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Editorial

THE Presidential Address for 1965 was delivered by Janet Payne Whitney on 30th September at the annual meeting of the Friends' Historical Society at Friends House. Last year's president, Elfrida Vipont Foulds, took the chair at the meeting. Janet Whitney's biographies, *Elizabeth Fry, Quaker Heroine*; *John Woolman, American Quaker*; and *Geraldine S. Cadbury*; have done much since the 1930's to make these Friends known to a wider public than would normally venture into the field of Quaker history. The Historical Society is therefore fortunate to have the benefit of Janet Whitney's reading and interpretation of the all-too-short paragraphs at the beginning of George Fox's *Journal* about his early life and development. Her address, entitled "The apprenticeship of George Fox" forms the main item of this issue.

"The mystery of Swarthmoor Hall" by Alfred Braithwaite is no ghost story but a discussion of the legal aspects of the dispute between Margaret Fell and her son George concerning the ownership of the Hall, and a possible assessment of the rights and wrongs of the case. This family quarrel has exercised a good many Quaker historians, and Alfred Braithwaite tells how Isabel Ross, the authority on Margaret Fell, was herself not convinced in which direction justice lay. The paper attempts a re-appraisal and a new verdict in the light of all the evidence which survives.

Andrew Brink's study of "The Quietism of Isaac Penington" is based almost entirely on the pamphlets which Penington published between 1648 and 1650 during a period formative in his own life and thought, as it was crucial in the application of political theory to a revolutionary situation in England. Geoffrey Carter prints a letter which throws some light on the childhood of Jacob Bright (1775-1851), father of John Bright the Statesman, a matter of which practically nothing is known.

The number also contains reviews (including an extended review by Dr. R. C. Alston, of the Leeds University School of English, of *You und Thou* by Thomas Finkenstaedt), Notes (including contributions from Henry J. Cadbury and Frank M. Wright) and reports on Archives.

The Spring meeting of the Society, held in the Library at Friends House on 1st April, heard an address by Amy E. Wallis on "Anthony Pearson, an early Friend of Bishoprick." We hope to print it in a future number. A brief report appeared in *The Friend*, 21st May, 1965, pp. 589-90.

The Apprenticeship of George Fox

Presidential Address to the Friends' Historical Society, 1965

By JANET PAYNE WHITNEY

ONE of the most interesting questions we can ask about a great man is "How did he become that way?" What forces played upon his childish years? How did he develop in adolescence? And when manhood brought its major choice of a career, what influenced him?

When a great character leaves behind him a detailed diary we are a long way towards answering those questions, and fortunately we have the journal of George Fox of which John Nickalls, one time the Librarian of the Religious Society of Friends, made a neat one-volume edition, carefully culling from all the available manuscripts. This is easy to handle, easy to read and has the benefit of an index. It is the edition to which page references can most readily be made.¹

I am also the possessor of a first folio printed in 1694—the one prepared by George Fox's stepson-in-law Dr. Thomas Lower,² with the long fascinating biographical preface by William Penn, and the testimony of Margaret Fox concerning her late husband George Fox.

With all this one might hope not only to have, what we do have, a vivid impression of Fox the man—the leader, the friend, the husband—but also some account of his earliest disposition and development.

But of the three witnesses mentioned, Penn, Lower and Margaret Fell all became acquainted with Fox in his maturity.

We depend therefore upon George Fox alone to find out about his childhood and earliest youth.

Unfortunately for our anxious curiosity, George Fox himself did not regard these years as important—except in one or two particulars—and *did* regard them as private.

¹ *The Journal of George Fox*. A revised edition by John L. Nickalls. Cambridge University Press, 1952. References not otherwise specified are made to that edition.

² Lower had married Margaret Fell's daughter Mary.

Perhaps a certain introspection is necessary which developed late. But the thwarting fact is that George Fox passes over his first eighteen years in one and a half short pages (Nickalls edition)—or a single foolscap page of folio.

Yet that single foolscap page contains the seeds of all that comes after. To get some insight into George Fox we must press between the lines and try to follow every hint, every shadow of a picture, or flicker of feeling, that gives a clue to home background, family life, early education; of encouragement, of ambition and thwarting, which gave colour and direction to later life.

In addition to this scarcity, there is another handicap. George Fox, like St. Paul, did not use a ready pen, and preferred to dictate his material. Remember when in prison at Launceston Castle he sent for an able young woman,¹ who travelled the two hundred miles from London to act as his secretary. So the voluminous breathless journal, with its strange events, multitude of characters, short cuts here and long detailed dialogue there, was dictated to the pen of Fox's stepson-in-law Thomas Lower during the year and a half of Fox's rest at his wife's home Swarthmoor Hall, many years after the earliest events.

One drawback to this is that we don't hear all we would like to, and the other is that in the account of the incidents of boyhood and youth we get an old man's gloss on a young man's act.

A touch of retroactive priggishness enters here and there as the dignified leader looks back upon his early days with a critical, sometimes scandalized eye, and puts in a pious commentary which in the vivid narrative seems out of drawing.

* * * *

George Fox, the son of Christopher Fox, weaver, of Drayton-in-the-Clay, Leicestershire, and of Mary *née* Lago his wife, was first intended to be trained for the priesthood of the Anglican Church, a decision made when somewhere near the age of eleven he had a very definite religious experience perhaps connected with the solemn instructions of the Rector during preparation for Confirmation. But to move

¹ Anne Downer (1624-86).

from the realm of even reasonable deduction into the factual statement of George himself, "my relations thought to have [made] me a priest, but others persuaded to the contrary," and George was apparently rather hastily apprenticed to a well-to-do kinsman in the nearby village of Mancetter, one that was "a shoemaker by trade, and that dealt in wool, and used grazing, and sold cattle."¹

This then represents the first and technical part of George Fox's apprenticeship to his future. What did he learn in those vital seven years from twelve to nineteen? Did he learn to make shoes? Perhaps. But he never says so. We have two sources of information on what he did. One is what George himself dictated to Thomas Lower to put down in his *Journal*, and the other is William Penn's report of what George Fox said to him about it. Taking William Penn's memory first, he recalled bits of conversation, when Penn was probably in his twenties and Fox in his forties, that "he [Fox] was brought up in country business; and as he took most delight in sheep, so he was very skilful in them; an employment that very well suited his mind in several respects, both for its innocency and solitude, and was a just figure of his after ministry and service."² But Fox himself gave a different emphasis when he dictated his life to his stepson-in-law. The wool trade of England was very prosperous. To be producing sheep for wool might be an accessory to his father's weaving industry. At all events, it was the business side to which the young George Fox was attracted, and in which, as he developed, he was most employed by his master, as his accuracy in accounts and talent for trading became gradually manifest; the buying and selling at fairs, the keeping of accounts. "A great deal went through my hands . . . I never wronged man or woman in all that time . . . While I was in that service, I used in my dealings the word 'verily', and it was a common saying among people that knew me, 'If George says "Verily" there is no altering him'."³

We have here the direct statement of a masculine youth, very much in control of his environment, conscious of efficiency and success in his business life. He had an eye for a horse, a sheep, a cow; he knew quality, and he kept in

¹ *Journal*, p. 2; cf. 1694, Folio ed., p. 2.

² *Journal*, p. xxxix; cf. 1694 ed., signature H1a.

³ *Journal*, p. 2.

touch with market fluctuations. Dealing with sellers and buyers of cattle and sheep and horses, notorious for sharp practice, he had learned, with his better trained brain and capacity for quick thinking, and slow deliberate speech, to outwit the double-crosser, the man of two prices, by sheer intelligence and unbreakable decision. The bartering, the beating down, taken for granted, was not young Fox's way. And he elevated that principle—decide on a just price and stick to it—into almost a religious tenet. It is not surprising that his master benefited greatly by George's abilities before his apprenticeship was up. Fox comments in retrospect—"While I was with him, he was blessed." Is it the elderly Fox who adds complacently, "but after I left him he broke, and came to nothing."¹

Fox appears to have slept at home during the years of this apprenticeship, going to Church at St. Michael-and-all-Angels with his family on Sundays. For, as William Penn says, "he descended of honest and sufficient parents, who endeavoured to bring him up, as they did the rest of their children, in the way and worship of the nation; especially his mother, who was a woman accomplished above most of her degree in the place where she lived."² ("Sufficient," that is reasonably well-to-do; "Way and Worship of the nation," i.e. orthodox as to Church and King.)

