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secretary of the Student Christian Movement, has tackled a difficult subject in *Christ and Money* (S.C.M. ; 3s. net), but he handles it with courage and with full knowledge. There is a good chapter on our Lord's teaching, and one on the rights of property, and the writer does not shirk the application of his principles to the most corrupt kind of practice. His chapter on personal expenditure includes recreation, rates and taxes, saving and investment, gambling and giving. Money is a means, not an end ; but the real question is, a means to what? That may be said to be the central point of the book. The social theory underlying the whole treatment is 'advanced,' but there is a great deal of sound sense as well as information in the book, and readers who are not as radical in their social views as Mr. Martin will learn wisdom on many points from his pages. There are, of course, doubtful points in the argument. The delusive simplicity of the case against gambling, on p. 97, will not convince any one who has really thought out the subject. That, however, is a subsidiary matter, and the worth of this sincere essay is not seriously lessened by the queries one is inclined sometimes to put against some of its statements.

The Student Christian Movement has published in paper covers at 2s. net a number of direct and unconventional letters of a young medical missionary in China to a colleague at home. The title is *What It Feels Like*. The author hides his identity under the name of 'Doctor Robin,' but there is an introduction by Sir Humphrey Rolleston, from which we

learn that he was at Oxford under Sir William Osler and was regarded by him as one of his best and most original students. Any one who reads these letters will no longer have any doubt as to the varied opportunities that a medical missionary in China has, or as to the romance of the life.

Does any average newspaper reader know what is happening in China? Dimly, as through a heavy haze, we see masses of men marched to and fro. Leaders, with alien uncouth-sounding names, appear and disappear. But that is all. We feel, indeed, that the giant has grown restless, and is turning in his sleep, seems wakening. And, if he does, interesting things are bound to happen. But it is all disconcertingly blurred and vague. The Student Christian Movement is, accordingly, on the spot when it publishes *China To-Day through Chinese Eyes* (2nd ser., 2s. 6d. net). Here at least we have what seven Chinese gentlemen feel about the problems of their land, though how far they represent the other odd four hundred millions we have no means of knowing. But the seven, who are distinguished men in Christian circles, have alert and interesting and broad minds. They know a vast deal more about it than we do ; and their views upon the political, industrial, intellectual, and religious movements in their country, if briefly stated, are fresh and arresting. Quite evidently the giant is awake at last. What will he do with his strength? One gathers that Chinese Christians are faced by an extraordinarily difficult situation. If they follow these seven, they will meet it with wisdom and courage.

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## Present-Day Faiths.

### The Society of Friends and its Contribution to the Life of the Church.

BY EDWARD GRUBB, M.A., LETCHWORTH.

THE very welcome invitation given me by the Editor to write something on this subject is a cheering indication of the change that has come over Christian minds since the seventeenth century —when one of the mildest epithets applied by their opponents to the Quakers was 'vermin,' and when so saintly a man as Richard Baxter could write, in his *Quaker's Catechism*, 'Was there ever a generation

of men on whom the image of the Devil was more visible than on these [Quakers]?' I am afraid that, yielding to current methods of religious controversy, my spiritual ancestors sometimes gave back as good as they got. Both sides were perhaps too much like the Scotsman who agreed that 'without controversy great is the mystery of godliness,' but thought that *with controversy* it was all plain

sailing. There was no doubt a real foundation for the common charge that the Quakers were exclusive and arrogant, claiming that they alone had possession of the truth, and that all others were 'in the black night of apostasy.' But there is another side to this: here and there in the early Quaker writings you will find passages that breathe the spirit of unity with true Christians whatever label they bear. 'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion'—so wrote William Penn in his *Fruits of Solitude*—and when Death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.' Nearly a century later John Woolman, the apostle of the American movement against slavery, recorded in his Journal his surprise and satisfaction, on reading the *Imitation*, at finding that Thomas à Kempis, though a Roman Catholic, was a truly devout Christian.

Perhaps one of the best contributions we can make to the life of the Church at the present time is along these lines: to prove, if we can, that, as Thomas Story wrote in 1737, 'The unity of Christians never did nor ever will or can stand in uniformity of thought or opinion, but in Christian love only.' 'Faith' to us is not a body of beliefs or a surrender to the authority of the Church, but an attitude of the inner man to the God revealed in Jesus Christ. In a document on *The True Basis of Christian Unity*, approved by the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends in 1917, it is stated that

'We conceive of Christianity not as a collection of "notions" or doctrines, and a number of traditional observances; but as essentially an experience, and a way of life based on that experience. Christian Unity for us consists, not in agreement in ideas and practices, but in a common Christian experience, apart from which neither doctrines nor practices appear to us to have meaning or value. . . . Unity consists in the One Divine Life that is reproducing in men the character of the historic Person, Jesus Christ; which, while it is something far deeper than any definition of His person, is for Christians the final manifestation of the character of God Himself. "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they all may be one."'

