

concession, or a surrender of our own—a yielding of the principle of exclusive individual guidance by the "Light." It is true we may claim that our own light sometimes reveals to us that it is our duty to follow the light of another; or the still more authoritative illumination generated by the concentrated and united "Light" of all or most of the individuals constituting the sect. But to do this is virtually to surrender and abandon the principle. It was this following the "Light" of the sect, or the priest, or the creed, that had led to the corruptions and abuses of their day, that prompted the early Friends to their strong protests, and to their giving such a prominence to the "Light," as the only true guide, in opposition to all priestly dictation or sectarian rule.

Had it not been that a large number of the illiterate, of the plebeian, and humbler classes were attracted by the fervor and simplicity of many of the early preachers, and that they preferred the unostentatious, yet earnest religion of the Friends, the motive for organizing a sect might not have been so forcibly suggested.

The leaders, those who understood the "Light" and followed it needed no sect; they were better off, more untrammelled and independent without it.

The sect was organized more as a refuge—a school to educate and strengthen in the faith, the weak, the untutored, the priest-ridden and dependent, who were drawn towards them from sympathy, and a desire for the assistance of those who claimed to be their Friends.

Wherever we find this fundamental principle of Quakerism stated in the Scriptures it is always in an unsectarian and universal sense. "That True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "The anointing you have received abideth with you, and you need not that any man teach you, but as the anointing teacheth you all things." "I will write My Law

upon their hearts and no man shall say to his neighbor or his brother know ye the Lord, for they all shall know Me." "The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation has appeared unto all men." These Scripture writers and teachers probably had no thought of sects or societies being organized as custodians or representatives of a principle so universal. The very act of organizing a sect for that purpose implies a distrust or negation of its universality, and tends to convey to the mind the impression that it is susceptible in some sense of being restricted to localities and conditions, as the special faith of the few organized for the purpose of upholding it. Its distinctive universality loses its force whenever it becomes sectarian, or is brought down to that level to be challenged by rival sects, to be denied and repudiated as a sectarian dogma.

The Friends have experienced the truth of this in hearing it ridiculed and caricatured as a "Will o' the Wisp," an ignis fatuus, an hallucination, an illusion, and altogether "Utopian."

The early Friends, or those who afterwards took that name, called themselves at first the "Children of the Light," but they soon found the name inexplicit and irrelevant to their condition. They then dropped it and adopted the more broad and unsectarian one of "Friends," in its Catholic generic sense, without regard to any belief or profession of faith.

To be Friends and treat each other as Friends should; and to demean themselves with propriety in the discharge of their duties, by adhering to the moral laws in their conduct amongst men, was all that they required,

The degree of "Light," or their speculative notions concerning it, were not made subjects of inquiry, but were private affairs of their own, to be cherished unchallenged.

(Continued in next issue.)

The greatest truths are the simplest, and so are the greatest men.