But Mrs. Fox was also interested in the currents of religious thought which flowed through the nation. She belonged to a group of "professors" who needed more religious nourishment than was found in the Church service alone. When Fox was fourteen, torn from his studies for the ministry and *perhaps* for a time employed in learning the craft of shoemaking, a pamphlet came out entitled *How Was a Cobbler, and The Cobbler's Sermon*. Its subject was "the Sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching, without human learning; or a Treatise tending to prove humane learning to be no help to the spiritual understanding of the Word of God." It said in plain print "the learned divines do pervert all Scriptures . . . whenas the unlearned ones, simple men and women having the spirit of truth in them, shall rightly know them and God's mind in them, for their great comfort."

As a result of such teaching, widely disseminated by

¹ *Journal*, p. 2.

² *Journal*, p. xxxix; cf. 1694 ed., signature G2b.

secret channels in the disturbed years of the Star Chamber and Laud's Court of High Commission, small groups and congregations had sprung up everywhere in the lonely villages. They would meet in fields and barns, in kitchens and parlours, on the Sunday afternoons—not to clash with authority by meeting in Church time—"and instead of orthodox Divines they set up all kinds of mechanics, as shoemakers, cobblers, tailors, butchers, glovers . . . button-makers, coachmen. These lawless lads do affect an odd kind of gesture in their pulpits."

Archbishop Laud had started out with the idea of a tolerant Church. He did not mean to hunt down the groups, as long as their components conformed. There had been groups in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Let the tares grow along with the wheat, so long as they would consent to grow in the same field. The Church of England was for everybody. But groups of men whose doctrines would end in breaking the acceptance of conformity to the universality of the Church, that was another matter. The Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission would deal with them. He dismissed clergy from their livings simply for refusing to wear the surplice: such revealed an inward nonconformity. Laud attacked the rain of secret pamphlets as seditious, and subversive of the Establishment in Church and State (as in fact they were).

The boldest pamphleteers, like Burton, scorned anonymity. Examples were made to stem the rising tide. Burton,¹ a clergyman, Prynne,² a barrister, and Bastwick,³ a doctor, were pilloried, ears cut off, branded, banished to fortresses for life. The pillory became their pulpit, and Laud reaped national hatred.

That excitement and its undercurrents had not died down when the talk flew through the villages about Lilburne, the ex 'prentice, taught by Dr. Bastwick through his prison window to "put off his hat and make a leg like a gentleman, and polish his rustic speech." Lilburne, said by some to be Prynne's clerk or servant, claimed to be an offshoot of gentle blood, and had certainly shown a talent for rabble-rousing politico-religious pamphlets, anonymous, but when charged

¹ Henry Burton (1578-1648); *Dictionary of National Biography*.

² William Prynne (1600-69); *D.N.B.*

³ John Bastwick (1593-1654); *D.N.B.*

with, he did not deny. In 1638, before the Court of Star Chamber, he raised a new issue; he refused to "take the oath," i.e. "to swear on the Book," quoting Christ's words "Swear not at all." But this did not save him—why should it? Lilburne was sentenced to be whipped at the cart's tail from the Fleet prison to the Old Palace Yard in Westminster. The crowd was on his side. "I have whipt many a rogue," said the executioner, "but now I shall whip an honest man." Lilburne shouted prayers to heaven as he went. The prayer was answered. "God hardened my back and steeled my reynes, and took away the smart and pain of the stripes from me." Bystanders at the pausing places where the executioner rested his arm—at Fleet Bridge, and in the Strand, and at Charing Cross—bade him be of good cheer. "So I am," he answered them, "for I rest not in my own strength but I fight under the banner of my great and mighty Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Still exhilarated beyond pain, he addressed the hushed crowd from the pillory, beginning with a dramatic simplicity—"I am a young man and no scholar." The Book of Revelation, with its current political interpretation for the times—the scarlet woman, the Church of Rome, Queen Henrietta Maria—seemed to be his theme. The guards fetched a gag and clapped it in, and then the blood ran down silently from his mouth, eloquent and shocking. His friends distributed to eager takers, at the very foot of the pillory, a batch of his newest pamphlet. It had just reached London from the printers in Holland, by whose use the pamphleteers evaded Laud's censor. And young Lilburne, at twenty-four, a handsome magnetic youth, whom prison could not silence—(his letters and pamphlets poured forth, there was always someone to smuggle them out for him)—became the favourite martyr-hero of the hour. Especially to the young.

This tide of feeling could hardly go unnoticed and unfelt by the lad George Fox, who was himself, through his mother, "of the stock of the martyrs." But the spring of 1638, which saw the new rector¹ installed at Drayton, the boy George Fox apprenticed to the shoemaker, and the events of disaster to Lilburne, Burton, Bastwick and Prynne, also saw the signing of the Scottish Covenant,² and set the pattern for

¹ Nathaniel Stephens.

² Against Laud's efforts to force the Anglican Church pattern on Scotland.

Laud's downfall and the long-drawn-out fatal struggle between King and Parliament. Two years later, 1640, the new elected "Long" Parliament released Burton, Bastwick and Prynne, and also Lilburne; and Laud was put in the Tower, his power broken forever.

Nathaniel Stephens could now be as Presbyterian as he wished. He had only been Rector of Drayton under Laud for two years.

The hidden groups now came into the open, and met comfortably in each others houses for Bible study and prayer, sometimes discussing pamphlets which poured forth uncensored now, or more ambitious publications, books, deeper than temporary controversy. The leader read aloud, and there was some question and answer. The young George Fox joined in this group and that from time to time—perhaps chiefly in the one that met in his mother's kitchen—listened, tasted new ideas, thereby advanced his education. William Tyndale's classic, *The Obedience of a Christian Man and how Christian Leaders Ought to Govern*, was receiving much attention. It stretched the mind the more because, along with a Calvinistic cast of thought, in Tyndale's marvellous gift for phrase, was found imbedded the theory of the divine right of kings which had first started Henry VIII and now Charles Stuart on self-determination in government permissible to the Lord's anointed. *The Forbidden Fruit* by the German mystic, Sebastian Franck, was translated from the Latin into English in 1640 by John Everard,¹ a member of the Platonist group called the Cambridge Mystics. Perhaps it was George Fox's mother, with her instinct for mysticism, who introduced this book to her son, and to the group which sometimes met in the Fox's house. At all events it is a fact that Everard's book, and also Tyndale's, are among those which George Fox owned, and read.

* * * *

It was not surprising that there was a good deal of sadness in George Fox's backward look. Many memories rose with edges of painful detail. He was a source of inevitable conflict in the family group. "My relations were offended at me."²

¹ Pollard & Redgrave, *Short-title catalogue*, 11324.

² *Journal*, p. 72.

Although now we only remember Christopher and Mary Fox because of their son George, they seemed at the time to have plenty of cause for complaint, and to have right on their side¹. The days of George Fox's apprenticeship were drawing to a close, and yet he seemed to show no sign of taking up any career leading from it. What was he going to do with his life? In September 1643 he relieved the situation on both sides by leaving home to find that out for himself.

An incident sparked off his departure which throws light on Fox's ordinary day-to-day goings on, and his easy, unaffected comradeship with young men of his own age. He never had the exuberant, popular high spirits of St. Augustine, or the witty gaiety which caused the young John Woolman to excel "in the art of foolish jesting." Like Napoleon, he had no humour, and could do without amusement, but he was infallibly interesting. Once the cat-calling of the little boys with whom he would not play, was out-grown, his company was both feared and sought. He provoked a large variety of reactions throughout the course of his life, but boredom was never one of them. So when he came towards nineteen years of age—that is July 1643—"being upon business at a fair" a couple of young men came up to him and invited him to come to the pub and join them in a drink. George readily accepted. He was thirsty in the dusty July market, and the young men were congenial. One was a cousin of his, named Bradford. Both of them attended the same reading and worship groups of "friendly people" as George did. They were "religious professors" therefore, beyond the habitual Church attendance, which was taken for granted. At first all went well, but perhaps Bradford and friend had been drinking before. Anyhow, they were in an excited mood, and when all had enjoyed a glass apiece, the others began to drink healths—perhaps beginning with a toast to George for his birthday. They called for more ale, "agreeing together that he that would not drink should pay [the bill for] all."² George Fox's quick scorn was equalled by his social aplomb. He curtly got up, threw down his groat and said "If that's the

¹ The Lichfield incident belongs to this period but having printed it in the *Friends' Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 5 (Jan. 1963), pp. 202-5, I do not repeat it here.