From this point of view, Paul's simile of the body and the members may be extended from individual Christians to the various groups in which they are

found: each has its contribution to make to the life of the whole, and none can say to another, 'I have no need of thee.'

The Society of Friends in Great Britain is one of the smallest of organized religious bodies, containing only some 20,000 members, of whom very few are found in Scotland or Wales. In Ireland there are about 2000, mostly centred round Dublin and Belfast. In America there are perhaps 120,000, but divided into several branches, of which the largest has to some extent assimilated its methods of worship to those of other 'Nonconformist' sects. In large parts of England it is almost unknown, and where this is not the case it is in general reputed to be 'straight' and often very successful in business<sup>1</sup>; to have a *flair* for philanthropy, as in the matter of slavery; to object on principle to war, and to have a gift for the relief of distress when this occurs on a large scale in any part of the world. It is also known to make large use of silence in worship, in which it has no appointed ministry, no recital of creeds, no singing of hymns, and no observance of sacramental rites. But few Christians who observe these peculiar ways of conducting worship have any clear idea of the source from which they arise, or of their relation to philanthropic and other efforts for the good of humanity.

For a real understanding of the contribution which the Society of Friends would like to make to the life of the Church at large, it is, I think, essential to get behind the outward form (or disuse of form) to the central experience and conception of religion on which it rests. This is known as the principle of the 'Inward Light,' by which the Quakers profess to be guided—in common perhaps with Mystics at all periods of Church history, from Paul and 'John' downwards. Belief in the Light was not a doctrine or theory accepted from tradition or even from a past revelation; it was the direct outcome of personal religious experience. George Fox himself, and others either before or after they met him, had turned from human teachers to an inward Source of what they believed to be direct revelation.

'These things,' says Fox, 'I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though

<sup>1</sup> Some years ago, on a steamer bound for New York, I sat at table by the side of a merchant who had lived for twenty years in America and was returning from a visit to England. I remarked that I supposed he found the standard of business integrity in America hardly equal to that prevailing in England. 'It is so,' he replied, 'unless you happen to come across Quakers.' I did not inform him that I was one.

they are written in the letter, but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God by whom the holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures, but they were very precious to me, for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them.<sup>1</sup>

Fox here claims that he is in the true line of succession from prophets and apostles, that the day of revelation has never ceased, that the Spirit of God is as near to men to-day as ever it was in the past. But he makes no *exclusive* claim; inspiration, he thinks, may be known by every sincere Christian, and indeed in measure by every man who will wait for it, attend to it, and obey it. His central interest, like that of the Hebrew prophets, was not theology, but the bringing of human life into conformity with the mind and will of God. As I have written elsewhere:

'We might perhaps without serious inaccuracy describe Quakerism as a recovery of Hebrew prophetism, reinforced by the Christian mysticism of Paul and "John," and enlarged by their universalism. It was, of course, no mere reaction to Hebraic modes of life and thought. Its evangelical note is strong and clear; and this, I believe, is due to the fact that George Fox and his friends, like the early Christians before them, identified the Light which had arisen in their souls with the living Spirit of Jesus Christ their Master. It was this that supplied them with the antidote against "Ranterism." The living Spirit of Jesus, reproduced in them, provided at once a definite moral standard and the inward motive for striving after it. They were never unwilling to reply to the many attacks on their Christianity by setting down, as occasion required, their Christian beliefs; and these statements (with the exception of a formulated doctrine of the Trinity) usually ran on quite orthodox lines. But if anyone began, as George Keith did about the time of Fox's death, to make such statements the *essence* of Christianity, he was described as having "run out into notions," because he seemed to be making Christianity an intellectual or dogmatic system and not a new spiritual life.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, i. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Quaker Thought and History*, p. 27.

