that the justices, in some counties, petitioned the judges of the courts to suppress them, which they did. But Archbishop Laud, then primate of England, summoned the judges before the king and council, for invading the Episcopal jurisdiction. A sharp reprimand and an order to revoke the prohibition, was the result. The archbishop taking the matter into his own hands, was informed by the bishop of Bath and Wells, within whose diocese the prohibition had been enforced, that the restoration of the wakes and revels, &c., would be very acceptable to the gentry, *clergy* and common people; in proof of which, he had procured the signatures of seventy-two clergymen; and believed, if he had sent for an hundred more, he could have had the consent of them all. It was determined to continue them, and the king forbade the justices in-

terfering with the people. It may readily be supposed, that such proceedings would have a powerful influence in promoting licentiousness; when, in addition to the command of their king, the ministers of religion joined in encouraging practices, to which the depraved inclinations of the human heart alone, furnish strong excitement. We may safely rank this among the causes, which contributed to promote the immorality and corruption which so lamentably overspread the nation, and gave rise to the close and sharp reproof, which our early Friends so often found it their duty to administer.

The few parliaments which James and Charles assembled, evinced a disposition to apply some remedy to the religious dissensions and grievances which distracted the nation. This was an interference so little agreeable to the crown, that they were speedily prorogued, and a long period suffered to elapse before another was called, which gave rise to the suspicion, that the monarch intended to govern by prerogative only, and without the intervention of a parliament.

The condition of the nation when Charles came to the throne, was melancholy indeed. It was torn by internal dissensions; and the affections of a large portion of the people alienated from the king, by oppression and injustice. The encroachments of the crown — the continued encouragement given to Papists, the unmitigated persecution of the Puritans, and of such as had the magnanimity and

courage to resist the arbitrary measures of the court and its minions, together with the failure of some of his military enterprises, tended to increase the murmurs, and to rouse the spirit of those, who regarded the liberties and the religion of the country. Influenced by mistaken notions of royal prerogative, and misguided by his counsellors, Charles, instead of softening the spirits of the Puritans by some concessions, proceeded to still greater lengths, until the minds of many of his subjects were prepared for any change which promised to restore to them their civil and religious rights. From this state of things, it was but a short step to open warfare, and accordingly the nation was soon involved in a civil war, which resulted in bringing Charles to the scaffold, and setting up a new form of government. Numerous negotiations for a settlement of the religious differences took place, but neither the king nor the parliament being willing to accede to the terms proposed by the other, in 1642 they appealed to the sword to settle a controversy, which had hitherto been managed only by words. During the course of the war, which continued with various success for several years, the king was often reduced to great extremities, and at last falling into the hands of the parliament, he was brought to trial before his avowed enemies, and condemned to be beheaded as a traitor. This cruel sentence was carried into execution early in 1648.

It was in 1646, during the prevalence of the civil

and religious commotions, that GEORGE FOX commenced his labours as a minister of the Gospel, being then in the 23d year of his age.

After the death of the king, the nation was without any legal form of government; but the parliament, which had assumed the power, and exercised it at the commencement of the war, still continued to govern. The Presbyterians had the control of affairs chiefly in their hands, and proceeded to model the religion of the nation to suit their peculiar views. Instead of the liturgy of the Church of England, they set up the Directory for Public Worship; and, forgetting the severity of their own sufferings for non-conformity, when others were in power, they now set about compelling all to comply with their established forms. The arguments they had used against persecution for religion, when smarting under the lash of the Episcopal Church, were urged upon them in vain. Having the power in their hands, they appeared to consider it as a sufficient authority for coercing others, to adopt that form of worship and system of doctrines, which they had determined to be the best. Never did religious toleration seem to be less understood, or the great right of liberty of conscience more wantonly disregarded.

But while the parliament was acting in conformity with these narrow and bigoted opinions, principles of a contrary character were at work in the army, where the Independents predominated, and carried

with them their wonted liberality toward the conscientious dissent of others. Against this latitude of indulgence, the Presbyterians declared with great earnestness, as a source of innumerable evils, and tending to the destruction of all religion. A long conference took place between the two parties, for the purpose of making some arrangement, by which the Independent form of worship and discipline could be included; but such was the pertinacity of the Presbyterian faction, that they refused to yield anything, and the scheme was abandoned as hopeless.

This arbitrary and oppressive course, rendered the sect unpopular; and the Independents finding they were not likely to obtain much from the parliament, and having the army on their side, with Oliver Cromwell at its head, he put an end to the Commonwealth and the parliament together, in the year 1653 — the former having continued a little more than four years, and the latter sat as a legislative body, with some short intermissions, for thirteen years.

It was not long ere Cromwell and his officers struck out a new form of government; and in the latter end of 1653, he was declared Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland, &c. The principles of the new government, relative to religion, were more liberal and Christian, than any which preceded it. The articles of the constitution embracing that subject, contain the following, viz.: —

"That the Christian religion contained in the

Scriptures, be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations.

"That none be compelled to conform to the public religion, by penalties or otherwise; but that endeavours be used to win them by sound doctrine and the example of a good conversation.

"That such as profess faith in God, by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, and discipline publicly held forth, shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of their faith, and the exercise of their religion; so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others, and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts; provided, this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, or to such as, under a profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness."

Creditable as these provisions are to the enlightened views of religious toleration, entertained by those who framed them, they are still defective, in making exceptions to two classes of professors. Had they been faithfully carried out in practice, they would have saved much suffering for conscience sake, both to Friends and the Baptists. For however favourable the protector was to granting liberty of conscience to all, it was not the case with the magistrates, justices and others, in whose hands the execution of the laws was placed. From the cupidity or intolerance of these, Friends were often interrupted in the exercise of their religion, and punished,

because they could not swear or pay tythes, though to a much less degree than was afterward the case.

Toward the close of Cromwell's government, he was again declared protector, under new articles of government, in which an attempt was made to narrow the grounds of toleration, by a more close definition of the doctrines to be professed.

In the opening of the second session of the parliament, in 1657, the Lord Commissioner Fiennes "warns the house of the rock on which many had split, which was a spirit of imposing upon men's consciences, in things wherein God leaves them a latitude, and would have them free." — "As God is no respecter of persons, so he is no respecter of forms; but in what form soever the spirit of imposition appears, he will testify against it. If men, though otherwise good, will turn ceremony into substance, and make the kingdom of Christ consist in circumstances, in discipline, and in forms, ... in vain do they protest against the persecution of God's people, when they make the definition of God's people so narrow, that their persecution is as broad as any other, and usually more fierce, because edged with a sharp temper of spirit." "It is good to hold forth a public profession of the truth, but not so as to exclude those that cannot come up to it in all points, from the privilege that belongs to them as Christians, much less to the privilege that belongs to them as men."

These just sentiments, which appeared to be gain-

ing ground in the minds of men, were soon to receive a check, by the change of rulers. In 1658, Oliver Cromwell died, and was succeeded by his son Richard; who, finding the difficulties and perplexities of balancing the power of rival parties, and conducting the affairs of state, little suited either to his capacity or his inclinations, resigned his high and responsible station, after having occupied it only eight months.

A short interregnum ensued, and in 1660 the kingdom was restored to the house of Stuart, by proclaiming Charles II.

These frequent changes in the government had a tendency to keep up the unsettlement which had long agitated the nation, as well as those violent party feelings and prejudices, which the political and religious struggles had engendered. Friends took no part in the revolutions of government — their principles forbade them from putting down or setting up, and taught them to live peaceably, as good citizens, under whatever power the Ruler of the universe permitted to be established over them. But though peaceable and non-resisting in their conduct, they were neither idle nor unconcerned spectators of the course of events. Believing that righteousness was the only security for a nation's stability and prosperity, they earnestly enforced on the parliament and protector, as well as the monarchs who succeeded, the suppression of vice and immorality, the equal administration of justice, and the

removal of all oppression. The addresses made to those in authority by George Fox, Edward Burrough and others, are marked with innocent boldness, and good sense, delivered in a style of great frankness and honesty. Nor did they omit to warn them of the consequences which would ensue if they failed to perform the divine will, predicting with clearness the overthrow of Oliver's government, and some other changes which occurred.

In his declaration issued from Breda, on the eve of his sailing for England to assume the crown, Charles held this conciliatory language, calculated to allay the fears of those who dreaded the restoration of the hierarchy. "We do also declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion, in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom."

But plausible as are these promises, and sincere as the king might have been in making them, the event proved how little reliance was to be placed upon the royal word. Devoted to his own pleasures, and with too little application or industry to examine the opinions of his advisers, or inquire into the sufferings sustained by his subjects, he permitted the clergy to pursue their own measures for the promotion of the church, who took care to return the measure of persecution, meted to them under the commonwealth and protectorate, heaped up and running over into the bosoms of the dissenters. Con-

formity was rigidly enforced, and not satisfied with the existing statutes for punishing those who dared to differ in their consciences from the prescribed standard, new and more oppressive laws were procured.

The persecution fell with peculiar severity on Friends, who were suspected of being unfriendly to the restoration of the king, from their refusal to take any oath, and consequently the oath of allegiance to the crown—though they repeatedly offered instead, their most solemn declarations to the same effect.

The peaceable and unresisting spirit which governed the conduct of Friends, seemed to embolden their persecutors to oppress them without colour of law or justice, knowing they had nothing to fear from the law of retaliation, and that but few could be found to plead their cause or espouse the defence of their rights.

To give some colour to the severities practised against them, pretexts were drawn from supposed violations of the regulations of civil policy—"A Christian exhortation to an assembly after the priest had done and the worship was over, was denominated interrupting public worship, and disturbing the priest in his office; an honest testimony against wickedness in the streets or market-place, was styled a breach of the peace; and their appearing before the magistrates covered, a contempt of authority; hence proceeded fines, imprisonments and spoiling of goods. Nay, so hot were some of the magistrates

for persecution, even in Cromwell's time, that by an unparalleled and most unjust misconstruction of the law against vagrants, they tortured with cruel whippings and exposed in the stocks, the bodies both of men and women of good estate and reputation, merely because they went under the denomination of Quakers."

Several obsolete statutes were brought to bear most heavily upon Friends, though originally enacted with a view of reaching the Papists, who refused to conform to the established religion. Among these was an act passed in the 32d year of Henry VIII.'s reign, against subtracting or withholding tithes; obliging justices to commit obstinate defendants to prison, until they should find sufficient security for their compliance.—The laws made in Elizabeth's reign for enforcing a uniformity of worship, authorizing the levy of a fine of one shilling per week for the use of the poor, from such as did not resort to some church of the established religion, every sabbath or holy day, — and also another, establishing a forfeiture of twenty pounds per month for the like default. A third law empowered the officers to seize all the goods, or a third part of the lands, of every such offender for the fine of twenty pounds. And as if these were not sufficiently severe, another was enacted in the 35th year of Queen Elizabeth, obliging offenders in the like case to abjure the realm, on pain of death.

All these laws were revived, and attempts made

to enforce them in the cases of Friends, though it was well known they were designed to bear upon the Papists. As Friends could not conscientiously pay tithes, believing that the ministry of the gospel should be free, according to the express injunction of Christ to his apostles, "Freely ye have received, freely give," great havoc was made of their property by the rapacious priests.

The Society of Friends viewed the positive command of our Lord, "Swear not at all," corroborated by the exhortation of the Apostle James, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath," as being of indispensable obligation, and entirely precluding the Christian from taking an oath on any occasion whatever.

Soon after Charles II. came to the throne, the acts made in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, requiring the subject to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, were revived, and visited upon Friends with great oppression.

In 1661, the parliament passed another act, aimed directly at the Society, providing that any Quaker refusing to take an oath, when lawfully tendered, or who should maintain, in writing or otherwise, the unlawfulness of taking an oath; or if five or more Quakers, above the age of sixteen years, should assemble for religious worship, they should forfeit five pounds for the first offence, or suffer three months imprisonment; doubling the penalty for the second

offence; and for the third, they were to abjure the realm, or be transported.

The insurrection of the "fifth monarchy men," as they were called, was the occasion of fresh persecution to Friends. They were a company of infatuated men, who, supposing that the one thousand years of Christ's reign on earth, mentioned in Rev. xx. was just commencing, rose in arms and ran about the streets of London, crying out that they were going to overthrow the government of King Charles, and set up King Jesus. Although there was not the shadow of reason, for connecting the Society in any way with this wild insurrection, yet the king made it the pretext for issuing his proclamation, for the suppression of all unlawful conventicles, or meetings for religious purposes, designating particularly those of the Anabaptists and Quakers. This encouraged the profane and irreligious populace to assail the meetings of Friends, and inflict upon them the grossest outrages and cruelties.

Severe as were the sufferings of Friends under the operation of these oppressive laws, their constancy was not shaken. They fearlessly and openly met for the solemn duty of Divine worship, nothing daunted by the terrors which threatened them. This Christian boldness exasperated their enemies, especially the persecuting priests and magistrates; and another law was procured more prompt and terrible in its operation. It declared the statute of 35th of Elizabeth in full force; and that every person taken

at a meeting consisting of more than five, beside the household, should suffer three months imprisonment, or pay a fine of five pounds, on conviction before two justices — double the penalty for the second offence; and being convicted of a third, before the justices at the Quarter Sessions, should be transported for seven years, or pay one hundred pounds fine—and in case they returned or escaped, they should be adjudged felons, and sentenced to death. It also empowered sheriffs, justices of the peace, and persons commissioned by them, to hunt out and break up all religious meetings, other than those of the established religion, and take into custody such of the company as they saw fit. Persons allowing such meetings in their houses, barns, &c., to be subject to the same penalties and forfeitures as other offenders. Such as were sentenced to transportation, were to be sent over sea at their own expense; and in default of ability to pay, to be sold for five years to defray the charges. Married women taken at meetings, to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding twelve months, or their husbands to pay for their redemption not exceeding forty pounds.

The next enactment by which Friends suffered, was commonly known by the name of the Oxford five mile act. It was aimed at the Presbyterian and other non-conforming ministers, requiring them to take an oath, that it was not lawful under any pretence to take up arms against the king; and that they would not at any time, endeavour to procure

any alteration in the government of church or state. Such as refused to take the oath, were declared incapable of teaching any school, public or private, under penalty of forty pounds. All nonconforming ministers were likewise prohibited from coming within five miles of any city, town, or borough sending members to parliament, or within five miles of any place where they had officiated as ministers, unless it might be in passing along a public highway, under a forfeiture of forty pounds; one-third of which went to the informer.

The refusal of Friends to take an oath, brought their ministers within the scope of this law, and fines, distraints and imprisonments were the consequences.

In 1670, there appeared to be a disposition among some of the officers of government to put a stop to persecution. The king, on several occasions, had shown his dislike to it; but being opposed by the bishops and parliament, he had not the firmness or resolution to withstand their influence. The former Act for suppressing religious meetings having expired, a new one was prepared and passed, making the penalty five shillings for the first offence, and ten for the second; the preachers or teachers in such meetings to forfeit twenty pounds for the first, and forty pounds for the second offence; and twenty pounds penalty for suffering a meeting to be held in a house or barn. A single justice was authorized to convict on the oath of two witnesses, and the

fines to be forthwith levied on the offenders' goods, and in case of his poverty, on the goods of any other offender present at the same meeting; provided the amount so levied shall not exceed ten pounds for one meeting. — One third of all the fines to go to the informer, as a reward for his services. Justices, constables, and other officers, were authorized to break open and enter any house, or place, where they might be informed was a conventicle, and search for, and take into custody, all persons found assembled there. If any justice of the peace refused to perform the duties prescribed in the Act, he was to forfeit one hundred pounds, and every constable five pounds. And it was further enacted, that "all clauses in the law should be construed most largely and beneficially for the suppressing of conventicles, and for the justification and encouragement of all persons to be employed in the execution thereof."

A more unjust and oppressive law could scarcely be conceived. In the hope of rioting on the spoils of the Quakers' goods, unprincipled men lurked about their dwellings, lodged information against them on the most frivolous pretences, and swore falsely to procure their conviction; the facility of which was greatly promoted by the privacy of the trial, and resting the decision with a single justice, himself often the accomplice of the informer and the sharer of the prey. It would be difficult to conceive a scene of more extensive rapine and plunder, in time of peace and under colour of law, than the

execution of this Act produced throughout the nation. Many Friends were reduced from competency to destitution of the very necessaries of life.

In 1672, Charles issued his declaration of indulgence, by which, in virtue of his royal prerogative, as supreme in ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs, he assumed to suspend the operation of the penal laws against the non-conformists. The right of the sovereign to exercise this power, was warmly contested. Some of the dissenters, and especially the Presbyterians, who were extremely jealous of the Papists, and unfavourable to general liberty of conscience, were not forward to accept the boon thus offered, and even wrote against it, on the ground that it would sanction the exercise of the dispensing power in the king.

Friends had suffered more severely during the preceding persecutions, than any other class of dissenters. They had stood their ground with unflinching intrepidity, when others fled before the storm. They contended that liberty of conscience was the natural right of all men, and that every interference of the civil power, with the peaceable exercise of conscientious duty, was contrary to Christianity and to sound principles of government. They meddled not with the politics of the day, nor professed to be skilled in questions of royal prerogative. The knowledge, that hundreds of their brethren were unjustly lying in prisons, while their helpless families were exposed to the rapacity of

merciless informers, was an argument sufficiently powerful, to induce them to accept the relief which the king's declaration afforded. An application was accordingly made to the crown for the discharge of those who had been imprisoned for conscience' sake; and such was the favourable opinion produced by the constancy, and uniformly peaceable and consistent conduct of the Society, that a warrant was readily obtained for their liberation. The success of this application, afforded Friends an opportunity of proving the sincerity of their opinions in favour of universal toleration and charity. There were other dissenters confined in the same prisons, and their solicitors requesting the aid of Friends in their behalf, they cheerfully accorded it, and included the names of their prisoners in the same instrument, by which their own members were relieved from bonds.

The respite which the declaration afforded was of short duration; for in the following year, the parliament compelled the king to revoke it; in consequence of which, the sufferings of Friends were renewed, though not to the same extent as before.

If the calamities in which Friends bore so large a share had no other good effect, they evidently tended to convince the nation of the folly of persecuting men for differences of opinion. More than thirty years of suffering had passed over, and not a single Quaker had been induced by it to abandon his profession—they were as prompt and diligent as ever in the open performance of their religious

duties, and as ready, patiently to submit to the penalties of unrighteous laws. They never resorted to violence or retaliation, relying on the justice of their cause, the truth and soundness of their arguments, and their peaceable and blameless conduct, to effect a change in the minds of those in power. This change now began to be apparent.

In 1680, a bill was introduced to parliament for exempting dissenters from penal laws. Friends lost no time in presenting themselves before the committee as the advocates of such a measure, and urging the insertion of such clauses, as would afford relief to the members of the Society, on the subject of oaths. So successful were they in these endeavours, that they obtained an amendment to the bill, admitting a declaration of fidelity, instead of the oath of allegiance. But the state of affairs was not ripe for such an important change, and the bill was lost. Another, however, passed both houses, exempting dissenters from the operation of the statute of the 35th of Elizabeth. But when it should have been presented to the king for his assent, it was not to be found, having been secreted purposely, as was believed, to defeat the measure. In the next year the parliament passed the following resolutions, viz.

"1. Resolved, that it is the opinion of this house, that the acts of parliament made in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, against popish recusants, ought not to be extended against protestant dissenters.

"2. Resolved, that it is the opinion of this house, that the prosecution of protestant dissenters upon the penal laws, is at this time grievous to the subject, a weakening of the Protestant interest, an encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the peace of the kingdom."

These votes showed the growing feeling in favour of dissenters, and mark the gradual progress of those principles of religious liberty, which were more fully recognized in 1688, by the passage of the *Toleration Act*, under William and Mary, a measure which afforded great relief to Friends, though they were still subject to prosecutions for tithes and for refusing to swear. After repeated applications to the king and parliament, a bill was brought into the house, in 1695, and finally passed early in the following year, allowing the solemn affirmation of a Friend instead of an oath.

Having taken a cursory view of the laws under which the persecution of the Society was carried on, it is proper we should briefly allude to the state of religion in the nation, at the time of, and subsequently to, the rise of Friends.

In treating this subject, the statements of historians are of the most opposite and contradictory character. Clarendon and others, who espouse the royal cause, are unwilling to accord to the Puritans either sincerity or truth. They allege that canting and hypocrisy were the order of the day — that a high profession of religion, and great pretensions

to sanctity and strictness, were the road to preferment and power, and were therefore assumed from ambitious motives.

The advocates of the Puritan party, on the other hand, represent the established Church as extremely corrupt—her ministers destitute of even the profession of religion, and in many cases, guilty of scandalous and immoral behaviour. That she enforced by severe penalties, a compliance with superstitious ceremonies, while she tolerated practices of evil tendency, and discountenanced everything like zeal or fervour in religion. Allowance, however, is to be made for the bias of party attachments, and the distorted views which prejudice gives of the character of an opponent. That great laxity of morals, as well as neglect of their prescribed duties, had crept into the clergy of the Church of England, cannot be denied. Many of them never preached, and addicted themselves to hunting, and other sports; frequenting alehouses and taverns, and indulging in drunkenness and other licentious practices.

In 1640, the parliament appointed a committee to inquire into the conduct of the ministers of religion, for removing scandalous ministers, and putting others in their places, as well as to procure ministers for places where there were none. A part of the proceedings of this committee was published, containing cases of one hundred who had been tried and ejected; from which it appears that eighty of them were convicted of immoralities. The reputa-

tion of some of them has been defended by writers on the side of the Church, though they admit that others were very vicious, and the offences of several so foul, that it is a shame even to report them. Baxter says, that "in all the counties where he was acquainted, six to one, at least, if not many more, that were sequestered by the committee, were by the oaths of witnesses proved insufficient or scandalous, or especially guilty of drunkenness and swearing. This I know, says he, will displease the party, but I am sure that this is true."

The writings of Friends frequently mention ministers, whose characters were similar to those alluded to in the above statements; and if the language sometimes used by members of the Society, in addressing them, appears severe, an ample reason for it is furnished, by the disgraceful conduct to which too many were addicted. It is not designed, however, to involve the whole body in indiscriminate censure. There were, doubtless, among them, persons of sincere piety and exemplary lives, and who, according to the degree of light afforded them, endeavoured to discharge their duties with fidelity.

When the reins of government came into the hands of the Puritans, efforts were made to procure a reformation in the morals of the nation. The licentious practices which had grown out of the encouragement given to games, sports and revels, on the first-day of the week, were checked. Those vain amusements, together with stage plays, were

prohibited; the observance of the first-day was strictly enforced, and regular attendance at places of worship enjoined.

It was certainly a period, when the profession of religion, and a compliance with its exterior requisitions were held in high esteem; though it cannot be denied, that there were some who put on the garb, in order more effectually to accomplish their ambitious and sinister designs. However just the severe censures of some historians may be, with reference to these individuals, they cannot with fairness be applied to others — nor should the whole mass of Puritans be stigmatized, in consequence of the duplicity of some particular professors.

The following observations from Orme's life of Owen, will serve to illustrate the religious condition of the nation during the protectorship of Oliver, viz.

"Of the true state of religion during the period of Cromwell's government, it is difficult to form an accurate estimate. Judging from certain external appearances, and comparing them with the times which followed, the opinion must be highly favourable. Religion was the language and garb of the court; prayer and fasting were fashionable exercises — a profession was the road to preferment — not a play was acted in all England for many years; and from the prince to the peasant and common soldier, the features of Puritanism were universally exhibited. Judging again from the wildness and extravagance of various opinions and practices which

then obtained, and from the fanatical slang, and hypocritical grimace which were adopted by many, merely to answer a purpose, our opinion will necessarily be unfavourable. The truth perhaps lies between the extremes of unqualified censure, and undistinguishing approbation. Making all due allowance for the infirmity and sin which were combined with the profession of religion—making every abatement for the inducements which then encouraged the use of a religious vocabulary—admitting that there was even a large portion of pure fanaticism, still, we apprehend an immense mass of genuine religion will remain. There must have been a large quantity of sterling coin, when there was such a circulation of counterfeit. In the best of the men of that period, there was, doubtless, a tincture of unscriptural enthusiasm, and the use of a phraseology, revolting to the taste of modern time; in many perhaps there was nothing more; but to infer, that therefore all was base, unnatural deceit, would be unjust and unwise. 'A reformation,' says Jortin, 'is seldom carried on without heat and vehemence, which borders on enthusiasm. As Cicero has observed, that there never was a great man *sine afflatu divino* [without a divine inbreathing;] so in times of religious contests, there seldom was a man very zealous for liberty, civil and ecclesiastical, and a declared active enemy to insolent tyranny, blind superstition, political godliness, bigotry and pious frauds, who had not a fervency of zeal which led

him, on some occasions, beyond the bounds of sober, temperate reason.' "

From the dawn of the reformation, the spirit of religious inquiry had been kept alive and strengthened by the very efforts used to suppress it. The shackles with which priestcraft had attempted to bind the human mind, had been in some measure broken, and an earnest desire awakened after the saving knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. This was increased by the troubles of the times. The nation was torn by intestine strife. Civil war, with all its attendant evils, raged throughout the country, and the property, as well as the lives of the subjects, were at the mercy of a lawless soldiery. Many were stripped of their outward possessions; reduced to poverty and want, and often obliged to abandon their homes, and flee for the preservation of their lives.

This melancholy state of affairs, had a tendency to loosen their attachments from the world, by showing the precarious tenure of all earthly enjoyments, and to induce men to press after those substantial and permanent consolations, which are only to be found in a religious life.

Where the ecclesiastical and civil power were so frequently shifting hands, and the national form of religion changing with every change of rulers, new sects and opinions arising, and different teachers of religion inviting their attention, and saying, "Lo here is Christ! or lo he is there!" it is not surprising

that the honest and sincere inquirers after the right way of the Lord, should be greatly perplexed. The effect of these commotions was to wean men from a dependence on each other, in the work of religion, and to prepare their minds for the reception of the important truth, that however useful instrumental means of divine appointment may be, it is the glory of the gospel dispensation, that the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, is himself the teacher of his people. Previous to the commencement of George Fox's ministry, many had withdrawn from all the acknowledged forms of public worship, and were engaged in diligently searching the Holy Scriptures, with prayer for right direction in the path of duty, and frequently meeting in select companies, for the worship of Almighty God and their mutual edification. Among these the preaching of George Fox found a ready entrance, and many of them joined in religious profession with him.

The period of which we have been speaking, may justly be denominated the age of polemic strife. The war itself had been commenced ostensibly for the redress of religious grievances. In the camp and the field, as well as by the fireside, religion was the absorbing theme. The Baptists and Independents encouraged persons to preach, who had not studied for the ministry, nor been formally ordained; and numbers of this description engaged in the vocation, with unwearied assiduity, often holding meetings in the fields, or preaching in the market-

places. The parliament army abounded with them, and preaching, praying, and disputing on points of doctrine, were daily to be heard among both officers and soldiers. Public disputations were also common, and were often conducted with a warmth of temper, and harshness of language, which seem hardly consistent with the meek and gentle spirit of the gospel. Modern ideas of courtesy and propriety, can scarcely tolerate the latitude of expression, which the antagonists sometimes indulged toward each other, not only on these occasions, but in their controversial essays.

Amid so much strife and contention, and the intemperate feelings naturally arising out of them, it is not surprising, that even good men should have formed erroneous opinions of the character and sentiment of each other. They judged rather by the impulses of prejudice and sectarian feeling, than by the law of truth and Christian kindness. In the heat of discussion, the mind is not in a condition to form a sound and correct judgment. The weakness or mistakes of an opponent, are seen through a medium, which greatly magnifies them; while his virtues are either depreciated, or distorted into errors. The controversial writings of the times, furnish evidence of the existence of these uncharitable feelings, among nearly all denominations of professors; and he who reads them with the enlightened and liberal views of religious toleration, which now happily obtain, will observe with regret,

men of unquestionable piety, unchristianizing each other for opinion's sake; and lament that such monuments of human frailty should have been handed down to posterity.

Those who judge of the writings of the first Friends, by modern standards of literary excellence and courtesy, are apt to censure them for their severity. Much, however, may be said in extenuation of them. Friends were particularly obnoxious to the hatred of the clergy, in consequence of their unyielding opposition to a ministry of human appointment, to a system of tithes and a forced maintenance. Their views on these subjects, which they fearlessly published, struck directly at priestcraft. Deeply affected by the corruption which they saw among many who assumed the sacred office, they boldly declaimed against their cupidity, licentiousness, and persecution. This course drew upon them a host of enemies, who were not very nice in the choice of means to lessen their influence and prejudice their characters. Friends were assailed with calumny and misrepresentation; opinions and practices were charged upon them, of which they solemnly declared themselves innocent; yet they were again and again renewed with the boldest effrontery. The conduct of some of the visionary sects which arose about the same time, was unjustly imputed to them, and every advantage that could be taken, was eagerly embraced to prejudice their religious profession. Harassed by this unchristian conduct, and

at the same time smarting under a cruel persecution, they must have been more than human, if the weakness of nature had never betrayed them into an unguarded, or intemperate expression. A comparison, however, with other controversialists of the times, will show that they were not peculiar in this respect. It should be recollected, too, that language, as well as the regulations of decorum toward opponents, have undergone a great change since that time. Expressions which sound harsh and offensive to modern ears, were then considered strictly within the limits of propriety, and appear to have given no offence to those who were the objects of them. This license of the tongue and pen, is found also in the parliamentary debates, and appears to have characterized those times of excitement and recrimination.

Another practice which prevailed to some extent, was that of going into the places of worship, and addressing the congregation during the time of service. Custom had sanctioned the practice of asking the minister, at the close of the service, respecting difficult or abstruse points, which required explanation. This liberty was exercised to a much greater extent, during the period of which we have been speaking, and not unfrequently a dispute followed. The overthrow of the national form of worship, and the consequent termination of ecclesiastical restrictions, had a tendency to induce greater latitude in this respect, than comports with our ideas of good order. The manner in which Friends speak of

those cases, in which they went to places of worship other than their own, induces the belief that it was not extraordinary; and in most, if not all, instances in which violence to their persons was the consequence, it appears to have been the doctrine delivered, rather than the time and manner of communicating it, which called forth the angry passions of the assailants. Friends were not alone in this course, and sometimes their ministrations were so acceptable to the audience, as to induce them to remain, after the stated preacher had withdrawn.

The religious men of that day, are commonly charged with evincing a fanatical and enthusiastic spirit, and Friends of course come in for a large share of the censure. To deny that there were cases in which such a spirit was evinced, would be folly; but to brand whole communities of professing Christians with those epithets, on account of the excesses of a few members, would be extremely unjust. It is, moreover, difficult for us to judge correctly of the exigencies of the church during that period, and what degree of energy and fervour was requisite, to carry those holy men through the work of their day. We know that a much stronger feeling must have been necessary to stem the torrent of abuse and persecution, and carry forward the reformation, than the present day of outward ease and liberty would probably elicit. It is, moreover, highly unreasonable to allow men of the world, their fervour and self-devotion in the pursuit of the com-

paratively trivial objects of their choice, and yet censure them in those who are pressing after the momentous concerns of salvation, with an earnestness becoming their vast importance.

In the succeeding reign of Charles II., the face of things was greatly changed. The court was devoted to licentious pleasures, while religion and religious things were made a mere laughing-stock. The restoration opened the very floodgates of vice and wickedness. "A spirit of extravagant joy," says Bishop Burnet, "spread over the nation, that brought in with it the throwing off the very professions of virtue and piety: all ended in entertainments and drunkenness; which overrun the three kingdoms to such a degree, that it very much corrupted all their morals. Under the cover of drinking the king's health, there were great disorders and great riots every where." This lamentable state of things was the source of great concern to Friends, several of whom addressed the king on the subject, reminding him of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha; and that in his own dominions, wickedness had reached a height which must certainly call down the divine displeasure. Many Friends were engaged to go to the courts of justice and exhort the officers to the discharge of their duties in endeavouring to suppress it; they also preached against it in the markets and places of public entertainment. So contrary were their example and precepts, to the prevailing corruptions, and so plain and fearless the

rebukes they administered, that they were subjected to much abuse; yet in many cases, they were the happy instruments of turning sinners from the evil of their ways. The licentiousness which had infected nearly all ranks of society, and was tolerated, if not countenanced, by too many whose duty it was to repress it, furnished ample reason for the close and even sharp expostulations, which are found about this time in the writings of Friends.

In taking a view of the religious principles of the Society, it is proper to remark, that they have always scrupulously adhered to the position, of proving their doctrines by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, rejecting whatever was contrary to the tenor of those divine writings. In their ministerial labours, their constant appeal to the people, against the existing errors, was to Holy Scripture. It is a well-known fact that George Fox carried a Bible with him, which he frequently used in his preaching; and in the meeting-house which he gave to Friends of Swarthmore, he placed a Bible for the convenience of reference and perusal, by those who attended the meeting. Samuel Bownas also carried a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him, and sometimes preached with it in his hand; and there is reason to believe that the practice was not uncommon. These facts contradict the groundless accusation which is sometimes made, that those worthy men did not acknowledge the paramount authority of Holy Scripture over all other writings. The So-

ciety has always accepted them fully and literally, as a rule of faith and practice under the enlightening influences of the Spirit of Truth, by which they were given forth. Such is the high character they have ever attached to the Sacred text, that they uniformly refused to accept, instead of it, the glosses and interpretations of school-men. It was thus they were led to the observance of the positive commands of our Saviour not to swear or fight, even in self-defence, as well as to the strict and literal acceptance of those precepts which forbid worldly compliance and indulgence; from the force of which, too many professors have sought to escape. It is true, that they recommended their hearers to Christ Jesus the Heavenly Teacher, who, by his Holy Spirit, has come to teach his people himself; yet they were careful to support this recommendation by showing its entire consonance with the whole scope of the Christian dispensation.

But while Friends fully admitted the divine origin and authority of the Sacred Volume, and acknowledged the richness of the blessing we enjoy in having it preserved and transmitted to us, through the goodness of Divine Providence, they dared not put it in the place of Christ, either as regarded honour or office, nor prefer it to the operations and teachings of the Holy Spirit in the heart; errors which they believed they saw in many of the high professors of their day.