² *Journal*, p. 3.

way it is, I'll leave you," and walked out. He finished his business in the fair, and went home, but he was deeply disturbed. Was this all that religious profession meant in daily life? (even to a strong professor like cousin Bradford?)

He paced about his room all night (evidence perhaps that he had a room to himself). Within a few weeks he had wound up his affairs and left home for nothing less than the search for truth.

The elder Fox, dictating the memoried event against a background of long years of religious certainty which the youth of the memory had yet, through sweat and tears, to discover, gives the solemn ultimate reason—"At the command of God, I left my relations."¹

The incident in the tavern may indeed have been the last straw in the whole complex of pressures, in which the increasing and terrible impact of public affairs had much to do.

Almost exactly a year before this, Richard Baxter, then fairly new to the charge of the parish at Kidderminster, was filling a friend's pulpit at Alcester on 23rd October when they heard a new sound in England—the heavy reverberation of distant cannon. "About sunset . . . many troops fled through the town, and told us that all was lost on the Parliament side . . . The townsmen sent a messenger to Stratford-upon-Avon to know the certain truth. About four o'clock in the morning the messenger returned and told us [correctly as it turned out] that Prince Rupert wholly routed the left wing of the Earl of Essex's army; but . . . the main body and the right wing routed the rest of the king's army."² The compassionate, victorious amateur general, Essex, his face bleeding from a swordcut, walked among his troops knocking up their weapons, shouting—"Spare your fellow countrymen!"

Baxter rode over at dawn of day to see the battlefield. He found the troops still drawn up about a mile apart, with "about a thousand dead bodies in the field between them."

So the bitterness of war came to the English countryside. "The fury of our own rabble and of the king's soldiers was such that I saw no safety," wrote Baxter, "in staying at home . . . I knew not what course to take. To live at home I

¹ *Journal*, p. 3.

² *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, ed. J. M. W. Thomas, 1925, pp. 41-42.

was uneasy . . . Soldiers on one side or other would be frequently among us, and we must be at the mercy of every furious beast that would make a prey of us. I had neither money nor friends; I knew not who would receive me in any place of safety; nor had I anything to satisfy them for my diet and entertainment.”¹ A friend suggested that he might go to Coventry and earn his way by assisting in the preaching duties of an old acquaintance who was a minister there to the Parliament troops, who were making it a rest headquarters. “So thither I went with a purpose to stay there till one side or the other got the victory and the war was ended, and then to return home again. For so wise in matters of war was I, and all the country beside, that we commonly supposed that a very few days or weeks by *one other* battle would end the wars.”

As war conditions in the midlands intensified, George Fox also was restless at home. But unlike Baxter, he had both money to pay his way and friends to go to, and a deep sense of quest in his travels.

George Fox left home on 9th September 1643, the first time in his record that he has given an exact date. Not even his birthday got anything but the month and year. This is probably an indication that from now on he was using in his dictation a number of old journals—“the little journal books”—not dated with complete care but giving accounts of people, places, and events more or less in order and generally fairly fresh after the event. George Fox left home then with the goodwill of his parents, with a horse and enough money for all his needs. One may say confidently with a horse, because most of the time throughout his journal George Fox customarily made his journeys on horseback, and when we look at his itinerary—Lutterworth, Northampton, Newport Pagnell, Barnet—which he reached in June, 1644, and then on to London, we see that they are all about a day’s ride apart. There was nothing vagabond or haphazard about his behaviour. His programme is described several times. He would go to the house of a “professor”, that is to say a religious group member or leader whom he knew of, and would hire a room; then he would join in the meetings of the group; a quiet, reserved, observant visitor, avoiding intimacy

¹ Baxter, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

with any; and would stay some weeks or months as he felt inclined.

He ignored the fact that he was travelling in a land at war. Yet in the previous Autumn ('42) the midland counties all around Leicestershire as centre, had been organized into an association for the Parliament under Lord Grey:¹ Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Rutland, Northampton, Beds., Bucks., and Huntingdon. The other two adjacent counties to Leicester, Warwick and Staffordshire, were joined in a different group under Lord Brooke, the same that was shot at Lichfield.² The eastern shires organized in an Eastern federation. These associations were mainly for recruiting and training militia. The indeterminate battle of Edgehill³ had been fought near Banbury in October 1642. After that battle Cromwell had taken command of Cambridge, near his home, and fortified it as a centre of recruiting and defence; and the King had taken over Oxford for the duration of the war. (A new conception of Oxford and Cambridge and their importance in national life.) The organized recruiting, however, was a serious matter. Volunteers were sought, and many came. But England had long been accustomed to pressing men for the Navy—catching a likely man in a tavern or wandering along the highways (very seldom were men taken from their work). Now such likely customers were pressed for the Army. Both sides, Royalists and Parliament, went in for the press gang method. A young man, well set up, of military age, particularly one who was obviously officer material, was liable to interference as he went about his own business. It may be that George Fox had to use ingenuity to avoid such encounters more than once. To go away from the too active midlands and take up some definite journey which involved temporary residence in different places was not a bad idea, and linked on with the young man's desire to see the world and to pursue his inward search, away from family pressures.

George Fox had been at Lutterworth a fortnight when the first battle of Newbury Down near Reading, on the wool route to the west, was fought and won by Parliament.⁴

¹ Thomas Grey, baron Grey of Groby; *D.N.B.*

² Robert Greville, 2nd baron Brooke (1608-43); *D.N.B.* See my previous account (*FQ* vol. 14, no. 5, p. 204).

³ The one reported by Baxter.

⁴ 20th September, 1643.

A strange air of unreality, almost play-acting, hung over these earlier battles fought in English fields, each side respecting the other as fellow-sons of the same soil, and yet irrevocably, and in the case of the more intelligent, bitterly, divided on matters that went deep. On the royalist side Prince Rupert, the King's brilliant nephew, come over to help him from abroad, would take his pet white dog with him on to the field. The Parliament soldiers called him the "dibble dogge pudle." (He was killed, poor little beast, at Marston Moor.) Lord Newcastle, royalist Commander-in-Chief, would drive on the field of battle in a coach-and-six, where he would have his refreshments, and from which he would direct the preliminary operations. And there were Parliamentary commanders who would sometimes take time off from desultory pursuit of a retreating enemy for a day of fasting and prayer, especially on a Sunday.

But whatever they did George Fox took no notice, made no comment, was absorbed in his private life. Not that he was the only one. Richard Baxter was scornful of the many thousands throughout England whom he would describe as neuter. Baxter came to take a more tolerant view of them in later life, admitting that there were times when those who had not got a clear opinion at the beginning would find it hard to make up their minds between the statements of the aims of war made by King Charles I on the one hand and Parliamentary leaders on the other. (Some of the latter were plumping for complete Presbyterianism as the established religion of England, and for making everybody take the solemn oath and Covenant in order to go into entire league with the Scots.)

John Lilburne had from the beginning thrown in his part with the Parliament Army, and expressed his religious feeling mainly through political statements couched in biblical terms. Being a brave soldier he had early obtained a captaincy, and had a great deal of influence with the troops. (He was beginning a kind of propaganda which presently led to the formation of the short-lived sect called the Levellers.) John Bunyan also was glad to conduct a holy war in the Army of the Parliament. But George Fox, younger than either of these, was indifferent and "neuter." Yet events and news had their painful impact.

Oliver Cromwell, whom Fox was to know intimately in

later life, had already established a high moral standard for the regiment of a thousand horse which he had recruited in the Eastern Association. In May, before Fox left home, Cromwell had proclaimed that his troops would be fined for swearing, put in the stocks for drunkenness: that looting, or damage to property or person, would be severely punished. And he kept his word, so that "the counties where they come leap for joy at them."

He obtained this high standard, both in camp and in battle, by the unusual course at that time of constant and regular drill. He also provided excellent horses for his Ironsides, and much more regular pay than was at all common in either army. Fox, a lover of horses and an excellent business man himself, must have approved of what he heard in this regard.

It is not impossible that the added conflict of feeling that his life might have more purpose if he joined in the war, had a part in the depression of spirit which accompanied him, and fell on him very darkly when he reached Barnet in June.¹ On 3rd June the King, besieged in Oxford by Essex, got away, and there seemed a down turn for the Parliamentary cause, a time when people hitherto "neuter" might rally to the help of what they thought the right side. And since Cromwell had been at Nottingham through part of May, recruiting and drilling, and talking his lofty, passionate propaganda, George Fox might have received word from home and friends thereabout that gave interesting and stimulating sidelights on the character of the new leader and of his Ironsides. Travellers from north and midlands to London were constantly coming through Barnet.

