

ness in following the light as he himself sees it.

The recognition of the peculiarity of one's relation to the Infinite, and the possibility of making it out for oneself, is an acceptance of the doctrine of the Inner Light:

The Friend may read the Bible as literature and get from it what he can that is helpful, or he may believe in its plenary inspiration; but he must assume, and permit others to assume, the right of individual interpretation. He may look upon Jesus as a man, divine as all men are divine in greater or less degree, and derive from his example some of the help needed in making his own life good; or he may believe in a Lord and Saviour, second person of the Trinity, and miraculous son of God; but he must admit that all his Saviour can do toward saving him is to lead him into the Light and help him to walk uprightly.

The Friend may hold what theory he will of the future life, but he must recognize the prime importance of this life and the necessity for making it the best he can.

Such great diversity upon doctrinal matters may, and does, exist in the Society of Friends. A belief in the Inner Light is the one thing that all profess, and even that, as I have intimated, is capable of various formulations. A belief in individual responsibility to a higher power, and the presence in each one of us of something that enables him to meet his responsibility — this, perhaps, is the *sine qua non* of Quakerism.

When George Fox began preaching, some two hundred and fifty years ago, he had no thought of creating a new sect; his purpose was to call Christians back to the simplicity of the religion that Jesus taught, from which they had wandered very far. He found them depending upon priests instead of upon the voice of God in their own hearts; he found them attaching more importance to the revelations made to or

claimed for the writers of the Scriptures than to the revelations made to themselves; he found them repudiating the brotherhood of man; he found them given over to frivolities, excesses, immoralities, and he called them back to the simplicity, the seriousness, the righteousness of the founder of their religion. But George Fox, in spite of his originality and his refusal to accept doctrine from the priests, could no more escape the influence of the religious and intellectual atmosphere of the seventeenth century, than we can that of the nineteenth. And faithfulness to the principles of Quakerism as taught by Fox does not mean a clinging to his seventeenth century theology in the light of our nineteenth century knowledge.

Doctrinal Christianity, as Friends see it, is a different thing at different times, as well as many different things at the same time. If I were to describe it I should not tell what George Fox believed two hundred and fifty years ago, nor what Elias Hicks believed seventy years ago, nor what I believed the day before yesterday. I should tell, as a part of it, what I believe now, and refer to other Friends who believe something else for the rest of it.

The Christianity of Friends is sometimes questioned because they do not, as a body, teach the doctrines of the immaculate conception, vicarious atonement, or bodily resurrection, although all these are accepted by some as individuals. But we do teach that the Christ spirit that was in Jesus is in everyone; and we call ourselves Christians because the rules of life that Jesus gave, and himself followed, agree *in general* with those that seem to us to be good.

[The above is part of the paper read by Edward B. Rawson, at the Greenacre Conference. It has been revised by the author and re-arranged especially for the YOUNG FRIEND'S REVIEW, and will appear in three issues, concluding in 2nd mo., 1898.]