They wished the Scriptures of Truth and the Holy

Spirit to occupy the places in the work of salvation, respectively assigned to them in the Bible itself, and that the honour due to the Author and Giver should not be conferred on the gift. It was for these causes, that they pressed on professors the necessity of coming unto Christ, that they might have life, even though versed in the literal knowledge of the Bible. That as its precious truths are not savingly known or appreciated by the unassisted reason of fallen men, so it is necessary to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, to open our understandings, and illuminate the darkness of our hearts, and prepare us for their reception. In asserting the superiority of the knowledge thus derived through the operations of the Holy Spirit, over that which is acquired from reading the Sacred Volume by the mere exercise of the unassisted intellectual faculties, Friends were sometimes misunderstood; and charged with denying the Scriptures of Truth, placing their own writings on a level with them, and professing that equally good Scriptures could be written at the present day, as those which were penned by Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles. But no sooner were these accusations made, than they were met by an unqualified denial, asserting in the fullest and most solemn manner, their sincere belief in all that the Scriptures say respecting their Divine origin, authority, and use.

The prominent manner in which they believed

themselves called to hold up the important offices of the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation, was another source of misapprehension among their opponents. Baxter, in his account of Friends, says of them, "They spake much for the dwelling and working of the Spirit in us, but little of justification and the pardon of sin, and our reconciliation with God, through Jesus Christ."

It is not correct to say that Friends "spake *little*" on the great doctrines of justification and remission of sins, through Christ Jesus, our propitiation; for they frequently and earnestly insisted on them. But finding that these were generally admitted by all Christian professors, while many either entirely denied, or undervalued the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, they were engaged to call the attention of the people to this, as the life of true religion; without which the Scriptures could not make them wise unto salvation, and Christ would have died for them in vain. But while thus enforcing this important doctrine of Holy Scripture, they were careful to recognize and acknowledge the whole scope of the Gospel, in all its fulness. They declared against that construction of the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, which taught men to believe they could be justified from their sins, while they continued in them impenitent; asserting that the very design of Christ's coming in the flesh, was to save people *from* their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil. Yet they fully and gratefully acknowledged the

mercy of God, in giving his dear Son, a ransom and atonement for mankind, that the penitent sinner might be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Many of them were persons who had been highly esteemed for their piety, in the societies with which they had formerly been connected, and several of them had been preachers. In the progress of their religious experience, they were convinced that they had been resting too much on a bare belief of what Christ had done and suffered for them, when personally on earth, and also in the ceremonies of religion, without sufficiently pressing after the knowledge of "Christ in them, the hope of glory" — to feel his righteous government set up in their hearts, and the power of the Holy Spirit giving them the victory over sin in all its motions, and qualifying them to serve God in newness of life. They saw that the Holy Scriptures held up to the view of Christians, a state of religious advancement and stability, far beyond that which most of the professors of their day appeared to aim at and admit; a state in which sin was to have no more dominion over them, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, had set them free from the law of sin and death. That this was an inward work, not effected by a bare assent of the understanding to the blessed truths contained in the Bible, hearing sermons, dipping or sprinkling in water, or partaking of bread and wine, but a real change of the heart and affec-

tions, by the power of the Holy Ghost inwardly revealed, regenerating the soul, creating it anew in Christ Jesus, and making all things pertaining to it of God.

Convinced that this great work was necessary to salvation, and yet in great danger of being overlooked amid a round of ceremonial performances, and a high profession of belief in Christ as the propitiation of sins, they zealously preached the doctrine of the new birth; calling their hearers to come to Christ Jesus, the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, that they might experience Him to shine into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The offices of the Holy Ghost, or Comforter, as the guide into all Truth, as the unction from the Holy One which teacheth of all things, and is Truth, and no lie, was the great theme of their contemplation and ministry, and it stands forth no less conspicuously in their writings.

When we turn to the Sacred Volume, and read there the numerous testimonies borne to the great importance of this doctrine in the Gospel plan, we cannot wonder to find it prominently set forth by a people professing eminently the spirituality of religion. But to infer from the fact of their preaching Christ within, that they designed in any degree to deny Christ without, or to derogate from any part of the work which, in adorable condescension, he

was graciously pleased to accomplish for us, in the prepared body, or from that complete justification from our sins which is obtained through living faith in Him, as our sacrifice and Mediator, would be illiberal and unjust.

When such accusations were brought against them by their enemies, they indignantly repelled and denied them; and the official declarations and acts of the Society evince that such opinions were never received or tolerated by it.

In carrying out these views of the spiritual nature of the Gospel, and of that great work in the soul described as "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," the primitive Friends were led to the adoption of their peculiar sentiments respecting water baptism and the use of the bread and wine. They found it declared in the Sacred Volume, that as "there is one Lord and one faith," so there is but "one baptism;" and that "the baptism which now saves, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Corresponding with this, is the saying of the apostle to the Romans, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death—therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life." Also, that to the Galatians, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on

Christ;" and to the Colossians, where he declares that those who are in Christ, "are buried with him in baptism, wherein, also, ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Sensible that these blessed effects were not the result of dipping or sprinkling the body with water, and apprehensive that many professors of religion were trusting to the outward ceremony, as a means of initiating them into the Church of Christ, while neglecting the necessary work of "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," they pressed upon their hearers the necessity of experiencing that one saving baptism, which John describes when drawing the distinction between his dispensation and that of Christ—"I indeed baptize you with water: but One mighter than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Convinced that the Gospel is not a dispensation of shadows, but the very substance of the heavenly things themselves, they believed that the true communion of saints consisted in that divine intercourse which is maintained between our merciful Saviour and the souls of his faithful disciples; agreeable to his own gracious words; "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

There is a strong tendency in the human mind to

substitute the form of religion for the power, and to satisfy the conscience by a cold compliance with exterior performances, while the heart remains unchanged. And inasmuch as the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the communion of the body and blood of Christ, of which water baptism and the bread and wine are admitted to be only signs, are not dependent on those outward ceremonies, nor necessarily connected with them, and are declared in Holy Scripture to be effectual to the salvation of the soul, which the signs are not, Friends have always believed it their place and duty to hold forth to the world a clear and decided testimony to the living substance—the spiritual work of Christ in the soul, and a blessed communion with him there.

A distinguishing trait in the character of the first Friends was, that amid the great political commotions which prevailed, they attached themselves to none of the parties, nor entered into any of their ambitious views. It was a principle of their religion, to avoid all strife and contention, and to live peaceably, under whatever form of government Divine Providence was pleased to permit. When the laws of the land came into collision with their duty to God, and they could not, for conscience' sake, actively comply with their demands, they patiently endured the penalties. When the nation was in a great ferment, after the death of Cromwell, George Fox, ever watchful for the welfare of his brethren, addressed a letter, exhorting them "to live in love and peace with all men — to keep clear of all the

commotions of the world, and not to intermeddle with the powers of the earth, but to let their conversation be in heaven."—"All who pretend to fight for Christ," says he, "are deceived; for his kingdom is not of this world, and therefore his servants do not fight."

Unaided by any alliance with the great or powerful; ridiculed and hated by the world, and everywhere pursued with contempt and cruelty, the principles of Friends silently spread through the kingdom, winning the assent of men who were inferior to none in education, talents, and respectability. Amid the severest persecution, when deprived of every temporal comfort, torn from home and all its endearments, with every probability that they should seal the truth of their principles with the sacrifice of their lives, they faltered not. Though all around them looked dark and threatening, yet there was light and peace within;—they not only met their sufferings with patience and fortitude, in the unresisting spirit of their Divine Master, but through the goodness of God, were so filled with heavenly consolation, that they sang for joy even in the extremity of their suffering.

Exposed to almost universal hatred and abuse, their names despised and cast out from among men, the disinterested love they showed for each other excited the admiration even of their enemies. While each one seemed regardless of his own liberty and estate, all were zealous in pleading the cause of their suffering brethren, when occasion presented;

freely sacrificing their time and property to promote their comfort, and even offering themselves to lie in prison, instead of those whom they thought could be less easily spared from their families or the Society.

Such fruits of Christian love and forbearance, under protracted and poignant suffering, unjustly inflicted, have rarely been exhibited to the world; and nothing less than the marvellous extension of Almighty Power could have sustained, and carried them through it all, to the peaceful enjoyment of that liberty of conscience, for which they nobly contended. Their conduct furnishes the strongest evidence of sincere and devoted attachment to the cause of Christ. It proves that they were true men, earnestly engaged in seeking after truth; while the Divine support they experienced, and the brightness with which they were enabled to hold forth, in their example, the Christian virtues, are no inconsiderable testimonies of the favour of that God whom they delighted to serve.

The character of the founders of the Society has not been duly appreciated, even by many of their successors in religious profession. We look back to the age in which they lived, as one of comparative ignorance; and tracing the improvements which have since been made in the arts, and in literature and the sciences, as well as the more liberal views of civil and religious liberty which now generally obtain, we are apt to undervalue the wisdom and attainments of our ancestors. But our opinion re-

specting them will change when we discover how far they were in advance of the times in which they flourished, — that though many of them possessed but few of the advantages of literary instruction, yet their minds, enlightened by the influences of the Spirit of Truth, and expanded by Christian benevolence, were prepared to perceive and to promulgate those great moral and religious truths which are considered the peculiar ornament and glory of the present age.

One of the earliest subjects of concern to George Fox, was the want of moderation and temperance in eating and drinking. "The Lord showed me," says he, "that I might not eat and drink to make myself wanton, but for health, using the creatures as servants in their places to the glory of Him that created them." He also observes, that he was engaged "in warning such as kept public houses for entertainment, that they should not let people have more drink than would do them good;" and in crying against the sin of drunkenness, setting an example of remarkable abstinence in his manner of life. The testimony thus early and zealously enforced has ever since been maintained, and from that period to the present, Friends, as a body, have been a Temperance Society.

No less clear were his views in regard to speaking the *truth* on all occasions, without the use of an oath. "The Lord showed me," says he, "that though the people of the world have mouths full of deceit and

changeable words, yet I was to keep to yea and nay in all things, and that my words should be few and savoury, seasoned with grace;" — "warning all to deal justly, to speak the truth, to let their yea be yea and their nay nay, and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them;" — "that Christ commanded, Swear not at all; and God, when he bringeth the first begotten into the world, saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him, even Christ Jesus, who saith, Swear not at all. As for the plea that men make for swearing, viz., to end their strife, Christ, who forbids swearing, destroys the devil and his works, who is the author of strife."

The uniform and consistent example of the first Friends, in respect to a scrupulous adherence to their word, as men of truth, and to strict uprightness in all their dealings, soon gained them a high reputation for those virtues. Their objection to the use of oaths cost them much suffering, but their faithfulness at length triumphed over opposition, and their conscientious scruple was recognized and tolerated by an act of Parliament. Since that period, a striking change has been wrought in public opinion, scarcely one in five taking the oath in our courts of judicature. By a late act of Parliament, nearly all oaths, excepting those of judicial character, are dispensed with in England, by which it is computed nearly a thousand oaths per day will be spared.

The benevolent and enlightened mind of George Fox was deeply affected with the sanguinary character of the penal code of Great Britain, and be-

lieving that the benign spirit of the Gospel would lead to save men's lives rather than to destroy them, he was engaged to write to the judges and others in authority, "concerning their putting to death for small matters, and to show them how contrary it was to the law of God in old time; for," says he, "I was under great suffering in my spirit because of it." In an address "to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England," setting forth a number of particulars "for taking away oppressive laws, &c.," he says, "Let no one be put to death for [stealing] cattle, or money, or any outward thing — but let them restore; and mind the law of God, which is equity and measurable, agreeable to the offence."

This is perhaps the earliest account extant of any proposal for meliorating the severity of penal enactments.

The amiable and pacific principles which produced these views in the founder of the Society, gave rise to corresponding feelings in the minds of other members. William Penn, in framing the laws of Pennsylvania, mitigated considerably the harshness of the English code, and it is a well-known fact, that Friends have always been the advocates of a mild system of punishment, coupled with penitentiary regulations.

In the improvement of prisons and prison-discipline, they also took the lead.

Being frequently confined for his conscientious adherence to the precepts of Christ and his apostles, he had an opportunity of seeing the wretched con-

dition of the jails in England, and of witnessing the demoralizing effects of associating the novice in crime with the hardened offender. His tender feelings were quickly awakened on this interesting subject, and when about twenty-six years of age he published a paper, showing "what a hurtful thing it was for prisoners to lie so long in jail, and how they learned wickedness one of another, in talking of their bad deeds;" and inciting the judges of courts to the prompt administration of law, that the prisoners might as quickly as practicable be removed from the influence of such corrupting examples. In the address to the Parliament, before quoted, he says, "Let none be gaolers that are drunkards, swearers, or oppressors of the people; but such as may be good examples to the prisoners. And let none lie long in jail, for that is the way to spoil people, and to make more thieves; for there they learn wickedness together." Again, he says, "Let all jails be in wholesome places, that the prisoners may not lie in the filth and straw like chaff, &c.;" and after mentioning some of the nuisances then existing in prisons, he adds, "Let these things be mended."

There are several other recommendations which bespeak the liberality and correctness of his views; such as the following, viz.

"Let all the laws in England be brought into a known tongue." Many of them, as well as the proceedings of courts, were then in the Latin language.

"Let no swearer, nor curser, nor drunkard, bear any office whatever, nor be put in any place."

"Let none keep alehouses or taverns but those who fear God; that will not let the creatures of God be destroyed by drunkenness."

"Let no man keep an alehouse or tavern, that keeps bowls, shuffle-boards, or fiddlers, or dice, or cards."

"Let neither beggar, nor blind people, nor fatherless, nor widows, nor cripples, go begging up and down the streets; but that a house may be provided for them all, and also meat, that there may be never a beggar among you."

"And let all this wearing of gold lace and costly attire be ended, and clothe the naked and feed the hungry with the superfluity. And turn not your ear away from the cry of the poor."

About the time that George Fox attained his twenty-sixth year, considerable efforts were made to induce him to join the parliament army, and a captaincy over a band of newly-raised troops was offered to him. But his religious opinions would not permit him to take up arms in any cause. The ruling principle of his life was "peace on earth and good will to men." He whose commands he esteemed of paramount authority, directed his followers to "love their enemies;" to do good to those who hated them, and to pray for those who despitefully and evilly treated them. He had none of that sophistry which could reconcile the horrors of the battle-field, the anger, the revenge, and the cruelty which reign

there, with these benevolent precepts. The simple acceptance of revealed truth, was strongly marked in the character of the primitive Quakers. They sought not to evade or fritter away the strict and positive injunctions of Holy Writ, because they came in collision with popular opinion, or thwarted the wayward inclinations of the human heart. "I told them," says George Fox, when speaking of the above-mentioned circumstance, "that I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lusts, according to James' doctrine, and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars. Yet they courted me to accept the offer, and thought I did but compliment them. But I told them I was come into the covenant of peace, which was before wars and strifes." Persuasion not effecting their object, they threw him into the common jail, where he lay for six months, but without shaking his constancy.

When Sir George Booth afterward rose in favour of the king, the Committee of Safety solicited Friends to enrol and join the army, offering important posts and commands to some of them. But neither the sharpness of their sufferings, nor prospects of honours or preferment, could induce them to violate their Christian testimony in favour of universal peace, and to the present day it has been steadily maintained, at no inconsiderable sacrifice both of liberty and estate.

The situation of the African race, and of the Indian nations in America, claimed much of his at-

tention and sympathy. One of his first engagements among his friends, after reaching Barbadoes, was to hold a meeting of conference, in which, among other directions, he enjoined them "to train their negroes up in the fear of God, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord, and that, with Joshua, every master of a family might say, 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' I desired also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty toward them, as the manner of some hath been and is, *and that after certain years of servitude, they should make them free.*" In one of his epistles, he expresses the sentiment that "liberty is the right of all men," and on many occasions he evinced a strong solicitude that the benefits of a religious education should be extended to them, as being equally interested with others, in that salvation purchased for us by the Saviour's death.

His mind, expanded by Christian benevolence, reached forth in desire for the salvation of all mankind. So exceedingly precious did he esteem the glad tidings of the gospel, and so adapted to the wants of man in every situation, that he not only preached Christ crucified, to the slaves and Indians, while in America, but urged upon his brethren the same duty. "All Friends, everywhere," says he, in one of his epistles, "who have Indians or Blacks, are to preach the gospel to them and other servants, if you be true Christians." "And also you must instruct and teach your Indians and Negroes, and

all others, that Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and gave himself a ransom for all men, to be testified in due time, and is the propitiation, not for the sins of Christians only, but for the sins of the whole world." Again, he observes, "Do not neglect your family meetings among your whites and negroes; but do your diligence and duty to God and them." In another epistle to his friends, he directs them to go among the Indians, and get the chiefs to assemble their people, in order that they may declare to them God's free salvation through Jesus Christ the Lord.

The same enlarged views are evinced by the letters he wrote to some Friends, who, in pursuing a seafaring life, had been carried captive to the coast of Africa. He advises them to acquire a knowledge of the language spoken in the places where they were situated, in order that they might be able to preach to the inhabitants the glad tidings of redemption through a crucified Saviour, and to translate works which would tend to promote Christian knowledge.

Nor was this Christian concern for the promulgation of the Gospel confined to George Fox. William Penn, in his frequent intercourse with the Indians, took especial care not only to teach them Christianity by precept, but, by a just, liberal and blameless conduct and example, to prepare their minds for the reception of its sublime truths. Ministers of the Society, at different periods, travelled into remote countries, without the least prospect of tem-

poral reward, in order to declare unto others that free salvation, of which, through the mercy of God, they were made partakers.

In advocating the cause of religious and civil liberty, the Society of Friends has always stood conspicuous. During a protracted period of persecution and suffering, they nobly refused to sacrifice their conscientious scruples, maintaining a patient but firm and unyielding opposition to the arbitrary intolerance and cruelty of those in power. Their steadfastness and boldness in suffering, not only relieved other dissenters from the sharpness of persecution, but tended to prepare the way for those more correct views of toleration which subsequently obtained.

Baxter, though not favourably disposed towards Friends, bears testimony to their constancy under the cruel operation of the Conventicle Act, observing, "Here the Quakers did greatly relieve the sober people for a time; for they were so resolute, and so gloried in their constancy and sufferings, that they assembled openly at the Bull and Mouth, near Aldersgate, and were dragged away daily to the common jail, and yet desisted not, but the rest came next day. Abundance of them died in prison, and yet they continued their assemblies still."

On this passage, Orme, the biographer of Baxter, makes this remark: "Had there been more of the same determined spirit among others, which the Friends displayed, the sufferings of all parties would

sooner have come to an end. The government must have given way, as the spirit of the country would have been effectually roused. The conduct of the Quakers was infinitely to their honour." In another note relative to Friends, the same writer remarks, "The heroic and persevering conduct of the Quakers, in withstanding the interferences of government with the rights of conscience, by which they finally secured those peculiar privileges they so richly deserve to enjoy, entitles them to the veneration of all the friends of civil and religious freedom."

There is no doubt that the persecutions which disgraced England during the seventeenth century, and of which Friends in common with other dissenters bore so large a share, contributed very much toward the introduction and establishment of those more liberal and correct views of toleration and civil liberty, which succeeded, and so happily distinguish the present times. The constancy of Friends under suffering; their uniform testimony in favour of liberty of conscience to all; the boldness with which they exposed the rapacity and illegal proceedings of the persecuting priests, justices and judges; and their repeated and earnest applications to the king and parliament, were eminently instrumental in preparing the way for the passage of the Toleration Act, under William and Mary, in 1688.

It was not as a boon for themselves, that they urged the adoption of this great measure: they took the simple ground, that liberty of conscience was

the right of all men; and that all interference of the government in matters of religion, by which the subject was debarred from the exercise of this right, provided he did not molest others, was contrary to Christianity, to reason, and to sound policy.

In framing the government of Pennsylvania, William Penn adopted these principles, and carried them out to the fullest extent; not only tolerating every religion which owned the existence of a God, but making the professors of all, eligible to offices.

Sir James Macintosh, in his History of the Revolution in England, in explaining the part which William Penn took in defending the declaration of indulgence issued by James, a measure which, however just the rights it granted, was nevertheless denounced as an unconstitutional and arbitrary assumption of power, has these observations: "The most distinguished of their converts was William Penn, whose father, Admiral Sir William Penn, had been a personal friend of the king, and one of his instructors in naval affairs. This admirable person had employed his great abilities in support of civil as well as religious liberty, and had both acted and suffered for them, under Charles II. Even if he had not founded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as an everlasting memorial of his love of freedom, his actions and writings in England would have been enough to absolve him from the charge of intending to betray the rights of his countrymen. But though the friend of Algernon Sidney, he had never ceased to intercede, through his friends at

court, for the persecuted. An absence of two years in America, and the occupation of his mind, had probably loosened his connexion with English politicians, and rendered him less acquainted with the principles of the government. On the accession of James, he was received by that prince with favour, and hopes of indulgence to his suffering brethren were early held out to him. He was soon admitted to terms of apparent intimacy, and was believed to possess such influence, that two hundred suppliants were often seen at his gates, imploring his intercession with the king. That it really was great, appears from his obtaining a promise of pardon for his friend, Mr. Locke, which that illustrious man declined, because he thought that the acceptance would have been a confession of criminality. He appears, in 1679, by his influence on James, when in Scotland, to have obtained the release of all the Scotch Quakers who were imprisoned, and he obtained the release of many hundred Quaker prisoners in England, as well as letters from Lord Sunderland to the lord-lieutenants in England, for favour to his persuasion, several months before the declaration of indulgence. It was no wonder that he should be gained over by this power of doing good. The very occupations in which he was engaged, brought daily before his mind the general evils of intolerance and the sufferings of his own unfortunate brethren." "It cannot be doubted that he believed the king's object to be, universal liberty in religion, and nothing farther.

His own sincere piety taught him to consider religious liberty as unspeakably the highest of human privileges, and he was too just not to be desirous of bestowing on all other men, that which he most earnestly sought for himself. He who refused to employ force in the most just defence, felt a singular abhorrence of its exertion to prevent good men from following the dictates of their conscience." p. 289.

Previous to this period, William Penn had written and suffered much in defence of liberty of conscience, and it was to be expected that when thousands of his friends were suffering imprisonment and spoliation by merciless informers and magistrates, he would eagerly embrace the relief afforded by the king's indulgence, without a very profound investigation of the disputed point of royal prerogative, or the secret motives which influenced the crown.

Another subject which claimed the early attention of George Fox, was the promotion of useful learning. He recommended the establishment of two boarding-schools, which were accordingly opened, one for boys and the other for girls. Although the Society has always contended that human learning was not an essential requisite for the ministry of the Gospel, yet it has, from a very early period, been careful to provide for its members the benefits of education. The following recommendation was issued by the Yearly Meeting, as early as the year 1695, viz.:

"Advised, that school masters and mistresses who

are faithful Friends and *well qualified*, be encouraged in all counties, cities, great towns, or other places where there may be need; and that care be taken that poor Friends' children may freely partake of such education as may tend to their benefit and advantage, in order to apprenticeship." From that period to the present time, the subject has frequently been earnestly enjoined on the attention of Friends, and large sums expended in founding seminaries for their youth. Soon after the settlement of Philadelphia, William Penn founded a grammar-school for Greek and Latin, and incorporated a board of education, which is still in operation, under the title of "The Overseers of the Public School founded by charter, in the town and county of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania," with a corporate seal bearing this inscription: "Good instruction is better than riches."

It would not be practicable in this brief sketch, to do justice to other members of the Society, who aided in carrying out the liberal views which we have endeavoured to portray. It is sufficient to remark, that those views were the general characteristics of the Society, and some of them peculiar to it. For a long period they maintained many of them single-handed and in opposition to the general voice of the community. That their faithful labours in these great works of Christian benevolence, have contributed to bring them to their present condition, cannot be denied; nor yet that the principles of the Society of Friends, and the practices consequent

upon them, are eminently calculated to promote the religious and moral improvement of mankind, and to augment the sum of human happiness.

It is no less the privilege and interest, than it is the duty of Christians to be diligent in the use of those means which a merciful Providence has placed within their reach, for attaining a correct knowledge of the principles and practices of our holy religion.

If we have a proper sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, of our responsibility as accountable and immortal beings, and of the vast importance of the concerns which relate to the salvation of the soul, we shall not rest satisfied, without a careful inquiry into the truth of those doctrines and precepts, by which we profess to regulate our conduct, and to build our hopes of future happiness, in a world that will never have an end. We shall frequently ponder the inspired pages of Holy Writ, as the divinely authorized record of the Christian religion, and raise our hearts in aspirations to our heavenly Father for the light of his Holy Spirit, to illumine our darkness, and give us a saving knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus. Nor will it be less interesting to us, to trace out the result of these principles, as exhibited in the examples of those who have gone before us. — To inquire what fruits of holiness they produced in their conduct and conversation, — what support they derived from them, amid the trials inseparable from mortal existence, and what consolation and hope they yielded in the

hours of disease and of death. If, in the course of our researches, we discover that they were remarkable for their justice, their integrity, their meekness and humility — were patient under suffering, even when wrongfully inflicted; zealously devoted to the cause of Christ, and cheerfully given up to spend their time and substance for its advancement; "blameless and harmless, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom they shone as lights in the world," we may be assured that the tree whence these fruits of the Gospel sprung could not be evil. The faith which showed itself by such works of righteousness must be that by which the saints of old "obtained a good report," and which was their victory. If we follow them to the chamber of sickness and to the bed of death, witness the tranquillity and composure of their spirits; their humble, yet steadfast, reliance on the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus; their peace and joy in believing; and their hope full of immortality and eternal life, we shall not only derive the strongest evidence of the soundness of their Christian belief, but, in admiration of its blessed and happy effects, be incited to follow them, as they followed Christ.

Differing, as Friends do, in some points, from their fellow-professors of the Christian name, construing the requisitions of the Gospel with especial reference to the spiritual nature of true religion, and its non-conformity to the fashion of "the world which lieth in wickedness," their peculiarities in

doctrine, manners, and phraseology, have, ever since their first rise, subjected them to greater or less degrees of misrepresentation and obloquy. For, although they have uniformly appealed to the Holy Scriptures, as the standard and test of all their doctrines and practices, freely rejecting whatever should be proved to be inconsistent with their Divine Testimony, yet, either through ignorance, or prejudice, or the force of sectarian attachments, their repeated declarations have been disregarded or perverted, in order to represent them as slighting those Sacred Writings, and their principles as scarcely deserving the name of Christian.

It is often more easy to disparage the character of an opponent, by loading him with opprobrious epithets, than to refute his positions by sound and solid arguments; and mankind are generally so prone to adopt this course, rather than take the trouble of impartial investigation, that it is not surprising the terms enthusiasts, fanatics, Jesuits, and others of similar or more odious import, should have been freely bestowed on Friends, and credited by too many. Those who have not had the opportunity, or who have disliked the task of ascertaining their real belief, and whose impressions have been chiefly derived from caricatures, drawn by persons whose object and interest it is to place them in the wrong, could scarcely fail to form opinions unfavourable to them as a body, however they might respect the piety and sincerity of individual members. Nor

would it be surprising if the frequent and confident reiteration of grave, though unjust, charges, should have the effect to awaken doubts even in the minds of the uninformed members themselves; to lessen their esteem for those devoted Christians, who were the instruments, divinely fitted and made use of, in founding the Society; and to induce the apprehension that the way, and the people, thus "everywhere spoken against," must indeed have little claims to Christianity.

It may not be inappropriate to remind the reader, that the Son of God himself was "set for a sign that should be spoken against;" and such has been the lot of his Church, from the earliest periods of its existence. Had the propagation of the Gospel in the days of the apostles depended on the estimation in which they were held by the wise, the learned, and powerful of this world, or on the report which they gave of its character and design, it must have made little progress; but there were many others beside the Bereans, who were more noble than to be influenced by such means, and who searched for themselves "whether these things were so."

Happily for the Society, it has nothing to fear from investigation conducted in the spirit of candour and fairness. The various accusations against it, have been fearlessly met and refuted; and, of those who may entertain doubts respecting the soundness of its faith, it asks a calm and dispassionate attention to its authorized vindications, and to its official

declarations of faith. Whatever ambiguity may hang over the essays of some of its writers, arising either from the heat of controversy, the redundant and loose phraseology of the times, or from unduly pressing an argument, in order to discredit the premises of an antagonist, by exposing the consequences deducible from them; the declarations of faith and the official acts of the Society, prove conclusively, that on the points where they have been most questioned, their views are clear and Scriptural. The records of the Society also show a long list of worthies, whose dying hours and sayings bear ample testimony that the principles in which they had lived, and by which they endeavoured to regulate their actions, did not fail them in the near prospect of death and eternity; but administered all that support, consolation, and animating hope, which give to the death-bed of the Christian its peculiar interest.

It is especially obligatory on the members to be conversant in these matters. Ignorance of them, where the means of information are accessible, is discreditable, if not culpable. We should be prepared to give to every one that asketh us, a reason for our faith and hope. If the things which belong to our peace have a due place in our affections, we shall meditate with pleasure on the experience of those who have trodden the path of virtue before us. The fervour of our piety, the strength of our attachment to religious truth, will be promoted by

frequently perusing their excellent writings, and dwelling in serious contemplation on the bright example they have left us, adorned with the Christian graces, and inviting us to follow in their footsteps.

To whatever department of human pursuit we direct our attention, we perceive that men delight in the productions of congenial minds. He who finds that he has little relish for serious things, and that it is difficult to fix his attention upon them, may safely infer that his heart is not right in the sight of God, nor its aspirations directed toward the kingdom of heaven. The religious man delights to dwell on those things which concern the salvation of his soul. He feels a lively interest in the saints and holy men who have entered the celestial city before him; and as he contemplates their blameless walk, their faith and patience under trials, their simple obedience and dedication, and above all, the blessed animating hope of an eternal inheritance, which shed a bright radiance around their dying beds, his whole soul kindles with desire to arise and gird himself anew for the journey, and with increased diligence and ardour, to press toward the mark for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT THE FRIARS' MEETING HOUSE, BRISTOL,

On the 27th of First Month, 1858.

I FEEL that in bringing before you the results of some inquiries which I have recently made into the early history of the Society of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire, it is due to myself to say a few words as to the objects which I have in view, and in reference to the course of Lectures of which this forms a part. Let me, in the first place, disclaim all idea of being able to present to you a complete view of the subject. Such a disclaimer would, I have no doubt, have been united in by those who have preceded me in the delivery of Lectures here. Whatever may have been their opportunities of research, or their ability for making a profitable use of the results which they have obtained, it must have been felt by them impossible to do full justice to their respective subjects, within the short space of time allotted to the delivery of these Lectures. It would indeed be a mistake for any one who desired to become well acquainted with a particular subject, to expect to do so by listening to popular

Lectures. If the information conveyed in them be not superficial, it must at all events be very limited; and it appears to me that a suggestive rather than an exhaustive style is best adapted to such discourses; and that the object to be aimed at in them is to afford such an introduction of a subject to the hearers as may either induce them to pursue it thoroughly, or may at least increase their acquaintance with it. The latter is all that can be hoped for in many cases; nor do I think that knowledge of an imperfect character is to be despised. It may be better to learn thoroughly one of the lessons placed before us in the great book of knowledge, than to learn several imperfectly. But there are few men who have time and ability to extend this thorough knowledge to more than a very few subjects; and it is surely a mistake to suppose that a man engaged in such pursuit should shut his eyes and ears to the information he may be able to pick up as he goes along through life, about a variety of things, with which it is impossible he should obtain more than a slight acquaintance. Neither ought we to overlook the benefit to be derived by the Lecturers themselves: and judging from the pleasure and interest which I have derived from the preparation of the present sketch, I am quite prepared to encourage others to engage in similar undertakings.

I am sure that it has not been with the least wish to restrict the interests of those for whose benefit these Lectures were chiefly designed, that they have

been confined to a small, though important class of subjects; but simply because there appeared to be no lack in Bristol of Lectures of a scientific and literary character. Many Lectures are indeed given elsewhere in this city, similar to those which engage our attention here: but it has seemed as if there was a certain range of subjects, having a bearing on our position as members of a Christian congregation, in regard to which it behoves us to endeavour to become helpful one to another. The qualification for occupying that position faithfully, is one indeed which cannot be conferred by the communication of merely intellectual knowledge; but, on the other hand, it would be a mistake to undervalue anything which throws light upon it. It is, as I feel well assured, very important that, occupying as we do the place of a small section of the professing Church, we should accustom ourselves to regard this position of ours from various points of view; and that we should bring to bear upon it, so far as we are able, the experience of other ages and of other Churches. We have been much indebted to the labours of those who, in preceding Lectures, have traced some periods both of ancient and of comparatively modern ecclesiastical history. Some of these sketches have had an important bearing on the still more recent times in which our Society arose. I should have been very glad if the present Lecture could have been preceded by a sketch of the ecclesiastical history of England during the latter

part of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, because I do not believe that the ground occupied by our early Friends can be fully understood, without our becoming acquainted with some of the events which had transpired, and the opinions and sentiments which had prevailed in the period preceding that in which George Fox made known his views.[1] There would seem to me to be a connexion still more important between the earlier and later history of the Society of Friends itself; and it is this conviction which has induced me to avail myself of such means of information as have been within my reach, in order to the preparation of a brief sketch of our local history.