In the first week of July news came down from the north of the great victory of Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides in the battle of Marston Moor. This battle was decisive in breaking the royalist forces and especially the powerful cavalry of Prince Rupert. When the troops lined up at Marston Moor, among the crops and hedges and difficult lanes and ditches for the Roundheads, and open moorland giving first advantage to the royalist troops, Prince Rupert anxiously enquired whether Cromwell had come to this fight, and took pains to draw up his cavalry immediately

opposite so that it might be a duel between him and Ironside horse. He lost. And Cromwell's name became magnetic to ardent young religious patriots throughout the land. Perhaps this was one of the "temptations" that Fox mentions, without specifying what they were, that tore him spiritually at Barnet. He walked day by day in the Chase wrestling with the Devil, although George Fox is not one who uses that word often. "But temptations grew more and more and I was tempted almost to despair, and when Satan could not effect his design upon me that way, then he laid snares for me and baits to draw me to commit some sin, whereby he might take advantage to bring me to despair. I was about twenty years of age when these exercises came upon me . . . And I went to many a priest to look for comfort but found no comfort . . . And sometimes I kept myself retired in my chamber, and often walked solitary in the Chase, there to wait upon the Lord. And I wondered why these things should come to me; and I looked upon myself and said: 'Was I ever so before?' Then I thought, because I had forsaken my relations I had done amiss against them; so I was brought to call to mind all my time that I had spent and to consider whether I had wronged any."¹

He came to the conclusion, with his sturdy common sense, that though he had hurt his family, specifically his mother, by coming away from home and staying away so long, he had not done wrong in it. He wrote a letter to give his mother some comfort. But he was not yet ready to return. He still hoped that by living away from all his old associations and all their influences, making acquaintance with strangers, and seeing different landscapes, he might give a new life a chance to burgeon within him. At any rate he would have more of a chance to come to a conclusion of his own. He was evidently a source of great interest to those among whom he lived, and they would gladly have drawn him into closer fellowship. But he was wary of falling under the influence of any person, or joining up with any meeting or group. He perceived that they had not got what he was looking for.

In the Autumn, a wet and chilly season of fog and mist, he went on to London "where I took a lodging, and was

¹ *Journal*, p. 4, with sentences in a different order.

under great misery and trouble there . . . I saw all was dark." Yet here he had not only friendly acquaintance but kinsfolk. There was his Uncle Pickering and family. The important thing about Uncle Pickering was not what he did for a living, or what his status was in the city, but that he was a Baptist. Perhaps George stayed at his Uncle Pickering's. He does not say whether he did or not. But certainly through him and his family Fox was very closely in touch here with the local group. The Baptists were now a strong sect, and Fox felt that he had much in common with them. "They were a tender people then." Yet there was something lacking. One barrier was that he could not feel intimacy with his Uncle. Problems of opinion or of career remained still undiscussed. The looked-for advice was either not given or was inappropriate. "I could not impart my mind to him nor join with them, for I saw all, young and old, where they were . . . [And] I looked upon the great professors of the city of London, and I saw all was dark and under the chain of darkness."¹

Why did Fox find London so dark?

That winter, 1644-45, the King's Commissioners were at Uxbridge. The Scottish and Parliament Commissioners were treating with him. His case was desperate. To win them (and the Scots were his only hope) Charles was making wide promises of allowing the Presbyterian Church to be the dominant church in England, stipulating for full recognition also of his beloved Anglican Church. Such an arrangement would logically entail recognition of others, in fact a general toleration of the main sects, of which Baptists were the chief. So the negotiations ended in deadlock. The war must go on.

Parliament in London was adopting a New Model Army to be organized on a national instead of a regional basis, but to be on the pattern of Cromwell's Ironsides; regular pay, good horses for the cavalry, and fine red coats for a dress uniform. They called it *pro tem.* the Auxiliary Band among the Soldiery. Men were being pressed for its service in every part of England, since numbers were essential, but volunteers were coming in well. Sir Thomas Fairfax, whom everybody liked and trusted, was named Commander-in-Chief. (King Charles II many years later told Pepys, when he dictated to

¹ *Journal*, p. 4.

him the story of his adventure after his escape from the Battle of Worcester, how one day he found himself with his attendant friend (both in disguise) in a town which proved full of "Cromwell's Redcoats.")

But the chief talk of the streets and the pulpits was the bitterness and the hate fanned up by the long-drawn-out trial of Archbishop Laud. Prynne, chief counsel for the prosecution, disfigured as he was for life by Laud's pillory, gave no example of Christian charity, but bullied and rated the dignified prisoner, interrupted his slow, scholarly periods, had him waked up at night to give up his papers, and tired him out by day. Laud had been cruel in his time, fair enough. But the revenge spread darkness rather than light.

The event that was most noticed by the citizens of London, 'prentices and aldermen, Bishops and Baptists, including Uncle Pickering and most surely by the young Fox, was the execution of Archbishop Laud on 10th January, 1645.¹ Men were presently to say of King Charles I that nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it. What then of the Archbishop, so bigoted and cruel (chiefly responsible for the burning alive of the last religious victim to be so treated, just before the birth of George Fox, in the horrified town of Lichfield) how would he behave when himself on the scaffold? At his trial he had given voice to the sentiment that had made the iron hand in his policy, a deep-rooted part of his conviction, irreconcilable with the new spirit of religious variety, if not religious freedom—"I have ever been of the opinion that laws bind the conscience." Now he came before the crowd to die by the axe, the old man, maintaining the dignity of a Prince of the Church, shivering in the cold blast of the January day; and, allowed the customary freedom of last words, he made a speech which contained these words—"Good people, this is an uncomfortable time to preach! I thank God, though the weight of the sentence lie heavy upon me, I am as quiet within as ever I was in my life."

When Spring came and the roads were open—such rough paths as they were, fetlock deep in mud, you often did not know if you were on the track or on a ploughed field—George Fox obeyed fresh letters and turned homewards, among the early buds of green, the mating birds.

¹ 1644 O.S.

And so at last came back to Leicestershire and Drayton-in-the-Clay.

What had he to tell them of his year and a half of apprenticeship to life—new scenes, different habits, fresh acquaintance, contact with different minds and other points of view? The crushing temptations during the long stay at Barnet—perhaps confided to his mother only; or perhaps to none. And last the disappointment over Uncle Pickering, and the saddening overwhelming impact of London, where the best religious teachers of England were holding forth to large congregations (the brand-new Puritan Church Order replacing the Prayer Book) and offering, from George Fox's point of view, a stone of harsh doctrine instead of the Bread of Life.

After the welcome and delight of George's return, the anxious parents set themselves once more to the problem of their son's future. He was not willing to use his technical apprenticeship in organizing his father's wool and weaving trade, nor was he ready to take over the orchards and small farm. He still asked for more time to explore his vocation. To settle himself. An unsettled young man is often settled by marriage, with its joys and comforts, and responsibilities assumed for the lives of others. So that was the first proposition made to him; and no doubt there was an attractive candidate, perhaps one known from childhood. But George Fox rejected this as being not yet ready for it. Then why not join the Auxiliary Band among the soldiery as many young men among his acquaintance were doing? The New Model Army? Regular pay, an active adventurous life, with an army group that was as sober and godly as a Church? Called themselves a Church! In any case he ran the risk of being pressed for service. But Fox rejected this plan also.

Then what would he do? It was hard to say. He had served his technical apprenticeship and acquired some skills; he had served a second session of apprenticeship in the ways of the world, a modest equivalent of the rich man's grand tour. But he still had more to learn; to explore and find out matters too deep to explain. He rode away to Coventry, to re-establish his independence, and escape the sense of their disappointment. And after a while among congenial friends there (not including Baxter, whom he did not know) he went back home again, that they might feel comfortable. So he

lived at home for "about a year",¹ helpful in many ways to his father, an obedient son in daily life; "easy, modest, gentle, tender," as Penn said; but needing freedom and time to pursue the necessity of his further self-education, in the quest of nothing less than certainty.

No youth apprentice now, but a man, with a man's stern honesty and a man's power to suffer. As he enters the awful experience of the dark night of the soul, from which he was to emerge at last with a triumphant revelation that revives our hearts today, he is a leader to be proud of.

* * * *

It is a curious fact that we very seldom get a description from his contemporaries of the appearance of a great man. It is to Thomas Ellwood that we are indebted for a description of George Fox's appearance. "Graceful he was in countenance, manly in personage, grave in gesture, courteous in conversation . . . free from affectation in speech or carriage."²

¹ *Journal*, p. 5.

