

my relations and broke off all familiar  
ity or friendship with young or old.”  
He travelled about in different parts  
of England, and finally returned to the  
home of his parents in Leicestershire,  
as he understood they were troubled by  
his absence. During this and the suc-  
ceeding period he spent much time in  
solitary walks in fields and woods. He  
also went about visiting clergymen and  
others, arguing with them about his  
condition, about “despair and tempta-  
tions,” and about theological matters.  
He found some willing to talk with him  
for a time, but others advised him to  
marry, to take tobacco and sing psalms,  
and still others wanted to give him  
physic and to bleed him. But, as he  
says, they did not understand his con-  
dition. Although he tells the story him-  
self with the utmost sincerity in his  
Journal, yet we cannot help seeing be-  
tween the lines that we would have been  
likely to look upon him very much as  
his relatives and acquaintances did as an  
eccentric young man, too old for his  
years, who needed more of the sweet-  
ness and light becoming to his age.  
He was morbid merely because he was  
not yet developed. But in all this time  
of mental turmoil there were forces de-  
veloping whose outcome would control  
his future, would affect those  
with whom he came into contact,  
would imbue them with his burning  
enthusiasm for truth, and would have  
an influence that has remained to our  
day, and which we may hope will  
never fade from the earth. It is to this  
influence of his that we owe in part our  
freedom from many of the conventions  
that still bind others.

The first notable impression that  
came to him was one to open his  
mind in charity to all the world. This  
was the belief that all men, both Protes-  
tant and Paptists alike, may be true  
believers and Christians. A noble  
beginning, with love and charity toward  
all men as the foundation, freed from  
the weakness of prejudice and distrust  
of men of other religions.

“At another time, as I was walking  
in a field on a First-day morning, the  
Lord opened to me that being bred at  
Oxford or Cambridge was not enough  
to qualify men to be ministers of  
Christ, and I stranged at it, because it  
was the common belief of the people.”  
(Fox’s Journal.) And he could no  
longer go with his relatives to church ;  
for, as he says, “I saw that being bred  
at Oxford or Cambridge did not qualify  
or fit a man to be a minister of  
Christ, and what then should I follow  
such for.” And he went into the orch-  
ard and the fields with his Bible himself.  
That was a liberation indeed. For  
centuries people had accepted the  
doctrine that the knowledge of the  
gospel of Christ was intrusted to the  
priesthood alone, and could only be  
imparted by those who had been bred  
in this learning at college ; and that  
one who had this learning could ad-  
minister the gospel of Christ no matter  
what might be his private character.  
“No,” thought Fox, “it is not that  
learning that qualifies a man to be a  
minister of God. The anointing is not  
from without. I shall no more ac-  
knowledge such a ministry. I shall  
learn more of eternal worth from the  
flowers and trees, yes even from inani-  
mate sticks and stones, than from such  
qualifications.” And he threw off the  
shackles which had bound him and  
went out into the open air on Frst day  
mornings. And those of us who are  
willing to accept outwardly the form of  
this doctrine by supporting no priest-  
hood, although believing in secret that  
the educated man delivers the best  
sermon, and also those who do not so  
believe, need not forget that while  
education is not the prime qualifica-  
tion, nor yet is it any disqualification,  
that it is the spirit which animates the  
minister which is the first essential and  
makes the minister true or false, and  
that one bred at Cambridge or Swarth-  
more may become a minister of Christ.

At another time as he walked in the  
fields to his relation’s house it was