Whatever we may think of the claim that every man is (or may be, consciously or unconsciously) inspired in measure by the living Spirit of Christ, it was this undoubtedly that made the Quakers what they were in the seventeenth century and what they have been since. Quite obviously it lay at the root of their method of worship. All that was needed, they believed, in the way of human organization was to fix a time and place for meeting together. When so assembled, in waiting fellowship before God, His Spirit would guide the proceedings in so far as human wills were brought into subjection to Him. There could be no distinction of clergy and laity, 'no male and female' even, where all were to be direct recipients of the Spirit's life. Silence was not to be an end in itself, but a means to the end of giving the Spirit freedom to rule and guide. The non-observance of outward rites was not a mere negation; the symbol was felt to be needless when the reality was actually experienced. The affirmation that Jesus never intended to institute ceremonies was a product of insight into the inwardness and spirituality of His religion; but it is confirmed by modern critical study of the New Testament, of which the early Friends knew nothing.

All true Christians recognize, of course, in varying degrees, the guidance of the Spirit. The Quakers simply trusted it further than most Christians have been prepared to do. Not only their meetings for worship, but their whole Church polity, was placed under Divine control. Individualists as they were, they recognized corporate as well as personal guidance. Every member of the body has an equal voice in every Church meeting he or she chooses to attend; and in this country, so far as I am aware, no vote has ever been taken at such meetings. They are gathered in a spirit of worship, and after a time of silent waiting the 'Clerk,' who is both chairman and secretary, introduces to the meeting the matters that need consideration. These are severally discussed, and the Clerk prepares a minute in regard to each which he (or she) feels to express the 'sense of the meeting.' This is very rarely challenged, but it is often modified to embody more accurately what the meeting desires. If (as sometimes happens) the gathering appears to be almost equally divided, it is not unusual for the Clerk or some one else to ask for a period of silent or vocal prayer for guidance. Frequently some solution to the problem is discovered; if not, and if there is no clear sense of the meeting, the matter is left undecided or deferred till further light comes. In this way party spirit is almost wholly

avoided; those who have not got what they desired usually acquiesce loyally in the decision of the meeting.<sup>1</sup> The method may appear slow and cumbrous, but it works to general satisfaction.

The principle of the Light in the souls of men also lay at the root of the Quaker attitude to moral and social questions. 'Walking in the Light' meant reality, truthfulness, simplicity, and sincerity. Hence the demand for uprightness in business dealings—which very early expressed itself in the fact that the Quakers were the first to place a definite price on goods offered for sale in shops.<sup>2</sup> It was this also, taken with a clear injunction in the Sermon on the Mount, that led to the refusal of judicial oaths—a 'testimony' which in the seventeenth century sometimes brought terrible consequences. When all other charges failed, recourse was had by unscrupulous judges to the Oath of Allegiance, which it was well known a Quaker, though perfectly loyal, would not take. Refusal might involve long imprisonment, with the confiscation of property. The Quakers would not use a form of speech which implied that their bare word was not enough.

It was the conviction that the Light of Christ shone, potentially at least, in the souls of all men that made the Quakers ardent reformers. It reinforced the sense of the inherent worth of all manhood which humanity owes most of all to Jesus Christ, slow as His followers have often been in understanding its applications. Injustice and oppression, such as that involved in slavery, degraded human personality and must be removed. The Society of Friends in America, thanks mainly to the labours of Woolman, has the honour of having been the first Christian body in that country to make the practice of slaveholding incompatible with membership.

Little as this has been understood, it is the principle of the Inward Light that explains our protest against war—a protest upheld by Friends from the first, in common with many of the Mystics who had preceded them. Belief in universal Light carried the assurance that all men were

<sup>1</sup> I remember a gathering of over one thousand men and women at London Yearly Meeting, when feeling was acutely divergent concerning a proposed declaration of belief, which many feared was nothing else than the attempt to impose a creed. The matter was debated for a whole day; no bitter word was spoken from first to last; and the proposal, though supported by many leading Friends, was negatived, in opposition to the view of the Clerk himself.

<sup>2</sup> For proofs of this statement see Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*, pp. 152, 211, 523.

brothers, and no one who held it with conviction could consent to kill another man even in what was held to be a righteous cause. Also the Light was felt to be the Light of *Christ*, who was seeking to reproduce in His followers His own character and way of life. As He overcame evil, not by force but by the way of the Cross, so must they. And, further, 'walking in the Light' meant obedience to *Christ alone*, with which military discipline, involving as it necessarily does unqualified obedience to human orders, was felt to be incompatible.

