

purpose I addressed myself to the Reverend Joseph Proud, their High Priest, who lent me several tracts, written by their founder, Baron Swedenborg. I was struck with the intrepidity of his undertaking. Conjecture and hypothesis are out of the question. All is pronounced to be fact. On the bold assumption of immediate correspondence with the Deity, this hardy Dogmatist had erected a system of doctrines, unequalled for ingenuity of contrivance. I went through much of this voluminous writer, and was for a while charmed with the subtlety of his deductions; but finding the whole scheme rest solely on the personal responsibility of one who wrought no miracle in support of his pretensions, I took leave of him as an entertaining madman, and classed his tale with those of the Arabian Nights.

My next tour was among the *Quakers*. Their modesty and simplicity had impressed me when a boy, and I loved the people without knowing their doctrines. To learn them satisfactorily, I applied to some of the most intelligent of the Society, and attended their Meetings. If I was at first pleased with their plain and artless deportment, I was soon dissatisfied with the nudity of their worship. I examined with the eye of reason and with the Scripture before me, their principal doctrine of a *Divine Light within*, which was to lead us into all truth. This was avowedly not the light of conscience, and I knew no other. I had no doubt indeed that conscience was susceptible of, and received at times, illumination from above: but it still appeared to me incontrovertible that, clear or cloudy, enlightened from heaven, or obscured by the powers of darkness, Conscience was our sole interior guide. Their definition of this favourite tenet, seemed to me a distinction without a differ-

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