I have felt that in such an inquiry, as in all others relating to the past history of the Church, two mistakes of an opposite kind had need to be guarded against. The one is that of instituting an unfavourable comparison of the past with the present, by judging of the characters and opinions of those who have gone before us, without due reference to the circumstances in which they were placed, and the character of the times in which they lived, or to the superior advantages which may in some respects be

[1] Since this Lecture was finished I have had an opportunity of reading the "Introductory Remarks" prefixed to an American Memoir of George Fox, published some years since. These Remarks, which are said to have been written by Thomas Evans of Philadelphia, contain by far the best introduction to the history of Friends which I have yet seen. The book has been republished in England in a cheap form and extensively circulated.

enjoyed by ourselves. The other danger to which I allude arises from that undue reverence for the past which would lead us to an indiscriminate reception of its teaching, and would cause us to forget the injunction of our Lord, "Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven." There has been but one period of the Church of Christ, whence infallible teaching has been handed down to us; that in which our Lord and His apostles made known the great truths of the gospel. How broad is the line of demarcation between those inspired writings in which their words have been preserved, and those of the very men who listened to their teaching. Beautiful and instructive as were the extracts, presented to us in a former Lecture, from the writings of those who are called the Apostolic Fathers, there are nevertheless statements and opinions put forth in them which preclude the idea that these writings should be received as authoritative declarations of the truth. It is incumbent indeed on those who set up a claim to infallibility on behalf of the teachings of their church to show that, both in past and in present times, all which has been set forth as truth on the authority of that church, is really true: but if such an attempt were to be made by any who call themselves Protestants, it would go far to prove that they are Protestants only in name. Above all would it be inconsistent in the successors of those who stood, as I believe our forefathers to have done, in the foremost

rank of Protestants, and whose mission it was to call the people away from the authority of man, and to direct them to the authority of Christ, to set up the authority of these good men in the place of that which they sought to overthrow. I may here quote the declaration of Wm. Penn, that "Articles of faith ever ought to be (expressed) in the very language of Holy Writ."[1]

A few sentences have sufficed to enable me to disclaim the intention of deriving from the past any other authority than that which *brethren* may exercise over each other in love; but it is a far more difficult thing to obtain one's self, or to present to others, such a view of the circumstances under which our Society arose as shall enable us really to understand the position of its earlier members. I cannot attempt to supply the want before adverted to, of a sketch of the previous ecclesiastical period; but I must remind you of a few points connected with it. Dissent from the churches established by law in different countries had already made considerable progress. It had in fact existed in the minds of men ever since man had begun to exert a spiritual tyranny over his fellows: and now that the right of *formal* dissent from the Church of Rome had been established by the Episcopal Church of this country, it was inevitable that others should in their turn separate themselves from its communion;

[1] Address to Protestants, p. 750, Vol. I., Penn's Works, ed. 1726.

seeing that whilst it came out from many of the errors of the Papacy, it undertook to prescribe services from which many were compelled to turn away. I need only refer, in support of this remark, to the Baptismal and Burial Services contained in the Prayer Book.[1] But was there no satisfactory resting-place to be found in any of the numerous bodies of Dissenters which sprang up about this time, for a man holding such views as George Fox did, without his adding still another to the sects into which the professing Church was divided? I think not, and for these reasons, among others, (and I am far from stating them as the only ones,) that whilst the more respectable bodies of Dissenters restricted religious liberty by confining the services of the congregation to one man, and expecting their members to receive an outward sign of communion at his hands, (not to mention their adoption of formal creeds;) there was in other sects, such as the Ranters, a state of religious anarchy, and a want of spirituality of mind, which unfitted them to discharge the duties of Christian Churches. It is hard to say what the National Church really was during some of the first years of our Society's existence: I mean under the Commonwealth, and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. Episcopacy was overthrown; and Independency had gained so much upon Presbyterian-

[1] No man could well have done more than John Wesley did in the following century, to retain his allegiance to the Established Church; but this effort proved a very unsuccessful one.

ism that a compromise had to be effected; and the last mentioned parties were not the only ones represented in the governing body set up in the Church, under Oliver Cromwell. The period was emphatically one of convulsion, both in church and state. Changes followed each other in such rapid succession that the national mind was kept in a state of feverish excitement, which naturally gave rise to wild fanaticism in some, and tended to exasperate the feelings of the different parties towards one another. In a work published in 1646, sixteen different sects of Christians are enumerated as being then in existence in England.

In attempting to trace the effects produced in this part of the country by the labours of George Fox and his brethren, there is no need for me to enter at any length on the consideration of their characters and writings; but I cannot satisfactorily pass to the consideration of these results, without adverting to the varied notice which the early Friends have received at the hands of some modern authors. Perhaps our tendency has been to be over sensitive as to what other people say about us. At all events, I believe we have had of late more occasion to be uneasy on account of the damaging praise which some writers have bestowed on George Fox and his cotemporaries, than in regard to the unfair and unjust aspersions of others. I do not allude to authors and lecturers like W. Hepworth Dixon and George Dawson, who have occupied themselves with giving

prominence to the mental and moral characteristics of George Fox and William Penn; but to authors like Bancroft, the American historian, who, taking advantage of certain objectionable forms of expression, contained in some of the early writings, and overlooking the plain declarations of gospel truth to be found in them, have attempted to show that, in giving such prominence as they did to the great doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence, they were only directing men to the *light of nature.* There is something in these representations so specious, and so attractive to a certain class of minds, that they are far more likely, as it seems to me, to prove mischievous, than the unkind aspersions with which other writers, like Macaulay, have sought to defame our forefathers. No candid reader who possesses a moderate acquaintance with the lives and characters of George Fox and William Penn, can read Macaulay's strictures upon them, without perceiving that he has acted the part of a prejudiced advocate, rather than of an impartial judge. And as respects his representations of George Fox's imbecility, it has always seemed to me, that even if his absurd caricature were a correct likeness, it would only make it the more remarkable that such a man should have been the instrument in introducing a system, which while it took up a position in advance of other Protestant systems, as respects its renunciation of priestly and sacramental pretensions, its practical recognition of the Spirit's teaching, and

the unyielding obedience to some neglected commands of Christ which it inculcated, has steered clear at the same time of follies such as characterized some of the short lived sects which started into existence about the same time. William Penn expresses indeed his great satisfaction that a man raised up to do such work as George Fox's, was "not of high degree, or elegant speech, or learned after this world;" but it seems to me impossible to read William Penn's very striking description of this remarkable man contained in the preface to his Journal, without perceiving, that however defective in educational training, his natural character was one which, under the influence of Divine grace, remarkably fitted him for his work. I allude especially to that rare combination of manly courage, and dauntless intrepidity, with gentleness of mind and delicacy of feeling, which was so strikingly exhibited in his case. William Penn says of him, "As he was unwearied, so he was undaunted in his services for God and His people. His behavior (in a variety of instances to which he refers, including his appearance in Westminster Hall, and before Oliver Cromwell,) did abundantly evidence it to his enemies as well as to his friends." "He was no more to be moved to fear than to wrath. So meek, contented, modest, easy, steady, tender, it was a pleasure to be in his company." It should be remembered that William Penn had, as he tells us, been George Fox's companion for weeks and months

together, on divers occasions. He speaks too of the originality of his mind and the soundness of his understanding: — "As to man, he was an original, being no man's copy;" and, "whilst he was ignorant of useless and sophistical science, he had in him the foundation of useful and commendable knowledge, and cherished it everywhere." Of his politeness he says "he was civil beyond all forms of breeding." The whole of this description of George Fox, in the preface to his Journal, is well worth reading. So too is Thomas Ellwood's account, which follows it. I must quote two or three sentences from the latter. He says of George Fox, "He was valiant for the truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, unwearied in labouring in it, steady in his testimony to it; immoveable as a rock." "A severe reprover of hard and obstinate sinners; a mild and gentle admonisher of such as were tender and sensible of their failings; not apt to resent personal wrongs; easy to forgive injuries: but zealously earnest where the honor of God, the prosperity of truth, and the peace of the Church were concerned. Very tender, compassionate, and pitiful he was, to all who were under any sort of affliction; full of brotherly love, full of fatherly care."

There have been other authors of late who, though differing widely from some of our Christian views, and labouring too under some misapprehensions, have, nevertheless, shown a disposition to treat our early history candidly and fairly. I might

instance Marsden, in his Dictionary of Christian sects; and Colquhoun, in his Sketches of Notable Lives. Marsden is a clergyman of the Church of England; and his account of Friends, as of other sects, is singularly fair and impartial. Colquhoun, who is also a member of the Church of England, assigns to George Fox the credit of having prepared the way for the establishment of religious freedom. He seems to regard this, indeed, as the chief part of his mission: and though the service which he rendered in that direction was but a secondary result of his upholding the paramount authority of Christ in the Church, it was doubtless essentially connected with it. There is an epistle from George Fox to one of the European sovereigns, written for the purpose of representing to him the persecution from which his subjects suffered, in which many quotations are given from Christian writers, for the purpose of showing that the doctrine of liberty of conscience had been recognized, in theory at least, in the later as well as in the earlier periods of church history. There were also some remarkable testimonies borne by authors cotemporary with George Fox — by Jeremy Taylor and John Milton in particular, to what the former denominates "the liberty of prophesying." That great principle had just received a practical illustration in the course pursued by Roger Williams, a puritan minister, who having been expelled from New England, had established a system of universal toleration in Rhode Island.

Nor can I omit to mention the remarkable example of two Archbishops in the seventeenth century (one of them a Roman Catholic) Fénelon in France, and Leighton in Scotland, who, being entrusted by their respective sovereigns with the task of inducing Dissenters to submit to church authority, declined to avail themselves of armed force, choosing to rely only on the weapons which the spiritual armoury supplied. We may well apply to them the test of true greatness of mind, which Dr. Arnold proposed, that of men's soaring above the opinions of their time into the regions of eternal truth. Tolerant opinions certainly did not belong to their time; and in this country, as Colquhoun remarks, the "opinion held its ground which the Commonwealth inherited from the Monarchy, and bequeathed to the Restoration, in which the Church and the Sectary were agreed—that conscience was to be governed by statute, and religion enforced by law." He adds, "It was no easy matter to gainsay these views; and yet they must be uprooted if conscience was to be free. The man who would attempt this had a hard task, and needed rare qualities; a daring spirit, yet matchless patience; the courage which could brave violence, yet the gentleness which could disarm hostility, and win prejudice by mild persuasion." Such a man he describes George Fox to have been.[1]

[1] Since extracting this passage, I have discovered that a similar one is quoted by John Hodgkin, in his Lecture at Birmingham, on "the progress of religious liberty, &c.," from a paper

The city of Bristol appears to have partaken, to the full extent, of the excitement and the varying opinions on religious subjects, of which I have spoken, as having characterized the period alluded to. In a farewell sermon preached by Major Kem, one of Cromwell's officers, to his regiment, in 1646, he says, "It is a sad time, this, but a more sad omen of worser times, even the rabble of opinions in this city of Bristol: of which I may say, 'as the sword hath slain many, so hath error many more, in a few months' time.' One while, such a man preacheth truth, and you are willing to pluck out your eyes to do him good: a little while after, you are ready to pull out his eyes, and he is a low man, and not worthy your presence, and so, discouraged. How many ways do you make to heaven in this place? I beseech you, where I am related unto, to look to your guards: keep a strict watch: double your guard: eye your sally-ports: and put on the whole armour of God."[1] But amidst this rabble of opinions, and notwithstanding the wild extravagance of some, and the lifeless formality of others, there were to be found in Bristol, as in many other places, a number of stedfast and earnest inquirers,

by Colquhoun, in the Christian Observer. J. H. adds John Locke's name to those of Taylor and Milton, as a cotemporary writer favourable to religious liberty. I would strongly recommend the reading of this Lecture, which is published in the form of a pamphlet, to any of my friends who have not seen it.

[1] Sayer's History of Bristol, Vol. II., p. 465.

who, wearied with the contradictory teachings of men, were longing for rest unto their souls: and some, too, who, like George Fox, were unable conscientiously to retain their connexion with the religious sects to which they belonged. Charles Marshall, who was born in Bristol, in 1637, says, in speaking of his childhood, "I went with my mother to the Independent meetings, in the days of that people's tenderness and sincerity; and sometimes I went to the Baptists' meeting, and in public, to hear those men who were esteemed most zealous in their day. Among those people, and in those assemblies, there were awakenings inwardly through the stirrings and strivings of the gift of God, under the sense of which living pantings and breathings were in many of their souls, after the true spiritual knowledge of God, who is a Spirit." After speaking of declension as having followed these awakenings, he adds, "And in those times, viz., about the year 1654, there were many who were seeking after the Lord; and there were a few of us who kept one day in the week in fasting and prayer; so that when this day came, we met together early in the morning, and did not taste anything. We sat down sometimes in silence; and as any found a concern on their spirits and inclination in their hearts, they kneeled down and sought the Lord; so that sometimes, before the day ended, there might be twenty of us pray, men and women; on some of these occasions, children spake a few words in prayer; and

we were sometimes greatly bowed and broken before the Lord in humility and tenderness. Unto one of these, our meetings, in the year 1654, came dearly beloved John Audland and John Camm, messengers of the ever-living God."[1] This brings us to the first visit paid to Bristol by those who had become united with George Fox as members and ministers of the Society of Friends.

Ten years had now elapsed since the Christian doctrines preached by George Fox had begun to spread amongst the inhabitants of Leicestershire, his native county; and many in the northern counties of England had, in the meantime, become united with them in religious profession. George Fox tells us that, in this year, his fellow-labourers in the ministry were above sixty in number; and he mentions different districts of the country into which they went forth, some of them by two and two, and others single handed. That the fields were white to harvest, was evidenced by the multitudes who everywhere gathered around these devoted men, and by the readiness with which their testimony was received. This was strikingly the case in Bristol, where the companies of people who thronged to listen to the preaching of John Audland and John Camm were so great, that no house could contain them. "The places of meeting were too streight," says an early historian, "the assemblies thereupon in the open fields, though it was

[1] Journal of Charles Marshall, Chap. I.

winter, were multiplied to two, three, nay, sometimes to near four thousand people." Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, who had, in the early part of this year, visited London, and been instrumental to the gathering of a large Society there, came also to Bristol; and though their labours, together with those of John Audland and John Camm, excited a strong and violent opposition on the part of both ministers and people, a number of steadfast followers gathered around them.[1] Among the earliest of the Bristol converts were Charles Marshall, from whose Journal I have quoted; Josiah Coale; Dennis Hollister, a Deacon in the congregation of Dissenters, meeting in Broadmead; Barbara Blagdon, Edward Pyot, and George Bishop. Fuller, in his History of Dissent, &c., describes D. Hollister as a great man in the corporation, and a Member of Parliament; but I do not find his name among the Members for Bristol. E. Pyot and G. Bishop are described as "Captains," and had held commissions in the army, under the Parliament. George Fox, speaking in the following year of a

[1] John Audland and Francis Howgill had both been ministers in another denomination before they became Friends; and on making the change, they returned to their flocks the money which they had received in that capacity. Edward Burrough, who is described by Marsden as the Whitfield of the party, died in Newgate, London, at the age of twenty-eight. Being in Bristol shortly before, he told some of his friends that he was going up to the city of London again, to lay down his life for the gospel, and to suffer amongst Friends in that place.

large meeting at Reading, says, "thither came George Bishop, of Bristol, with his sword by his side, for he was a Captain." It does not appear whether George Fox gave him the advice which he is said to have done to William Penn, on the latter's asking him whether he would advise him to give up wearing his sword, "I advise thee to wear it as long as thou canst."[1] John Audland and John Camm visited Somersetshire and other parts of the West of England at this time. Among the earliest and most eminent of the Somersetshire Friends, were Jasper Batt, of Street, and John Anderdon, of Bridgewater. The names of Clark, Metford, Clothier, and Gundry, occur at a very early period in the middle division; those of Alloway, Ferris and Parsons, and afterwards of Pole, in the West; and in the North, we have those of John and Samuel Hipsley, Arthur and Abraham Thomas, and Edmund Beakes. The last named Friend lived at Portshead, in the house now occupied by James Tanner. George Fox's first visit to Bristol was in 1656. Edward Pyot had been his companion in a journey through the Western counties, commenced in the previous year, and had suffered a severe im-

[1] This anecdote is given by Janney, in his Memoir of William Penn, on what he considers reliable tradition. The account goes on to state that, when the two Friends next met, George Fox said, "William, where is thy sword?" "Oh!" said William Penn, "I have taken thy advice; I wore it as long as I could."

prisonment with him in Launceston gaol. After their liberation, they came by way of Exeter and Taunton to Puddimore, in Somersetshire. George Fox says, "a great convincement there was up and down in that country—many meetings we had, and the Lord's power was over all; many were turned by the power and Spirit of God to the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for them, and came to sit under His free teaching." George Fox next accompanied Edward Pyot, his late fellow prisoner, to his house near Bristol, arriving there on a seventh-day. The following morning he attended the meeting in Broadmead, which was large and quiet. Notice was given of a meeting to be held in the Orchard, which Friends then made use of for their larger gatherings. As he was on his way to this meeting, George Fox was told that a noted opponent of Friends would be present; "but," true to himself, he adds, "I bid them never heed, it was nothing to me who went to it." He mentions having stood for some time in silence, on the stone in the orchard (which Friends used in speaking,) with his hat off, letting the people look at him, some thousands being present. The expected opponent came and made some disturbance, but was soon silenced, and George Fox adds, "a glorious, peaceable meeting we had; the word of life was divided amongst them; and they were turned from darkness to light, and to Jesus their Saviour." After speaking for hours, and directing them, as he says, to the

Spirit of God in themselves that would lead them into all truth, he concluded with prayer. "The Lord's power," he adds, "came over all. A blessed day it was, and the Lord had the praise." At Edward Pyot's house he had another large meeting, at which he says, "many were turned to Christ Jesus their life, their Prophet to teach them, their Shepherd to feed them, and their Bishop to oversee them."

In the following year (1657,) George Fox was again in Bristol; and three years later, on his return from Cornwall, he passed again through Somersetshire, where he had "divers large and peaceable meetings;" and arrived in Bristol, as on the occasion of his first visit, at the end of the week. Finding that Friends had been driven out of the orchard, the day before, by a company of soldiers, he requested George Bishop, Thomas Gouldney, Thomas Speed, and Edward Pyot, to go to the Mayor and Aldermen, and ask them to allow Friends the use of the Town Hall to meet in, and to offer at the same time to pay £20 per annum to the poor, as compensation for its use. These Friends were astonished, and said the Mayor and Aldermen would think they were mad. At last they consented to go, "though in the cross to their own wills;" and they seem to have been agreeably disappointed with their reception. On hearing their proposal the Mayor said, "for his part he could agree to it; but he was but one." He mentioned

another hall to them, which would not, however, answer their purpose. "So they came away, leaving the Mayor in a very loving frame towards them." It was concluded that the meeting on the following day should be held in the orchard, as usual; and though some formidable opposition was offered, it gave way. Again a large meeting was held at Edward Pyot's house, at which it was judged several thousands of people attended. Friends from other places were present; and some of the Baptists and Independents, with their teachers, and many others of the sober people of Bristol, insomuch that the people who stayed behind said, "the city looked naked." George Fox says of this meeting, "it was very quiet, many glorious truths were opened to the people, and the Lord Jesus Christ was set up, who is the end of all figures and shadows, of the law, and the first covenant."

In 1662 George Fox had a narrow escape from imprisonment in Bristol. Alexander Parker, his companion, standing up first to speak, was carried off to prison. George Fox stood up after him, but was unmolested. He says, "I tarried till first day following, visiting Friends, and being visited by Friends. On first day morning several Friends came to Edward Pyot's, where I lay the night before, and used endeavours to persuade me not to go to the meeting that day; for the magistrates had threatened to take me, and had raised the trained bands. I wished them to go to the meeting,

not telling them what I intended to do; but I told Edward Pyot I intended to go, and he sent his son to show me the way from his house, by the fields. As I went I met divers Friends, who did what they could to stop me: 'What,' said one, 'wilt thou go into the mouth of the beast?' 'Wilt thou go into the mouth of the dragon?' said another. I put them by, and went on. When I came to the meeting, Margaret Thomas was speaking. When she had done I stood up. I saw a concern and fear upon Friends for me; but the power of the Lord, in which I declared, soon struck the fear out of them. Life sprang, and a heavenly, glorious meeting we had." The meeting ended peaceably, the soldiers having, meanwhile, been employed in breaking up another meeting. (Of George Fox's marriage in Bristol, I shall have to speak hereafter.)

On his return from America and the West Indies, George Fox landed at Shirehampton, and went on to Bristol, where he was met by his wife, by William Penn, and others. Here again he held large meetings, and from the account given of them in his Journal, he may, emphatically, be said to have preached Christ to the people. This was in 1673. Five years before this he speaks of a visit to Bristol, and of the establishment of men's and women's meetings for discipline in this city. This exactly tallies with our Bristol records: the first meeting for discipline, of which the minutes are preserved, having been held in the third month, 1667.

Before entering on the subject of the discipline and of the state of the society in those early days, as indicated by these records, the mention of which must be reserved for a future Lecture, it is needful to turn to that which was the most prominent feature in our history in those times, the severe and almost constant persecution under which its members suffered. In Bristol and Somersetshire, as elsewhere, persecution commenced with the rise of the Society, and pursued it with but little interruption for upwards of thirty, and in some places for nearly forty years. The persecutions of this period were less barbarous indeed than those which befel the first teachers of the Reformed Churches. Christian civilization had made great progress since the days in which William Tyndale and John Frith gave to their countrymen the invaluable treasure of the printed English Bible; and sealed their testimony to its truths with their blood, as did many others of their time, and as the disciples of Wyckliffe had done before them. The reaction which took place in the reign of Queen Mary had been mercifully cut short. It was a true prophecy which was uttered by the venerable Latimer, for the encouragement of Ridley, his brother martyr, as they were being chained to the stake, "Be of good courage, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as, I trust, shall never be put out."

The progress which *civil liberty* had made, also

produced a very marked effect, as regards the restraints which were imposed on these persecutions of which I speak. Juries were less ready than they had been to convict prisoners, in violation of their conscientious convictions. The inhuman practice of legal torture ceased in England under the Commonwealth: and though men and women were fined, scourged, imprisoned, and transported, for daring to worship God as their consciences dictated, and even incurred a liability to the punishment of death, that sentence was no longer carried into execution in England for such offences. Even among the Puritans of New England, the gallows was substituted for the stake. But if the treatment of Protestant Dissenters under Cromwell and Charles II. was comparatively mild, how cruel must have been the previous suffering endured by them? Let us turn for a short time to the consideration of what in those days was involved in the punishment of being sent to prison. It was not the mere deprivation of personal liberty, the being shut up as prisoners now are, in apartments so well warmed and ventilated, and with such a supply of wholesome food, that it is to be feared many a poor man is induced to commit crime for the very purpose of finding an asylum within the prison walls. Our early Friends were not a complaining people, but some of the representations which they had to make in Bristol and Somersetshire, as elsewhere, of the state of the cells and dungeons in which they were

herded together, are of the most loathsome character. If any one should be disposed to think that such cases were exceptional, he would do well to turn to that faithful and humiliating picture, which was presented one hundred years later, of the condition of our prisons, by that great and devoted friend of mankind, John Howard. His work on prisons is too large to find many readers; but the "General View of Distress in Prisons," which forms the first section of it, deserves to be universally studied. I am the more disposed to extract a few sentences from it, because, in addition to my present purpose, it may serve as a basis for the consideration of some more recent efforts which have been made for the relief of prisoners, and, I might add, for the relief of lunatics.[1] The testimony of some of the authors quoted by Howard on this sad subject relates to an earlier, and of others to a later period than that of our first Friends. He has the following sentence from Lord Bacon, which has doubtless served as a text to many a sanatory reformer: — "The most pernicious infection, next the plague, is the smell of a jail, when the prisoners have been long and close and nastily kept; whereof we have had in our time experience twice or thrice, when both the Judges that sat upon the jail, and numbers of those who attended the business or were present, sickened

[1] See Appendix.

and died." This quotation is followed by the statement, that at the Lent Assize in Taunton, in 1730, some prisoners who were brought thither from Ilchester Jail infected the court, and Lord Chief Baron Pengelly, Sir James Sheppard, Sergeant, John Pigot, Esq., Sheriff, and some hundreds besides, died of the jail distemper. The jail at Ilchester, mentioned in the last extract, is the one to which I shall chiefly have to refer in speaking of Somersetshire. In describing his own visit to it, Howard mentions, "Straw on the stone floors, no bedsteads, no infirmary, no bath." He does not appear to have been shown the wretched dungeon which was in use one hundred years before, and which served not only the purpose of a condemned cell, but also on some occasions as the receptacle of innocent men — prisoners for conscience' sake. We may hope that this relic of barbarity no longer existed, for there were few things which escaped the penetrating eye of that undaunted man. On Howard's visiting Bristol, he was shown the dungeon in Newgate, which was then called the Pit, and was, I suppose, the same as the West House, often mentioned in the records of Friends' sufferings. A descent of eighteen steps led down into this miserable hole, which he describes as close and offensive. Of the old City Bridewell, which had also been a place of great suffering to Friends, he

says, "All the rooms were very dirty, and made offensive by sewers." The almost unlimited power of many of the jailers, was another point which claimed the special notice of Howard, and it was one which had been connected with the worst features of the imprisonment which befel our forefathers.

The persecution of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire followed to some extent the same course as that of their brethren in other parts of the country. It commenced under the Commonwealth, and became still more severe under Charles II. The former period was doubtless one which brought great relief to many who had suffered under the tyranny of the Star Chamber and the High Commission; and although Oliver Cromwell was doubtless responsible for the severe persecution which befel the early Friends, it is probable that he acted in deference to popular clamour, rather than in accordance with his own conviction. At all events, nothing could well be stronger than his declarations in favour of the free toleration of religious differences. We need not be at any loss to account for the existence of popular prejudice in this instance, when we remember the prevalence of bitter party feeling before alluded to; the extent to which the position assumed by Friends was opposed to the views of the previously existing sects; the fact that Friends

were not satisfied to act only on the defensive; and that although the cry for liberty was everywhere to be heard, there were but few who understood in what it consisted, or were willing to grant others the freedom which they claimed for themselves.[1]

The opposition with which our forefathers had to contend, was no doubt aggravated by the success which attended their preaching. In Bristol the companies of inquiring people who attended the meetings (large as they were,) were probably outnumbered by the ignorant mobs assembled to insult and injure them. John Audland and John Camm were in great danger of their lives when, in proceeding towards Brislington to attend a meeting, a large concourse of people prevented them from passing the Bridge; and carried them, amidst threats and execrations, into the city; where the approach of officers of the garrison induced the rioters to disperse. On the following day these earnest-minded men reached Brislington, and held

[1] There is a sketch given in a pamphlet published by Friends in 1656, of the party spirit which had prevailed in Bristol during the previous eighteen years. Episcopacy is represented as having persecuted Puritanism; then Puritanism in the form of the Presbytery opposed Episcopacy as popish and Independency as heresy. Afterwards Independency gained the ascendant, and paid its persecutors in their own coin. And lastly, these sects, and others with them, were leagued together against the Quakers.

their meeting; but the mob having again collected on the Bridge, the magistrates, fearing bloodshed would ensue, sent their Sword Bearer to prevent the preachers from returning that way. One of the Presbyterian ministers who now filled the pulpits of the city, of the name of Farmer, is said to have been especially active in inciting the rioters.

The magistrates certainly manifested a commendable zeal for the preservation of the peace of the city; but one of them in particular, Alderman Hellier, showed great sympathy with the rioters: and in reporting these tumults to the Protector, they represented these innocent men against whom they were raised as the cause of them. They also issued a warrant for the apprehension of the strangers, including in the number George Fox and James Naylor, neither of whom had then been in Bristol. The absurd plea on which this warrant was issued, was that of their being monks of the Franciscan order from Rome, travelling under the guise of Quakers. The opposition offered to these strangers was subsequently turned against those who had embraced their doctrines, and they had to undergo a severe ordeal of persecution, which was however but an earnest of greater suffering in store for them. At one of the Quarter Sessions, before which a number of Friends had to appear, the Town Clerk in charging the jury told them, the law did protect

those who met together to sing, pray, read or expound the Scriptures; but for people to meet together, though in a private house, and to be silent, was no part of religion, and therefore out of the verge of the law. The Friends had no difficulty in making it appear that this doctrine was as contrary to law as it was to sound sense; and they further showed that the statement on which it was based was incorrect, as it was well known that they did not meet together "resolving silence," and that there was both prayer and preaching in their meetings. Marsden, in his Dictionary of Christian Sects, says, that the only excuse which can be pleaded for the severity used towards Friends, was furnished by the excesses into which some of those connected with them were led. And after making large allowance for the misrepresentations of adversaries, and even confining ourselves to Friends' own statements, it is evident that a good deal of unhealthy excitement prevailed. It could hardly indeed have been otherwise than that, in an age of universal excess of feeling, many persons of excitable temperament would gather to this new standard of profession. In the early Bristol Minutes, mention is made of two crazy persons, in particular, by whom the meetings were disturbed from week to week. And a severe trial awaited the newly gathered Society in Bristol, in the visit paid by

James Naylor, in company with a set of followers who, on any other supposition than that of their being insane, must be allowed to have rendered him blasphemous homage. I cannot bring myself to dwell on the painful details of their proceedings, and of the still more inexcusable cruelty with which James Naylor was treated. There may be lessons of instruction to be derived from these events, as regards the effects which spiritual pride and vanity may produce; and from the humility and contrition which marked Naylor's subsequent course: but there was still more in his case, if I mistake not, which pointed to a truth but little recognised in that day, that there are diseased conditions of mind which should rather be dealt with by the skill of the physician, than by the branding-iron of the executioner. But if any shade of excuse was to be found in such excesses for the indiscriminate persecution of this suffering people, it must be borne in mind that their suffering was everywhere received with meekness and resignation, such as should have disarmed prejudice and opposition.

In Somersetshire, as in Bristol, this period of the commonwealth was one in which Friends suffered greatly from the violence of mobs gathered to assault them, and led on, as was too often the case, by parish priests, and instigated by the magistrates themselves. Companies of men armed with pitch-

forks, and other weapons, rushed into quiet village meetings, causing the utmost disorder; and afterwards accused the Friends so assembled of having been concerned in a riot. In some instances the horses of Friends who were riding to meeting were taken from them; and those who ventured a few miles from their homes were apprehended on a charge of vagrancy. Among these is mentioned John Evans, of Inglishcombe, near Bath. His wife, Katherine Evans (a well-known name), having ventured to preach repentance to the people, in the market-place, at Salisbury, was, by the mayor's order, tied to a whipping-post in the market, and scourged by the beadle. Returning thither next month, and exhorting the people as before, she was sent to the Bridewell, and put into an offensive place called the blind-house, where two madmen had lately died. It is mentioned that she had been confined, a little while before, in a cell with an insane woman. The magistrates proposing to renew the former punishment, one of their number, Colonel Wheat, zealously opposed it, and told the mayor "they might as well have whipped the woman of Samaria, who brought good tidings into the town." The accounts given of Katherine Evans present us with a succession of cruel treatment, including imprisonments in Bristol, Ilchester, and elsewhere. It was she who, in company with Sarah Cheevers, a

Wiltshire Friend, being on a religious visit in the Mediterranean, was imprisoned in the Inquisition, in Malta, in 1659, where they endured great suffering, for three years and a half. The house of the Inquisition, in Malta, has now been rebuilt, and is used as a guard-house for soldiers. I paid a visit to it, during the winter of 1833–4, which I spent in that island, with George Waring; but could not identify any part of the premises with the account given in Sewell's history, excepting the well, in the central court of the building, to which the poor prisoners were allowed access on a few occasions. There is an epistle, from Sarah Cheevers, from the Inquisition, in Malta, preserved amongst the papers in our Quarterly Meeting's chest, at Bridgwater — but not written, as I have heard it said, by means of a stick, dipped in soot and water. The writing is in the form of printed letters, and might have been executed with any pointed instrument, but the ink retains its original blackness. An additional cause of suffering to Friends resident in country places, was the severe treatment pursued towards them in the recovery of the ecclesiastical demands, which they refused. I select the following from among many such cases on record, as having occurred in Somersetshire, during the Commonwealth. As Henry Gundry, a husbandman, of Street, was driving his oxen, he was arrested at the suit of a

tithe-farmer. The bailiffs beat and abused him, and hurried him away to Ilchester jail, without permitting him to speak to his wife or any of his friends. He continued a prisoner above fourteen months. William Sergeant, of Bathford, had suffered ten months' imprisonment for tithes, when the prosecutor entered another action against him and his wife, and in the time of harvest, when the industrious woman was taking care of their corn, arrested and sent her also to prison. They had two trusty servants, who diligently followed the harvest work; but they also were imprisoned; and, had it not been for the kind interest of some of their neighbours, the corn would have been left unhoused. This would not however have mattered much to the poor man himself, for, after twenty months' imprisonment, he died in jail. Another imprisonment for tithes, which at this time terminated in death, was that of John Comb. At Wellington, a poor journeyman was subpœnaed in the Exchequer for a demand of two pence halfpenny. The number of Friends imprisoned in England during the Commonwealth, is stated in Knight's Pictorial History of England, to have been 3173, and of deaths in prison, 32.

The events of the first year of Charles the Second's reign (1660) served to convince our Friends that there was no dependence to be placed on his

declaration from Breda, as to the liberty which he would grant to tender consciences. In this one year upwards of 4000, and one account says 5000, Friends were imprisoned, chiefly in connexion with a proclamation issued by the King against their meetings: an excuse for which was furnished by the rising of the Fifth Monarchy men. Of this number, 212, imprisoned at Ilchester, were shamefully used by the keeper. Their friends were not allowed to bring them food or bedding: many were thrust into wretched apartments, and not allowed the use of straw to lie on. In Bristol 65 persons assembled at Dennis Hollister's house were carried off to prison, and a like number the following week, making in all about 190 prisoners in Bristol. D. Hollister and G. Bishop, being summoned before the Mayor, arguments were used to dissuade, and threats to terrify them from meeting: but they answered with Christian courage and freedom that they thought it their duty to meet in obedience to the requirings of the Lord, whom they ought to obey rather than man: and that they might as well think to hinder the sun from rising, and the tide from flowing, as to think to hinder the Lord's people from meeting to wait upon Him, whilst but *two of them* were left together. They were sent to join their brethren in prison: but happily a speedy liberation was obtained for those who were subjected to this impri-

sonment, through the unwearied intercession of Margaret Fell with the King. The spirit of persecution having now become rampant, there was no difficulty in obtaining legal sanction for the severest measures. The laws passed in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. against popish recusants, were now turned against Protestant Dissenters. By one of the acts of Elizabeth's reign, £20 per month might be imposed for neglecting the attendance of the parish church; and by another of these acts, the neglect of such attendance, and the going to conventicles, was made a ground of imprisonment, and, if persisted in, declared to be felony. In addition to the rigour of these and other old laws, the power of the ecclesiastical courts was restored under Charles II.; and, under writs of excommunication, multitudes of Friends and others were committed to prison. And yet all these destructive powers were judged insufficient, and one act after another was passed in this intolerant reign, with the design of restricting religious liberty still further. One of these measures, passed in 1662, was against the refusal to swear; and prohibiting as many as five of the people called Quakers from meeting together. It prescribed transportation for the third offence. The Act of Banishment, as it was called, was passed in 1664. It made seven years' transportation the punishment for the third offence of attending con-

venticles. The goods of the prisoners were to be sold, and the profits of lands sequestered, to defray the charges of transportation. A third, which was called the Conventicles Act, prescribed fines of £20 on the preacher, £40 for the second offence, and £20 on the house. Of these fines one-third belonged to the King, one-third to the informers, and one-third to the poor of the parish: but it was remarked by one who had witnessed the operation of this measure, that the Justices and informers being commonly poor themselves, kept the poor's part and the King's too. It may easily be imagined what would be the operation of such a measure in an age which stands disgraced, beyond most others, by the manner in which informers plied their wretched trade. By far the largest portion of the suffering which befell Friends in this reign, arose from the attendance of meetings, and the refusal to swear. Their testimony against oaths involved them also in various civil disabilities. In Bristol, and other corporate towns and cities, young men who had served their apprenticeship were prevented from following the trade they had learnt, because their refusal to swear was a bar to their taking up the freedom of the city. Others were precluded from recovering their just debts; from defending themselves against unjust actions, proving wills, and administering to estates; and from maintaining their civil rights in

various ways. A Somersetshire Friend, who sought redress against a highwayman, was himself detained as a prisoner for refusing to swear, the robber being allowed to go free.