² *Journal*, 1694, Folio ed., p. xvi.

James Jenkins in 1824

FRIENDS who have enjoyed reading the thousand-page manuscript called *The Records and Recollections 1761-1821* of James Jenkins (c. 1753-1831) or the excerpts from it printed in *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, Vol. 36 (1902) or in Norman Penney's *Pen Pictures of London Yearly Meeting* (1930) may have wondered what became of him. He himself relates (p. 983) that in 1819 he resigned from the Stock Exchange and moved to Folkestone.

As he was a member of Devonshire House Meeting and related to the Quaker Head family, it is not surprising to find a reference to him in the correspondence of my ancestors. Whether the tragic event described is otherwise reported, I do not know.

Elizabeth Head Cadbury wrote from Islington Row, [Birmingham], 2 mo. 2nd 1824, to Caroline Cadbury of Philadelphia, who was both her daughter-in-law (wife of Joel Cadbury of Philadelphia) and her niece (daughter of John Warder and Ann Head Warder), as follows: (*Family Letters and Portraits*, edited by Walter Barrow and W. A. Cadbury, Vol. 1, 1910). The letter is addressed "Joel Cadbury, Philadelphia, for C.C. Canada via N. York." . . . We have an affecting account of the failure of James Jenkins, Jun^r who has ruined his father, his bro' Edward & himself by doing what is call'd "time business" in the stocks. It is much to be regretted that although J. Jenkins, sen^r has long been out of the concern, yet no legal dissolution of partnership ever took place, so that every farthing of this wealthy man's property is gone with his sons'. They have an old servant, Susan, who [*sic*] my dear sister will remember, who has lived with them 40 years, and she and her master were living together at Folkestone, her hard earned savings are gone with the rest, & James Jun^r who is a widower with 9 children from this act is disabled from ever going on the stock exchange again. This is another instance of the fatal effects of gambling, some of which you have no doubt seen something of in our papers which was full of them lately of the murder near Hertford.

HENRY J. CADBURY

The Mystery of Swarthmoor Hall

THE recent death of Isabel Ross, a former President of the Friends' Historical Society, will have led some readers to turn back to her book *Margaret Fell, Mother of Quakerism* (1949). This admirable biography was the result of many years of research and sifting of records, and there is probably no source touching on the Fell family that Isabel Ross left untapped. There was, however, one problem that continued to baffle her—the problem as to just what view should be taken of the dispute between Margaret Fell and her son George as to the rightful ownership of Swarthmoor Hall.¹

To Isabel Ross this was not a question of purely academic interest. For if in fact her famous ancestress had unfairly deprived the son of what was rightfully his, then this might well affect our whole judgment of Margaret Fell's character. I remember a conversation with Isabel Ross in which she confessed her misgivings, and although this does not appear in her book, there is no doubt that she was troubled by them. I am sorry that I was not able, at the time, to do more than make a few generalizations, which may or may not have comforted her. But recently I have had another look at the problem, and it does seem as though a rather different line of approach might enable us to form a clearer judgment of the rights and wrongs of the case. I offer what follows, therefore, as a tribute to Isabel Ross's memory.

JUDGE FELL'S WILL

The mystery begins with Thomas Fell's Will,² which he made in September 1658, only a week or two before his death. The language of the Will is perfectly plain and straightforward, and it *appears* to do three things:

1. It gives to his widow, Margaret Fell, Swarthmoor Hall, with its gardens, and 50 acres of ground, "so long as she shall continue and remain in my name, and as my widow, and unmarried to any other, and no longer, in hopes that she

¹ The questions involved were previously discussed, and many of the original documents quoted, in three articles by Norman Penney, "George Fell and the Story of Swarthmoor Hall" in the *Jnl.F.H.S.* for 1932-34, xxix, 51-61; xxx, 28-39; xxxi, 27-35.

² Printed in full in Ross, *Margaret Fell*, Appendix Ten, pp. 398-400.

will be careful and loving unto my poor fatherless children."

2. Except for a number of legacies and bequests, it gives "the residue and remainder of my real and personal estate" equally between his seven daughters.

3. By necessary implication, therefore, it gives nothing whatever, apart from a legacy of books, to the only son George Fell.

Now it has long been recognized that this cannot really have been how Judge Fell's property devolved. A hundred years ago, John Abraham of Liverpool (Isabel Ross's grandfather), was voicing his doubts.¹ Apart from anything else, the behaviour of the persons involved in the subsequent dispute is quite inconsistent with the proposition that George Fell's sole claim derived from the Royal Grant made in 1665 (to be discussed later). In fact, before there was any such grant, there is evidence that George Fell had a considerable interest in the estate; for example, he was in receipt of rents,² and his signature was required to a lease to his sister.³

A lawyer consulted by John Abraham in 1865⁴ suggested that there might have been previous settlements of the estate, under which George Fell derived his interest. This seems to me unlikely, as there is no reference to such documents, either in his father's Will or subsequently. A simpler explanation is this. In the seventeenth century, although land might legally be left away from the eldest or only son, this was still an unnatural and extraordinary proceeding, which would require the clearest and most positive language to make it effective. When therefore Judge Fell used the words "the residue and remainder of my real and personal estate," he was not referring to his landed estate, and no one would have taken him as doing so; what he was referring to was his property other than land; the word "real" was inserted to catch any property of this nature which owing to some peculiarity of tenure might technically be realty. Similarly, the gift to his widow was not intended to be an absolute one, but only an interest for life; and this is confirmed by the proviso which was inserted, that it was to cease on her

¹ Ross, *Margaret Fell*, p. 123.

² *Ibid.*, p. 187. Cf. *J.F.H.S.*, xxix, 1932, p. 57, and Ross, *Margaret Fell*, p. 134.

³ *J.F.H.S.*, xxix, 1932, p. 58.

⁴ Ross, *Margaret Fell*, p. 123.

re-marriage. On this hypothesis, Judge Fell's landed estate passed, by the laws of inheritance, to George Fell as heir-at-law (subject to any customary rights of the widow and the other children), and did not pass under the Will at all.

This fits in with what appears to have happened, namely, that a considerable part of the rents of his father's property were paid to the son from the beginning. Just what his sisters' rights or interest may have been we have no certain means of telling. But as to his mother's interests, some facts are clear. At the time of her trial in 1664 she stated positively, when she was threatened with forfeiture of her estate, that "my estate is but a widow's estate," and again "my estate is a dowry."¹ This, in the seventeenth century, would convey a precise meaning, namely, that she had an interest for life in a third of her husband's landed estate.

Normally, this would not have included the use of the husband's mansion or principal dwelling-house, which would have gone at once to the heir; but the provision in the Will made it clear that Judge Fell wished his widow to have this, and the words quoted above imply that she regarded it as part of her dowry, and if so, her other receipts would have been adjusted accordingly. It seems fairly clear that this was the legal position.

George Fell, on his side, appears, at the time, to have accepted the position with a good grace. It probably suited him well to live in London, enjoying the income remitted to him from Swarthmoor by his mother and sisters, and leaving to them the responsibility (which they were quite willing and able to undertake) of managing the estate. Though he had no sympathy with their Quakerism, his personal relations with them remained for some time cordial and affectionate, apart from any friction caused by their disapproval of his and his wife's extravagance.

MARGARET FELL'S *PRAEMUNIRE*

In 1664 Margaret Fell came under sentence of praemunire, of which one of the consequences was that the whole of her estate was forfeited to the King, and could be disposed of at his pleasure. This catastrophe was not unexpected, and it would be likely that any property of which she was free to dispose would already have been made over by her to her

¹ Ross, *Margaret Fell*, pp. 172 and 177.

daughters.¹ But there remained her "dowry," that is, her life interest in Swarthmoor Hall and other parts of her husband's landed estate. Some action with regard to this was urgently needed, as there were many hangers-on of the King constantly on the look-out for forfeited estates which he might be persuaded to grant to them.

The danger was averted when George Fell successfully petitioned the King to have his mother's estate granted to him.² I share the view of those who regard this as a friendly rather than a hostile action on the part of the son. It is true that in his petition he speaks in a somewhat unfilial manner of his mother and her Quaker activities. But he had no doubt been advised that it was essential for him to disavow completely any personal connection with Quakerism, and that the more disparaging he was, the more conviction his disavowal would carry.

