

pealed to the Scriptures indeed; but they were sacrificing the spirit to the letter; and their lives, Fox could not but notice, were strangely at variance with its sublime teaching. Then, too, the dark and gloomy doctrines of Calvinism repelled him, as they have repelled many devout people since. They were a gross caricature, as he perceived, of the true Gospel.

Such was George Fox's position when he founded Quakerism. The Society of Friends were to exhibit what he conceived to be the characteristics of the true Church, and were to live under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

What a noble purpose! What a lofty aim! So far our feeling must be that of admiration of such principles. That the Spirit of Christ dwells in the Church and in her individual members is a most precious truth never to be lost sight of.

The illumination of conscience by the indwelling Light is necessary for all who would walk aright. This from the beginning has been the teaching of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. 'Lo I am with you always,' is one of her most treasured promises. She feels that the Spirit of Truth is with her even now, teaching her all things—guiding her into all truth. Her forms of worship are no empty meaningless ceremonies; they are the outward expression of the revelation she has received from God.

Had George Fox carefully examined into the Church's doctrines he would have found all he was in search of—a Truth altogether based upon the conviction of the perpetual Presence of the living Lord. Secession would have been unnecessary, and the weakness which springs from division might have been avoided.

By separating from the Church, we have now to observe, the Quakers, like other dissenting bodies, lost the balance of truth, for the continual emphasising of one aspect of truth only causes us to lose sight of others equally important. And here it is that the ancient creeds are of such great value. They preserve for us the due proportion of God's revelation, they keep before the mind's eye the entire faith.

It was not in what they affirmed, but in what they denied, that the Quakers departed from primitive teaching. It was when they came to dispense with all outward ordinances, when they asserted that they could do well enough without them, that they fell into error. The line of action they took is common enough still. 'I see my neighbour abuse some help from God, and therefore I will abstain from its use.' Whereas the wiser course to take is to use it faithfully as God intended it to be used. The Quakers saw outward ordinances trifled with. They witnessed men using the holiest symbols without attaching any spiritual meaning to them. There were formalists in abundance then—as there are now—mere mechanical Christians untouched by the sacred fire—the spirit of their faith. Therefore the Quakers resolved to cut themselves adrift from all forms. So they abandoned Holy Baptism and abstained from Holy Communion. They dispensed with an outwardly ordained ministry; and no longer used forms of prayer. All outward forms had become distasteful to them. So at their meetings there was no bending of the knee, no uncovering of the head. An assembly of Quakers sits in silence, each waiting for the Spirit from within to move him to speak.

Yet, it has been well observed, it is impossible to escape altogether from forms. And so the Quakers have found. They have done away with Sacraments, but they adopted a peculiar kind of language. They have no fixed forms of prayer, but they have assumed a special form of dress.

In truth, if we reflect, George Fox's mistake is apparent. He tried to fashion a religion which should be purely spiritual for beings of flesh and blood. God provides on the other hand for the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. The sanctification of the body is no less a part of His purpose than that of the soul. Outward and visible signs go along with inward and spiritual grace. And the channels through which He has chosen to convey to us supernatural gifts are so simple, so entirely