The trials of George Bishop, Edward Pyot, and others, which took place in Bristol, in 1663, afford instances of juries refusing to shape their verdicts in terms such as the bench would have dictated; and of the determination of the latter to convict the prisoners notwithstanding. The mayoralty of John (afterwards Sir John) Knight, which commenced the latter part of this year, was a period of bitter suffering to Friends in Bristol. The crowded and loathsome state of the prisons was, as Besse remarks, very hard to women of substance and credit, accustomed to live neatly. Three of their number died in consequence of the treatment to which they were subjected. It was well indeed, not only for Friends, but for other Nonconformists, who suffered grievously at the hands of Knight, that the tide of public opinion was now turned, for a time, against his inhuman proceedings. He was very active in his place in Parliament, in 1664, in procuring the passing of the Act of Banishment: and he was heard to say, that he hoped to send 400 Quakers out of the land before the expiration of his mayoralty. He had so far made progress towards the attainment of his object, that he had committed

a large number to prison under this act: but he had only succeeded in condemning three to transportation, when his term of office expired. These three having been placed on shipboard, were put on shore again by the sailors, seven of whom signed a certificate to the effect that they neither could nor would be parties to this wicked proceeding. It is a remarkable circumstance, that this Act of Banishment, which was a cause of great suffering to Friends in other places, should have been productive of so small a result in a place like Bristol, which seems to have been rather notorious for the practices of kidnapping and illegal transportation. It is mentioned by Fuller that, in the year 1666, the prevalence of the plague in Bristol, produced a great effect in moderating the fury of the persecutors: and this was one of the years in which Friends suffered comparatively little.

There would have been something very humiliating to a *conscientious* mind in the terms of the proclamation issued by Charles II. in 1672, which states that it was "evident, from the sad experience of twelve years, that there was very little fruit from all the forcible methods which had been employed against the Nonconformists." The object of that proclamation was to suspend all the measures of persecution then in force. This tardy act of clemency appears to have been brought about at the interces-

sion of George Whitehead, on behalf of Friends. Other Nonconformist prisoners applied to Friends on this occasion to include their case with their own, to which the latter agreed, as appears from our records at Devonshire House. We have there the deed of pardon, granted by Charles II., (with the great seal attached.) Among other names of the prisoners thus released, is that of John Bunyan. This relief was, however, of short duration: the proclamation was recalled in the following year, and persecution was renewed. In Bristol, there appears indeed to have been, comparatively speaking, a lull in the storm, which lasted till about the year 1680, when the last and by far the most severe of these sad outbreaks commenced. So numerous are the details given of the sufferings of Friends in Bristol, in 1681, 2, and 3, that there is great difficulty in making a condensed statement of them. Besse's account of them extends to fourteen folio pages; and lengthened descriptions are also inserted in other histories of persecution at that period.[1] Sir John Knight, who served the office of Sheriff in one of these years, was again the chief agent in

[1] Some of the original statements from which these accounts are prepared are contained in a number of pamphlets published at the time, and are verified both by Friends themselves, and by some of their fellow-citizens. Francis Fry has kindly lent me a number of these pamphlets, which are contained in his collection.

the atrocities committed; and he found willing accomplices in Helliar, an unprincipled attorney, and Ralph Olive, an Alderman of the city, of whom Fuller gives a bad account, in his History of Dissent in Bristol. These leaders of the persecution found no difficulty in engaging the services of hungry informers, who were ever ready to attend to their instructions. The first outrages committed were upon the meeting-houses at the Friars and in Temple Street. These were damaged to the extent of £150 in value, by the tearing down of galleries, &c.: and under the pretence of levying sums of money on the houses for the non-payment of rates which had not been legally imposed on them in support of the trained bands, they took possession of the buildings, and nailed up the doors. Then followed a long series of brutal assaults on men, women, and children, as they walked the streets. Private committals to prison, and private distraints of goods, were carried on to a large extent by these men, despite the remonstrances and counter-orders of Knight's colleague, of the Mayor, Sir Thomas Earle, and others of the magistrates. Friends themselves remonstrated; and a declaration was published by some of their fellow-citizens, setting forth their cruel wrongs, and the danger resulting to their health and lives from the crowded and noisome state of the prisons. Two Friends of Bris-

tol took a journey to London, and were successful in their application to government for an order to be sent to the magistrates to allow better accommodation to the prisoners. The effect produced by this order was, however, very partial and transient. A memorial, signed by several physicians, was next presented to the magistrates, in which they represented the crowding and unwholesomeness of the jails to be such, that the prisoners were in great danger of suffocation, and that a liability existed of infectious disease, such as would endanger the lives of many others beside the prisoners themselves. That too was disregarded. The constancy of these poor prisoners, in sitting down together to worship God, was made a fresh occasion of cruel wrong, and of outrageous personal violence. One who ventured to speak a few words of exhortation, on one of these occasions, was thrown headlong, backward, down stairs; and another was put in irons, into the west house or dungeon, into which numbers were thrust from time to time. The permission usually granted to felons placed in this dungeon, of coming out for change of air by day, was not always granted them—and it was so dark, that they were dependent on the light of candles.

On one of the occasions of the Quarter Sessions, the magistrates showed their good will to the prisoners by liberating the greater part, on their

promising to appear at the next Sessions. But this only served as an occasion for fresh outrages on the part of Knight and Helliar. The meeting-houses being again opened, some were carried off to prison from one of the meetings, and the rest of the company nailed up in the house for six hours. The work of imprisonment proceeded till most of the men were again committed; and then, because the women kept up the meetings, they too were sent to jail; so that at length there remained few but children to meet together. "These children," says Gough, "after the example of their parents now in confinement, kept up their meetings regularly, with much gravity and composure: it was surprising to see the manly courage and constancy with which some of the boys behaved, undergoing many abuses with patience. Although their age exempted them from the lash of the law, yet even the state of minority could not rescue them from the furious assaults of these callous informers." Several of them were put in the stocks on more than one occasion. They were unmercifully beaten with twisted whalebone sticks. Helliar sent eleven boys and four girls to Bridewell; next day they were brought before the Deputy Mayor; they were cajoled and threatened to make them forbear their meetings, but the children were immoveable. They were sent back to Bridewell; and Hel-

liar, to terrify them, charged the keeper to procure a new cat-of-nine-tails against next morning. Next day he urged the justices to have them corrected, but could not prevail. So many were at length imprisoned, that there was no more room in the jails.

John Whiting, a Friend of Nailsea, who went repeatedly to visit the prisoners, says, that on his remarking on the crowded state of the prison, one of them, Margaret Heal, replied, "Ay, we are full freight, ready to set sail the first fair wind," as she and some others did upon the ocean of eternity, not long after: four other prisoners, two men and two women, dying also from suffocation. By their cruel proceedings, many families were ruined in their circumstances. Their goods were continually taken away for attending meetings; and to those who were thought to be men of good estate, the oath of allegiance was tendered, in order to bring them under the sentence of "premunire," (which involved the confiscation of a man's whole property, the loss of the King's protection, and imprisonment during his pleasure.) It seems probable that the edge of this persecution was sharpened by the circumstance of some Friends having ventured to give their votes at the election of members of Parliament, to the advocates of civil and religious liberty; and hints are said to have been given to Friends in London, who applied to the Court on

behalf of their suffering brethren in Bristol, "that if Mr. Penn or Mr. Whitehead would undertake for the Quakers that they should not vote for the parliament men, there should be no further persecution of them." The cruelty of the jailers, both in Newgate and Bridewell, especially that of Isaac Dennis, the keeper of Newgate, tended greatly to aggravate the suffering of the prisoners. Some of the prisoners desired to work for their support, but he would not allow them to do so. A blind man, nearly ninety years of age, was obliged to sit up in a chair for three nights. The spotted fever made its appearance and several died. To the sick Dennis behaved with great inhumanity, and he interfered to prevent those who had not taken the complaint from going out for change of air. But this poor man, Dennis, was soon placed in circumstances more painful than those of his prisoners. Being taken ill himself, he had to endure great anguish of mind; and expressed a wish that he "had never seen the inside of a jail, for it had undone him." On his asking forgiveness of Friends for the wrongs he had done them, they told him they "did forgive him, but he should ask forgiveness of God." The physicians ordering him to be bled, he said, that "none of their prescriptions would do him any good, his distemper being beyond their reach; his day was over, and there was no hope of mercy from God for him." In the account

given by some of the Friends in prison, who had access to him, they say, "and seeing him in this woful condition, our hearts did pity him, and desired, if the will of the Lord was so, he might find a place of repentance; and we used such arguments, as in our Christian tenderness we thought best to persuade him out of his hardness of heart and unbelief; and one of us said unto him, that 'we hoped his day was not over, seeing that he was so fully sensible of his condition.' To which he replied, 'I thank you for your good hope; but I have no faith to believe; faith is the gift of God.' Whatever was spoken to relieve him, gave him no ease; but languishing in all the anxiety of despair for about a month, he died." It would be easy to add to this sad case the narratives of others, which occurred in this part of the country, in which a righteous retribution seemed as if it was awarded to the persecutors before the close of life; but I feel so much the force of the poet's words,

"Let not this weak, and erring hand, presume Thy bolts to throw,"

that I prefer to speak of them only as cases which bore witness to the truth that "the way of transgressors is hard." The last days of Helliar and Olive were similar to those of Dennis, and Sir John Knight was himself subsequently confined in

Newgate. The rigorous character of the proceedings against the property of Friends in Bristol, may be judged of from the fact, that the fines imposed on them in 1683, for the non-attendance of the national worship, under the 35th Elizabeth, amounted to the enormous sum of £16,440.[1] There seems no means however of ascertaining to what extent this sum was actually levied. A great effort was made by Knight and Helliar to put in execution the sentence of death, awarded by this act of Elizabeth, on those who should refuse to conform or to abjure the realm, in the case of Richard Vickris, son of Alderman Vickris, of Chew Magna; and the sentence was actually pronounced upon him, by Sir John Churchill, of Churchill, the Recorder.[2] As the time of execution was drawing on, his wife went to London, and was there enabled through the favour of the Duke of York, to obtain the issue of a writ of error, by which her husband was brought to the bar of the King's Bench, and there liberated by the Chief Justice Jefferies. "Few so bad," remarks J. Whiting, "but they may do some good acts." Richard Vickris returned home, says

[1] Besse's Sufferings, Vol. I., p. 70.

[2] Alderman Vickris, who had himself been a persecutor of Friends, built the house at Chew, in which William Adlam now resides; and it became the residence of Richard Vickris after his father's death.

the same Friend, in the ninth month, 1684, "to the great joy of his aged father, his distressed wife and family, and his friends throughout the nation. His father lived to see him after his discharge, but did not long survive it, living but three days after he came home — by whose death and will, his house and estate at Chew fell to his only son, Richard, who soon after came with his family, and settled there, to Friends' comfort and satisfaction."

About 100 Friends continued prisoners in Bristol, until the accession of James II., in 1685, when they formed part of the large number (about 1,500) who were liberated on the King's warrant. Marsden seems to me to have done an unintentional wrong to Friends, in representing them as the only Dissenters who chose to accept a benefit conferred by James, through the exercise of "the dispensing power," by which he sought to bear absolute sway. He says, "the Nonconformists in general declined to avail themselves of the indulgence, choosing rather to suffer injustice, than to obtain relief at the cost of the Protestant cause, and that of the Church of England."[1] If Macaulay's account of these proceedings is to be trusted, (and it is not often that he shows a disposition to favour the poor Quakers) the Nonconformists failed to obtain relief, in the early part of James II.'s reign, not because

[1] "Dictionary of Christian Sects," (p. 446.)

they would not accept it, but because it was not offered to them. He adduces various reasons for the peculiar indulgence shown to Friends, in addition to the motive, which was no doubt uppermost with James, of assisting his Roman Catholic subjects, by uniting them with Friends, in the toleration which he extended. Other bodies of Dissenters had certainly not been backward in obtaining relief in Charles II.'s reign, by means of a similar proclamation to that which James now issued.

The charge of obstinacy sometimes brought against the early Friends, would, as it seems to me, have been borne out, if when their prison doors were thrown open by the King's orders, they had refused to come out, until they could be satisfied that he was not infringing his prerogative. As far as Bristol is concerned, it does not appear from Fuller's history of Dissent in Bristol, that any Nonconformist persecution took place in James II.'s reign.[1]

[1] Of the Dissenters liberated in the latter part of James II.'s reign, many refused to send an address of thanks to the King, as Friends had done; but it must be remembered that Friends' liberation took place before the King's designs were fully developed; and though an undue confidence in James's sincerity, on the part of William Penn, may have had something to do with the gratitude expressed in Friends' address; we may say with Sir James Macintosh "It cannot be doubted that he believed the King's object to be universal liberty in religion, and

I must now devote a short space to the concluding history of the Somersetshire persecution. One of the most interesting and trustworthy accounts of the sufferings of Friends in that county, is given by John Whiting, of Nailsea, in a book entitled "Persecution Exposed," from which I have given more than one quotation. He was an eyewitness of many of the events described; and he suffered a seven years' imprisonment himself, at Ilchester. During a part of this time he was kindly treated, and even allowed to go home for short intervals; but at other times his treatment was very severe. On one occasion he was made to lodge in the dungeon, called Doctors' Commons, where condemned prisoners were commonly confined. He says, "I lay upon straw, on a damp earthen floor, which seemed somewhat hard, not having been used to such lodging; but one day, as I was walking in the court of the prison, with my mind retired to the Lord, it arose in my heart, 'give up,' which took impression on my mind, so that I gave up to suffer patiently, and leave my cause to the Lord, being resigned to His will, and as I was freely given up, way was made for my deliverance, near about this very time. Oh the peace that I had in my bosom! The Lord

nothing further." It should be remembered, also, that the Parliament had passed resolutions in 1681, condemning the persecution of Protestant Dissenters which was taking place.

was wonderfully with me, and gave me as it were a song in the night. * * * I could often even sing, as Paul and Silas did in the stocks; and could say with the Psalmist, 'His statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.'" The year before his release, he, and his friend, John Hipsley, were hand-bolted together, and could only pull off their coats at night from one arm. In this condition they were kept in a close room in summer, among the Duke of Monmouth's men, with nothing to lie on but straw. They were in danger too from small pox, and had a fever patient by their side. The same magistrate who committed John Whiting, had on one occasion disturbed the meeting at Claverham, whilst Charles Marshall was praying, pulling him down between the gallery rails, by which he was seriously injured.

Friends of Chew were inhumanly treated on one occasion, by Helliar, of Bristol, who fell upon them, and beat them, as they were sitting in their meeting, as he had been used to do to their brethren in Bristol. Twenty-seven were apprehended, and sixteen sent to prison. Helliar was with difficulty restrained from burning the house, and actually caused the seats to be carried out and burnt.

Although I have been obliged by want of space and time to give up the intention of including Gloucestershire in this sketch, I do not like to omit

the mention of an outrage committed at Frenchay meeting on one occasion, at which time the Friends present at the meeting were shamefully beaten and ill used, and great injury was done to the seats of the meeting-house. It was mentioned to me by the late Jacob Player Sturge, with whom I had some long and interesting conversations on the subject of these Lectures, during his last illness. He said he remembered seeing some of the seats which were injured at that time, in the old meeting-house, at Frenchay; and he was present many years ago at a Quarterly Meeting there, at which it was proposed to build a new house. Matthew Wright, of Bristol, who was present, pointed to these damaged seats, and intimated that an ancestor of his own had been concerned in the outrage; and that he would give Friends £100 toward the new house.

The loss of goods, and the time spent in prison, fell with peculiar severity on many persons in low circumstances, who had united themselves with the Society. Among the cases of imprisonment mentioned in Somersetshire are those of a widow, nearly one hundred years of age; of several other widows and poor persons, imprisoned for demands of a few shillings (one for eight years); of a widow, with six children, carrying her infant to prison; and of labouring men, leaving wives and families at home. The havock of goods often included the

loss of all the household furniture; the very beds on which the sick lay being taken from under them. No circumstances of affliction seemed to be regarded as a bar to these cruel proceedings. We read of a corpse being taken away from a funeral company by a parish priest, and afterwards buried in the unconsecrated ground of the churchyard; the pretext being a demand of 6*s.* 8*d.* for allowing the procession to pass through his parish. In another case a widow had two cows taken from her, worth £9, for having been present at her husband's funeral; and others, who attended on that occasion were distrained upon to the value of £82. Great unfairness was often practised in the manner in which legal proceedings were carried on. John Clark, of Grenton, was outlawed for having failed to appear in answer to summonses which he had not received: and an aged cripple was imprisoned for not appearing in London the day after he had received a summons from the Exchequer Court. The total loss of Friends in Somersetshire, from distraints under the Conventicle Act, is estimated by John Whiting at £3000, and in the country at large at £100,000. Various statements have been put forth in regard to the total number of Friends imprisoned in England and Wales, and of the deaths which occurred in prison, some of which are doubtless exaggerated. John Whiting quotes a statement, as having been

presented by Friends to the Bishops and Clergy, that 12,316 Friends had been imprisoned, and that 321 had died in prison, from 1660 to 1685; and these numbers, added to those before given under the Commonwealth, amount to 15,489 imprisonments, and 353 deaths in prison. A paper contained in a valuable collection of manuscripts which has been kindly lent me by James Dix, gives an account of 929 Friends imprisoned in Somersetshire, and of 33 having died in prison: but it is not clear whether this includes the whole period of the persecution.[1] This paper, attested by Jasper Batt, shows J. W.'s estimate of £3000 distrained, to have been within the mark. Even if the number of deaths which occurred in prison could be precisely fixed, we should be unable to estimate the total loss of life, many having died soon after leaving prison, in consequence of the privation they had endured, or the infection to which they had been exposed. I must restrict myself to the mention of but a few of those who sealed their testimony with their blood in Ilchester Prison. John Anderdon, of Bridgwater, has been already mentioned as one of the earliest members of the Society in Somersetshire. He was a learned man, and having had the benefit of a legal training, he was of great assistance to

[1] The statement quoted by Colquhoun, of 15,000 Friends having been imprisoned in Charles the Second's reign, and of 5000 having died in prison, is no doubt incorrect.

others in this time of persecution. He suffered in all about twenty years' imprisonment, and died a prisoner, says Whiting, "for the testimony of Jesus against swearing." He adds, "He was carried with an honourable attendance to Bridgwater to be buried." "He was an able minister of the gospel of Christ, of a sound judgment, solid weighty testimony, and grave deportment. * * * He left a good report and savour behind him in the town, and among all that knew him. Of whose sincerity, zeal for God, and service for His truth, a volume might be written." Thomas Budd died also at Ilchester, a prisoner eight years; William Hodges, six years; John Popple, ten years; Lucy Travers, an aged widow, imprisoned for a demand of two pence (Easter Offerings); and Samuel Clothier, more than ten years. There was another member of the Clothier family imprisoned, an interesting relic of whose confinement is now in the possession of his descendant, Celia Clothier, of Street, a family Bible, purchased with the proceeds of his labour when in prison.[1]

[1] Among other deaths at Ilchester, were the following:—

Henry Gundry, of Street, a prisoner	4	years.
George Ceely, North Curry, "	9	"
Jeremiah Powell, "	9	"
James Popple, "	10	"
John Brice, Burnham, "	10	"
John Wride, "	13	"

The only other case I must mention, is one in which Friends of Bristol seem to have taken a deep interest — that of Thomas Parsons, of Portshead. He was committed to prison in 1670, and died about three months after. Besse says of him, "He was a faithful and valiant man, who kept his house open for religious meetings in the most dangerous times, and maintained his testimony to the truth through many imprisonments and spoilings of his goods, abiding firm unto the end, and finishing his course with joy." The following letter, in James Dix's collection, is addressed to William Rogers, or Thomas Gouldney, of Bristol, by Thomas Parsons, during his last imprisonment at Ilchester, and is in reply to their offer to take charge of two of his sons; "Dear Friends,—I received yours of the 20th instant, with your true love more largely expressed in your brother-like proffer than formerly, which I most obligingly receive and accept. And although the power and presence of the Lord gives that consolation and true peace which the world cannot give, nor take away, which is, according to His promise, an hundred-fold more worth than all that we are capable of losing, or forsaking, for His sake; yet the Lord leaves not His faithful ones here, but fulfils His promise in taking care for them, even in these outward concerns of the world, whereof He seeth His to stand in need, everlasting praises to

His name, with perpetual thankfulness to Him for His mercies in opening the hearts of you His instruments of compassion, by whose bounty I now and mine do, or are like to partake so plentifully. Dear Friends, I have three sons; which of them you will please to choose, I shall freely commit them to you, esteeming it mine and their greatest happiness (here in this world) to be where they may receive such education, that neither my opportunity nor ability can reach to give them. And my truest desire to the Lord is, that they may, in all sobriety and diligence, walk worthy of the Lord's mercies and your favours. I know not how the Lord will further dispose of me, but I hear the full intention is to bring me under a præmunire, and keep me a prisoner during my life; and strict order is given to the keepers not to give me liberty to see my home. Therefore I must leave this business to you and my wife to do as you think meet, to which we both shall thankfully agree. Our Friends of the meeting at Long Sutton are most barbarously used this last week. Justice Helier putting off the informers (for which they threaten him for his £100) they went to Wells, and the Chancellor and Francis Polet granted them warrants to distrain, which they have done, leaving many Friends neither meat, drink, bedding, nor dish, spoon, nor any lumber; breaking open Friends' houses that be here prisoners, to look for, and to

search for, the goods of some [ ]. The Lord, in His due time, will put an end to this cruelty, which is a far greater burden to me to hear than to feel. The opportunity of sending home by one of our Friends here, denieth me the opportunity of further enlargement at present, only my dear love to you and all Friends, as you have freedom and opportunity, resting in haste, your faithful, obliged friend, Thomas Parsons." He adds, "I hear that my brother Knight hath been troubled again by your Parliament Knight. If either of your leisures will permit, I should desire to hear the truth of it by the next." [No date.] Before the discovery of this admirable letter, I had been greatly interested by the following minute of Bristol two weeks' meeting, relating to Thomas Parsons's children, dated 20th of first month, 1671:—"Friends having formerly manifested their readiness to take a fatherly care, as to education, and binding apprentice, two of Thomas Parsons's children, now a sufferer in Ilchester jail, Jane Hods, daughter of the said Thomas Parsons, came and presented to this meeting her brothers John and Samuel, to whom the whole meeting manifested their tender love and regard; and thereupon ordered Dennis Hollister to receive, in the name of the meeting, the said John and Samuel from the hands of the said Jane, their sister; and to acquaint her that a

due and fatherly care should be taken of them, according to what had been signified, by order of this meeting, to their father, which accordingly was done, and the two children immediately committed, in her presence, to Susannah Pearson for their diet, at £2 per ann. for each child."

It would have been easy to multiply extracts from the letters of the poor prisoners, breathing a spirit of meek submission and of cheerful trust; but I must content myself with a notice of two of these epistles. The following are extracts from that which was addressed by Friends in Newgate, (Bristol) to the yearly meeting in London, dated, fourth month, 1685. "Dear friends and brethren, — This being a season wherein you may be glad, as well as desirous to see, or at least to hear from one another, as fellow members of that living body, of which Christ Jesus is the head, we thought it not unreasonable that you might hear from us, who though still in bonds, yet in good satisfaction, knowing that affliction is that in which all the righteous in all ages, ever pass to God's heavenly kingdom." * * * "This is our God; and as we have waited on him, he hath suffered us to want no good thing; neither *hath anything seemed hard to us;* insomuch, that we can truly say to God's glory only, 'It is manifold better to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of this sinful world.'"

* * * "Dear Friends! — In your approaches to the Lord, pray for us. Oh, let us watch and pray, and that continually, one for another, that God would keep us faithful by His divine grace, to serve Him in meekness, holy fear, and innocency, unto our lives' end. This hath been the hope and end of our calling, from the dark ways in the world, to the marvellous light of Christ Jesus, which hath shined in our hearts, through which we have seen the way of life, and know Him who is the truth, and there is not another. God enable us to love Him above all, and to cleave to Him through the loss of all. We are but worms, and of no might: and have none in heaven but Him alone, nor can desire any." * * * "Praise God with us, for His wonderful goodness in preserving our health— a work to a wonder (oh, that we ever may be thankful for it!) and also that He has thus made us worthy to suffer for His name's sake only. We are not quite an hundred, are well, and in good content, peace, and love, and want nothing. We pray God keep you, and crown your assemblies with His ancient glory. — Amen." This letter is signed on behalf of themselves and the other prisoners by Richard Sneed, Charles Harford, Charles Jones, Paul Moon.

The following letter, written in the same year, is

from Friends in prison at Ilchester:[1] — "Dearly beloved Friends, whom the Lord hath gathered by His everlasting arm, and called to be followers of the Lamb, in this day of His power, wherein it is given to the Lamb and His followers to overcome: unto you all, without respect of persons, the salutation of our endeared love freely flows, as dear companions and followers of the Lamb with you, in the many trials, tribulations, and exercises, which daily attend us in this our journey and pilgrimage towards that inheritance which our God in everlasting love hath prepared for us: earnestly desiring and beseeching you, that you always have the principal regard to the guiding and conduct of the Captain of our salvation, waiting for His counsel in a readiness to answer His requirings; that so ye may be still furnished with His wisdom and power, to discover and withstand all the wiles and temptations of the devil, (who works in a mystery, and takes many in his snares at unawares,) and that you may always feel the Lord's work to prosper; that so all *that* may be rooted out that remains within you that

[1] This letter has been kindly copied for me from the Somersetshire Records by Thomas Clark, to whom, as well as to his niece, Isabella Metford, and to Elizabeth Payne, J. H. Cotterell, and Alfred and S. A. Clark, I must once for all express my great obligation for the assistance they have rendered me in copying minutes and manuscripts. I have also to thank several of my friends for the loan of books.

would join with the enemy; that when he comes and sifts, he may find nothing in you; and then shall we none of us any more be shaken in our minds, or any ways be taken in his snare, but may remain grounded, rooted, and built up in Him, who is the Foundation against whom the gates of hell shall never prevail. And lastly, that Friends in all things take heed, that they have their conversation in the simplicity of the gospel of Christ; and carefully to avoid the vain customs and fashions of this world, and take up the cross of Christ; and be faithful in their testimony to God's everlasting truth; that so His blessing and peace may be with you all for ever, Amen. And now as for us who are prisoners for the testimony of a good conscience, let all Friends know that we are generally well; and the Lord's power and presence is daily plentifully manifested amongst us, to the great refreshing and *glading* of our hearts; and the place of our close restraint made to us *a safe and pleasant habitation;* glory, honour, and praise to our God for evermore. Given forth by order and advice from the late Quarterly Meeting, held at Marston, the 26th of seventh month, 1685, from the prison at Ilchester." This epistle is signed by Jasper Batt, John Hipsley, and others, and appears to have been addressed to Friends of Somersetshire.

In the brief and very imperfect sketch, which I

have now given, of the persecutions of our Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire, and to which I may have occasion hereafter to refer, nothing has been further from my wish, than to excite feelings of indignation against the persecutors, or against the political or religious parties, to which they belonged. Surely the effect should rather be, to lead us to magnify the grace, by which so many were enabled with boldness, and yet in meekness, to confess their Lord, and to manifest their allegiance to Him, not counting their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy. Does not their example also call loudly upon us to consider whether the foundation on which we ourselves are building, is the same as that which stood so firm beneath them, amidst the storms of trial to which they were exposed? I do not know that I can better close the present Lecture, than by quoting the words of evangelical consolation, which George Fox addressed to his fellow-sufferers, during this period of persecution to which I have referred, somewhat redundant though they be. They are contained in Samuel Tuke's excellent selection from George Fox's Epistles, a book which deserves to be more largely read, than I suppose it to be. This extract is given at p. xi. of the Introduction. He says, "If the world do hate you, it hated Christ, your Lord and Master also; if they do mock, and

reproach, and defame, and buffet you, they did so to your Lord and Master also; who was, and is, the Green Tree, that gives nourishment to all His branches—His followers. If the world do persecute you, and take away your goods or clothes, was not your Lord and Master so served? Did they not cast lots for His garments? Was not He haled from the priests to Herod, and before Pontius Pilate, and spit upon? And if they hate thee, and spit upon thee, He was hated, and spit upon for thee. Did He not go to prison for thee? And was He not mocked and scourged for thee? Did He not bow to the cross and grave for thee, He who had no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth? And did He not bear thy sins in His own body upon the tree? And was He not scourged for thee, 'by whose stripes we are healed.' Did He not suffer the contradiction of sinners? who died for sinners, and went into the grave for sinners, and died for the ungodly, yea, tasted death for every man; who, through death, destroyed death and the devil, the power of death, and is risen, for death and the grave could not hold Him; and the powers and principalities, with all their guards and watches, could not hold Him within the grave; but He is risen, and is ascended, far above all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions, and is set down at the right hand of God, and remaineth in the

heavens, till all things be restored; and He is restoring with His light, grace, truth, power, Spirit, faith, gospel, and word of life; so that you read of some that came to 'sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' "

(The quotations from George Fox's Journal are from the folio edition of 1765.)

APPENDIX.

THE following representation of John Howard's is interesting, as pointing to an abuse which existed also in the time of our Friends' imprisonment; and as showing that if time and opportunity had served, Howard might have become the benefactor of the insane as well as of the prisoners. — "In some few jails are confined idiots and lunatics. These serve for sport to idle visitants at assizes, and other times of general resort. Many of the bridewells are crowded and offensive, because the rooms which were designed for prisoners are occupied by the insane. Where these are not kept separate, they disturb and terrify the other prisoners. No care is taken of them, although it is probable that by medicines and proper regimen, some of them might be restored to their senses, and to usefulness in life." The following observations were more extensively applicable. After speaking of deficient food, Howard says, "many prisons have no water. This defect is frequent in bridewells and town jails. In some places where there is water, prisoners are

always locked up within doors, and have no more than the keeper or his servants think fit to bring them; in one place they were limited to three pints a day each; a scanty provision for drink and cleanliness. And as to air, which is no less necessary than either of the two preceding articles (food and water) and given us by Providence, quite gratis, without any care or labour of our own; yet, as if the bounteous goodness of heaven excited our envy, methods are contrived to rob prisoners of this 'genuine cordial of life,' as Dr. Hales very properly calls it; I mean, by preventing that circulation and change of the salutiferous fluid, without which animals cannot live and thrive. It is well known that the air which has performed its office in the lungs, is feculent and noxious. Writers upon the subject show that a hogshead of air will last a man only an hour." "Air which has been breathed, is made poisonous to a more intense degree, by the effluvia from the sick, and what else in prisons is offensive. My reader will judge of its malignity, when I assure him, that my clothes were in my first journeys so offensive, that in a post-chaise, I could not bear the windows up; and was therefore obliged to travel commonly on horseback. The leaves of my memorandum-book were often so tainted, that I could not use it, till after spreading it an hour or two before the fire; and even my antidote, a vial of

vinegar, has, after using it in a few prisons, become intolerably disagreeable. I did not wonder that in these journeys, many jailers made excuses, and did not go with me into the felons' wards." "From hence, any one may judge of the probability there is, against the health and life of prisoners, crowded in close rooms, cells, and subterraneous dungeons, for fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four. In some of those caverns, the floor is very damp; in others, there is sometimes an inch or two of water; and the straw or bedding is laid on such floors, seldom on barrack bedsteads." "Some jails have no sewers or vaults; and in those that have, if they be not properly attended to, they are even to a visitant offensive beyond expression; how noxious then to people constantly confined in those prisons! In many jails, and most bridewells, there is no allowance of bedding or straw for prisoners to sleep on; and, if by any means they get a little, it is not changed for months together." "Some lie upon rags, others on the bare floors." "I am ready to think, that none who give credit to what is contained in the foregoing pages, will wonder at the havock made by the jail fever. From my own observations, made in 1773–4–5, I am fully convinced that many more prisoners were destroyed by it, than were put to death by all the public executions in the kingdom. This frequent effect of confinement

in prison, seems generally understood, and shows how full of emphatical meaning, is the curse of a severe creditor, who pronounces his debtor's doom *to rot in jail.* I believe I have learned the full import of this sentence, from the vast numbers who, to my certain knowledge, and some of them before my eyes, have perished by the jail fever."—(*State of the Prisons in England and Wales, sec.* 1.)

SECOND LECTURE,

Delivered 2d Month, 24th, 1858.

It would be observed by those who heard my former Lecture on the Early History of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire, that the information contained in it was derived chiefly from printed books. My first intention in regard to these Lectures, was simply to bring together such materials from the unpublished records of our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, as might be calculated to set forth and illustrate our local history. I found, however, that most of the details of the persecution, which formed so important a feature of the earlier period, and which I believe to have exerted a marked influence on our general history and discipline, were already published. It seemed therefore the better course to compile a short narrative from those accounts. In proceeding, as I now do, to state some of the results of the examination of our records, I may confess I have had another object in view besides the preparation of these Lectures. It

has often seemed to me, that the histories which have been written of the Society of Friends, have been too much restricted to *a record of events;* that they have failed to bring into view, as fully as could be desired, the interior life of the body; and, that the same complaint which has sometimes been made of national history, that of its not placing before us the actual condition of the people in successive ages, is to some extent applicable to the histories of our Society, and, as much so perhaps to those of other religious bodies. It may be long before the right man is found to supply this deficiency among us; but in the mean time it would form an important and essential preparation for the work, if Friends in different localities could be induced to search the records and documents of their respective meetings, with a view to ascertain what testimony they bear as to the condition of the body in former periods. Such materials might serve in the first instance to interest a company like the present, and be afterwards treasured up for the use of the future historian. Many who, like myself, may not be fitted to act the part of the *architect* of a general history, might nevertheless do something in the capacity of *quarrymen.*

I had no desire indeed to act any other part in regard even to this local sketch of our history. My proposal to the Committee of our Library and Lec-

ture Association was, to search for materials, in the hope that some one else might be found to work them up into Lectures. Having, however, in default of such assistance, taken the further step of putting these materials together as best I might, I trust it will not subject me to a charge of egotism if I say further, that whilst I have no wish to make these Lectures the vehicle of personal or peculiar views, it seems to me essential that any one undertaking the task should to some extent point out or suggest what appears to him to be the bearing of different facts and circumstances: not for the purpose of biassing the judgment of his hearers, but rather of inviting their attention to certain important inquiries. No one besides myself is responsible for the views and sentiments which I may here express, beyond that general approval which the Library and Lecture Association may be considered to give to the Lectures for which they make arrangements: for that approval is of a negative rather than a positive character, as respects any incidental statements of opinion which may from time to time be contained in them. The intimation which the Committee has given in reference to the books in the Library of the Association, that the sentiments and opinions contained in them must be taken as resting solely on the responsibility of their respec-

tive authors, might very well be extended to these Lectures.

