

they repudiate the dogmas which are producing all the mischief, do not exhibit a satisfactory capacity to formulate doctrines which can be accepted as those of Jesus. Indeed all religious associations, conventions, assemblies and councils have failed in the attempt to do this, and it is not surprising that Friends have failed too; they are but men.

The essential doctrine of Friends, that on which every other rests, is that of the Inner Light, the direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man. This doctrine, as understood by Friends, is, I believe, peculiar to Friends. We sometimes call the influence inspiration; but all the churches believe in inspiration. The Roman church, on all great occasions, invokes the presence and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and truly no doubt believes in it. And I have heard it as strongly preached from the Episcopal pulpit as from the Quaker gallery. Nor am I able to say in what respect their doctrine differs from ours. But we lay far more stress on ours than others do on theirs. And that brings me to the point which I wish to place before the reader, that we, in order to enhance the importance of the doctrine, are in danger of exalting it too far above everything else. I have often heard it treated as of such consequence that nothing else was of any consequence, it was made the infallible guide, as infallible as the Pope himself. This is certainly not safe teaching. Carried to the extreme it would render all other teaching useless, the Bible and even Jesus himself. This error is, I fear, more than common, universal almost, and I think there are some things which, if Friends would reflect on them, would modify their language. The Inner Light is after all but a light, and light does not tell the bewildered traveller which of the two roads is the right one. He must know from some other source what are distinguishing marks of the right road, and if he has eyes, the light will enable him to discern

them. But without knowledge and without light the light does not help. Again Jesus told his apostles that they would be slain by people who would think they were doing God's service thereby. If they thought this, they must have been sincere, and if so, the Inner Light did not enlighten them. Again, on the cross Jesus prayed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." That can only mean they did not know they were doing wrong. And how can we be certain that we are always able to know whether we be doing right whenever we think so.

What share of the influence as a teacher should be ascribed to the Bible and to good and honest men and to general public opinion I am unable to say, but I am sure that more or less of influence should be awarded to all these, certainly to the extent of causing men to pause and consider well before going counter to them. We all believe that James Nayler did wrong in expressing himself naked in public, thinking it was his duty to do; yet here public opinion would have checked him, had he heeded it. My conclusion is that Friends should be careful how they treat this topic, more careful than many are.

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By these things examine thyself: By whose rules am I acting, in whose name, in whose strength, for whose glory? What faith, humility, self-denial, and love of God and to man have there been in all my actions?—*Mason.*

Nothing more completely baffles one who is full of trick and duplicity than straight forward and simple integrity in another.—*Colton*

Put off thy cares with thy clothes; so shall thy rest strengthen thy labor; and so shall thy labor sweeten thy rest.—*Charles.*