

tically nothing for two generations, except through the reports and opinions of those from whom they separated—he alluded to what was sometimes called the “Hicksite” body of Friends. It was his privilege last summer to attend many of their meetings and to mingle among them socially, and he should not be doing his duty if he did not endeavor to lay before the meeting the impressions that he received. The land was such an unknown land, and he could not help wishing that it were better known. If some of those present could have sat in their meetings, could have been participators in the solemn, living silence which was the rule with them, could have heard their earnest, simple presentation of gospel truths as it is in Jesus, and had been able to mingle in their beautiful domestic life, and to participate in their desire to do the work of the Master in the world, and their constant loyalty to every command of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, he believed they would love those Friends better than they did, not knowing them.

He was aware that in the minds of some hearing him the one great “stop” in this matter, to use a Quaker phrase, was a matter of doctrine. But there was for all practical purposes, so far as his observation went, no cause for hesitation between us and them on the question of the divinity of the Lord Jesus, his historic character, or his living presence with us now. As regarded minor matters, those Friends did not belong to what was called the liberal school of theology, such as was represented in all the Christian bodies in England and America; but it was almost impossible to say anything about them in this respect that would not be capable of numerous corrections and exceptions. Their discipline remained for seventy years, indeed from before the separation and from the early days of the Society, absolutely untouched, until two or three years ago. Then a revision took place,

which led only to small, and to his mind not important, changes on statements of doctrine. He took the liberty of printing the revised form in Fourth month’s *British Friend*. It would be fair to add that it was not the practice of this body to deal in a disciplinary way with members or ministers on doctrinal points. They cultivated variety, and there was amongst them every variety of doctrine, so that both extremes of doctrinal view found expression in their Meetings. But he agreed with what Howard Nicholson said in the Meeting for Ministry and Oversight on the previous day, that doctrinal position was a mere skeleton by itself, and that faith, hope and love must make the flesh and blood to cover it. He believed that if we could enter into the minds of the Friends we should find their ways to be singularly like our own. They stood not for any doctrinal position, but for the liberty of the Spirit in dealing with individuals—they were the individualistic wing, if he might say so, of the Quaker Church. And especially in America did they stand for moderation. He said unhesitatingly that it was to that body that we must look for moderation. They did not, on the one hand, lay very great stress on forms of speech and dress; nor on the other side had they gone into the payment of pastors and the establishment of fixed and regular forms of service, which other bodies of Friends in America had adopted. They were far more like ourselves than any other body of Friends in America, on the whole. At the present time there was amongst them a distinct religious revival, in its early stages of progress. During the past twenty years they had extended their schools and colleges, by giving money, far beyond anything that we had thought of; and so there was a body of educated young people, alive to all the intellectual movements of the day, full of loyalty to the Society, and desiring to serve it.