Now in turning to the view which was presented to you on a former occasion, of the first gathering of this religious body, and in regard also to the statements which I have to make this evening, I must ask you to spend a short time with me in considering what was the character and constitution of the newly-formed Society. Nothing could well have been more simple: a number of earnest inquirers after truth, dissatisfied with some things appertaining to the different religious systems in which they had been educated, and having been obliged on conscientious grounds to separate from them, met together in different places, in which they resided, to worship God in spirit. Having been led to renounce the system common to other sects, of devolving upon one man those responsibilities in regard to public ministry, which in the Apostolic Church were felt to rest on all who might be entrusted with the gifts of prophecy and of teaching, they sat down in silence in their religious assemblies, giving leave to all to speak who might feel themselves called to the work, and whose services might prove acceptable to the congregation. Being also convinced that the symbolical rites of baptism, and the Supper, were not of perpetual obliga-

tion;[1] and further, that it was only by the immediate operation of the Spirit of God that any could be truly baptized into Christ, or be brought to a true participation in His body and in His blood; they felt themselves called to the disuse of all outward rites and ceremonies. If the inquiry be raised, whether those who had thus escaped from the trammels of human authority, which had been so oppressive to them in the bodies to which they had belonged, did themselves make the terms of their communion as broad as those of the Apostolic Church, I think it must be answered, that although at the first their Association was of a very simple character, yet occupying the position of *a section* of the Church, rather than of the Church itself, as the first Christians did, they soon judged it needful to define the principles in the profession of which they were united, and the extent to which their practices differed from those of other Christians. It may not be to much purpose to inquire, what their course

[1] The following is an extract from a paper entitled "Gospel Truths," published in Dublin, in 1698, and signed

William Penn.	Thomas Story.
Anthony Sharp.	George Rook.

"We believe the necessity of the one baptism of Christ, as well as of His one supper, which He promiseth to eat with those that open the door of their hearts to Him, being the baptism and supper signified by the outward signs; which, though we disuse, we judge not those that conscientiously practise them."

would have been in this respect if their position had been different. Their opinions as to the extent to which Christian comprehension ought (abstractedly speaking) to be carried, would probably vary in proportion to the enlargement of mind which they respectively possessed. Nothing can indeed be more catholic than the opinions expressed by William Penn on this subject, in his work entitled "An Address to Protestants of all Persuasions." He says, "the question is not, whether all the truths contained in Scripture are not to be believed; but whether those truths are equally important, and whether the belief with the heart, and the confession with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God, be not as sufficient now, to entitle a man to communion here and salvation hereafter, as in those times. Against which nothing can be of weight objected."[1] After noticing some of the objections, which might be raised to the adoption of such a principle, he says, "Lastly, if it be alleged 'that this would take in all parties, yea, that schismatics and heretics will creep in under this general confession, since few of them will refuse to make it:' I do say it would be an happy day. What man who loves God and Christ, seeks peace and concord, that would not rejoice if all our animosities and vexations about matters of religion, were buried in

[1] Penn's Works, Vol. I. p. 756.

this one confession of Jesus, the great author and Lord of the Christian religion, so often lost in pretending to contest for it."[1] It might be difficult to give an exact definition of the meaning of the modern phrase "*broad church*," but I do not see that a more comprehensive meaning could be attached to it than is furnished by these noble words of William Penn.

There is no reason however to suppose, that whilst taking his stand on this broad New Testament ground, as to the principle which should be adopted in any attempt at general comprehension, he was indisposed to acquiesce in the judgment of his friends, that, circumstanced as they were, it was needful for them to lay down, and to abide by the grounds of their dissent from the Churches previously existing. It is important, moreover, to bear in mind, that the comprehension of all Christians under one form of communion, is a thing of far less consequence than their being united together in the bonds of Christian love. What can be more illusory than the professed unity of the Church of Rome? There is on the other hand a possibility of agreeing to differ; of our maintaining without compromise, those views of Christian faith and practice which each sect, and each individual has felt it right to adopt; and of our being at the same

[1] Penn's Works, Vol. I. p. 757.

time so influenced by Christian charity and condescension towards others, as even to bear before the world a testimony to the oneness of the body of Christ.

I must ask leave to introduce another quotation from William Penn's Address to Protestants, in which he lays down a principle recognised by the Society of Friends in its early days; and from which it cannot I think be said to have since departed. I allude to the important distinction which exists between membership in the true Church of Christ, and membership in the professing Church. In the course of the objections which he urges to the undue exercise of ecclesiastical authority, William Penn says, "Let me add something about this great word *Church*. Some men think they are sure enough, if they can but get within the pale of the Church, that have not yet considered what it is. The word *Church*, signifies any assembly, so the Greeks used it; and it is by worthy Tyndale everywhere translated congregation. It has a twofold sense in Scripture. The first and most excellent sense is that in which she is called the body and bride of Christ. In this respect she takes in all generations, and is made up of the regenerated, be they in heaven or on earth, thus Ephes. i. 22. — v. 23 to 33. Col. i. 16, 17, 18. Heb. xii. 22, 23. Rev. xxi. 2. — xxii. 17. Here Christ only can be

head: this Church is washed from all sin; not a spot nor a wrinkle left: ill men have nothing to do with this Church, within whose pale only is salvation. * * * The other use of that word in Scripture is always referred to particular assemblies and places." I cannot but think, that if this distinction had been kept in view, less objection would have been raised to the constitution of the Society of Friends on the ground of its being a mixed company, and consisting both of the converted and the unconverted. Such objectors seem to forget that the same charge might have been made against the twelve apostles themselves; and for aught we know, against every Church which ever existed (using the word Church in Tyndale's sense, of a Christian congregation.) I am aware that I am treading on controversial ground, and I would not wish unduly to press my own views; but I do not feel that it would be right to omit the mention of the subject in this place. In Trench's work on the Parables, in the chapter on the Parable of the Tares of the Field, there is an interesting reference to the ancient and extensive controversy which was raised on this question in the fourth and fifth centuries, by the Donatists.

I would further observe, that the practice of the early Church, as set forth in the New Testament, appears to me to have been to admit into member-

ship those who made profession of faith in Christ, and afterwards to disown all such as by their conduct, and by their rejection of the means used to reclaim them, proved themselves insincere; such I find to have been the early practice of the Society of Friends. Those who attended their meetings even occasionally, were watched over as members of the flock, remonstrated with when their conduct was disorderly, and testified against when they refused subjection to the discipline. Inquiry was made as to the orderly conduct of those who applied for relief, for leave to be married at meeting, or (according to the practice introduced towards the close of the seventeenth century, and ever since continued) for certificates of membership on their removal from one meeting to another: but I do not find in the minutes of the monthly meetings which I have examined, any mention made of a formal admission into membership, for more than a hundred years after the establishment of our meetings for discipline. It was not until within the present century that the different meetings prepared lists of their members. There were doubtless some practical inconveniences connected with this state of things, and the line of distinction to which I have alluded, as having been judged needful, was gradually drawn between the Society of Friends and other sects of Christians, and resulted at length

in the separation of the attenders of our meetings into the two classes, of members and non-members: but the belief that such membership merely implies a connexion with the professing Church, has continued to be manifested by the children of members being recognised in that capacity until they formally withdraw, or prove themselves unworthy by their conduct. It may be said that, although the distinction between the professing and the true Church is Scriptural, this mode of recognising it is not so: but I am not aware that any portion of the New Testament could be referred to, to show that it is unscriptural. Have we any good reason for supposing, that the children of those who were admitted into the Apostolic Church, on the ground of their professed faith in Christ, would be excluded from any of the privileges which membership in the congregation conferred, until they proved themselves unworthy of them? And was there anything more implied in the original idea of Church membership, than the right to participate in those privileges?

It may be further observed that the Society of Friends has from the first steadfastly avoided the introduction of formal creeds. Doctrinal treatises have at different times been published by individuals; some of these have received the negative sanction which our Morning Meeting in London

gives when it decides that books submitted to it contain nothing contrary to our principles; and some of them have been published at the expense of the Society. In regard to the last mentioned course of proceeding I would observe, that, though I am one of those who think that the works of individual writers should be left to individuals to publish, the object which the Society has had in view in undertaking such publication, appears to have been to disseminate our views, and not to make their contents binding upon the consciences of its members. In the controversies which have at different times arisen among Friends, the Society has been accustomed to appeal to the truths of Holy Scripture rather than to the writings of individuals, in accordance with Robert Barclay's declaration in regard to the Scriptures, "We do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians."[1] If I should be asked how such a declaration agrees with certain other expressions contained in our early writings respecting the Scriptures, my answer would be, first, that it is not needful to defend every thing contained in these writings; and, secondly, that I believe their authors would very generally have united with the opinion in which William Penn says, "all sound Protestant writers" agree, that "the Scriptures only, interpreted by the

[1] Apology, Prop. 3., Sec. VI.

Holy Spirit in us, give the final determination in matters of religion; and that only in the conscience of every Christian to himself."[1] The belief of the Society in modern times on this important question is plainly set forth in the paragraphs of the Yearly Meeting's epistle of 1836, which relate to it, and in which the Scriptures are said to be "the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound as Christians to believe, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions." The whole of these paragraphs may be found in the last edition of the selection from the minutes and advices of the Yearly Meeting. I know of no book more suitable to be recommended to the notice of those who are making inquiry as to the views and principles of Friends.

The earliest controversy which befell the Society in England was probably that which was raised by some Friends in Westmoreland against the establishment of meetings for discipline; and those who acted for the Society on that occasion drew a broad distinction between the *disorderly walking* which the

[1] Penn's Works, Vol. I., p. 779. William Penn further says, "O that we would but be impartial, and see our own overplus to the Scriptures, and retrench that redundancy, or keep it modestly! for 'tis a horrid thing that we Protestants should assume a power of ranging our human apprehensions with the sacred text, and enjoining our imaginations for indispensable articles of faith and Christian communion." Vol. I. p. 774.

discipline was meant to repress, and those convictions and opinions for which man is answerable to God alone. It has been considered, indeed, that for any one to persist in teaching opinions which the Society regards as opposed to fundamental truth, should be made a ground of disciplinary proceeding: but it is *the act of disseminating* such views, and not the mere holding of them, which constitutes the offence in such cases. The Society having declared from time to time, in its official documents, what those truths are in the profession of which its members are united, has wisely thrown the responsibility on the conscience of each individual of deciding how far he can honestly remain a member of it.

The need of establishing *meetings for discipline* was very early perceived by George Fox, and with him originated, for the most part, the disciplinary system which has since obtained amongst us. Some years had elapsed before the connexion between these meetings was fully established. In some instances the County or Quarterly Meetings were the first which were held, whilst in others a few neighbouring meetings were joined together as a Monthly Meeting: the Monthly Meetings being afterwards made subordinate to the Quarterly, and these again to the National or Yearly Meeting. The first meeting for discipline held in this part of the country

appears to have been the Quarterly Meeting for Somersetshire. Its record of minutes commences with a meeting held at Ilchester, in 1668: but George Fox speaks of being at a General Meeting in Somersetshire, in 1663 (both the National and County Meetings were at first called "General Meetings"); and among the manuscripts in James Dix's collection there is an account of a still earlier meeting held at Glastonbury, the 27th of Fourth month, 1659. I believe this paper to contain a copy of the earliest record of a meeting for discipline held in this part of the country. The names of forty-five Friends are appended to the minutes, or "proposals," as they are called. These proposals are to the following effect, viz.: First, That care be taken that all sufferings of Friends for conscience' sake be collected in each meeting, and forwarded to a Friend appointed to record them. Second, That if any difference should arise amongst Friends, which in love and the spirit of meekness shall not be composed or ended between themselves, they shall lay it before some Friends of their own meeting, or others who, in the wisdom of God, may judge thereof and end the same; but that if it cannot be so ended, it shall be brought to be determined at the General Meeting. Third, That Friends, who are servants, should not leave their employers, or employers dismiss their servants, without due notice. Fourth,

That Friends be desired to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that such as are capable be instructed, or kept employed, that none live idle in the creation. Fifth, That all Friends who are not provided, may speedily procure burying-places. Sixth, That if any Friend be indebted, and unable to discharge the same without the assistance of Friends, the matter should be inquired into at the General Meeting. Seventh, That a register be kept in every meeting of all marriages, births, and burials, and the particulars sent to the Friend appointed to record the sufferings. Eighth, That care be taken to collect and maintain the stock of public moneys for the relief of poor Friends, and defraying other public charges. Two treasurers to be appointed (one in the north and the other in the south of the county), who shall disburse the moneys as the General Meeting shall direct, or as they, with the consent of four other Friends, shall judge meet; and render an account to the meeting. Ninth, That if a necessity be laid on any Friend to write or print any book for the service of truth, the copies be first tried and weighed by such persons as are able to judge in the wisdom of God, and the same being approved, the charge of printing (above what is raised by the sale of the book) may be borne by the public stock. That care be taken to

distribute such books as are thus printed, for gratuitous circulation.

At a second General Meeting, or adjournment of the former, held a month later, a long minute was adopted in relation to marriage, the substance of which was, that before the parties intending to marry concluded "any contract," the matter should be "propounded to two or three" "to judge thereof: if they object not, that then it be published to Friends of the meeting, or meetings, to which the parties belong," at "the end" of the meeting, "the parties being present:" that if after a lapse of fourteen days no obstruction arise, the said "intention shall be published in the market town next" to the residence of each party, "on a market day, in time and place of full market, by the party himself, or some other person, as the parties think fit, or at the end of the General Meeting, or meetings to which the party or parties belong, so that it be publicly done." "That fourteen days after such publication (at the least)" the marriage should take place "at the end of a meeting, or at and before an assembly of Friends" not "less than ten in number," "a certificate" to be "signed by four at least of the men present, and the marriage to be then registered." Any obstruction arising in relation to marriage to be reported to the General Meeting: certificates of

marriage to be shown to some public magistrate soon after the marriage.

The only other minute of this second meeting, refers to the collections to be made for the public stock, and directs that all meetings "on the south and south-west of Mendip," should send their collections "to a Friend of Puddimore;" and that meetings on the north or north-east of Mendip should send theirs to a Friend at Saltford. There is another paper in the same collection, signed G. F., containing most of the suggestions embodied in these proposals of the Somersetshire meeting; and a third, without date, but issued apparently about the same time, in which various objects are recommended to the different meetings, such as the keeping up of meetings for worship, the extension of private admonition to delinquents in a "tender meek spirit," and speaking to them, if needful, before two or three witnesses, before making complaint to the Church; the care of the goods of Friends travelling in the ministry, and of those who are in prison; and the extension of private advice and care to ministers. Various quotations of apostolic counsel, bearing on the different relations of life, are given in this paper. It will be observed that the duties which devolved on this Somersetshire Meeting include those which were subsequently left to the care of the subordinate Monthly Meetings.

And for years after the establishment of the latter, the respective provinces of these meetings were not clearly defined. Delinquents were sometimes dealt with by the Monthly and sometimes by the Quarterly Meeting: and cases which had been brought under the care of the former were often carried forward to the latter for final decision. The attention of these early meetings for discipline was often occupied with the sufferings attendant on persecution, and committees were appointed "to take care of the affairs of the prison, and to see that nothing be lacking to them that suffer for the testimony of a good conscience."[1] Other Friends were appointed to attend the Assizes and Sessions, to assist those who were under prosecution.

The range of the Mendip Hills has continued to form the boundary of one of the Monthly Meetings in the County of Somerset, viz., the north division; but the southern and western part of the county was soon afterwards divided into two, and subsequently into four Monthly Meetings: and these have again been united into two. In the year 1691 the middle division, containing Street, Glastonbury, &c., was separated from the south division, which included Yeovil, Shepton Mallet, Puddimore, &c.: but most of the meetings which remained in existence in the latter were joined to the middle division

[1] Minutes of Quarterly Meeting for Somerset, 1682.

in 1783. Again, in the west division, Minehead and some other meetings were formed into a distinct Monthly Meeting in 1691, but were reabsorbed into the west division in 1761. The minutes of Minehead Monthly Meeting appear to be lost: those of the north commence first month, 1667, two months earlier than those of the Two Weeks Meeting in Bristol: those of the west in 1676; and those of the south in 1687.

Another paper, which appears to have been issued by one of the Somersetshire General Meetings, contains lists of Friends by whom the business of the different Monthly Meetings was to be transacted. It may be said by those who object to birthright membership, that in the arrangement by which the exercise of the discipline was committed to a few persons, a corrective was provided (which has since been lost) for the otherwise objectionable course of treating all the attenders of a congregation who had not been disowned as members of the Church. I shall have something to say as to the working of this restrictive system in my next Lecture. But supposing we should find that this system worked badly in the long run, this would not prove that its introduction at the early period of which I speak, was an error. Its adoption or rejection appears to me to be a matter of allowable arrangement. And if some of my friends should

say to me that this question is, in their view, one of principle rather than of arrangement; and that under a system of birthright membership, such restriction is absolutely required, I would ask them to consider that the restrictive system can only be carried out by the exercise of superior authority like that of the Queen over the Church of England; or by self-appointment, like that which the fiction of apostolic succession involves; or by the general consent or appointment of the other members of the meeting. The latter is the only course which could be pursued in our own Society. In other words, those who are imagined to be *unfit to undertake the conduct of the discipline* would have *to take part in the appointment* of others to perform this duty! Do not such considerations point to the conclusion, that the bringing forth good fruit in this matter of church government, (as in every thing else,) is dependent on the goodness of the tree; on the condition of the congregation; that where spiritual life, in the main, prevails, and is allowed free scope, good results will follow; but that whenever it becomes low or extinct, no form or system whatever will ensure good church government? In the earlier times of which I am speaking, it is easy to perceive that the heterogeneous character of the congregations may have rendered such selection needful. In Bristol it was felt to be a serious thing that so many should

be excluded from all meetings excepting those for worship, and in 1697, a Quarterly Reading Meeting was established for the children and servants of Friends; and there is a mention in the minutes of the Men's Meeting having adopted "several articles and paragraphs containing tender counsel, advice, and caution for reading to the Quarterly Meeting."

The manner in which the selection of Friends to attend meetings for discipline was made, was probably different in different meetings. The following minute of the north division of Somerset Monthly Meeting was adopted in 1667, just after its establishment: "It is desired that one Friend at the least, at each meeting, do give attendance at each General Quarterly Meeting, and also at each Monthly Meeting, and that [the] Friend or Friends who do come to such meetings have the consent of the major part of the meeting to which he do belong; and that he motion nothing here as from the meeting, but only what is the mind and sense of the major part of the meeting: yet not limiting or restraining any Friend, but all may come in their freedom, and speak their judgment; but not in the name of the meeting otherwise than aforesaid." I need hardly say that the principle of deciding by majorities has never been generally recognised by our Society. The desire of its members has been to form their conclusions in accordance with "the

mind of the Spirit;" and it has often been instructive to observe that where this desire has been maintained and accompanied by brotherly condescension, those who have differed widely in opinion, have at length been brought to agree. But infallible as are the dictates of the Spirit of Truth, there is a great liability even on the part of the renewed mind to misapprehend them; and in cases in which opinion continues to be divided, the testimony of *numbers* cannot be overlooked without endangering the relationship in which we stand one to another as brethren. In a minute of the north division Monthly Meeting, in 1702, complaint is made of the character of some who attended that meeting; and it is requested that Friends of each particular meeting would meet the first day before each Monthly Meeting, and make choice of two Friends to attend it — a duty which afterwards devolved on preparative meetings, when these were established in 1754. Representatives to the Quarterly Meeting seem at first to have been named by the particular meetings, and those to the Yearly Meeting by the Monthly Meetings.

I do not think that any one who has examined the minutes of our earlier meetings for discipline, and observed the character and the extent of the delinquency noticed in them, could entertain the idea that the first years of the Society's existence

are in all respects to be considered a golden age. Perhaps a mistake has sometimes been made in reference to those early times by overrating the purifying effect which persecution would exercise on the body: I do not mean as respects its influence on individual minds, but as to its tendency to repress insincere profession. No doubt many insincere persons were kept aloof from the Society in the days of persecution, by the fear of suffering: but it may not have been sufficiently considered that *another* effect of persecution was to develope to a large extent the kindly and charitable feelings of the little flock towards each other; and that the free extension of pecuniary and other aid, resulting therefrom, would prove a temptation to some, whose aim it would be to avail themselves of the aid, and at the same time to evade the suffering which others bore so faithfully. I have no doubt that, as respects many of the members, the period under consideration was one in which singleness of purpose, devotedness of heart, and uncompromising faithfulness, were exhibited to a far greater degree than has since been commonly witnessed amongst us: but it must be considered that, even as respects the sincere and earnest members of the body, there had been, in many instances, a want of that early religious care and training which cannot be fully compensated for by any of the advantages of after years. I was

often reminded of some of these features of our Society's early history, by what I had the opportunity of witnessing, some time since, of the state of things among our dear Friends in Norway. One sees there a community of persons who have come together on the grounds of professed individual conviction (few, if any, of the adults having had a birthright in the Society); and it is refreshing to witness the zeal, and love, and self-denial by which many of them are actuated; but one cannot be among them without feeling how great a loss has been sustained by more than a few, for want of the early culture to which I have alluded.

In Somersetshire, and perhaps in Bristol also, many of the first converts appear to have belonged to the labouring class of society: to the same class, indeed, from which Whitfield and Wesley drew a large number of their disciples in the following century. There were, in Somersetshire, three times as many meetings as at present; but there are more reasons than one why we should hesitate to use this comparison as a test of the religious strength of the body in these different periods; many of these meetings were small, a number of them were held in private houses; and from a very early time frequent complaints were made of the great slackness of Friends in many places in attending the meetings for discipline. The following is a minute of

the West Division Monthly Meeting, in 1676: "Here is none of Minehead or Withell, Wiveliscombe nor Milverton, nor Polden Hill nor Taunton, to attend upon the service of truth." There were often not more than from four to six Friends present at that Monthly Meeting; and similar complaints were made of some of the other meetings in the county, and of the attendance of the Quarterly Meeting.

Many of the first Quarterly Meetings were held at Ilchester, apparently in consequence of the great number of Friends who were there as prisoners. The ordinary prison being full, two old buildings, known as the Nunnery[1] and the Friary, were also used as prisons for Friends. In the hall of this Ilchester Friary, many of the first Somersetshire Quarterly meetings were held. On one occasion, when the permission to meet there was refused them, the landlord of the inn at which they met was fined £40 for allowing them the use of his house (£20 for the Men's, and £20 for the Women's Meeting), and he incurred £20 expense in the

[1] It is stated by Collinson, in his History of Somersetshire, that this Nunnery was originally one of the hospitals, of which there were several in that county, devoted to the use of lepers, pilgrims, &c. He speaks of the Friary as having been the house in which the famous Roger Bacon was born. This Friary, like our Bristol Friars, belonged to the order of Black Friars. The abbey kitchen, at Glastonbury, was another ecclesiastical building which served Friends for a place of meeting.

attempt to defend himself at the Sessions. Friends afterwards repaid him these sums. The names of most of the Somersetshire Meetings at present in existence are given in the earliest list. Sidcot and Claverham are not mentioned, but were established soon after. Backwell, Nailsea, and Bourton, formed one meeting in the neighbourhood of the latter, as did Cheddar and Berrington near the former. The Friends probably went from Cheddar to Berrington on foot, passing between the Cheddar Cliffs, across the highest ridge of Mendip, and through the Berrington Coomb; a walk almost equal in picturesque beauty to some of those by which I have seen Norwegian peasants wending their way to a place of worship. In that neighbourhood resided William Lawrence of Axbridge, and William Goodridge of Banwell, both of whom suffered severe imprisonment.

The meeting for discipline, established in Bristol in 1667, unlike the meetings of which I have spoken, was not made subordinate to any Quarterly Meeting. Bristol may be said, under this arrangement, as in its civil capacity, to have been "a city and county of itself." On the occasion of the regular establishment of the Yearly Meeting in London, in in the year 1672, it was decided that it should consist of six Friends for the City of London, three for the city of Bristol, two for the town of Colchester,

and one or two from each of the counties of England and Wales respectively. This meeting for discipline in Bristol continued to meet once in two weeks until its junction with the Quarterly Meeting of Somersetshire, in 1784. Like the Monthly Meetings, it was occupied with the relief of the poor and of those who were sufferers from persecution, with proceedings in relation to marriage, and with the general maintenance of Christian discipline.

Although the early meetings for discipline were of so select a character, it was felt that some provision was needed for the regular extension of still more private care and oversight. At a Quarterly Meeting for Somerset, held in 1686, a minute was adopted, stating that, "Whereas some matters relating to truth are not fit to be discussed in a public Quarterly Meeting," an appointment was then made of six Friends from each Monthly Meeting. A time was fixed for them to meet; and they were to appoint another time for such a meeting to be held, and acquaint their respective Monthly Meetings with it. Those meetings were to appoint them, or a like number of Friends in their places, to attend to such service. In the first month of 1698, the Quarterly Meeting issued a paper of disciplinary advice and direction, which was afterwards revised, and is called, in the early minutes, "the paper of particulars." Two Friends were to be appointed in

each Meeting to report, from time to time, as to the conduct of their members. This was just before the advice was issued by the Yearly Meeting to appoint overseers. In Bristol, a meeting was established as early as 1670, whose duty it was to extend such private care as was needed, previously to the charge against any Friend being laid before the Men's Meeting. It was subsequently arranged that this meeting should be composed of ministering Friends, and of six Friends to be appointed annually by the Men's Meeting, and that it should hold its meetings once a month. This Meeting, which continued in existence till 1765, was accustomed to undertake the oversight of the ministry as well as of the conduct of the members generally. It was not long, indeed, before it exceeded the powers entrusted to it by proceeding to disown impenitent offenders; and in 1697, the Men's Meeting found it needful to adopt a minute expressly limiting the powers of this "Monthly Meeting" to the preliminary dealing with delinquents, and declaring its entire subordination to the Two-weeks Meeting. As regards *ministry*, however, it was still accustomed to advise Friends, whose ministry was not approved, to keep silence in meetings.

Besides the appointment of overseers, other means of oversight, in use from an early time, were periodical meetings of the heads of families, in

different places; and the appointment of Committees by the Monthly Meetings, to visit the families of Friends.

The first mention which I find of queries to be answered to the Yearly Meeting in London, is in 1700. These referred chiefly to the sufferings and imprisonment of Friends: and the only one which bore on the state of the meetings was that which related to the prosperity of truth, and the increase of unity, among Friends. Verbal answers appear to have been given for some years. The first publication of a book of extracts from the minutes and advices of the Yearly Meeting, was made in 1783: but the following minute was adopted by the Quarterly Meeting of Somersetshire, in 1739: "Understanding that a motion has been made in the Yearly Meeting, at London, that an abstract of the minutes of the said meeting be drawn up for the use of Friends; if said motion should be repeated, our representatives are ordered to second it."

Among the minutes of the first sitting of the Bristol Meeting, is one containing an offer to pay the passage of Wenlock Christison to New England, and another shortly after directing relief to be given to his wife. I suppose this to have been the same Friend who returned to Boston in 1660, after he had been banished on pain of death; and who, entering the court whilst sentence of death was

being passed on his friend William Leddra, addressed a bold warning to the Judges not to shed any more innocent blood. His warning did not prevent the execution of William Leddra, but it does not appear that the barbarous spectacle was afterwards repeated. Wenlock Christison himself, though sentenced to death, was liberated the following year. I suppose that he had in the mean time returned to England, and was now contemplating another visit of love to New England — but I have not met with any later record of his life. (In the previous year Wenlock Christison, of Sutton, is mentioned as having been sent to Ilchester, for refusing to swear.) Others of the first minutes, relate to the case of William White, a lad who had been turned out of doors by his father, (who was a serjeant,) for his attendance of Friends' meetings. Friends were appointed to visit his father, and try to convince him of his "unnaturalness;" but as this failed, arrangements were made for the son's apprenticeship. The following is a minute relating to his case:—"Margaret Thomas having been spoken to concerning the tabling of William White, accepts the terms proposed by Friends — 3*s*. per week."[1]

Bristol was from a very early period remarkable for having two meeting-houses belonging to the

[1] I suppose the word "boarding" has the same sort of origin as "tabling."

same congregation; and from the year 1670, if not before, there have been two Week-day Meetings. At first they were both held, as they now are, at the Friars — Temple Street meeting-house being only used once in the week (on the first day.) The following minute was adopted in 1667: "It is concluded that a large public meeting-house on this side of the Bridge, be built *on the ground*, and that it be not thereby intended to make void the determination of Friends in procuring a meeting-house on the other (*i. e.* the Temple Street) "side of the Bridge." A committee was then appointed to make arrangements for building. The meeting-house in use up to this time, is always spoken of as having been in Broadmead; and I am inclined to think it stood on the site of the present Baptist Chapel in that street. In the "Broadmead Records," a volume of which has been published, it is stated, that the Baptist church, which met at one time in a room in the Friars, formerly a chapel, removed in 1671, "to the meeting-house at the lower end of Broadmead, where the heretics, called Quakers, had formerly used to meet, it being four great rooms made into one square room, about sixteen yards long and fifteen yards broad." The Friends' meeting-house in the Friars was opened in 1670; and the probability seems to be, that this room to which the Baptists removed, was the one which Friends had left. It

was certainly an up-stairs room which was occupied by both parties. The minute which I just now read, stipulates that the new house should be built on the ground — a former minute speaks of letting the rooms under the old meeting-house for £3 : 10 per annum; and there is another minute appointing Friends to stand at the lower stair-head to make a collection for the poor, after meeting. The house in Temple Street appears to have been finished in less than a year, and was opened in the autumn of 1667.[1] Much more difficulty seems to have arisen about the larger house, and in 1669, there is this minute, "Friends appointed about the new meeting-house, are desired effectually to meet about it very speedily." It seems probable that a difference of opinion had prevailed as to the site which should be chosen, &c. The question was "largely debated" in one of the meetings, and in a minute made six months after the last which I read, stating that the committee had determined that it should be built on the ground of Dennis Hollister, in the Friars; we are told that the judgment was determined by lot, both as to the place, and the persons who should go on in the work. I see it stated in a Lecture on the History of Friends in Birmingham,

[1] Six years later it was ordered to be enlarged, and in 1763 it was re-built. In 1832, this house was made use of as a cholera hospital, and soon afterwards sold.

published in the "British Friend," that the site on which their meeting-house was built had also been that of a Friary. Trench had better have referred to such coincidences, in his interesting little book on proverbs, to illustrate the proverb that "extremes meet," than to refer, as he does, to that which he takes for granted as a fact, that Friends, like the Roman Catholics, represent the Bible as needing a supplement. The first house at the Friars had the ministers' gallery on the side opposite to the present, and the entrance was from Merchant Street, through the Cutlers' Hall premises. The officers who came to apprehend Friends during the persecuting times, are described on one occasion as waiting for them in the Cloisters. In 1699, complaint was made of the injury done by Friends' coaches coming into the narrow lane which led to the meeting-house, and they were desired to leave them in the street, or else not use them at all.[1] In the description of the property purchased of Dennis Hollister, mention is made of a large orchard connected with the Friars, which I suppose to have been the same used for the larger meetings in earlier times.

The first burial-ground used by Friends, was that at Redcliff Pit, purchased in 1665. There is a minute in 1668, stating that the herbage of Redcliff

[1] Minutes of Two-weeks and Monthly Meetings.

Street burying-ground was let for three years, at 30*s.* per annum. The Friars' burial-ground was probably the garden purchased of Dennis Hollister as part of the meeting-house premises, and described in the abstract book as having been formerly a burying-ground. The burying-ground of the work-house was opened in 1708. There are some curious minutes relating to funerals. The grave-digger was more than once ordered to attend the Two-weeks Meeting, to be treated withal concerning his over-charging poor Friends for making graves; and on one of these occasions the following scale of charges for funerals, &c., was agreed to:—1*s.* for digging the grave of a poor Friend; 2*s.* 6*d.* for other graves; 1*s.* 6*d.* for inviting the friends and relations of a poor Friend to a funeral; 2*s.* 6*d.* for inviting those of other Friends. No one receiving such payments to sit in the meeting for discipline. Friends were cautioned against the use of varnished, or wainscot coffins. In 1670, grave-stones were ordered to be removed. There is a minute advising against the customary handing of wine at funerals, and a minute of Frenchay Monthly Meeting condemns the practice of drinking and smoking on such occasions.

Among the early minutes, are two which relate to the opening of the city gate called Newgate, on first days, to allow Friends to pass out to their

meeting, (Broadmead not having been within the city bounds.) The closing of the gates on that day of the week, had probably originated with the Puritans. In 1668, 5*s.* per quarter is directed to be given "to the porter, for his pains and love in opening the gate to Friends, as they go to and again to meetings on the first days of the week." The other minute was passed in 1673: "If the porter of Newgate continue to open the gates, to the benefit of Friends passing through at the breaking up of our First day Meetings, this meeting do appoint Charles Harford and William Ford to pay him 5*s.* every quarter, to begin at the next quarter day." This payment was still continued in 1703.