But the Friends have never been contented with a mere refusal to take part in war. They have felt that an essential part of their 'testimony' is to do their utmost to take away the causes that lead to war, by the advocacy of justice and goodwill to the people of other nations; in the conviction that in the steady practice of justice to all is to be found the true and sufficient defence of their own country.<sup>3</sup> When wars have occurred, they have come forward for the relief of the suffering war has brought, especially on the non-combatant population, friends and foes alike. I think that one of the chief contributions we have to make to the conduct of human life is in the assurance that a nation which consistently stands for justice to all, and is prepared to make sacrifices for this end, need never fear attack. It appears to me that this belief is not superstition but common sense; and that it ought always to have been adopted and proclaimed by Christian teachers as affirming the only true way of life.

There is, I believe, a very close connexion between the two main applications mentioned above of the central principle of the Inward Light—first to the life of worship, and second to the service of humanity. Whatever gifts may have come to the Society of Friends for ministering to the needs and sorrows of mankind are attributable, in my own judgment, in the main to the training its members have received in their quiet meetings for worship. They have deliberately forgone the aid to the religious life which many undoubtedly derive from ritual and sacrament, and have been compelled to find for themselves a Divine 'strength made perfect in weakness.' Their spiritual muscles have been strengthened by exercise. Severe, no doubt, is the discipline of free worship in the atmosphere of

<sup>3</sup> The classical example of success on these lines is Penn's treaty with the Indians. For the seventy years during which the government of Pennsylvania adhered to the spirit of the treaty the Colony was never attacked by Indians, though wholly without armed defence against them.

silence, for those who take seriously the task of finding, for themselves and the gathered company, the reality of the Spirit's guidance ; but in spite of many failures it is often manifestly found. In the fellowship of silence before God strength is received and accumulated to 'take the common things of life and walk truly among them.'

'To each one,' wrote the Apostle Paul, 'is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.' It is only with that thought in mind, applied to corporate as well as individual members of the Christian Church, that I have felt justified in writing of any 'contribution' that the Society of Friends may have to offer to the Church's life. Recognizing our weakness in intellect and in numbers, our inability to win more than a tiny fraction of the number of real Christians to our particular ways of thought and life, our frequent failure to live up to our own ideals, I ought rather to be seeking help from others than trying to offer it. Yet I am sure that good will result from the Editor's endeavour to extract from representatives of the different Christian communions a summary of what they feel they want to say ; and perhaps no one can really do it except from the inside of each body. Briefly, then, and in all humility, I would summarize thus what I take to be the Quaker contribution to our common life.<sup>1</sup>

(1) We feel that Christianity is essentially the Religion of the Spirit ; that the final seat of authority is God indwelling in the soul of man ; that the outward authorities of Church and Bible, and most of all of Jesus Christ Himself, take their right place as they are accepted on the testimony of the Inward Witness that convinces of truth and goodness ; that this Inward Guide is to be trusted with the preservation of order and unity and edification in the Church.

(2) We desire to offer evidences that a Christian Society can be maintained in life and fruitfulness

<sup>1</sup> In what follows I am not committing any one else, but only stating what I myself believe the Society of Friends to stand for.

with a minimum of human organization, and without the outward helps of an appointed ministry and sacramental rites ; that a purely lay ministry, including that of women, if it genuinely seeks for the 'anointing' of the Spirit, can supply the religious needs of such a body.

(3) We wish to call the attention of our fellow-Christians to the strength and fruitfulness of silent waiting on God, in fellowship with one another ; and to suggest that it would be well if this always found a place in the public worship of God.

(4) We feel that the most urgent need of the modern world is that Christians should be convinced that Jesus Christ is the Lord of *all* our life ; that He understood and understands the problems of social and international relations ; that His way of 'overcoming evil with good' is a safe and practicable method, and the only one that can now save humanity from self-destruction by war ; and that Christians can only play their true part in His world if they are willing to understand and follow Him at all costs.

(5) We believe, as stated at the beginning of this paper, that we have something to offer towards Christian reunion, in urging that this must be sought on the basis of loyalty to Christ and manifestation of His life, and not on that of creeds and sacraments. It appears to us that we can do more to further the cause of true unity by adhering faithfully to what we believe has been revealed to us as to the non-necessity of outward forms for the Christian than we could by surrendering our 'testimony' for the sake of a superficial uniformity. In pleading that a place must be found in any reunited Church for Christians who, through what seems to them loyalty to Christ, are not baptized with water and abstain from the outward Communion, we are erecting no barrier but seeking to prevent the erection of one that we believe our Master would not approve ; just as Paul prevented the barrier of circumcision being imposed on the early Church. For 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

