

The body of Friends who were left out of our official communion by our Yearly Meeting in 1829, in consequence of the theological differences of seventy years ago, and in consequence of many failings in human nature apart from that, have only been known to us in the past from the reports of their former opponents, and have been found by those who have actually met them to be more like ourselves than used to be thought. Their case should be considered as they and as we now are. To read up the controversial literature of the period of 1827, with a view of discovering the rights of the case, is for the historian a necessary though painful task. It is the saddest of all the reading that a Friend, as such, can turn to. It makes one sorrow for our common human nature to find that zeal for the Quaker faith should have flamed so luridly. But their's is not the living issue now. Both Jonathan Evans and Elias Hicks, the protagonists of that conflict, would find themselves strangers to the world we live in. No progressive religious body would wisely bind itself to the positions its divines upheld two generations ago, nor permit itself to be worried by their differences. "From scheme and creed the light goes out." Of course there would be very little difficulty over these Friends but for the suspicion which exists that they are not on the same fundamental Christian basis as ourselves. The only way, and a very fair way, of examining into that is to study their published statements. In the Book of Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Race Street), revised so recently as 1894 we find these passages :

"If any one in membership with us shall blaspheme or speak profanely of Almighty God, Christ Jesus or the Holy Spirit, or shall deny the divinity of Christ, the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, or the inspiration of the Scriptures, he ought to be tenderly

treated with for his instruction, and the conviction of his understanding, that he may experience repentance and forgiveness (p. 50).

"We tenderly and earnestly advise and exhort all parents and heads of families that they endeavor to instruct their children and families in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion as contained in the Scriptures, and that they incite them to the diligent and reverent reading of those excellent writings, which set forth the miraculous conception, birth, holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (p. 53)

"The Introduction to the book speaks of 'the Eternal Word which was in the beginning and which was manifested without measure in the person of our Divine Master, Jesus Christ.'"

Further comment is not needed, particularly as the present position of these Friends occupied a former paper (xi. mo., 1896); here it may be briefly said that of the three principal Quaker bodies this one is now in my view as near to ourselves as any, on the whole. Nor would I for a moment propose to transfer our correspondence to them alone, any more than I would to the Wilbur bodies. There are Friends in England to whom such a course would cause grave uneasiness.*

*In the above paper on the "Friends called Hicksite," a reference was made to the unofficial singing of a few hymns at the Swarthmore Conference. I have been informed that that should not be taken as a typical act on the part of the body generally, as a rule they do not sing hymns at such times. The question of singing in First-day Schools was, in fact, mentioned in the Conference as a novelty, and not much supported. Moreover, the hymn quoted is not a typical one. Whittier's hymns are their ordinary, indeed their constantly used, verses. I blame myself for having had to be reminded of this, which I ought to have known. This opportunity may further be taken to correct or explain a few other matters in this series of papers. The statement of Whittier's as to the preacher from the West was not made to the man himself, but to a third party—making the story more characteristic but less striking. Also the number of Friends in the Select Meeting at Philadelphia who wear beards is now more than one—it is not easy to keep up with the tonsorial changes of one's friends even here). And the Friends at Lawrence explain that they preferred colored glass in the windows of the Meeting-house because it was both cheaper and kept out the excessive sunlight better. I am particularly glad to mention this.