I have not been able to ascertain whether the Women's Quarterly Meeting, which was held in 1680 (as appears from the statement that the landlord of the inn at Ilchester, was fined for allowing their meeting in his house), was regularly held afterwards; but some, at least, of the Women's Monthly Meetings in Somersetshire, do not appear to have been kept up. In 1755, a minute of the Quarterly Meeting states that no such meetings were held in the North and Middle Divisions. The minutes of the former show, however, that the attempt to hold such a meeting had more than once been made. In Bristol, the Women's Meeting, established at the same time as the Men's, appears to have been kept

up ever since. It was from the first largely occupied with the care of the poor; and the applications for relief, from persons of both sexes, were commonly referred to them. The opposition made to the establishment of meetings for discipline, of which I have spoken, extended to Bristol, and a Friend, of the name of William Rogers, who resided there, became a warm partizan of the movement. One part of the dissatisfaction arose from the idea that the establishment of Women's Meetings was an attempt to usurp authority over the man: but the objectors went further, and argued that the abiding of the Spirit of Christ in His people, rendered them independent of all Church authority; and that the authority then attempted to be exercised among Friends, was similar to that of the Romish Councils. To this it was replied, that if the authority exercised was consonant with the Scriptures, he who follows the leadings of the Spirit, will not reject it; and that whilst it would be right to oppose such tyranny as that of the Church of Rome, we cannot reasonably plead the like scruple against relieving the poor, visiting the sick, ending differences, reproving the licentious, reclaiming backsliders, promoting justice in dealing and temperance in living; nor against making the needful arrangements for marriage proceedings, &c. And, that as to the Women's Meetings, which were established for the

purpose of assisting in the care of the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned; the apostolic injunction referred to by the objectors, could not apply to them: and that although a motherly and watchful care over their own sex, as being the fittest to counsel and advise in some cases, had since devolved upon them, there was in this no usurpation of power.

Before giving any further details of disciplinary proceedings, I would call the attention of my friends to what appears to me to have been a marked effect produced on the Society and on its discipline, by the severe persecution under which its members suffered for so many years. Not only did it open the hearts of the sufferers towards those who suffered from any cause, but it seems to have induced a close compact among the members, which resulted in a sort of *family government.* Peculiar circumstances call for peculiar measures, such as it may not be wise to continue under *other* circumstances; just as, in the Apostolic Church, the believers sold their possessions and had all things in common. Such considerations may have been suggested to us by the beautiful minute of the Bristol Meeting referred to last month, which describes the affection shown by the whole meeting to the children of Thomas Parsons when they were introduced by their sister and taken charge of by Friends; and by the minute of the first Somersetshire Quarterly Meeting, which

recommends those who are contemplating marriage to take the advice of their friends before they enter into any contract with each other; and there are many other things in the early minutes of a similar character. Offenders were at first summoned to come to the meeting and receive the advice of Friends. Thus, in 1678, a minute of the west division Monthly Meeting advises a delinquent to attend the next Quarterly Meeting at Ilchester, to receive such advice and admonition as Friends may give him, "which," it is said, "we doubt not will be to the eternal good of his soul." As regards marriage, the *consent of parents* was shortly afterwards substituted for the *advice of friends*, but meetings were accustomed to concern themselves with marriage proceedings to an extent which would now be regarded as an infringement of private rights. Appointments were made in the case of second marriages, to see that the children of the first, if any, were properly provided for. In one case, the middle division Monthly Meeting had the deed of a marriage settlement copied among their minutes, "because," they say, "the trustee is a contentious man, and Friends are not willing to be troubled by him." It is evident, moreover, that in the personal presentation of marriage, the parties were looked upon as seeking the sanction of the meeting to their proceeding. In the case of an ancestor of my own,

William Tanner, of Kington, near Thornbury, who married Mary Motley, daughter of Joseph Sturge, in 1707, the minute of Frenchay Monthly Meeting on the occasion, says, "this meeting do not really approve of this intention of marriage, but do permit them to proceed therein among Friends."[1]

In regard to trade, we find the early meetings occupied to a large extent with the proceedings of their members, by loans of money and otherwise. Thus a minute of the Bristol Meeting, in 1676, mentions that two Friends complain of the decay of trade, and £40 is agreed to be advanced in weekly sums, for which each is to supply one dozen of shoes. Two Friends are bound for the said sum, and others agree to see them harmless. Sometimes the meetings undertook the winding up of the estates of deceased Friends. A minute of the south division appoints a Friend to sell the goods of another who had recently died, "and pay his debts if his brother don't do it." It may perhaps be thought that the advice issued in early times by the Quarterly Meeting for Somerset, that its members should avoid paying wages in goods, came within what would now be considered as the legitimate province

[1] I am indebted to Philip D. Tuckett, and P. D. Tuckett, junior, for copies of some Frenchay minutes, and to John Naish, for assistance rendered in regard to those of the north division of Somerset.

of a meeting for discipline; but the same can hardly be said of the following minute of that meeting, 23d First month, 1726: "John Hipsley, by order of the north Monthly Meeting, acquaints us that about three months past, Mary Cuff, a poor Friend who lived in Belluton meeting-house, was unhappily murdered, and the person who is supposed (as by his own confession) to have committed the fact, being now taken, and to be tried at the coming assizes at Taunton. And whereas the said prosecution may be expensive, and no way probable to raise the expense unless by Friends, therefore (eight Friends) are desired to carry on the said prosecution as much as in them lies, and the charges thereof to be reimbursed by this meeting." The execution of the murderer was reported at a future meeting.

There can be no doubt as to the effect which the sort of family compact of which I have spoken produced, not only on the charitable disposition of the early Friends towards each other, but also in making way for the system of relief which has been gradually matured amongst us. The right of our members to maintenance has never, I believe, been admitted by the Society, but our *practice* is very much the same as it would be if the right were admitted. I am not going to enter on the difficult question whether the right course has been in all

respects pursued by us in this matter of relieving the wants of our members, or on the still more difficult question of what better could have been devised. Few problems in moral science are more difficult of solution than that which relates to the mode of so dispensing aid to others, as to comply with the requirements of Christian charity on the one hand, and to avoid lessening their independence and self-respect on the other. The rulers of states and of churches, and individuals in their private capacity, have alike been at fault in this matter. It is perhaps equally certain (I am now speaking of the world at large) that a great deal is withheld which ought to be given away, and that a large part of that which is given is productive of injury rather than of good. The worst course of all would seem to be, that of those who cut the knot of the difficulty by giving as little as possible, or by giving indiscriminately what they have to spare.

I have spoken of a *system* of relief as having gradually grown up amongst us; but the mode in which charitable aid was afforded in early times was not of a systematic character, at least in so far as respects what may be termed a law of settlement. Friends of one county or country were ready to help those of another. In 1664, a considerable sum was raised by Friends in Ireland, to aid their suffering brethren in this country, of which £25 were

distributed to the prisoners at Ilchester and £30 to those in Bristol. Six years afterwards an opportunity was afforded to Friends in this country of reciprocating the kindness, by the severe losses sustained by their brethren in Ireland during the rebellion: the amount of which is estimated by Rutty at £100,000. The sum of £1,810 was sent from England for their relief, £162 being collected in Bristol and £113:19 in Somersetshire (Friends in Barbadoes sent them £100.) Applications were frequently made to Friends from different parts of the country to assist their brethren in special emergencies. Among these, by far the most frequent were occasioned by losses from fire: and this need not surprise us when we consider that many houses were then built of wood, that fire-engines had not come into use, or insurance companies been established. In 1672, two such applications were made to Friends of Bristol, and in the case of one of them, that of a Friend of Southampton, who had lost all he had by fire, the sum of £142:5:9. was sent from hence. On an application to assist a Friend of Worcester, who was poor and in debt, a donation of £5 was sent for his relief; but Friends say, that "as to the matter of his debt, and contributing thereunto, we have no freedom." In 1708, Abraham Darby, who lived near Lawford's Gate, applied to Friends to assist an aged couple in Shrop-

shire; Friends there being "few in number and mean in estate:" the sum of £5 was sent for their assistance, and further relief was afterwards forwarded to that meeting. Sometimes, without any application being received, Friends were appointed to inquire into the necessities of their brethren in other places. This course was more than once adopted by Bristol Friends, in reference to some of the Gloucestershire meetings, and the offer when not accepted, was kindly acknowledged. In another instance, an inquiry was directed to be made as to the necessities of some Derbyshire Friends, emigrating to Pennsylvania. Assistance to Friends going to Pennsylvania is repeatedly mentioned. During the persecution, from which Friends in Bristol suffered, in 1682, "an epistle was received," says one of the minutes, "from two Friends in Yorkshire, expressing the great sense and compassion Friends of the Quarterly Meeting have of the present sufferings and afflictions of our poor Friends in this city, for whose relief they have sent a token of £30. It is desired by this meeting, that an answer should be returned to their Quarterly Meeting, tenderly accepting their brotherly love towards us." There were applications too, for funds to be used in the redemption of Friends who were captives in Algiers. Bristol sent £10 for this purpose in

1674, and £20 in 1679, out of a sum of £220 required.

It is very interesting and satisfactory to observe, that large as were the demands made upon our Friends in those days, to aid their suffering brethren at home and abroad, they had still something to spare for the necessities of other sufferers, not belonging to their particular fold. In 1673 there is a minute relating to the distressed condition of the inhabitants of Fordingbridge, consequent upon an extensive fire. "We having hearts," it says, "to commiserate their distressed condition, thought meet to request Dennis Hollister to move" it "in our public meeting-house, according as it shall be upon his heart, on the next first day, in the afternoon." Four Friends were appointed to receive contributions on the following first day. Just after this, several Friends are desired to ride down to Pill, and relieve the wants of some distressed passengers to Ireland, to the extent of £5: and the sum of £5 is sent for the inhabitants of the town of Wemm (another case of loss by fire.) In the second month of 1688, a collection was made after meeting, to relieve "the necessity of some of the French Protestants," then resident in Bristol. This is particularly interesting in connection with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had taken place about three years before. Hundreds of

thousands of French Protestants are said to have been driven out of France at that time, the greater part of whom took refuge in England. (Twenty-two French Churches were formed in London.) England has had a bad name given to it of late, as the hiding-place of assassins; but if our hospitality has sometimes been abused, many have come to us at different times as foreign refugees, "of whom" it may be said "the world was not worthy," and long may it be ere we close our doors against such, or indeed against any whose conduct entitles them to our protection. On the occasion of which I speak, Louis the Fourteenth may be said to have driven out of France many of her best citizens; and the descendants of more than a few of these still look upon England as their home.

In 1704, a collection was made by Friends, from house to house, under a brief issued by Queen Anne, for the suffering Protestants of the principality of Orange. The following is the endorsement of the brief: "There is collected amongst the people called Quakers, in the city of Bristol, pursuant to this brief, £78 : 19 : 4, which sum is paid to the hands of Thomas Eddolls and Thomas Bilby, churchwardens of St. James's parish, in the said city of Bristol. Signed by Charles Jones and Thomas Callowhill." In 1709, the sum of £97 : 0 : 6, was collected in a similar manner, for "the sub-

sistence and settlement" of the distressed inhabitants of the Palatinate. Mention is made of a collection under a royal brief, as early as 1687; and the churchwardens having become willing to recognise the Friends' meeting in this way, and Friends being willing to respond to the call, the reading of such documents in our meetings became a regular practice; and none seem to have been refused, except those in which application was made for the building or repair of parish churches, one of which was for the repair of Redcliff Church, in this city, in 1709. In ten years, from 1706 to 1715, no less than forty-eight collections under briefs were made in Bristol meeting, for losses sustained in other places by fire.

Among the Somersetshire minutes, there are a number referring to collections made for the relief of Friends in distant parts of the country. One of these was for Friends in the north of England, who were sufferers from the rebellion in 1745. A letter from four Friends in London,[1] in 1666, to John Anderdon, then a prisoner at Ilchester, acknowledges the receipt of £20, sent from Friends in Somersetshire on account of the Fire in London. There are two epistles from the Somersetshire Quarterly Meeting, directing subscriptions to be made for the release of captives in Algiers; and a letter from London[1] acknowledges the receipt of £15, sent on one of these occasions. The practice of supplying the wants of poor Friends in Somer-

[1] J. Dix's manuscript.

setshire out of a Quarterly Meeting stock, was not long continued, though collections were made by the authority of the Quarterly Meeting till the year 1725; but the Monthly Meetings were accustomed to assist each other under the direction of the Quarterly Meeting. In 1668, the west division was desired to supply the south "with £3 out of their stock, wherein they abound." On another occasion the north supplies the south with £2; the other meetings "being themselves in debt, were not in a capacity to do anything for the present." The relief afforded to poor Friends in Somersetshire in the early times, was generally small in amount. There are frequent entries of cases such as the following: — 5*s.* to W. B., having a family of small children, and being out of his usual employment— 20*s.* to a poor man with a great family of small children — 5*s.* to a poor man, and blind, having a hard family—20*s.* for setting a broken leg, and 10*s.* for the Friend's relief — 5*s.* sent to a Friend to buy him a pair of hose and shoes. A load of peat, costing 8*s.* 6*d.* was given yearly to a poor Friend: and a cow was ordered to be purchased for the assistance of another. In cases in which weekly pay was given, the amount was probably not above the scale of parish relief: 8*s.* 6*d.* per month is allowed for the support of a widow, in 1735, and it is stated in the minute to be "as little as she can be kept for." It must be remembered that the value of money was greater than it is now; that cottages in the country were rented for about 20*s.* per annum,

and that many articles of food were very low in price, butcher's meat costing from 1½*d.* to 2½*d.* per pound, &c.[1]

Numerous cases occurred, in which parties applying for relief were not considered to have any claim upon Friends; but in which temporary aid was given, and application directed to be made to the parish officers. Such applications were sometimes made too, on behalf of the attenders of our meetings. One minute states that as Friends paid the poor-rates, they thought they had a right to such assistance; and another advises a Friend to make such application, "she having no scruple against it." There was doubtless a great difficulty in those early days, in drawing the line between those whom the meetings ought to relieve, and others. In Bristol, the proportion of indigent Friends was perhaps less than in some of the country meetings, but there were cases, such as that in which 45*s.* was allowed to a poor widow, to recover her bed from pawn; and one minute orders £5 to be given to women Friends, to buy coal and cheese for the poor during the winter: whether this refers to poor Friends may be doubtful. Both in town and country, the need was early felt of acting on the apostolic precept, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. A minute of the north

[1] There is a curious book, published some years since, entitled "Autobiography of William Stout, of Lancaster." He was a member of the Society of Friends, and born in 1665. Among other facts of economical interest, there is a mention of his having when a young man, been boarded for £5 per annum.

division, advises an applicant for relief "to be diligent to follow some honest calling, for they think him able to do so, without expectation or dependency on Friends," and he is further advised, "to be busy about his calling, and not about matters that do not concern him, or are too high for him." In Bristol, a person who was remonstrated with, for not affording his family proper support, said he was willing to work at his "trade in the winter, and to gather herbs in the summer:" which was not considered a satisfactory answer.

On the establishment of the Friends' workhouse in 1696, an individual who had removed to London, and to whom Friends had sent several sums of money but without feeling that his conduct entitled him to their assistance, replies to an offer which I suppose had been sent him to enter the new establishment, that he has "no desire to come to Bristol and weave cantaloons." The idea of the workhouse was first suggested by the circumstance of several poor Friends who were weavers being out of work; and the needful funds were quickly raised by Friends making themselves answerable to the extent of several hundred pounds. In 1698, the present building at the bottom of New Street was erected at a cost of upwards of £1,300, and was described in the minutes of the Men's Meeting as a house "for the willing Friends to work in, and the aged and feeble to live in." An additional object was afterwards secured by the admission of boys, who were first provided with school instruction and after-

wards taught the weaving trade. This trade was carried on until about the year 1721; the chief article manufactured being the sort of woollen stuffs called "cantaloons." It is to be regretted that the workhouse ledger has been lost, so that the pecuniary results cannot be very fully ascertained. In the report of one of the annual audits, the account is said to be "whole with some advantage," and this probably continued to be the case for many years; but at length the trade had so far declined that loss ensued and the undertaking was relinquished, the house having since been used as an asylum for the aged and infirm, and having also in modern times accommodated our first-day school on its first establishment. For some years there was a common table kept for Friends living in the workhouse. A Week-day Meeting was established, and I understand that at one time a meeting for worship was also held on first-day. One of the Bristol minutes orders that "a very good large Bible should be purchased for the use of the boys." Another purchase made by the meeting, about the same time, was a Cambridge Concordance, to be placed on the table of the meetings for discipline.

I must remark in reference to *endowments*, that I do not think the Society of Friends has steered clear of all the disadvantages ordinarily connected with them. I believe, however, that we might very generally plead "not guilty," to a charge of *misappropriation;* and also that the advice given by the Quarterly Meeting for Somerset on one occasion, to

some Friends, to invest certain moneys "on no worse security than they would take for themselves," has been generally followed. About ten years ago a report was presented to the Bristol Monthly Meeting, by a committee, consisting of Samuel H. Lury, Francis Fry, and Samuel Bowden, of their examination of the accounts and records of this meeting, with a view to ascertain whether all legacies which had been directed to be invested had been duly secured. That undertaking must have involved weeks of uninterrupted labour: for although a complete set of accounts has been kept since 1734, the previous statement had to be prepared from various sources. The report (which extends to 212 folio pages of large size) showed that from 1734 to 1844, £22,943 had been expended in the relief of our poor, including education and apprentice fees, of which, £15,070 had been raised by subscriptions, and the remainder derived from legacies, or the income from investments. The report also showed that a sum of £335 had been inadvertently allowed to pass into current expenditure; and a subscription to that amount being at once raised, the proceeds were invested. I may refer likewise to a printed account, prepared by the committee appointed to manage the Somersetshire charities, as showing that in that county, there has been a conscientious discharge of the different trusts. The committee of charities to which I allude, has been held half-yearly since 1719, and consists of Friends nominated by the Quarterly

Meeting. Friends of Bristol and of Somersetshire, retained the management of their respective property on their union as one Quarterly Meeting, in 1784. In Somersetshire, the income of the charity estates has been large enough to supersede the necessity for periodical collections to be made in some of the Monthly Meetings, for the relief of the poor, a result which was not contemplated by the donors. A minute of the Quarterly Meeting in 1722, says, "The design of our deceased worthy Friends, our benefactors, was not in their giving to make void the charity of the living: let such poor objects as ought to have monthly pay, be taken care of by your collections, as have been often recommended; pray therefore regard it." I will not attempt to show that any particular injury has been done to those of our Somersetshire Friends who have in this way been deprived of the pleasure of contributing to the relief of their poorer brethren; but there is no doubt that the *ordinary* effect of such deprivation is to destroy the *habit* of giving. A curious instance of this is mentioned by Fuller, in his "History of Dissent, &c."—that of a dissenting congregation possessed of an endowment of £100 per annum, whose evening services had to be abandoned during the winter months, because "they were *unable to raise money to buy candles.*"

The first collection for our Society fund, called the "National Stock," was made in Bristol in 1669. The minute states that, the sum of £36 : 17 : 6 was sent to London, for "the service of truth beyond

the seas, which, with £27 : 5 : 3 defaulked for our own disbursements relating to that service, amounts to £64 : 2 : 6." A collection was made in Somersetshire, for a like object, as early as the year 1658, on the recommendation of a meeting of Friends of the northern counties, held near Skipton. The subscriptions to the National Stock, from the Somersetshire meetings, in 1722, amounting to £35 : 13 : 6, were returned to them by the Quarterly Meeting to be increased.

I must reserve for a concluding Lecture, some further mention of the early discipline, and devote the remaining space to a reference to the public ministry of our early days. The principle was from the first recognised, by George Fox and his brethren, that the true call and qualification of ministers of the Gospel, can only be received from the Great Head of the Church Himself; and that the Church has only to judge of the reality of the call, and to watch over, encourage, and advise those who are entrusted with such a gift. Even the *recognition* of ministers as such, in the Society of Friends, was of an indirect and informal character for many years after its establishment. Those who spoke often were allowed to occupy a raised seat, but then, as now, this was adopted as a matter of convenience, and not of ecclesiastical distinction or superiority. As in the case of membership, no line of separation was drawn between the attenders of the congregation; so, neither were those who spoke as ministers formally recognised as such. Before long it was

found needful to give certificates of membership to those who removed from one meeting to another; and about the same time, a necessity was felt for giving similar credentials, to those who left their homes to travel in the service of the Gospel. An *indirect* recognition was given in many instances, in this and in other ways, both of membership, and of the ministerial character: but in regard to the latter, as well as to the former, it may be said, that more than a hundred years had elapsed after the establishment of meetings for discipline, before *formal* recognition was adopted.

This circumstance renders it more difficult than it would otherwise be, to judge of the number of the first ministers: but there is no doubt it was very large. Robert Barclay states[1] that, in the early times of the Society, there was scarce any meeting in which God did not raise up some or other to minister to his brethren; and that there were few meetings altogether silent. In Bristol and Somersetshire there is to be found, in the records of our meetings, incidental mention of many Friends who were engaged in the work of the ministry, in the latter part of the seventeenth, and the first half of the eighteenth century. I believe there were at least twelve men Friends so engaged at one period in Bristol, and an equal number in the middle division of Somersetshire. The amount of vocal service in the meetings here seems indeed to have been greater than was profitable to some; and in 1678,

[1] Apology, Prop. ix., Sec. ix.

and again in 1698, a proposal was made for the establishment of a silent meeting, to be held on First-day afternoons, which any who were inclined might attend. In one instance the experiment was tried for a short time. I am inclined to think, that the number of men engaged in the ministry was much greater in proportion to that of women than is now the case, as far at least as Bristol and Somerset were concerned: I have, however, already mentioned the names of several women who were so engaged; and an important part of that recognition of the freedom of the Gospel, to which the early Friends were led, consisted in their leaving the way open for the exercise of spiritual gifts, whether they were bestowed on sons or on daughters.

The number of religious visits received from Friends from a distance, was very large. I was told by the late Jacob Player Sturge, that he had examined a book belonging to one of the Gloucestershire meetings, in which an account was kept of the charges for the horses of Friends who came to visit them; and that the number of visits averaged one a fortnight for many years in succession. There are entries in our Bristol minutes, of charges for "horse meat," which lead me to think that the number who visited Bristol was at least as large. It may seem strange to bring the statistics of *oats consumed*, to bear on such a question; but I must mention, that a bill brought to the Bristol meeting, for oats supplied for the horses of ministering Friends, was for thirty-six bushels and a half, in a year and a quar-

ter; and from the sums paid in other years, it would appear that this was not an unusual quantity. Although the principle of giving freely that which had been freely received, was from the first recognised by the Society, it was also felt that another principle laid down by our Saviour, and by the apostle Paul, that those who had *left their homes* in the service of the Gospel were entitled to support, must not be overlooked: but as our first ministers travelled on horseback from place to place, little more was required, in this way, than "entertainment for man and beast." The expenses connected with the needful *outfit*, &c., for such journeys, was sometimes greater than those who were engaged in them could well bear. The following was a minute of the west division Monthly Meeting, in 1708:—"Whereas our Friend John Reeves has been concerned to labour and travel in the work of the ministry, which proving chargeable to him beyond his ability, this meeting do order that 30*s.* of the money received last Quarterly Meeting be paid him, for or towards his expenses."

The earliest certificates which I have met with, for ministers travelling in this part of the country, were not issued by the meetings to which the ministers belonged, but by Friends among whom they had been travelling. One of these,[1] dated 1655, was sent by Friends of Bristol in behalf of Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, who were then travelling in Ireland. This document was sent to Ireland from

[1] In the possession of James Tanner, of Portshead.

hence, in consequence of certain calumnies with which these ministers had been assailed. It certifies whomsoever it may concern, that "Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough are not vagabonds or disorderly persons, or popishly affected, or disaffected to godliness — but are natives of Kendal, in Westmoreland, where hath been their constant abode (except in the warrs and the ministry of the Gospel), and are well known to the writers to have been, and to be men of a sober, honest, and godly conversation, always faithful to, and active for the Commonwealth, and are of a settled principle in religion; sound in the faith, having Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, for their foundation, in obedience to whom they have borne their testimony in this nation, at London for several months, and in this city of Bristol, and in divers other parts of this nation, having free liberty, travelling up and down and preaching the Gospel freely, according to the example of the saints recorded in the Scriptures of truth." It is further certified that their going to Ireland was, in obedience to the Lord, to bear witness to the eternal truth, and that they went with the consent of the Church. Another certificate[1] is dated Exon, the third of the eleventh month, 1682, and is on behalf of Thomas Taylley, "who," it says, "arrived in England, after his captivity in Algiers, about two or three weeks since, and was landed at Dartmouth." Friends of Exeter state, that he had since been among them in the service of truth, and was passing thence to London, desiring

[1] James Dix's manuscripts.

to visit Friends on his journey, and being a stranger and not knowing where to find Friends, or how the meetings lie, they ask for him the assistance and direction of his Friends from place to place. This document was signed by eleven Friends (among other names, is that of William Hingston). In the second month of 1698, William Penn, who was then resident in Bristol, applied to the Men's Meeting for a certificate to visit Ireland. The minute states, that "William Penn having signified to this meeting his intention shortly to go for Ireland, desires, according to the good order established among Friends, to have a certificate." Five Friends were accordingly appointed to prepare it. In some instances these documents were brought to the meeting and signed by Friends present, in others the Friends who prepared them were left to sign them. This was comparatively unimportant, as the first certificates simply stated that the Friends on whose behalf they were given, were of orderly conduct, and that their ministry was approved. There was a certificate granted to Samuel Bownas, by the south division of Somerset, in 1707, for a visit to Ireland, in which Friends say, that they "have good unity with him in this undertaking." (They speak of him as "our well-beloved Friend and labourer in the Gospel, for the good of souls.") But for many years after this, the certificates given in Bristol were restricted to a statement of the conduct and ministry of the Friend being of a satisfactory character. Sometimes the early meetings appointed committees to make inquiry on

these points, before granting a certificate; but they do not appear, generally speaking, to have *deliberated* on the particular proposals of religious service made to them from time to time. Indeed these were often expressed, as by William Penn, by the word "intention." "Having an inclination[1] to visit," &c., was a common expression in the Somersetshire minutes. Samuel Bownas used the word "concern." In 1726, he obtained a certificate from the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset, to visit America, in which it is said, that he having been "a well approved minister, and for a considerable time a member of this meeting, in which station we have reason to value his repeated services, do order a certificate to be drawn accordingly, manifesting our continued good esteem and unity, &c., and our approbation and earnest supplication for a blessing on his said journey and labour of love."

It is probable that in Somersetshire, as in Bristol, some oversight of the ministry was undertaken by the committee to which I have referred, as having been appointed to exercise private and preliminary discipline. In 1714, the following minute was adopted by the south division Monthly Meeting: "Offered to the consideration of this meeting by our ancient friend, Elias Osborne, whether it would not be proper to offer to our next Quarterly Meeting, viz. — That forasmuch as we have several Friends in our county that appear (in) public a little sometimes, whose welfare and prosperity therein we truly desire,

[1] See a similar use made of the word "inclination" in the extract from C. Marshall. — First Lecture, p. 12.

whether it may not be proper for all the public Friends in our county, to have a select meeting to wait upon the Lord together, and unbosom ourselves to each other; (and) whether the day before each Quarterly Meeting may not be a convenient time. This meeting have unity with the proposition, and do agree to lay it before the next Quarterly Meeting." This proposal was agreed to by the Quarterly Meeting, and the "select" meeting accordingly established. It was constituted of Friends appointed each quarter by the respective Monthly Meetings, and when in 1727, other Friends, under the designation of *elders*, were chosen to unite with the ministers in these meetings, and to take the special oversight of the ministry, the selection seems to have been made by their appointment to attend such meetings, rather than by any formal recognition. In Bristol also, the ministers who formed part of the committee on discipline, felt the need of more free conference among themselves, and for many years they were accustomed to meet together every Seventh Day afternoon. On these occasions they agreed what meetings they would attend on the following day. The book containing these arrangements, which I have examined, is ruled in three columns, for the Friars, Temple street, and the country meetings.

One of the queries received from the Yearly Meeting in 1700, was as to the number of ministers who had died during the year; and, in answering it, the meetings sometimes gave a short notice of deceased Friends. The following is the Somerset-

shire answer for 1718: "One, viz., John Peddle, junior. He was a young man in good esteem with us, growing in the gift of the ministry. We question not but he have received a good reward of eternal life, among the sanctified. We might enlarge, but do favour brevity." The first notice I have found of the longer documents, known as *testimonies*, which our meetings for discipline have been accustomed to issue from time to time, in regard to deceased ministers, is in the Quarterly Meeting minute of 1711, directing a testimony to be prepared for John Banks. Traditionary mention of this Friend is still made at Street, where he ended his days; and, until lately, there might be seen, in the low cottage room in which Friends' meetings were then held, the beam of the ceiling, a portion of which had been cut away, that John Banks, who was a tall man, might stand to preach. He was a native of Cumberland, and born in 1648. His parents had given him a careful training, and, having received seven years' instruction at school, he became a teacher himself at fourteen years of age. In connection with another school, to which he removed a year later, he undertook to read the Scriptures and Homilies on First-days, in a chapel-of-ease, for which service he was to receive a shilling a-year and a fleece of wool, from each family attending his services (besides a shilling per quarter for each of his twenty-four scholars). But having been brought to much serious thoughtfulness, and led to adopt the views of Friends, when about sixteen

years of age, he gave up his reading, and refused to receive the stipulated payment. He was a member of Pardshaw meeting for upwards of forty years, a great part of which time was spent in repeated journeys through Great Britain and Ireland. His faithfulness involved him in imprisonment and hardships of various kinds. In 1696, he came into the west, and settled at Meare, from whence he removed to Street, in 1708. It is said of him in the Quarterly Meeting testimony, "He was a man very zealous to the last, to spread the Gospel; and in all his exercises and afflictions, he had the honour of God and good of his people in his eye. He devoutly laboured in his gift, and being an able minister of Christ, was instrumental both to gather and confirm many souls in the truth." In William Penn's preface to John Banks's Journal, he speaks of having known him above forty-four years, and of his having been "an ordinance of strength" to his "soul, in the early days" of his own "convincement." He says of him, that he was "a heavenly minister of experimental religion, of a sound judgment and pious practice, valiant for truth upon the earth, and ready to serve all in the love and peace of the Gospel."[1]

In 1720, the Quarterly Meeting issued a testimony concerning Elias Osborne, the Friend to whom I have already referred. The following are extracts from it. "He was a man excellently gifted in the ministry, in which he laboured with great diligence

[1] See Journal of the life of J. Banks.

and good success." "His doctrine and pious example in all his conduct was of eminent service among us, and being endued with a good understanding naturally, he was qualified for service in cases of difference, often interposing as a mediator to the reconciling of discord. And being just, prudent, and skilful in such affairs, he acquired great reputation and honour amongst all sorts of people." "Of a singular good disposition (he was) not apt to give way to hard thoughts, though sometimes he had cause for it; and if he heard anything not right of a brother, or neighbour, the first opportunity he would take the freedom of speaking his mind to the party concerned, with (such) candour, and caution as at once (to) bespeak him to be an overseer indeed, not lording over the greatest or least offender; but in meekness and sincerity labouring that things amiss might be mended. In his ministry he was very exemplary, tenderly regarding the service of strangers that travelled amongst us in the work of the Gospel, by giving way to them. In our meetings of business he was of great service, and great condescension to his brethren, guarding on the one hand against an undue liberty, and on the other, that under a pretence of zeal, no private and bye ends might be gratified." "Charitable and open-hearted in distributing, and (in) entertaining strangers, faithful in his testimony in all respects; a good husband, a tender father, and kind neighbour: in a word he

was a great and good man, of whom we have much loss, but our loss is his great gain."

There were other ministers living at this time, of whom I may have something to say next month; and there were others who were called hence at a still earlier period, of whom but little mention has been made. I must not now attempt to supply this deficiency; but I may refer to two of the early sufferers from the Bristol persecutions: Barbara Blagdon, who travelled extensively as a minister, and suffered much; and Josiah Coale, who endured great suffering and privation in New England, and other parts of America, where he travelled as a minister of the Gospel. He finished his course in peace at the age of thirty-five. Then there was Jasper Batt, of Street, one of the earliest of our ministers in the west of England; and Christopher Bacon, another Somersetshire Friend, who, from having been a soldier in the army of Charles the First, was brought to engage in a better warfare. After labouring much as a minister, and enduring great persecution, he died from the effects of imprisonment.

We might look in vain among these devoted men and women for perfect examples or infallible teachers; but there were many faithful labourers in that day, whose example calls loudly upon us to follow them, as they followed Christ.

THIRD LECTURE,

Delivered 4th Month, 8th, 1858.

It was my intention to have omitted the word "early" in the title of this concluding Lecture on the history of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire, and to have occupied this evening chiefly with a notice of what may be called *the middle age* of our religious Society; but having been obliged, by want of space, to leave out of the last Lecture several matters of interest connected with the earlier period, I must endeavour to supply these, before passing to the consideration of later events and circumstances. No one can be more sensible than I am that the words "imperfect sketch," which were used in reference to the account given of the persecutions of Friends, is quite as applicable to the representations which I have attempted to make of their first gathering as a religious Society, of the circumstances in which the members were placed, and of the attempts which were made to supply that need for *Christian discipline* which has been felt by the Churches of Christ in every age.

Having already entered into some particulars in relation to the care of the poor and the performance

of other charitable duties, I must now make a further reference to the mode of *dealing with delinquents* in the early days of our Society. That mode was, I believe, thoroughly Christian, as respects both the *order* of the proceedings, and the *spirit* in which they were conducted. The chief object kept in view was to *reclaim*, not to cut off. When private labour failed, the case was reported to the Meeting for Discipline, the offender was invited to attend, and, if needful, a Committee was appointed to labour with him. The terms made use of in such appointments were sometimes very expressive. Two or more Friends were desired to go and visit such an one "in love to his soul, and admonish him to repent and turn to his first love, and testify against his evil;" or "in the fear" or "love of God;" or "in love or tenderness;" or "to discourse with him lovingly, and give account how they find him;" or "to speak with him in abundance of love, and endeavour to make him sensible of his outgoing." If such a visit was declined, another attempt was ordered to be made; and sometimes, when one Committee had failed in its object, another was appointed.

The patience and forbearance exercised in some of these cases are very remarkable. In the instance of a Friend of Minehead, who was disowned by the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset for receiving impropriate tithe, to which he had become entitled in his wife's right, years of labour were bestowed before the decision was come to. In 1701 he is reported

as saying "he could not justify himself, and would, one way or other, seek to give Friends some satisfaction." The Committee are then desired to ask him "in what manner he will do it?" In 1703 they were to "let him know that Friends cannot always bear with him." Again, being requested to return a positive answer, he replied that he would write to the meeting; but no letter being received, he was to be told that "Friends would no longer be put off." The Committee at length reported that they "did not find him like to answer," and he was thereupon disowned.