After the grant to George Fell, there was some discussion in the family as to whether he would wish to take up residence at Swarthmoor Hall,³ but there is no evidence that he did wish to do this. He continued for some time living in London, still on friendly terms with his sisters,⁴ who retained possession of the Hall during their mother's imprisonment, from 1664 to 1668.

MARGARET FELL'S RE-MARRIAGE

What apparently changed George Fell's attitude was the combination of two events, his coming to live in Furness, and his mother's marriage to George Fox. About six miles west of Swarthmoor Hall was another house, Marsh Grange, which, though originally in Margaret's family, had passed to her husband Thomas Fell as part of his wife's property, and her interest in it after his death was limited to her "dowry" of one third. George Fell's financial difficulties were now presumably such as to make it desirable for him to live out of London, and it was agreed that he and his family should

¹ In 1669, when considering his proposed marriage to Margaret Fell, George Fox asked the daughters whether they would suffer loss if their mother re-married, and whether she had made provision for them. "And the children made answer and said she had doubled it" (*Journal*, Ed. Nickalls, p. 554). This must mean that the daughters had received a good deal of property from their mother, at one time or another; there is other evidence that all the sisters were possessed of independent means.

² *Extracts from State Papers*, edited by Norman Penney, 1913, pp. 227-8.

³ *J.F.H.S.*, 1933, xxx, p. 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

occupy Marsh Grange. The fact that he regarded this as a matter requiring agreement indicates again that the King's grant was thought of by him not as conferring any personal benefit on him, but as held for the benefit of the family. It is clear that although George Fell afterwards attempted to repudiate it, a written agreement was made,¹ which in some way compensated his mother for the loss of her income from Marsh Grange; it is natural to suppose that this was contained in the two deeds executed at this time, the contents of which we know from the reference to them in a later conveyance,² though the documents themselves are lost. This reference, as it has not previously been printed, should be given in full. It excepts, from the land conveyed:

such parcells of the said premises as by two severall Indentures made or mentioned to be made the fifth and sixth days of March which was in the Eighteenth yeare of the Reign of his late Majesty King Charles the second [1666] betweene the said George Fell deceased of the one part and the said Margaret Fox mother of the said George Fell of the other part were limited assigned granted and demised to the said Margaret Fell in lieu and satisfaction of the dower of the said Margaret or otherwise for the better and more perfect assuring such annual or yearly payments as are therein mentioned and expressed to be granted and payable to the said Margaret and her assigns.

The "parcells" comprised in the deed are probably not Swarthmoor Hall, but some minor part of the estate, which, in accordance with current conveyancing practice, would be charged to secure the carrying-out of George Fell's undertaking as to the payment of income to his mother.

The son's change of residence had, however, an unfortunate result. While he was living in London, the doings of his family, at the other end of England, had little importance to him; they would be known to few of his acquaintances, and could be ignored. At Marsh Grange he was thrown into association with the neighbouring gentry, and quickly found that they regarded the Quaker activities of Swarthmoor Hall as something of a public scandal: this feeling was intensified when his mother was released—too speedily as the local gentry thought³—from her imprisonment, and at once resumed her illegal holding of meetings.

¹ See letters of 23rd and 25th December 1669, quoted in *J.F.H.S.*, xxx, 1933, pp. 33-36.

² Conveyance of Swarthmoor estate in 1691 to Daniel Abraham, now at Friends House, London (in the care of Friends Trusts Ltd).

³ *Extracts from State Papers*, p. 277.

The growing antagonism of the son towards the mother found a handle in her marriage with George Fox in October 1669. It has been suggested that the marriage was felt to be a social humiliation; however this may be, it would certainly be regarded as an open defiance of the local opposition to Quakerism. George Fell must have been urged on all sides to end the situation by taking possession of Swarthmoor Hall himself. The threat was made that unless Margaret left Swarthmoor Hall she would be re-imprisoned, under the old *praemunire* sentence, and although it is not certain that George Fell approved of this threat, he certainly reported it to his mother's advisers;¹ he had now determined to eject her, by whatever means he could contrive.

The crucial question therefore arises, and this is the question that caused Isabel Ross concern: had George Fell the right to take this action, and if so, was his mother justified in resisting him? We are hampered, in our consideration of this, by having only one side of the case presented to us; we do not know just what the son's contention was, nor the arguments upon which he based it. The best indication of them is to be found in the reports of John Rous's interviews with George Fell in December 1669.² John Rous seems to have been the only member of the family to have approached his brother-in-law in a "tender" spirit, or to have tried in any way to win his confidence. It is clear that George Fell still did not base any claim on the King's grant; he was apparently prepared to waive this, and to rely on his mother's forfeiture of her interests as a result of her re-marriage.

Even so, he did not claim that she had forfeited *all* her interests. Although he disputed the validity of the agreement mentioned above, he offered to make her an allowance of £200³ a year, a substantial sum for those days, and one that cannot have come far short of a third of the income of the estate, which would represent a widow's full dowry.⁴

¹ *J.F.H.S.*, xxx, 1933, p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-6 (Letters from Rous and Geo. Fox). The information in Rous's own letter is clearer than that in Fox's. No one has yet explained how Margaret could have "lost her right by building," or what building she did!

³ The figure of £100 a year given in Ross, *Margaret Fell*, p. 221, should be corrected.

⁴ By way of comparison, it may be mentioned that the purchase price of the whole estate in 1691 was £4,500. This price did not, however, include Marsh Grange.

But he insisted that she should give up Swarthmoor Hall, his most telling argument doubtless being the expressed wish of his father that she should only have the use of it while she remained unmarried.

WHAT SHOULD OUR JUDGMENT BE?

Having put George Fell's position as well as we can, in the absence of any express statement by him, let us now put Margaret's side of the case. I think this would probably have been summed up as follows:

1. You know well that Swarthmoor Hall is particularly precious to me, not only for its own sake, but as a centre for Friends, and that no monetary payment could compensate me for it. If, therefore, you admit that I am still entitled to some portion of my dowry in spite of my re-marriage, it is unconscionable and unnatural to refuse to let me have it in the form in which it will be of most value to me.

2. The provision in my first husband's Will as to my giving up Swarthmoor Hall was intended to apply to quite different circumstances. If my second husband had been a man with an estate elsewhere, or, alternatively, a man who wished to live at my expense, it would be reasonable, in my daughters' interests, for me to leave Swarthmoor Hall. But as it is, no such question can arise, and I am convinced that Thomas Fell would have approved my continued occupation of it, as my daughters do.

3. When the arrangement was made between us that you should live at Marsh Grange, you appeared entirely satisfied with this. It is only your association with our hostile neighbours that has caused you to change your mind. This shows again that your desire to turn me out is not founded on justice and reason, but on caprice and animosity.

Put in this way, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Margaret Fox had an unassailable moral case for resisting her son's demand, and we need not hesitate to be glad that she was able to do so successfully. For before George Fell could commence any legal action, he died, on 14th October 1670. He had evidently been ill for some time, and this, together with his financial worries, must mitigate any harsh judgment we might be inclined to pass on him. He left an infant son; and his widow, who had shared his animosity, continued to claim possession of Swarthmoor

Hall, though without attempting any decisive action. The dispute was only finally settled when Daniel Abraham, the husband of Margaret's youngest daughter, purchased the whole estate in 1691, and the interests of all members of the family were bought out.¹

There is one further problem on which a few words may be said. When Margaret Fox was finally released from her imprisonment under the praemunire sentence, in 1671, she was given an official pardon, and a grant was made of her estate to two of her daughters, Susannah and Rachel.² The question has been asked, first, how could this be done when the King had already granted her estate to George Fell, and secondly, why he did not make the grant back to her, instead of to her daughters.

The answer to the first question is clearly that the grant to George Fell had come to an end on his death; it was a grant to him personally, not to him "and his heirs." The second question is more puzzling; I believe the solution may be that any grant back to Margaret would be in effect (as married women could not hold property) a grant to her husband George Fox, and that Fox had always desired to obtain as little financial advantage as possible from his marriage,³ and therefore wished the grant to be to two of the unmarried daughters.

It is interesting that although Fox did not counsel his wife to submit to her son's demands, he was anxious that she should not reach a frame of mind in which she was attaching undue importance to earthly possessions, even so precious a possession as Swarthmoor Hall. The key-note of his advice is in the words:

"As concerning the house, keep over it."

ALFRED W. BRAITHWAITE

¹ I think we must discount the statement, made by James Lancaster, that George Fell admitted that the "title" to Swarthmoor Hall was in his mother and not in him (Ross, *Margaret Fell*, p. 225). We do not know the context of this "admission," nor what George Fell intended to convey by it. He may have meant only that he could not legally dispossess his mother without a court action.

