

INTRODUCTION

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HE who desires to understand the real history of the English people during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should read most carefully three books: George Fox's "Journal," John Wesley's "Journal," and John Henry Newman's "Apologia pro Vita Sua."

As Lord Hugh Cecil has recently said in a memorable speech, the Religious Question cannot be ignored. It is *the* Question; in the deepest sense it is the only Question. It has always determined the course of history everywhere. In all ages the sceptical literary class has tried to ignore it, as the Roman historians, poets, and philosophers ignored Christianity until the time when Christianity became triumphant and dominant throughout the Roman Empire.

But, however much ignored or boycotted by literary men, the growth or decline of religion ultimately settles everything. Has not Carlyle said that George Fox making his own clothes is the most remarkable event in our history? George Fox was the very incarnation of that Individualism which has played, and will yet play, so great a part in the making of modern England. If you want to understand "the dissidence of Dissent and