Those who on being visited expressed regret for their misconduct were asked to draw up a declaration or testimony of their repentance; and if this was considered satisfactory, they were desired to read it at the close of a Meeting for Worship, as an evidence of their sincerity. In other cases, in which the meeting had to draw up a testimony, this document was also read at the close of a Meeting for Worship.[1] In cases of disownment for marriage out of the Society, a copy was sometimes ordered to be sent to the priest by whom the parties had been married; and a Friend who had acknowledged himself guilty of intemperance was desired to furnish a list of all places and houses in which his conduct had been an occasion of reproach, in order that a copy of his declaration of repentance might be sent to each of them. Among the declarations of repentance, copied in a book kept by the Bristol

[1] This practice was continued till 1801.

Meeting for that purpose, is one from Hannah Salter (late Stringer), in reference to the part she had taken as one of the followers of James Naylor. It is not clear in all cases whether the testimony issued on account of misconduct amounted to a deprivation of membership. I have met with one instance in which a second testimony was issued, because the first was not clear on this point; and another in which it was repeated, because the individual had continued to attend meeting — his conduct being still bad. The testimonies of disunion generally concluded then, as now, with some expression of good desire for the offender, such as that he might "come to a true and living sense of his condition," &c.

One feature common to many of these documents cannot, however, be referred to with the like satisfaction: they contain expressions which could only be considered correct, on the supposition that the Society of Friends was occupying exclusively the position of the one true Church. The perception was not wanting to the early Friends, that true believers were they, who, in the words of George Fox,[1] "were born of God, and were passed from death to life," under whatever name they might be known among men: but believing as they did, that the Reformation had failed of its full accomplishment as respects the surrounding sects; and recognising too, in many of these, that spirit of persecution which is so inconsistent with the Christian

[1] Journal, p. 5.

character, they were perhaps too often led to entertain the idea, that all the sincere-hearted of other denominations would be brought to join their own standard of profession; and to speak of themselves in terms appertaining to the whole Israel of God: this remark applies also to some of the printed books of that period. In one of the controversies in which Friends of Bristol were involved, and of which an account is given in a pamphlet published in 1665, the question is put to George Bishop, by an opponent, "What do you mean by this phrase, 'My people?' Do you by that intend only those of your own opinion and party? If so, why are you only to be esteemed the people of the Lord?" George Bishop's answer was clear and full. "I answer, by 'My people,' or 'the people of the Lord,' we do understand all such in every nation, kindred, and people who fear the Lord; be they known or distinguished by whatsoever name or appellation. They who fear God and work righteousness are accepted of Him; as Peter said in the case of Cornelius, who was converted to the faith, who was before a Gentile, and without the law; and so the Jews had no conversation with such till after Jesus was offered up, who broke down the middle wall of partition that was between, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself one new man, so making peace. So that when we say 'My people,' or 'the people of the Lord,' we restrain it not to any sort, or particular company,

or society of men, but to such as fear the Lord as aforesaid." It is evident that the opposition which Friends at first experienced from the surrounding sects, was but little calculated to lead them to judge favourably of those bodies; but as persecution declined, it is refreshing to observe a better feeling springing up. We find John Whiting, for example, holding friendly intercourse with the Bishop of Bath and Wells; the Bishop listening respectfully to his statements and opinions, and inviting him to dine with him whenever he came to Wells.

The most frequent causes of disownment in our early days, appear to have been the being married by a priest to a person not attending our meetings, and intemperance in drinking. The practice of the Society in regard to the first, was not uniform; in 1739 the Middle Division adopted the following minute: "Inasmuch as we are now in the practice of disowning persons that have been in unity with us, for going to the priest to be married, and upon inquiry we find that others are not in the same practice, it is agreed to apply to the Quarterly Meeting about the same." What answer was given does not appear, but in 1755, John Clark, the ancestor of the present Clark family of Street, &c., was retained in membership on his expressing regret, in a letter to the Monthly Meeting, for the *manner* in which he had been married, his wife being also looked upon as a member from the time of marriage, and attending the meetings of Friends with him. In that instance, the chief objections to such mar-

riages were obviated; John Clark not having withdrawn from his religious profession, or been involved in those differences of religious sentiment which are so important to be avoided by those who enter on the close relationship of marriage.

Great as are at present the evils of intemperance, there is reason to believe they were still greater in the times of which I am speaking. The testimony afforded by national statistics is necessarily imperfect, but it is a significant fact, that the quantity of malt annually used in England at the close of the seventeenth century, for the manufacture of beer, was from twenty-two to twenty-three million bushels,[1] whilst in the excise year ending in 1856, the quantity was under thirty-two million bushels. The increase in the population in the intervening period, was probably not less than as three to one, whilst that of malt used in making beer, was less than one and a half to one. We must not however overlook the extent to which ardent spirits have been substituted for beer. I cannot say how far the reduction of which I speak, is due to the introduction of unintoxicating drinks, such as tea and coffee, or how much of it is due to the labours of temperance societies. I am one of those who believe that total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drinks, as beverages, is the course which should be pursued by those who wish to see the evils of intemperance still further diminished. It appears to me that the Society of Friends has derived great benefit from

[1] Pictorial History of England, Vol. IV. p. 842.

the extent to which its members have adopted it, and that its further adoption would be helpful alike to ourselves and to the cause of temperance. But I also think that this question comes within the range of that Christian liberty, with which no Church authority ought to interfere.

I must not omit the following minute of the Bristol Men's Meeting, under date of the twenty-sixth of the second month, 1675. "The persons who were appointed to speak with Peter Hawkins, have given an account of their care over him. And Friends do further request the same persons, or any two of them, to advise Peter Hawkins not to sell ale any longer than to dispose of what he hath, for that they do judge that Peter Hawkins *his* selling ale is contrary to the truth." It is needful to lay the emphasis on the word "his" in this minute, for I find from a more private record of the case, that the charge brought against him, and on which indeed he was afterwards disowned, was that of keeping a disorderly house. Two other such charges are made about the same time, against attenders of meetings, — one in Bristol, and the other in the West Division. There is a curious minute of Frenchay Monthly Meeting, in 1702, which states that report was made that some Friends had been visited for selling ale, and had promised when they had sold all the ale in the house, and what more the malt would make which they had by them, they would give over selling ale, except at fairs. This exception as to fairs seems rather lax, but it pro-

bably refers to the liberty granted to the inhabitants of certain towns, to open their houses as places of entertainment at fair times.[1]

In reference to the general proceedings of the first Meetings for Discipline, two things strike me as worthy of imitation: the love and forbearance shown towards delinquents, and the uncompromising adherence to all that was felt to be right and true. We may think them mistaken in some of their conclusions, as in the matter of disownment for receiving and paying *impropriate tithes*, and for the marriage of second cousins (I forbear to speak of some other like questions, which are under consideration); and their decrees were not intended to be like those of the Medes and Persians: but we have much to learn from them, if I mistake not, as respects their fearless adherence to what they believed to be right. *Expediency* was a word almost unknown to them. The question of whether a certain course would be politic or impolitic, was foreclosed by the consideration whether it was *right* or *wrong*.

Friends in Somersetshire were involved in some difficulty in 1685, by the circumstances attendant on the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion. There were, indeed, more reasons than one why Friends were less likely than most others to be implicated in that movement. Their testimony against all wars and fightings, their steady loyalty, and the benefits which they had received at the hands of James the Second,

[1] The bush hung over the door as a sign that such accommodation was provided, probably gave rise to the proverb, that "Good wine needs no bush."

all conspired to prevent it. Macaulay, in writing of the first year of James's reign, says that the Quakers had, in spite of much ill-usage, submitted themselves meekly to the royal authority: and that no Quaker had ever had a libel on the Government traced to him, or been implicated in any conspiracy against the Government. An instance of the loyalty manifested by Friends in early times, is mentioned by Thomas Garrard, in his "Life and Times of Edward Colston." He mentions that on the occasion of the visit paid to Bristol by Charles the Second and his Queen, in 1663, the city treasury was empty; and that a number of the citizens consented to join in lending the amount necessary to provide for the royal visitors. Among others he mentions that "Thomas Speed and George Bishop, two highly respected members of the Society of Friends, presented, in the name of the Society, a loan of £100 for the purpose of augmenting the fund, 'that their Majesties might be entertained in a style and manner becoming their dignity, and the proverbial hospitality of the city, in its most palmy days.'"[1]

In regard to the Duke of Monmouth's position, Friends in Somersetshire were early on their guard. John Whiting, who was a prisoner at Ilchester in

[1] Page 241, Garrard states that Sir John Knight received his title on that occasion, and that shortly afterwards he sent both Thomas Speed and George Bishop to prison. Thomas Speed was a member of the Town Council, as appears from the following extract from the city records, given me by Francis Fry:—"At a General Sealing 28th September, 1685, was sealed a discharge to Mr. Thomas Speed, from the Common Council and other offices."

1680, writes as follows: — "In the sixth month of this year came down the Duke of Monmouth, in his progress in the west, and came through Ilchester with some thousands on horseback attending him; the country flocking to him and after him; the eyes of the nation being upon him and towards him, as the hopes and head of the Protestant interest at that time, in opposition to the Duke of York and Popish party; so that the affections of the people run exceedingly after him. We stood in the Friary-gate as he rode through the town; and as he passed by, taking notice of so many Quakers together with their hats on, he stopped and put off his hat to us; and one Friend, John Anderdon, had a mind to speak to him, and tell him that *we were prisoners for conscience-sake*, but had a stop in his mind, lest there should be an ill use made of it, in applying to him and making him too popular: the Court having a watchful eye over him. However we could not but have a respect to him for his affability, and therefore were the more concerned for him when his fall came."[1]

Notwithstanding the caution observed by Friends in regard to the Duke's proceedings, and their well-known loyalty and peaceableness, unfavourable reports were put in circulation, and some of these having reached Whitehall, and become known to Friends in London, they addressed a letter of inquiry to the Ilchester prisoners, who seem to have acted the part of a standing committee on behalf of

[1] Memoirs, p. 65.

Friends of Somersetshire. Their reply, signed by Jasper Batt and others, is dated the first of sixth month, 1685. It speaks in decided terms of the general clearness of Friends from any participation in the Duke's insurrection, and mentions the circumstance of one of his officers having come to Ilchester "and released several prisoners that were detained on his account, and the Quakers also," and "strictly charged the keeper no more to detain them, and highly threatened him if he did. But the so-called Quakers took no advantage of that liberty, but continued prisoners as formerly." It is remarked that some Friends had rendered themselves liable to suspicion, by their having followed the army to look after the horses and oxen which had been taken from them by the Duke's soldiers, and that other Friends in travelling to their markets, &c., had encountered detachments of the army. Several cases are mentioned of persons joining the Duke's forces who had at one time been known as Friends, but who had sometime before been disowned on account of their intemperance or dishonesty. And there is an allusion made to one or two persons still known as Friends, who had been more or less compromised by their proceedings in connection with the late rebellion.

Another document was prepared by Friends of the counties of Somerset, Devon, and Dorset, for presentation to the Government, disclaiming all approval of the late insurrection, or participation in it. They speak of a public meeting of Friends, held near

Taunton[1] the same day on which the Duke marched thither, in which it was "testified by the said people, that whatever our sufferings were we must not expect deliverance by the arm of flesh, but look unto the Lord from whom our salvation comes, and who will not save us by sword nor spear, but by his own Spirit. And therefore our Friends were warned not to concern themselves in this war, (and) all unanimously consented thereunto." This paper concludes with an expression of Friends' resolution to persevere in their peaceable principle and profession, "through the assistance [they say] of our God, while we have a being in these earthly tabernacles, in the full assurance that when the testimony is finished, and this mortal life ended, we shall have a dwelling place in the kingdom of glory, which Christ Jesus hath prepared for us, and purchased us unto his own blood, by whom only we expect to enjoy the same, when we shall rest from our labours and sufferings, and give glory to our God and His Lamb, who is worthy of honour and dominion for ever.—Amen." This "testimony" was sent to the Meeting for Sufferings, together with a number of certificates, granted to Friends by the churchwardens and others in different parishes in which they resided, setting forth their clearness of participation in the late insurrection.[2] A letter from George Whitehead, dated London, the twenty-second of the sixth month, 1685,

[1] This was probably the Quarterly Meeting at Gregory Stoke, mentioned by J. Whiting, p. 226.

[2] Copies of these certificates are preserved among James Dix's MSS.

acknowledges the receipt of these documents, and intimates that they will shortly be laid before the King. He mentions that the unfavourable impression which the Court had received was wearing off, but recommends Friends to clear themselves as far as they can to the magistrates in their respective neighbourhoods, and at the same time to be careful not to charge particular persons by name, as having taken part in the rebellion, "though they be apostates."

Three cases are recorded by the Somersetshire Meetings, of persons connected with the Society who had taken more or less part in the rebellion. A graphic account is given by John Whiting,[1] of his going to Taunton, whilst the Duke was there, to endeavour to induce one of these persons, Francis Scott, who had followed the army in the hope of selling some horses, to return home. Another case, which attracted still more attention, was that of Thomas Plaice, of Edington, against whom a testimony was issued by the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset, in the seventh month, 1685.[2] It states, that "whereas the said Thomas Plaice did appear very active and conversant in the late Duke of Monmouth's army, &c., though not in arms. Now, in consideration thereof, we do on behalf of the people called 'Quakers,' testify and declare that we utterly disown the aforesaid practices of the said Thomas Plaice, and that he is greatly revolted and backslidden from and turned out of the way, which the said

[1] "Memoirs of J. W.," &c.

[2] A copy is preserved among J. Dix's MSS.

people still own and walk in," &c. This document concludes as follows, "And for any others that have formerly made a profession of truth, our principle and way as afore declared, and have taken up arms, or assisted with horse, money, or ammunition in the late war, we do testify that therein they are turned from the said way and principle, and are disowned by us; are gone from our Christian Society, and cannot again be owned by us, but as the Lord may give them time and space of repentance, and they repent accordingly." The case of Francis Scott was dealt with by the West, and a third, that of J. Hellier, of Mark, by the Middle Division Monthly Meeting. None of these parties fell into the hands of Judge Jefferies, the selection of whose victims seems to have been a very random one.

Almost the whole of Somersetshire was implicated in these sad transactions, and many traditions of the brutal executions which followed the "bloody Assizes," still exist in that county. One of these, often mentioned by the late Mary Follet, of South Brent, referred to an ancestor of her own (not a Friend) who resided at Bridgwater. He and others secreted themselves for some time in a cave, where his wife and child[1] were in the habit of visiting him by night. Their place of concealment being discovered, they were apprehended and executed. The selection of the two hundred and thirty-nine prisoners whom Jefferies left for execution, was made from thirty-six different places in Somersetshire.

[1] This child was Mary Follet's great-grandmother.

The relief from severe persecution which had been granted to Friends through the dispensing power exercised by James the Second, was secured to them in a more satisfactory and constitutional manner, on the accession of William and Mary, by the passing of the Toleration Act, and other measures of a like kind. The principal remaining cause of grievance was the ruinous processes to which they were subjected for the recovery of ecclesiastical demands, and in connexion with which a number of cases of severe imprisonment occurred in the early part of the last century.

Some of the disabilities consequent on the refusal to swear have been continued to the present generation; but Friends were relieved from the suffering in which their refusal of the oath of allegiance had involved them, by the 1st of William and Mary. Another Act, passed in the reign of William the Third, allowed our members to use a form of affirmation instead of an oath, on most occasions on which the law required the taking of an oath. This first form of affirmation, which continued in use until the year 1721, when a more simple declaration was substituted for it, was as follows: — "I, A. B. do declare in the presence of Almighty God, the witness of the truth of what I say." It need not occasion an surprise, that Friends should have been divided in opinion as to whether these words constituted an oath or not. The Yearly Meeting in London gave the following excellent advice on the subject: "That Friends be charitable one to

another about it: they that can take it (are) not to censure or reproach them that cannot; and those that cannot (are) to use the like caution with regard to those who can."[1] From their correspondence with the Meeting for Sufferings on the subject, Friends in Bristol appear to have felt no objection to the first form of affirmation, and to have desired that no attempt to obtain an alteration should be made, lest the liberty already granted should be endangered.

The history of this *case of conscience* affords an example, which should not be lost on the Society of Friends, of the extent to which those who are agreed in the adoption of a principle may differ as to the manner in which they ought to support it. I believe I shall never forget the powerful reference made to this subject by the late Samuel Tuke, in the Yearly Meeting of 1848. The grounds of Christian unity were laid down by him on that occasion, in a most truly catholic manner. He showed, among other things, that whilst that unity does not always bring men to see eye to eye, it prepares them to bear one with another in their differences; and he illustrated this position by a reference to the differences of opinion which arose among the Apostles themselves, and to the difficulty

[1] I find this expression quoted in a manuscript book of the advices of the Yearly Meeting of Pennylvania and New Jersey, which was sent by John Churchman to John Player of Tockington, and is now in the possession of his daughters, Fanny and Mary Player. Thomas Story suffered eighteen months' imprisonment, because he could not use the first form of affirmation.

under which our early Friends laboured for nearly forty years in determining what constituted an oath. I do not know that I ever listened to a discourse of which I should be so glad to possess a verbatim report.

Proceedings in relation to marriage occupied, apparently, more time in the first Meetings for Discipline than most of their other duties. There were few things in which the Christian boldness of George Fox and his associates was more exemplified than in the affair of marriage. One of the usurpations of ecclesiastical authority on the part of the Church of Rome, had been that of representing marriage as *a sacrament*, and of requiring all who would obtain legal validity to such an union to apply to the priest to solemnize it. That the chief object of this arrangement was that the priest should obtain his fees, was further shown by the circumstance that, whilst the Canon Law proscribed the marriage of near relations, the income of the priest was still further augmented by the many payments made to him, in consideration of his setting aside such restrictions. Now, although the Church of England had renounced the error of accounting marriage as a sacrament, its ministers were generally[1] looked upon in the days of George Fox (and are so still by many persons) as the only parties by whom marriage could be rightly solemnized. So strong was the belief that legal validity could not be

[1] In the time of the Commonwealth, marriages sometimes took place before magistrates.

obtained for a marriage contract by any other means than by going "to church" to be married, that Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters resident in England, were alike accustomed, up to a very recent time, to waive whatever objection they might have to employing a minister, or submitting to the marriage ceremony of the Church of England. It was no common responsibility which rested on George Fox when he counselled his Friends not to do anything of the kind, but to proceed simply in this affair of marriage, as in everything else, in the fear of God, and in single dependence on His blessing. It seems to me that if a *temporising spirit* had found any place in his mind, he would have given way on this question of marriage, on the plea that the clergyman might be applied to as the person appointed by Government to perform the marriage ceremony without any admission of his spiritual claim; and if he had done so, who can say that the legal sanction given, under the act of 1837, to other marriages besides those of the Church of England, would not have been indefinitely postponed? Few men have practically reversed Paley's doctrine, that "whatever is expedient is right," so completely as George Fox. He believed that in the affairs of marriage, as in other things, the ministers of the Church of England set up a claim, against which he was called to testify. And if he did stop to count the cost, and to consider what the consequences might be to himself and to his brethren,

there are certainly no symptoms of doubt or hesitation to be observed in his words or actions.

His belief on this subject, as declared by him on different occasions, was, that man had no authority to join others in marriage — that neither the priests under the law, nor the first ministers of the Gospel exercised any such function; that it was God who joined man and woman in marriage before the fall, and that this is still His prerogative, &c. So early as the year 1653, he issued a paper of advice to Friends who were contemplating marriage, to lay their intentions "before the faithful in time, before anything was concluded, and afterwards publish it in the end of a meeting, or in a market."[1]

The question of the validity of Friends' marriages was raised on one occasion before Chief Justice Hale, who said that "he thought it reasonable, and consistent with natural rights and the precepts of the Gospel, that all marriages made according to the several religious persuasions of the parties ought to be valid in law." Other judges expressed a similar opinion on different occasions; but it was

[1] Journal, p. 395. — An original letter of George Fox's, written whilst the subject of marriage was under his consideration, has been kindly lent me. It is addressed to Richard Richardson, schoolmaster, Wheeler Street, London. Geo. Fox says—"Now, dear R. R., I desire that thou would search all the libraries concerning marriages, and what they do say of them; and the Fathers, and how they did before the monks first came in; and when marriage with the priest came in; and search histories and laws, and see what thou canst bring out, both good and bad; and what maketh a marriage — and do what thou canst in this thing," &c.

not until the passing of the Act introduced by Lord Campbell in 1847, that the marriages contracted by Friends prior to the Marriage Act of 1837, received the positive sanction of statute law.[1] In 1707, more than fifty years after the first solemnization of marriage in the Society,[2] the Meeting for Sufferings advised Friends to make their wills in such a way as not to raise the question of the validity of their marriages. It was recommended that in such documents the wife should be described by her maiden, as well as by her married name, &c.

There is no reference to the consent of parents in the earlier Bristol minutes in relation to marriage, and the meeting seems only to have concerned itself with the question of the orderly conduct of the parties, and with such publication being made before the marriage as might afford an opportunity for any one to object who had a right to do so. In the eighth month of 1669, George Fox and Margaret Fell, the widow of Judge Fell, declared their intention of marriage to the Bristol Meeting, and on that occasion several of Margaret Fell's children, who were present, expressed in strong terms their approval of the proposed union. This may, perhaps, have suggested to Friends here the propriety of ascertaining in other cases that the consent of *parents* was given. At all events such consent began to be recorded soon afterwards. It is also possible

[1] Campbell's Lives of the Chief Justices, Vol. I. p. 558.

[2] The first marriage registered by Friends in Bristol took place in 1657.

that in the conscientious care manifested by George Fox not to interfere with the pecuniary interests of the former marriage, may have originated the care which Friends here also began to take shortly after to secure the like benefit in other cases. In the form of the certificate agreed to, marriage is spoken of as "God's ordinance." During the time of the last persecution in Bristol, publications of marriage were frequently made at Newgate and Bridewell, the regular meetings for worship being closed. *The prisons* may, indeed, be said to have been *places of worship* in those days. The regular holding of the Meetings for Discipline was also often interrupted. Sometimes they were held in private houses, word being left with the prisoners where the meeting would be held, that Friends who wished to ascertain it might do so by calling at the prison.

In many cases the publication of the marriage was the only means taken to ascertain whether any obstruction existed to its solemnization: but when the parties making application were but little known to the meeting, or had been guilty of disorderly conduct, committees were appointed to make inquiry respecting them. There was, for the most part, a disposition shown to form a charitable judgment of such applicants; and in some cases in which their conduct would not permit of their being recognised as Friends by being allowed to marry at meeting, an *intermediate* course was adopted, as appears by the following minute of the Two-weeks Meeting in Bristol, in 1687:—"Whereas A. B. and C. D. have

signified at a former meeting their intention of marriage, and desire to accomplish the same in the way and manner of Friends: but inasmuch as we find that the young man have not walked as a Friend, convinced of the truth which we profess, but rather so contrary thereunto, as that we have not freeness to countenance their marriage in the meeting, in the way and manner of Friends: yet, forasmuch as we do not find but that they may be clear from all other persons in relation to marriage, and that they may have their parents' consent, we do not see meet to concern ourselves to obstruct or hinder them; but shall leave them either to wait longer, for our better satisfaction, or to consummate the same as soon as they please, amongst such Friends as may be free to be present thereat: or otherwise, as they shall see meet."[1] In the year 1700 such a case occurred, in which the parties were allowed to marry "before witnesses in the meeting-house."

[1] Among James Dix's manuscripts is a report of a committee appointed in 1674 to consider what course should be adopted in certain cases, in which, though the conduct of the parties had been disorderly, the meeting might wish to avoid casting them off, and leaving them "open to the temptation of going to the priests" to be married. That committee recommended that if in such cases Friends were satisfied of the penitence of the parties, the marriage should be allowed to be solemnized before witnesses; and that a testimony to be issued by Friends against their misconduct, together with the declaration of their repentance, and the certificate of their marriage, should be copied together in the book containing the declarations of repentance sent by delinquents to the Men's Meeting.

There are repeated instances of another kind recorded both in the Bristol and Somersetshire minutes, in which parties to whom, on account of their misconduct, the permission to marry at meeting had been denied, persisted nevertheless in doing so. Expressions of regret from those who had prepared or signed certificates in such cases, were often recorded in the minutes. It is obvious that, unless care had been taken to repress irregularities of this kind, there would soon have been an end to the orderly character of our marriage proceedings. In the Yearly Meeting's epistle of 1730, such proceedings are spoken of as being "of a clandestine nature," and are accordingly advised against.

In 1692, a minute was adopted by the Bristol Two-weeks Meeting, requiring the parties who applied for leave to be married, to appear a second time before the meeting, to declare their intention of marriage. The object of this was, "*to ennure them in speaking;*" complaint having been made that on marriage occasions the parties, and especially the women, often spoke so low that what they said could not be "understood by half the meeting;" so that many Friends were "not free to subscribe as witnesses" to the marriage certificate. In the early part of the last century, the practice was adopted by the Somersetshire meetings, of appointing two Friends to attend marriages, to see that they were conducted in an orderly manner; but this practice was not adopted in Bristol until 1756. Among the early reports given to the Somersetshire

meetings, by Friends so appointed, I find the following: "It was well, for what they saw." "Pretty well considering the mix'd multitude." "Indifferent." "The people were very orderly, and things were well." In 1695, an intention of marriage is recorded in the Bristol minutes, between William Penn and Hannah Callowhill, daughter of Thomas Callowhill, of Bristol; and the publication of their marriage was reported to the Men's Meeting in the twelfth month of that year. In 1697, William Penn removed with his family to Bristol, where he resided about two years. A certificate of removal to Philadelphia was granted him in 1699, on the occasion of his going thither for the last time. There are some others of our Bristol minutes in which his name occurs, during his residence here. In 1697, he was appointed, with other Friends, "to visit our Latin schools, and give them counsel and advice as they shall see meet:" and a second minute appoints him, with other Friends, "to visit the schools of our Friends' children, to inquire into the order and manners thereof, (and) admonish against that they shall find amiss." In 1698, an intention of marriage is recorded between William Penn, junior, son of William Penn, Esq., and Mary Jones, daughter of Charles Jones, merchant: William Penn, and Mary Jones's father and *grand-parents* being present gave their consent. In the second month of 1699, William Penn was appointed a representative to the Yearly Meeting in London.

It was probably during the period of William

Penn's residence in Bristol, that he arranged the building of the streets to the eastward of the Friars' premises, which still bear the names of Philadelphia, Penn, Hollister, and Callowhill Streets. Hannah Callowhill, the mother of Hannah Penn, was a daughter of Dennis Hollister; and, as the ground on which these streets were built adjoins the Friars, which Friends purchased of him, there is but little doubt that it formed part of his property. I believe also, as the result of an examination of a map of Bristol, in the office of our city treasurer, published in 1646, that some of these streets were built on the ground formerly occupied by the great orchard, in which the larger meetings of Friends were at first held. We have in our Monthly Meeting chest, the lease for a year of Pennsylvania, granted by William Penn and his son, preparatory to the mortgage on which several Friends of Bristol and other places advanced them, in 1708, the sum of £6,600: and also a trust deed relating to it.

It is well known to those who are acquainted with the history of William Penn's later years, what important assistance was rendered him in his unequal struggle with difficulties of various kinds, by the devotedness and sound judgment of his second wife. He also secured whilst in Bristol, the services of another able helper, James Logan, whom he induced to accompany him to Philadelphia as his secretary. In the memoir of this remarkable man, published by Wilson Armistead, he is spoken of as possessing a powerful mind and extensive learning. Besides

being appointed secretary to the province, he filled with great ability and integrity the offices of commissioner of property, chief justice, and for nearly two years, that of governor of the province, as secretary of the council. At his death he bequeathed a library of three thousand volumes, as a legacy to the new colony.[1] There is a remarkable paper at the end of the memoir, drawn up by James Logan, and addressed *to himself*, which affords instructive evidence that his varied and engrossing public duties did not turn him aside from that still higher duty of walking with God, from which alone the ability is derived for the right discharge of our various stewardships.

The subject of the education and training of children in the early days of our religious society, might well occupy more time and space than can here be devoted to it: my observations must be chiefly confined to a notice of our first Bristol and Somersetshire schools and schoolmasters. To those who wish to pursue the subject further, I would strongly recommend a perusal of the comprehensive and able statements upon this subject, contained in the papers read by the late Samuel Tuke, before the Educational Society, at Ackworth. It is now nearly twenty years since the first of those papers was read, and having been a witness of the lively interest excited on that occasion, I regret that they are not better known. I must ask leave to refer to a few of the observations contained in them. After speak-

[1] Preface to Memoir, p. 5.

ing of the evidence afforded by the memoirs of our early Friends, of the beneficial influence of the religious training then given, Samuel Tuke says, "It is not improbable, however, that some out of the very large number who joined the Society in early times, mistook the real character of the doctrine which they professed, in regard to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so as to neglect the right use of means in the care and improvement of their families; and George Fox, who may be considered as the organ of the Society at that time, in several of his bold pastoral epistles, reproves this neglect in very strong terms."[1] Then follow extracts from these epistles, commencing from 1656. Writing in 1669, George Fox says, "Some among you breed up your children in such a rude, heady way, that when they grow up, they do not matter you, nor care for you: in many things they are worse than many of the world's, more loose, stubborn, and disobedient, so that when they come to be sent apprentice, they run quite out into the world." Ten years later, George Fox writes: "Now you having your food from Christ and God your Father, cannot you train up your children in the fear of God, and tell them from whence you have your good things, that they may come to receive of all these good things from the good God, and Christ, the treasure of wisdom and knowledge; and that you may say, the children of your children are the crown of your old

[1] Paper read in 1838, "Report, &c., of Friends' Education Society."

men in the truth, and the glory of their fathers in God?" Again, in 1683, he says, "It is desired that all Friends that have children, families, and servants, may train them up in the pure and unspotted religion, and in the nurture and fear of God; and that frequently they read the Holy Scriptures, and exhort and admonish them, that every family apart may serve and worship the Lord, as well as in public." Samuel Tuke says further, "It would not have been surprising if the religious and moral department of the subject of education had been the only one which occupied the particular attention of George Fox, but it was otherwise. In the year 1667, in the midst of various trials and persecutions, he mentions in his journal that he had recommended the establishment of two boarding-schools, one for boys and one for girls, in the neighbourhood of London, for the purpose of instructing them 'in all things civil and useful in the creation.' This brief, but comprehensive phrase, is worthy of his large and enlightened mind."

I cannot undertake to decide how far the fatherly expostulations of George Fox were applicable to Friends of Bristol. Mention was made in my first Lecture, of the admirable constancy of the children in keeping up the meetings when their parents were in prison; but at that time, and for many years afterwards, constant reference is made to the disorderly conduct of some of the boys, both in meetings and in the neighbourhood of the house during meetings; and committees were appointed month after month

to repress these disorders. Many of these boys were probably the sons of those who were but slightly, if at all, connected with the Society; but in 1701, a paper was ordered to be drawn up on this subject and sent to all families of Friends, "for a caution to them." Another minute warns Friends, that if they neglect to restrain those under their care, from the folly and mischief practised during the time of meeting, "they must not take it amiss if they find their children and servants in Bridewell for such offence, since the Government is strict in this case for the suppression of vice and looseness."

The difficulties which had to be overcome in promoting school training among Friends, in the earlier days, were by no means slight. There was no lack of Friends well qualified to teach; but those of them who were willing to pursue this calling rendered themselves liable to prosecution if they did so; and in the event of a schoolmaster becoming a Friend, he would also be deprived of the support he had hitherto received, by the removal of pupils from his school. Many of the Friends again were too poor, and too much harassed by persecution to allow them to contribute much towards the education of their children. Under these circumstances the expedient was resorted to, in some meetings, of guaranteeing a certain sum from the funds of the Society; to which the condition was sometimes attached, that the children of poor Friends should be educated gratuitously in the schools so established. In 1668, one of the Bristol minutes states that a letter had been

received from John Tappin, schoolmaster, signifying his willingness to come and teach school on such terms and conditions for wages as Friends should judge meet. The minute proceeds, "It is ordered that he shall have £10 per annum out of the public stock, in consideration whereof he is to teach so many of poor children as shall be thought convenient by this meeting." In the following month these terms are repeated, with this addition — "It is concluded, that for the present he shall be allowed to teach in this room, provided that he be careful to have it made clean and ready for meetings every week, and such other services of truth as occasion may require."

The next reference I find to schools, in the Bristol minutes, is in 1676, at which time the Friars' meeting-house had been erected: this minute is as follows, "It being proposed to this meeting, to spare the void room over the meeting-house to Lawrence Steel, for a school-room, this meeting doth, with one accord, give consent that he shall have it for the use proposed." I take the following particulars from the account of Lawrence Steel, related by John Whiting, who speaks of him as one whom he dearly loved, and was well acquainted with. He was born in London, in 1644. His parents, who were zealous Independents, devoted him to the ministry from his birth, and spared no pains in his education. Strong religious convictions led him to seek for help and guidance among the Presbyterians, and after that among the Independents. Although not satisfied

to occupy the position of a public teacher among them, he accepted a situation in a gentleman's family in Dorsetshire, in which he was expected "to tutor children, and pray and preach in the family." When the time came for him to receive his stipend, he felt that it would be wrong for him to accept payment for his religious services; and shortly afterwards he decided that he could not continue to conduct these stated services. Though he had received a strong prejudice against the newly established Society of Friends, yet his convictions on these points being in accordance with theirs, he was led to make inquiry respecting them. Having parted from his employers with feelings of mutual love and regard, he returned to his family. After attending the meetings of Friends for twelve months, he spoke as a minister among them, and he afterwards became eminent in that calling. About three years after leaving his situation in Dorsetshire, he came to Bristol, kept school "in the great meeting-house at the Friars," and was very serviceable in that city and the country adjacent. Being imprisoned in Newgate, for attending one of the meetings in Bristol, his health became impaired by the close confinement, and he died not long after his release, in 1684: "laying down his head in peace with the Lord." John Whiting says further, "He was a preacher of righteousness in that great city, in which he walked as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth; but hath finished his course, and kept the faith, and received the crown of life."