² *Extracts from State Papers*, pp. 329-30.

³ Cf. Ross, *Margaret Fell*, pp. 214-15.

The Quietism of Isaac Penington

A Study based on his Pamphlets of 1648-1650

ISAAC Penington (1616-79), is the most impressive mystic the Society of Friends has known. Among the leaders of seventeenth-century Quakerism he placed greatest emphasis on the retired life with its discipline of self-denial, meditation and writing to support the uncertain seeker. He was the first effective spokesman for the contemplative side of Quaker life, and while not in disagreement with George Fox, he favoured less the active reformism that made Fox the undoubted leader of the Society. Penington seldom travelled in the ministry, regarding his Buckinghamshire house, the Grange, as a proper centre for worship and retreat. Even after losing this property, he remained in the neighbourhood, inhabiting houses which also served as retreats. The imprisonments which he was so ready to accept confirmed a solitary determination to testify against the world in his own way. The fruits of these long-withdrawn periods are found in the many Quaker pamphlets he issued between 1658, the year he joined the movement, and 1679, when he died. They show remarkable spiritual perception, evidently the work of strong inspiration, and they are well known under their seventeenth-century collected title, *The Works of the Long Mournful and Sorely Distressed Isaac Penington* (1681). But there is another forgotten side to Penington's writing, more daring and trenchant in manner, the work of an earlier period between 1648 and 1656, when he was still uncertain of what religious position to take. Like so many who eventually became Quakers, Penington searched assiduously among churches and sects which finally brought him to the followers of Fox. Their way gave him full satisfaction, and his Quaker pamphlets have a certainty and consistency of viewpoint lacking in the earlier series. But as records of doubt and search, and of urgent grappling with religious questions, the early pamphlets have a special interest. They are invaluable for those interested in the forming mind of a Puritan mystic. The remarks in this paper are therefore confined to the pamphlets of 1648, 1649 and 1650, the crucial years leading into the Commonwealth, and for Penington the years of greatest stress and uncertainty. The pamphlets

contain a kind of confession that emerges when they are read in sequence. They are both personal and impersonal, noting directions of change, not merely in his own views but in the views of his Puritan countrymen as they sought a basis for life without king or established church. He was extremely close to the radical element and his pamphlets mirror developments within the various branches of the reform party. As straight commentary on events they deserve more attention than they have had. But they are of interest in a still more significant way: they tell us something profound about seventeenth-century spirituality and despair. The background of Penington's mysticism requires examination before his position among the first Quaker writers can be fully appreciated. Penington was above all a quietist, whose concern was devotional. How this came about is largely explained by his early tracts, seen in connection with the known biographical facts. What we find is reformist zeal gradually modified by doubts about human nature until it turns into almost total otherworldliness. Penington learned despair of the world by bitter observation and experience. His quietism represents a side of the Puritan tradition that should not be overlooked.

Penington was among the articulate Puritans whose disillusionment with affairs of state promoted mystical withdrawal into the privacy of their inner lives and sometimes into the sects. The considerable movement in that direction showed frustration with political actualities. Whether it was the building of a Christian Utopia proposed by Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers or the singular act of John Saltmarsh who used his chaplaincy in the New Model Army to issue a prophetic warning to Oliver Cromwell, the intention was the same. The world as it was had to be repudiated before a better one could be built. The struggle for liberty of conscience was itself a source of frustration giving rise to extreme forms of protestantism, and this could only prompt some to look beyond human society to an ideal spiritual resolution of its differences. Penington's pamphlets speak for those who in their reaction to religious and political distress set out on a mystical quest for timeless unity. Direct contact with the divine through illumination promised hope of rest; yet the radical Puritan who sought eternity within time was both a separatist and

separatism's most fervent opponent. He was caught in a paradox of extremes preventing compromise, so that when the revolution entered its Protectorate phase all that he could do was to cherish the light already shown to him and look to its source for more. He had to live at the very edge of consciousness where the human and divine grow indistinct; he had sought to convince others of the rightness of his way in a desperate attempt to restore Christian unity. But the harder he pressed, supported by private illumination, the more fixed in a misunderstood minority position he found himself. Suspicion and mistrust were often the results of his labours. This was a typical situation in religious minorities, and it was certainly Penington's. Hence the vigour of his self-examination and questioning of positions taken by others; but doubt did not answer his need. Some kind of certainty growing out of private illumination had to be reached. Private certainties lent little stability; a society of the like-minded who spoke for basic Puritan aims in the language of mysticism could sustain him. A society of quiet people removed from the world is what he envisaged as political hope dwindled; what would seem excessive concern with the Ranters is evidence of this.

Penington was destined for Quakerism from the beginning; he had long been preparing for the decisive meeting at John Crook's in 1658. Joining the community of worship relieved him of his extreme minority position and stabilized his thought. There was nothing left for him to do. Cromwell's death in 1658 intensified religious confusion and made it less likely that the paradox of sectarianism would be resolved in a godly state. All that could be hoped was that a witness would be kept to the truth that had been seen. As his letters to Richard Cromwell show, Penington was among the first to see that the chance for a full-scale spiritualization of life had been lost. The work now was to salvage the pure seed and nourish it quietly. Thus Penington moved cautiously with a sense of the limitations upon him when he joined the Friends. The increasing quietism of the early pamphlets prepared for the contemplative Quakerism Penington adopted. Complete disengagement from politics may have seemed artificial but it is what he came to want. Abandonment of self-will to the divine was the only cure for perverse human nature, an attitude not at all unique. His had been

a species of the spiritual withdrawal found elsewhere in seventeenth-century literature, for example, in the poetry of George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and Andrew Marvell. Their desire was for inner solitude in the midst of national chaos, and physical removal to houses in the country played a necessary part. Penington began his return from this mystical alienation to give his talent as a publicist to the growing sect. But his message is always one of inward search for self-knowledge, for contemplative quietism and separateness from the world. It is a quietism based on reservations about both reformed and orthodox religion that became serious enough to make us wonder whether his unstated aim was not a kind of spiritual self-annihilation. The early pamphlets help explain this dark side of his religion, but they lead directly to the first attempts at consolidating his mature views in *The Life of a Christian* (1653) and *Divine Essays* (1654), pamphlets which lie just outside the time of crisis. This discussion, therefore, stops short of them in the hope of making plain the stages through which he passed in the years of greatest flux.

Why was Penington not more eager to join in the main action of Puritan reform? Why did he turn away from the very resolution that promised a rule of saints? His special position as a doubter, who nevertheless had the revolution's aims at heart, can be seen as a reaction to his father, Alderman Isaac Penington, an influential parliamentarian from the City of London and a prime mover in the struggle to destroy episcopacy and monarchy. Not only did Alderman Penington use his connections among City merchants and Independent churchmen to raise money for the Parliamentary army, he took an active part in carrying out reforms. He championed the extirpation of Popish tendencies in the church, and it was with satisfaction that when Archbishop Laud went to the scaffold in 1645 Alderman Penington conducted him there. His reforming zeal led him into complicity in the execution of Charles I four years later, though charges to that effect were never fully proven. He was clearly among the harsher kind of Puritans who were willing to do the Lord's work swiftly with force. From this practice the younger Penington dissented, mourning over his father's mistaken use of power. A quietist from the start, there is nothing to show the least sympathy with militant politics; reform was necessary, but

the coercive methods being used were wrong. Had the younger Penington viewed the workings of the revolution from a greater distance he might not have been so disturbed by them; as it was he mistrusted the whole programme. Thus, while acquiring radical convictions naturally, he modified the punitive Calvinism of his father into a gentler religion of love and despair. Penington developed a quietist Puritanism through mystical submission to the will of God. Contemplation and attendance on the Holy Spirit were substituted for the aggressive headlong action of the Puritan men of power and for the fanaticism urged by those who knew they would never have power. Penington's dominantly inward religion, springing from an overwhelming sense of immanence, fills everything he wrote with prophetic ardour that combines with the shrewd incisiveness of his social observation. He could be both prophetic and sharply analytic, both hopeful for the millennium and darkly pessimistic about the ability of man to heed the signs of God. His language typically opposes the paradisaical imagery of light, life and love to that of darkness and negation. The difficulties of resolving himself about the perfectibility of God-ordained human institutions were almost insuperable and the tensions set up by his inner debate gives his prose its urgency.

