

walking in and boldly contradicting the preacher in the name of the Lord. No doubt they were too absolute in their identification of their own conceptions with the perfect truth of God, an error into which all are prone to fall. The most tolerant remark made of them by their opponents is that dotted down in Pepy's Dairy, August 7, 1664:—"I saw several poor creatures carried by, by constables, for being at conventicles. They go like lambs without any resistance. I would to God they would either conform or be more wise and not be caught!" The aged Puritan Roger Williams declared that "the Papists and Quakers' tongues are both spitting and belching out fire from one fire of hell"—rather an emphatic way of expressing difference of opinion on theological topics, but in an age when orthodoxy was deemed an essential condition of salvation, Quakerism was necessarily

REGARDED AS SOUL DESTROYING.

For many years the Quakers labored under the grievous imputation of denying the Word of God, and their vehement protestations against the charge were in vain. Robert Barclay, a clear-headed, logical and scholarly Friend, set forth their position by careful definitions. "The Scriptures," he says, "are only a Declaration of the Fountain, and not the Fountain itself. * * * They are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty." The operation of the Spirit of God upon the human heart is taught throughout the Old Testament, and is the special promise in the New. "As to the Papists," says Barclay, "they place their foundation in the judgment of the church and tradition. If we press them to say why they believe as the church doth, their answer is, 'because the church is always led by the infallible spirit,' So here the leading of the spirit is the utmost foundation. Ask the Protestants why they trust in the Scriptures, and

take them to be their rule. Their answer is, 'because we have in them the mind of God, delivered unto us by those to whom these things were inwardly, immediately and objectively revealed by the Spirit of God,' and not because this or that man wrote them, but because the spirit dictated them.' As all Christendom unites in making the revelations of the spirit the foundation of the foundations upon which their own faith is built, therefore the spirit is the ultimate foundation and supreme authority.

If we would know more of this inward light we must turn again to Barclay, whose definition is lucidity itself: "This divine revelation and inward illumination is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing, by its own evidence and clearness, the well disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent: as, that the whole is greater than its part; that two contradictories can neither be both true, or both false.' It is defined again as "that secret light which shines in the heart and reproves unrighteousness." This is indeed the

FOUNDATION OF MORALITY AND RELIGION.

This is the beginning of that practical holiness of life and heart which is the essential thing. In the teeth of popular prejudice William Penn was not afraid to say that "it is not opinion, or speculations, or notions of what is true, or assent to articles or propositions, though never so soundly worded, that makes a man a true believer or a true Christian, but it is the conformity of the mind and practice to the will of God." Though the Quakers believed in historic Christianity, they believed just as strongly that this historic belief was not necessary to salvation.

With the death of its founder the heroic age of Quakerism closed, and then began the century of quietism.