The following mention of another schoolmaster is from a minute made in the fourth month, 1690: "Paul Moone acquaints this meeting that Patrick Logan, a Friend, late of Ireland, and now at London — a good scholar, and an apt schoolmaster to instruct youth in Latin, &c., is at present out of employment, and, upon some discourse of it among Friends at London, is in some expectation that he may be serviceable to Friends' children in Bristol, upon consideration of which this meeting is desirous to promote it, in hopes it may be serviceable to our youth," &c. In the ninth month following the treasurer was desired to hand Patrick Logan "£50, and to pay Jno. Harwood's note of carpenter's work for the said school." There seems every reason to suppose that this Patrick Logan was the father of James Logan, before mentioned as the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. Wilson Armistead states that he "was educated for a clergyman, receiving the benefit of a good education in the University of Edinburgh, where he received the degree of Master of Arts. But though educated for the 'Church,' and having served some time as a chaplain, he relinquished his clerical profession, and returned to Ireland, where he afterwards joined in religious Society with the Quakers." In 1694 another schoolmaster had to be chosen, and in a minute on the subject reference is made to a young man aged twenty-two, who had been proposed, a good scholar for Greek and Latin, and a good hand in writing;" but he was thought too young, Friends "being

desirous to have a grave, sober man, his wife a good motherly woman, fit to table, and cherish up lads, and the master able in Latin, writing, and mathematics, if can be had." James Logan, who appears to have succeeded his father in the care of the school, consented to continue it awhile longer.

The next appointment of a schoolmaster took place in 1699 (the year of James Logan's removal to Philadelphia), when Alexander Arscott, who is described as "a scholar lately convinced," was established in the workhouse as master of the school. From the particulars of his life given by Gough,[1] I find that he was born about 1677. His father was a clergyman of the Church of England, incumbent of Southmolton, in Devonshire, and designing his son for the same vocation he sent him to Oxford to complete his studies. Alexander Arscott seems to have felt, at an early period of his life, that he must relinquish the prospect of worldly advantage which was opened before him by the education which he had received, and by the expectation of preferment which his father's connections and influence held out to him. The difficulty which he experienced in adopting this conclusion was greatly increased by the affectionate entreaties with which his parents sought to divert him from it. He wept with them in their distress, and his understanding became clouded for a time by doubts respecting the propriety of his conduct. But during this season of spiritual conflict, he prayed earnestly for right direction; and

[1] History of the Quakers, Vol. IV. p. 307.

in answer to his prayers the conviction was brought home to his mind that if he would be Christ's disciple, he must be willing to forsake father and mother at His requirement. He had afterwards the satisfaction of finding his parents more reconciled to the change; and his interest with Friends enabled him to become serviceable to other members of his family, by procuring them situations. Alexander Arscott came to Bristol when he was about twenty-two years of age; and his subsequent course must have convinced Friends that they did well to waive the objection which was expressed in a former case to engaging so young a man. Not only as an instructor of children, but in the work of the ministry to which he received a call; by his zeal for upholding Christian discipline in a Christian spirit; as well as by means of the sound judgment and diffusive benevolence which gave him a high position among his fellow-citizens in general, he appears to have exerted an influence for good which continued to be felt till the period of his decease. He died in 1737, in the sixty-first year of his age, in a peaceful frame of mind.

Passing into Somersetshire, we find in the Quarterly Meeting minutes of 1697, a reference to an epistle received from Friends in London on the subject of education, &c.: and in the following year Long Sutton having been proposed as a suitable situation for a school, John Banks, Jasper Batt, and Elias Osborne, were desired "to act for the procuring a schoolmaster, and to let him know for en-

couragement, that if there do not scholars enough come to him to make up £20 per annum, that Friends of this county will make up so much as doth fall short, for two years, so that he may be sure of £20 per annum for two years." At the following Quarterly Meeting it was mentioned that the Friends so appointed "did desist the matter, finding there was an objection did arise in the north division of this county: doubting how the place proposed might agree with their children's health; and they now proposing Sidcot for the setting up of the school, this meeting consents that it may be there." In the fourth month, 1699, the following minute occurs: "William Jenkins, of Hertford, pursuant to an invitation from Friends of this county, offering himself to this meeting for a schoolmaster, and he being approved of as one fit for that employment, have agreed with him for two years, to commence from the first of sixth month, next, viz. For teaching Greek, Latin, writing, and arithmetic, after the rate of 30*s.* per annum. For teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, after the rate of 20*s.* per annum. To reside at *Sithcott*, a very healthy, serene air, about twelve[1] miles from Bristol, in the road to Exon. Friends of this county to assure him as many scholars as will amount to £30 per annum, for *teaching*. That £9 per annum is proposed for boarding as many scholars as he shall board." In the following year, subscriptions were brought in from the different Monthly Meetings, to

[1] The miles were long in those days.

defray the outlay incurred in repairing the house at Sidcot, in which the school was established. A later minute contains an offer from William Jenkins, "to teach such children for nothing, as shall be sent to him from the Monthly Meeting's Charity, they paying for their tabling, (and the like for any Friend, in case of inability to give the rates agreed on) for one year next ensuing, if he continues teaching school." The amount charged for boarding the scholars seems to have been thought somewhat extravagant, and a minute of the Middle Division, in 1701, complains of it as being too high, provisions being low in price.[1] In that year, William Jenkins informed the Quarterly Meeting that he had been presented at the Assizes, for keeping school, and a copy of the presentment was ordered to be sent to the correspondents in London, for their advice in the case. No report is given of the result of this prosecution; but it probably ended in the same way as a similar proceeding against Richard Claridge some years later. Whilst engaged in conducting a school at Tottenham, where he went to reside in 1707, Richard Claridge was cited to appear at Doctors' Commons, "to answer to certain interrogatories concerning his soul's health, and the reformation of his manners, and especially for teaching and instructing boys." A prohibition having been obtained to stay the proceedings, the cause was re-

[1] In 1728, the charge at David Hall's school, at Skipton, was only £8 per annum, for board and tuition. — *Life of James Gough.*

moved into the Queen's Bench. Chief Justice Holt, who presided on the occasion, gave it as his opinion that the statutes of James the First against Popish recusants, under which the prosecution had been instituted, did not apply to the defendant; and the jury accordingly brought in a verdict in his favour.[1]

In 1707, William Jenkins informed the Quarterly Meeting that his continuance at Sidcot was uncertain, as the tenant under whom he rented the house, was about to leave the estate. A committee was appointed to confer with him, but their report was not recorded. I have, however, been able to trace the issue of this difficulty, by applying to Joseph Davis. The deeds of Sidcot School, which he has kindly examined for me, show that the property on which the present school has been erected, was conveyed to William Jenkins in 1709. This is all the more interesting, as leading to the inference that William Jenkins conducted his school from 1709, if not before, in the house in which John Benwell kept school many years afterwards, and which partly served the purposes of the present institution, up to the year when the new house was erected. In 1708, the following answer was given by the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset, to the Yearly Meeting, to a query which had been adopted on the subject:—"Our godly care is continued in the good education of Friends' children, insomuch that many people who are of different persuasions, send their children to table at a Friends' school, and allow

[1] Gough's History, Vol. IV. p. 216.

them to go to meetings constantly." William Jenkins sold the property in 1729, at which period he removed to Bristol. His name appears for some years after this in the book in which the names of the Bristol *ministers* were entered.

Another Friend, in the station of minister, had opened a school within the compass of the North Division, a little before William Jenkins left Sidcot. This was Jonah Thompson from Westmoreland, who removed to Yatton in the year 1728, and conducted a school there up to 1735, when he married and went to reside in Dorsetshire. In 1756, he came to Bristol, and conducted the school at the Workhouse for about three years. Returning again into Dorsetshire, he established the school at Compton, afterwards conducted by his son Thomas, at which a large number of Friends in this part of the country received their education. The celebrated Dr. Thomas Young, a native of Milverton, was among the Compton scholars. Jonah Thompson was extensively engaged in the work of the ministry, and his representations of Gospel truth are said to have been acceptable to persons of various denominations.[1] He paid two religious visits to North America; the first of these was in 1750. The Monthly Meeting of Sherborne and Bridport, to which he then belonged, was very small, and Jonah Thompson was accustomed to relate that on the occasion of his proposing to his friends to visit America, those who were present expressed their

[1] Piety Promoted, Vol. IV. p. 100.

entire approval; but that after some time had been spent in deliberation, one of the friends said, "Jonah, there is no one among us that can write a certificate but thee, and thee must draw it up thyself." This he accordingly did. Through the kindness of his grandson, John Thompson of Hitchin, from whom I received this anecdote, I have had a sight of this certificate, which is in Jonah Thompson's hand-writing. The anecdote certainly points to the need there was in those days, for the labours of the schoolmaster to be further extended. Soon after Jonah Thompson left Bristol, the school was placed under the care of James Gough, who had been an usher under Alexander Arscott, and had subsequently settled in Ireland, whither he again removed at a later period. James Gough was another of the vigorous minded and well educated men who came from Westmoreland in the early days of our Society, and took up their residence in the south of England. Like several others of the schoolmasters of whom I have spoken, James Gough laboured extensively as a minister of the Gospel.[1]

Reference is made in the Somersetshire minutes, to schools established during the last century, at Long Sutton, Glastonbury, &c., which received more or less pecuniary assistance from the Society. The school established by John Benwell, at Yatton, in 1790, and afterwards removed to Sidcot, on account of the situation being considered more healthy, ap-

[1] Life of James Gough.

pears at first to have been under the notice of a Monthly Meeting's Committee. Friends in Bristol were for some years accustomed to send their boys to a school at Gildersome, in Yorkshire. On the occasion of the establishment of Ackworth school, in 1779, the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset sent a contribution to its funds, of £114 : 10 : 0. From this period until 1808, when our Sidcot school was established, many scholars were sent to Ackworth, from this Quarterly Meeting.

In speaking of the schoolmasters who resided in this neighbourhood, I must not omit the name of Anthony Purver, the translator of the Bible. He was for some years a member of Frenchay Monthly Meeting. He lived as tutor in a Friend's family, at Hambrook, and whilst there he translated some of the minor prophets. He subsequently kept a boarding-school at Frenchay, and removed thence to Stapleton. John Player, who was one of his scholars, remembered hearing him speak of his having been able, when a boy, to commit six chapters of the Bible to memory in an hour.[1] His translation of the Old Testament is, I believe, considered to have the merit of keeping very close to the original. An attempt which he made to publish portions of his translation in Bristol, was unsuccessful; but the whole was afterwards published in London. In a sketch of his life, by Joseph Gurney Bevan, which Paul Bevan

[1] There is now in the possession of Fanny and Mary Player, of Tockington, a Cambridge concordance, which belonged to Anthony Purver.

has kindly lent me, the question is raised whether Anthony Purver does not stand alone in having completed the translation of the whole Bible into English. In 1758, he removed to Andover, where he died in 1777, aged seventy-five. Arduous as were his literary engagements, they did not prevent his labouring, and travelling as a minister of the Gospel.

The early Meetings for Discipline do not appear to have been usually preceded, as at present, by a joint meeting for worship of men and women Friends; but Monthly Meetings for worship were held at different places. In 1694, one of the minutes of the Bristol Meeting recommends its members to encourage Kingsweston Friends, by attending their Monthly Meeting, which was held on first days, "they being declining, and weak, and few in number."

In 1694, it was concluded to appoint a Yearly Meeting in Bristol, for the southwestern counties; such meeting to be held a little before the time of the Yearly Meeting in London, to which it was made subject. In an epistle issued by the Men's Meeting in Bristol, inviting Friends of other counties to attend this meeting, allusion is made to the "cloud of darkness which had been over the city for some years past," by reason of the persecution from without, and the trials from within, to which Friends had been exposed: and this being now in great measure removed, they call upon their friends to come and rejoice with them. The object of this gathering is further described in the words, "to the end that we in this Gospel day, after the enjoyment

of so many evangelical privileges, may know the restoration of, and keep the holy feast of unleavened bread (in) sincerity and truth, together; and that for the time to come our holy and heavenly relation in Christ Jesus may be increased and continued," &c. Mention is also made of the number of ministering Friends who could not attend the Yearly Meeting in London, as a reason for establishing this Bristol Meeting. These meetings occupied three days: one morning was devoted to a meeting of ministering Friends, and the Temple Street meeting-house was appropriated to the use of women Friends, if they should incline to meet. Queries were adopted by the Bristol Yearly Meeting, to be answered by the Quarterly Meetings composing it, in relation to Friends travelling as ministers without certificates; to the keeping up of meetings; the prevalence of love and unity among Friends; and the spreading of their principles. Suggestions were at different times made, to the effect that this Yearly Meeting should be held alternately in the different counties composing it, and in 1720, it was decided to hold an Annual Meeting for Worship, in addition to the Yearly Meeting in Bristol, which from its being held at different places in turn, was called the Circular Meeting.[1] These Circular Meetings were

[1] In the Somersetshire minutes, there are references to the expenditure incurred on different occasions, on account of the Circular Meetings: — in 1743, for seating the Town Hall, at Wells; and on another occasion for a booth erected at Bridgwater. In 1764, Friends were appointed to acknowledge Earl Pawlett's kindness in allowing the use of Crewkerne Market-house for a like purpose.

often held in places where there were but few, if any, Friends, and were largely attended, both by Friends from a distance, and by persons not belonging to the Society.

An anecdote of Samuel Bownas, connected with one of these meetings (held, I think, at Ilminster) was related to me by the late Young Sturge. Samuel Bownas had the habit of pausing between his words and sentences, when he stood up to preach, but usually became more fluent as he proceeded. On the occasion referred to, a lady who had been accustomed to attend the Circular Meetings when they were held in her neighbourhood, interrupted Samuel Bownas soon after he began to speak, by remarking that she thought it would be well for him to sit down, as many other ministers were present. Samuel Bownas, looking towards her, said, "Have patience, woman, 'twill be better bye and bye." Having in the end preached a very remarkable sermon, the lady in question came to him after meeting, and apologised for the interruption she had caused him. Young Sturge also mentioned to me the accounts he had heard of the kind and fatherly care which Samuel Bownas was accustomed to extend to younger ministers, and that being present on one occasion when some Friends were complaining of the mistakes which a young man had made in his ministry, and fearing they would deal with him in a manner which would prove discouraging, he put them by from their intention of speaking to him, by saying, "Leave the young man to me." The account of

Samuel Bownas's own experiences, in the early period of his ministry, is as interesting as it is instructive. During his first visit to the West of England, he felt it to be his duty in attending the funeral of a deceased Friend, to take his pocket Bible with him, and to preach with it in his hand: turning to various texts in support of the doctrine which he preached, and pressing earnestly on his hearers the duty of reading the Bible carefully, and of seeking the Lord by prayer, for the assistance needed to enable them to practise what they read. It afterwards transpired that several ministers of other denominations, with many of their hearers, were present; and that one of these ministers had some time before publicly charged Friends with denying the Scriptures, and not making use of them to prove that which they preached.[1]

It would be easy to give many interesting extracts from Samuel Bownas's Journal. Apart from its value in a religious point of view, that book may be safely said to exhibit more originality and liveliness of mind than are to be found in many volumes, the authors of which have made these characteristics their prominent object. Like his friend Jonah Thompson, with whom he sometimes travelled, and to whom he left some of his manuscripts, and his travelling gear, Samuel Bownas was a native of Westmoreland, and like him, he afterwards resided in Somersetshire and also in Dorsetshire.

I find the name of Samuel Emlen, of Philadelphia,

[1] Life of Samuel Bownas, pp. 22 to 25.

among those of the ministering Friends who resided for a time in Bristol, during the last century. Many traditions have been handed down of his extraordinary gifts as a minister, and his remarkable spiritual discernment.

I do not know that I have much occasion to regret having but a short space to devote to the *middle period* of our history; for in the experience of the Society of Friends, as in that of other religious sects, and of the Christian Church at large, the middle period was one of spiritual darkness and depression. If the first period of our Society was not in all respects a golden age, it was an age of zeal and love; and the Christian devotedness of its members was the means of attracting many to the beauty of holiness. The large additions made to their numbers from time to time were probably not restricted to the period of persecution; but I do not think that any large in-gathering took place in the south-western counties after the close of the seventeenth century. There does not appear to be any means of ascertaining the number of those who attended the different meetings at that time. The number of marriages was very large; scarcely a month passed without one or more intentions of marriage being brought before the Bristol meeting. This may be partly accounted for by the liberty to marry at meeting being generally accorded to the attenders of meetings whose conduct was orderly, and not restricted, as of late, to those who are formally recognised as members; but I do not think

that this fully accounts for so many more marriages having taken place then than now. It is very probable that in the more simple state of society which then existed, prudential considerations had less influence in restraining marriage than is at present the case.[1] In Bristol, the meeting-house accommodation was probably greater than at present; but it is impossible to ascertain to what extent the meetings at the Friars, and in Temple Street, were attended by the same persons.

In the description given of our Society history by Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, at the commencement of the second volume of J. J. Gurney's Memoirs, he remarks on the extent to which traditional belief and formal profession marked the successors of the early Friends. And I have met with abundant evidence that this representation was fully applicable to the state of things in this part of the country. Before the close of the seventeenth century, many of the meetings for worship, held in the middle of the week, were "either totally neglected," or had "in a great measure declined." To this succeeded a deficient attendance of First-day Meetings. In some places in the west of England, no meeting was held before one o'clock on First-day, and where two meetings were held, the first was often poorly attended, the reason being that Friends were busily occupied with their worldly callings.

The undue pursuit of worldly gain may be con-

[1] In many of our meetings the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births, for many years past.

sidered as having stood in the relation of both cause and effect to the low spiritual condition with which it became connected; and there were, doubtless, many things which conspired to lay the members of our Society peculiarly open to such a snare. Amidst the opposition which at first arose against Friends in all directions, the earning of a livelihood was often a matter of great difficulty: but their neighbours were not long in perceiving that, however mistaken they might be in some of their views, they were (generally speaking) honest and true-hearted men, whose word was their bond. They could send their children to the Quakers' shops with a certainty that they would be as well served as they would have been themselves. The old proverb that "honesty is the best policy" was not long in being verified by the success which attended the commercial undertakings of many of the early Friends. Then again, whilst they gave up a great deal of time to the attendance of their meetings and other church services, their diligence in following their business was not interrupted by the frivolous pursuits and amusements in which many of their neighbours indulged. They were ready to distribute their substance for the benefit of others, notwithstanding their own losses, to an extent which might well surprise us, were it not that one of the benefits of suffering is the effect which it produces in opening the heart towards other sufferers; but on the other hand their personal habits were very simple. Nei-

ther their furniture, dress, nor food, was of an expensive kind.

In these, and in other ways, a foundation was laid for the accumulation of wealth to an extent which it was not easy to foresee. Still more difficult was it to perceive the effects which such accumulation would produce upon individuals, and upon the general state of the Society. There are, however, indications given, in some of the documents issued in very early times, that the danger of which I speak was by no means overlooked. It certainly does not form any part of the business of the Church to define the *extent* to which it is right for its members to accumulate wealth; and it is a matter of no small difficulty for individuals to set the limit for themselves; but I believe that our Society, in common with other Christian bodies, would have derived benefit from a clearer recognition of the principle, that Christians should cease to accumulate wealth when they have reached the point at which conscience tells them they have enough. If the rule which Richard Reynolds laid down for himself, of spending his income year by year, had been more generally followed by those of our members who had obtained a competence, there is great reason to believe that important benefit would have accrued both to themselves and their families. Many names occur in the early Bristol minutes which have since been identified with the commercial prosperity of the city, but which are no longer recognised as having any connexion with Friends.

There is one result of the increase of wealth among Friends in Bristol, of which we cannot complain. I allude to the erection of this comfortable and commodious meeting-house. The first house built on these premises cost £655, whilst the second, which was built in 1747, cost £1830. Even the latter sum would now appear small; and I should be one of the last to object to this large expenditure, seeing how greatly the convenience of Friends was consulted in the building of this house; and being disposed, as I am, to think that the interior is a good specimen of chastened and correct taste.[1] To glance for a moment at a more recent outlay of money on these premises, which of us does not feel pleasure in recalling the fact that, in the year 1845, the sum of £700 was expended in the purchase of the Cutlers' Hall, the old dormitory of the monks, and that a further sum of £972 was spent in restoring and adapting it to the use of our day, and First-day schools for boys.

But I must make further reference to the unwelcome subject of *the declension* which marked the second period of our history. It was alike observable, in town and country; and although the indications of it were somewhat different, worldly-mindedness was as much evinced by the exclusive

[1] John Clark, of Bridgwater, who was well versed in architecture, used to say that this interior would have been a perfect specimen of its style — the Roman Doric — if the bases of the pillars had been square instead of octagonal; and it appears from a minute of the building committee, which directs the cutting off of the corners, that they were originally square.

devotion which some gave to their farms, as by the zeal with which others followed their merchandize. Not only were the meetings for worship neglected, but in regard to every branch of our Christian profession unfaithfulness appeared. The increase of wealth was found, as in so many other cases, to impede, rather than assist, the exercise of *charity*. Complaint was made to the Quarterly Meeting of Somerset, in 1740, of the deplorable circumstances of poor Friends in divers parts of the county; and an epistle was sent to the Monthly Meetings recommending a more charitable disposition on the part of Friends of ability.

In 1742 mention is made of the underhand payment of *ecclesiastical demands*, which the Quarterly Meeting considered to be only "deceit." Our testimony against *war* was compromised in a similar manner—subscriptions being entered into by many Friends for providing substitutes for such as were called upon to serve in the militia. Dealing in smuggled goods is also mentioned in the Quarterly Meeting minutes. The simplicity of *dress*, by which the early Friends were distinguished, was exchanged for the extravagancies then in fashion. James Gough, who came to Bristol in 1728, says that his plain dress caused him to appear like "a speckled bird;" and the father of the late J. S. Fry, who settled here about 1748, found only two young men in the meeting who dressed plainly. Samuel Emlen is said to have addressed himself, in one of his sermons, to the "powder-pated beaux."

Church discipline and oversight had suffered, at least, as great a decline as the conduct of the members. In 1757 the Somersetshire Meetings are stated to have been altogether deficient as to the appointment of overseers.[1] Wrong doers were allowed, in many instances, to continue a nominal connexion with the Society: whilst, in others, the discipline was exercised, but with less of Christian forbearance than formerly. I have met with many cases in which persons were disowned, without having received, as far as can be learnt from the minutes, a single official visit. The love of souls and the desire to reclaim the wanderer, seem to have given place to the notion of maintaining the credit of the Society. Testimonies of disunion were issued, "forthwith," against persons of disreputable conduct: and one Friend was disowned because he refused to fasten a copy of his declaration of repentance to the market-cross of the town in which he lived.

In such a state of things it need not surprise us that the select character, before referred to, as having been given to the Meetings for Discipline, was found to be injurious in its operation; and that, in many cases, the place of the "nursing fathers," came to be filled by such as must rather be described as "lords over the heritage." The Somersetshire Monthly Meetings being held in private houses, were the more liable on that account to be restricted to particular cliques and classes. In

[1] Quarterly Meeting Minutes.

1748, I find the *Quarterly Meeting* adjourned to the house of John Thomas, of Winthill. In Bristol the meetings, though not held in private houses, became very exclusive in their character. A friend is still living amongst us, Arnee Frank, now in his ninety-second year, who remembers the operation of this exclusive system. He has told me that, when he returned to Bristol in 1792, from his apprenticeship to Thomas Young of Milverton, he believes the late Joseph Storrs Fry and himself were the only young men in Bristol who ventured to intrude themselves into the meetings for discipline.[1] It was natural that, under such circumstances, a struggle for pre-eminence should have led, as of old, to dissension and party spirit. The manner in which the Bristol Yearly Meeting exercised its disciplinary powers, became a matter of great dissatisfaction to the meetings composing it; and the opinion was repeatedly expressed that it should be held as a meeting for worship only. A minute of the Somersetshire Quarterly Meeting,[2] on this subject, says—"We find Friends very desirous that fellowship may be maintained in charity, which is our best fortress. We don't approve that Friends be obliged to answer any stated questions, but may be

[1] I have heard an anecdote of an American Friend, who being present at a meeting for discipline, held about that period, and hearing a young man complained of for taking too active a part, remarked—"if it was not for the old men, the young men would set the house on fire; and if it was not for the young men, the fire would go out."

[2] 1722.

left at liberty to ask or answer, as in the wisdom of God may appear to edification."[1]

It would be easy to multiply evidence of the low spiritual condition of the Society in the middle period of its history, from the records of the Meetings for Discipline: and a similar testimony is borne by a manuscript journal kept by John Player of Tockington,[2] of a visit paid by him, in 1760, to the western counties, &c., as a member of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, the first, I believe, which was appointed to such a service. In speaking of Bristol, John Player alludes to the poor attendance of the Week-day Meetings for worship, and to the smallness of the Meetings for Discipline. Of the Somersetshire Meetings he says, "Things appeared exceeding cloudy and heavy—occasioned, we are jealous, by too close an attachment to the profits and spirit of the world." It is worthy of notice that this committee advised the junction of some of the Dorsetshire Meetings, which had become very small and weak, to Somersetshire, a measure which has been recently adopted. The account given by John Player, of the state of other Quarterly Meetings, shows that the declension to which I refer was of a general character. That men like those who laboured in this service, were found to undertake it, proved

[1] The Bristol Yearly Meeting ceased to act as a meeting for discipline in 1772, but was continued some time longer as a meeting for worship.

[2] This journal has been kindly lent me by Fanny and Mary Player.

that the spiritual life of the body was not extinct, and many were prepared to co-operate in their labours for the restoration of the health of the body. Frequent reference is made to serious-minded young men and women with whom the committee held intercourse in the different meetings. It must, however, be acknowledged, that as respects the Society at large, the condition of things was exceedingly low; and even suggestive of an inquiry like that addressed to Ezekiel, "Son of Man, can these dry bones live?"

A statement lately published in the *Times* newspaper, seems to imply that our recent history answers this inquiry in the negative: this I am not disposed to admit. I allude to an advertisement, in which prizes are offered for an essay on the subject of the decline of the Society of Friends. The gentleman who offers these prizes states, that our Society has lessened in numbers during the first half of the present century, and also expresses his belief that the Christian testimony which it has borne to the world "*has been gradually becoming more and more feeble.*" The first part of the statement is probably correct, and certainly calls for the most careful and searching inquiry on *our part*, whatever the world at large may say about it; but I think that no one who carefully considers the history of our Society, during the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, can doubt that a much more healthy condition prevailed in the latter than in the former period; or that our Christian

testimony has in some respects become clearer and stronger.

There is no doubt that we have been for some time past in a state of transition. In one sense, this state is common to all living bodies; the maintenance of life having been made to depend on the removal of decayed, and the substitution of new particles. But there have been some special influences at work upon our Society of later times, the tendency of which has been to modify the condition and feelings of our members in a variety of ways, but which ought not, and it is to be hoped will not, have the effect of turning us aside from our Christian calling. I must now briefly advert to some of these influences. The *philanthropic efforts* of different kinds, in which many of our members have been led to engage during the last seventy years, have exerted a marked, and, I believe on the whole, a very beneficial influence upon us. Philanthropy may sometimes have engrossed the time and talents which should have been devoted to services more exclusively appertaining to the Gospel of Christ. But it would be a very narrow view of the requirements of the Gospel, which would lead us to reject any legitimate means by which the moral and physical condition of our fellow-men may be improved. Among the benefits which we ourselves have derived from taking part in such efforts, it may be mentioned, that many have had their minds thereby diverted from the engrossing pursuits of trade; that opportunities have been thus

afforded for the expenditure of means, the accumulation of which would have proved injurious; and that our sympathies have been enlarged, not only towards those on whose behalf we have laboured, but also towards our fellow-labourers of other denominations of Christians. If time had permitted, I would gladly have dwelt more at length on some of these efforts.

We had an interesting lecture given us twelve months since, on the Slavery of the Old World, and the relations of Christianity to it; and I wish that it could be followed by a description of the part which the Society of Friends has taken in the work of abolishing *modern slavery*. In T. Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, there is a very interesting account of the visit which he paid to Bristol, about the year 1787, for the purpose of collecting evidence on the evils of the Slave Trade. He mentions by name many Friends to whom he was introduced on coming to Bristol, and he remarks that "the Quakers to a man were strenuous, and this on the best of principles, in support of the abolition movement." During that visit, T. Clarkson had need of all the countenance and support which could be given him. Many nights, as well as days, were spent among the crews of the slave vessels, in the low public-houses in Marsh Street, which were their places of resort; and the obstacles which impeded his various inquiries were of a formidable character.

I would also fain have spoken more at length of

another movement of a philanthropic character, in which, as far as England is concerned, Friends may be said to have taken the lead. I allude to the amelioration of the treatment of the *insane.* I could not, however, have hoped to do full justice to the subject, even by a more lengthened reference to the importance of the work accomplished by William Tuke and his successors, in not only exposing the miserable abuses of the old lunatic asylums, but in exhibiting in "The Retreat," established near York, in 1792, an example of what might be effected by the extension of kind and judicious care to these children of affliction.

Friends have borne a part in other philanthropic enterprises of more recent date, in which the communication of *religious instruction* has formed a prominent feature. I allude particularly to the Bible Society, the British and Foreign School Society, and the Prison Discipline movement. The amelioration of our criminal code, which George Fox was one of the first to suggest, and the abolition of the punishment of death, have been objects of deep interest to many Friends. As respects our local charities, it is needless for me to dwell on the assistance afforded them by Richard Reynolds, and by others who in more recent times have followed his example. Although it is true that we were behind some other bodies of Christians in entering on the work of Sabbath School instruction, I believe we have derived very great benefit from the part which we have taken in connexion with it. If I

were asked to mention the most beneficial influence of an external kind which has, in modern times, been brought to bear on our Society in Bristol, I should have no hesitation whatever in answering, *that of the First-day school.*

The establishment of Ackworth and other schools, in which the education of many of the children of our own members, was placed under the direct care of the Society, formed an important epoch in our history. Not less important was the change effected, at a later period, in the instruction given both in our public and private schools, by the introduction of a course of Scriptural teaching; a change which was accomplished, to no small extent, through the labours of the late Joseph John Gurney.

I cannot but think that a corresponding benefit has resulted from the giving up of the exclusive system which characterized the Meetings for Discipline in former days. I regard it as one of the most hopeful signs of the present state of our Society in Bristol, that many of our younger Friends are not only devoting themselves to the promotion of philanthropic efforts, but are willing to bear their part in the affairs of our own Society. Of the younger men and women, who, in the early part of the present century, were instrumental in the infusion of new life into the Society in this country, many became qualified to bear a part in the ministry of the Gospel. We can ourselves recal the persons and services of more than a few, of whom it may be said that they were gentle among us, even as a nurse cherisheth her

children, and that being affectionately desirous of us, they were willing to have imparted unto us not the Gospel of God only, but also their own souls, because we were dear unto them.[1] The inquiry as to where, and on whom the descending mantles of these faithful labourers are to rest, is one which may well engage our anxious thought. The qualification for such service cannot be bestowed by man; but it is for us to see that we do not disqualify ourselves for the reception of spiritual gifts, and to labour for the removal of all those stumbling-blocks which prevent the word of the Lord from having free course amongst us.

I think no one can feel more strongly than I do, that *boasting* should be altogether excluded from our consideration of both the past and present state of our religious Society; but we surely have cause for reverent gratitude, that He who appointed us a place to occupy, and a work to do in the great family of the Church, has continued towards us His faithful care. I am not one of those who think that our calling and responsibility, as a distinct section of that Church, is about to cease. Whether we be faithful to the call or not, I am fully convinced that there is still a place and a need for a body of Christians who should bear before the world a testimony to the *entirely* spiritual character of the New Covenant Dispensation — to the authority of Christ as distinguished from the authority of man in matters of religion — to the freedom of that Gospel ministry

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

which is to be received as a *gift* from Him, and to be exercised in the strength which He bestows—and to the peaceable character of His kingdom.

In saying this, I feel no disposition to ignore the fact that the general condition of the professing Church, has greatly improved since the days of George Fox. I rejoice that it is so; but I am well convinced that if we would contribute our share to the general improvement, we must maintain *our own ground.* Let me not, however, be understood to speak of a traditional adherence to the profession made by our forefathers. Many influences have been at work, of late, in the Society of Friends, as well as in the Church of Christ at large, tending to the demolition of *traditional faith;* and we shall have occasion to rejoice in the result, if tradition be replaced by a new growth of individual conviction. Christianity is a *vital influence*, and not a mere system of opinions, and cannot therefore be effectively maintained under any form of profession, by the teaching which one man gives to another, or which one age hands down to another.

It is certainly a critical period, whether it occur in the life of an individual, or in the history of a Church, in which the unhesitating faith of *childhood* comes to be disturbed by doubts and questionings, such as must inevitably precede the independent conviction and sound judgment of *manhood:* a period in which there is peculiar need for the exercise of watchfulness and teachableness of mind on the one hand, and of forbearance and condescension on

the other. Religious conviction implies much more, indeed, than an assent to certain propositions; and, if we would be prepared to bear a faithful testimony to the truth of the Gospel, it is essential that our own hearts should be made subject to its regenerating and transforming power: that, being ourselves made partakers of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, we should become truly subject to Him as our *Lord*, and know our hearts to be influenced by His constraining love, and our wills subjected to His pure and holy will. Let us not propose to ourselves any inferior aim, either in regard to the means by which we would seek to fulfil our duties, or the strength in which they should be discharged, than that which is set forth in the words of the apostle — "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." [1]

In conclusion, I may confess that my own love for the Society of Friends has been afresh warmed by this investigation of its early history; but I trust that the feeling is not one which arises from sectarian narrowness. The love which the *true patriot* feels for his country, is something added to, and not subtracted from his love of the world at large; and I cannot but think that a corresponding feeling of *especial interest* in that portion of the Church in which our own lot is cast, is quite consistent with the desire, that "grace" may be "with all," of every

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 6, 7.

name and of every nation, "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." But how much is there in the divisions which now separate between the professed followers of Christ, and in the imperfections which attach to them all, which should make us rejoice in the thought of that state of heavenly rest and blessedness, where, in a far higher sense than can be applicable to the Church on earth, "Christ is all and in all."

[Correction.—The queries mentioned in the Second Lecture as having been answered by the Bristol Meeting, in the early part of the last century, do not correspond with those which had been adopted by the Yearly Meeting in 1682, and in 1696. See "Extracts from the Minutes, &c., of the Yearly Meeting," printed in 1783.]

THE END.