

It is the critic of critics, the scholar, the philosopher, the friend of suffering humanity, the flower of modern France—Victor Hugo, who has said of this philosophy:

"Is there not in every human soul a first spark, a divine element, incorruptible in this world and immortal in the other, which good can develop, fan, ignite and make to glow with splendor, and which evil can never wholly extinguish." If this is not Quakerism, George Fox was not its founder.

The great heroes of this world are the men who have stood in the breach in the world's history. It is when men are breaking away from the old and turning to the new, that the hero comes to the front.

It was in 1624 when George Fox was born at Drayton in Clay, in Leicestershire, England, and his parents were members of the Established Church. His father was a weaver by trade and his mother was of the stock of martyrs, a woman of polish and refinement beyond her station in life. Fox was naturally of a religious turn of mind, and with fond hope his mother looked forward to the day when he would be received into the priesthood as a pillar of the Established Church.

Little did she realize that her son was to be the advocate of an inward faith that would tear down the stones of this temple of creed. It was an age when the human mind was a slave and liberty of conscience synonymous with outlaw.

On the one hand stood the Roman Catholic Church like cold and barren mountains where icy peaks of creed and dogma barred the human mind from progress; on the other stood the Established Church not less dogmatic in its creed or less cruel and exacting in its punishment.

He who dared assert liberty of conscience found himself locked by the Established Church in London Tower, as the heretic found himself locked in Bastille by the Roman Church.

It was an age when the ashes of the martyr mingled with the ashes of the fagot, and Roman Church and Established Church kindled the funeral pyres with the same torch of intolerance. The Puritans, the Independents and the Baptists had broken away a little from the old moorings.

Into such a world as this was George Fox born. He longed for something better. We find him going to priest and clergy; we find him alone with his Bible under the orchard tree in the summer time. But priest and clergy and Bible were not enough. It was one day when alone in the fields, when like that light which shone around Paul as he journeyed to Damascus, it came upon George Fox that God dwelt not in temples made with hands, but that He dwelt in every human heart and soul.

A living God within, a light within, and from that day until that sad hour when in the face of impending dissolution he could look up and say, "I am clear," George Fox had one motto, "Mind the Light." He saw a church, not like a mountain standing in cold and immovable sublimity, but a church like the sea, which is always pure because never still. No creed. No dogma. Every member free to act according to the light within his own soul. This is George Fox Quakerism.

This is the Quakerism of the distinguished and polished Penn. This is the Quakerism of the learned Barclay. This is the Quakerism of that long list of early martyrs and heroes who are now "walking with Him in white." Of Pennington, of Whitehead, of Mary Dyer, of Mary Fisher and last but not less worthy than these, it is the Quakerism of Whittier, and of Lucretia Mott.

This philosophy enfranchises mankind. It could be nothing else than democratic in its organization. Long before the days of Thomas Jefferson, it declared that all men were created equal. That we are all in that higher sense