Some of the reasons for the neglect of Penington's pre-Quaker pamphlets are evident. Although he was deeply concerned with national affairs he was never a public figure. His detachment conferred advantages, but it prevented him from strongly influencing the debates which shaped national policy. Further, as the chances of complete reform in church and state diminished, his embracing of apocalyptic and then mystical religion, leading to his joining an oppressed minority that had little hope of political influence after the restoration, put him outside the circles of greatest influence. As a pamphleteer he was caught up in the excitement of the Puritan revolution and its aftermath, yet in the actual events of the day he stood well to one side as a commentator and man of conscience. The activists, like Prynne, Cromwell, Lilburne and Milton, who carried into the public arena their reformism in religion and radicalism in politics, deserve their prominence, but Penington's significance should not be underestimated. In his hope to see the revolution perfected without loss of principle, he sought to guide the activists

from behind the scenes, reminding them what their true mission was, how God's will for the nation was to be interpreted and how original Puritan idealism might be preserved amidst the confusion of political upheaval. These were his aims when he emerged in print in 1648. The revolution was all but accomplished and the Commonwealth about to be set up, as debate about forms of government raged. He had long been watching events in London and had good reason to doubt whether the final phase of revolution would meet the high expectations held for them. But the revolution took its downward course despite his warnings, and his importance as a theoretician of political reform remained small. Nevertheless, Penington's writing had considerable impact on sectarians and did much to shape their thought by reasserting what was best in early Puritanism and linking it with the European mystical tradition. His pamphlets successfully turned attention to an inward religion offering more than mere separation from the Church of England. But most important, they helped re-evaluate the assumptions underlying religious developments of his time; his doubts were as important as his certainties and they contribute greatly to our understanding of why, instead of the Puritan millennium, a plurality of sects carried its much-diminished programme into the Restoration period.

Misgivings about the future of reformist Puritanism pervade Penington's writings. The search for Christianity, qualitatively different from the one that had produced warring factions, was announced in *A Touchstone or Tryall of Faith* (1648): "It is high time to look out after some other place and certainty of entertainment there, when this earth by its continuall shaking and cracking under us, doth so often threaten that it will not long support us."¹ Penington wanted the settling of affairs in the state according to the highest principles of brotherhood and, if that was impossible, he wanted an alternative community where brotherhood could be attained. Thus a Quaker quietism is anticipated in his first pamphlet. Indeed we find a shocked sense of the revolution's destruction of Christian unity throughout the pamphlets. The central argument of *A Touchstone* is that a

¹ Penington, *A Touchstone or Tryall of Faith, By The Originall from whence it springs, and the Root out of which it grows*, 1648, Sig. A2. [Wing, *Short-title catalogue* . . . 1641-1700, P 1216].

complete rebirth and change of direction would be necessary before Puritan ideals could be realized. This pamphlet's theme is spiritual rebirth, taking as its central text John i. 12, 13 to make an unfavourable comparison of observed Christian practice with that of primitive times. Although the tone of the pamphlet is not despairing, the difficulties in the way of personal rebirth, which would necessarily precede national rebirth, are recognized as formidable. But there remained a hope that men would want to change for the better. It is in the next pamphlet that this hope seems to have been dashed; there is not a more powerful confession of pessimism in Puritan literature than Penington's second public utterance, almost certainly inspired by the abrupt dislodgement of the monarchy.

In 1649, the year of the King's execution, Penington's view of human nature reached its darkest. Perhaps no event of the revolutionary period caused such a lasting sense of horror mingled with excitement as did the judicial murder of Charles I. Many in the reform party were appalled by the lengths to which a minority had gone in the supposed service of principle. Although Penington does not refer to it directly, the regicide undoubtedly convinced him that divisive forces had triumphed; his reaction was immediate and profound. The settling of the new Jerusalem could not now be looked for until there had been a thoroughgoing change of heart, an honest confrontation of the human situation. The resulting pamphlet, portentously called *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times Represented in a Mapp of Miserie: or A Glimpse of the Heart of Man* (1649) vigorously analyses the distempers which had led to spiritual breakdown in the revolutionary party. The pamphlet is explosive with the fierce energy of disillusionment, and yet it pleads again for rebirth in the spirit. The manner is bold and incisive, marking a change from the preceding pamphlet which had been "Intended Not for the disquiet of any . . ." Penington's intention was to arouse his countrymen to a passionate rededication, to show them their wickedness and inspire change. The prose is measured and controlled, not in the least ill-considered or disorganized. Penington knew precisely what had to be said, having become convinced that no mere political remedy would cure the ills of church and state; a deeper inward disorder had to be faced first in all its un-

pleasantness. It was the universal "black dark Self" so often denied, "that filthiness which every man thinks he is free from, and yet the heart of every man is full of" that Penington drew to the attention of his readers.¹ There was no venom in his words, only despair, as he pointed out the iniquity of believing that one party alone—the King's, Parliament's or Army's, the Episcopal, Presbyterian or Independent—could hold all the truth. Bigotry had become the barrier to national as well as Christian unity and concessions had to be made if the vision of brotherhood was ever to be regained.

Who imagines, while he cries out against Pride, Covetousness, Cruelty, Treason, Heresie, Blasphemy, &c. that he himself is the spring whence these issue, and where they would live and flourish, if all the outward appearances of them were cut off?²

These words are the logical extension of the early Puritan injunction to search and know the heart in both its goodness and corruption. To be entirely stripped of illusion was to give the divine light of God access, to open the way for purgation and rebirth.

The pamphlet was not meant to stir further ill-feeling but to show the root causes of ill-feeling. Its powerful condemnation of human nature was backed by the assurance that a higher being stood ready to help the struggling creature once his corruption had been exposed. The deep therapy of regeneration called for giving up all illusions, but it was not in itself destructive. This is shown in the way the argument is set out in four propositions: that the heart is above all deceitful, that it is desperately wicked, that there is universal ignorance of man concerning his heart, but that nevertheless God continually searches the heart hoping to effect a cure. In Penington's view man condemns himself to error; he is deeply untrustworthy and in need of forced confrontation with the truth about his self-seeking. Penington wrote less to prompt political reform than to show the necessity for total submission to God. His mistrust of man is particularly evident in the harsh remarks on the insidiousness of self-deception.

The heart "has deceits and skill to cozen itself with: It can seem to hate sin, and make it self beleve it doth hate sin; all manner

¹ I. Penington, *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times*, 1649, Sig. A2. [Wing P1170].

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

of sin, its own beloved sin, its inmost sins most, and yet all this while hugg, cherish, imbrace, enjoy them; unseen, unknown to itself: it can kisse sin and suck the sweetness of sin, even in those very prayers it seems to put up against sin, and of that very sin which it seems in its own spirit to be most fearfull of, and most bent against."¹

No amount of well-intentioned heart searching could expose all that needed to be known. In taking this view Penington departed from the optimism of earlier Puritan teaching, that of John Dod, for example, who had said "we must digge and search into our consciences, and when we find any corruption therein, we must cast it forth."² After the violent upheavals of church and state it was no longer so easy to speak this way. Human nature had come to seem incorrigible and the heart so wicked that it could not be serious about attaining saving knowledge. Penington flatly asserted that "Man is not capable of knowing his own heart, it is too bigg for him to comprehend, too vaste, too deep for his shallow brains, to receve the knowledg of."³ God alone could take charge and is pictured as a wholly transcendent being who will "work to search out [Man's] filth, to fetch it up out of this dark depth, and set it in order before his and others eyes."⁴ In suggesting this, Penington seems to half-recognize the presence of a sub-conscious mind with all its secret contents and unpredictable violence. If, as Lancelot Whyte has argued, "the seventeenth century was the first period when the individual's experience of 'consciousness' and 'self-consciousness' was isolated and treated as a primary concept or value," we can understand how it was that Penington was able to detect that portion of mental activity which is evidently present but not easily controlled by the will.⁵ He plainly suggested that the springs of action lie below the level of conscious control producing wickedness which pious intentions could not touch. But, he believed, so do God's promptings come from within, when the good is able to disentangle itself from the evil. The exact operation of this is left unclear in Penington's writing; he had little of Hobbes's skill in systematic psychology. In any case, he

¹ I. Penington, *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times*, p. 8.

² J. Dod, *Seven Godlie and Fruitfull Sermons*, 1614, p. 63. [STC. 6944].

³ I. Penington, *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times*, p. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵ L. L. Whyte, *The Unconscious before Freud*, 1963, pp. 37-8.

called for the total submission of the erring self to the other, the divine light which burned both within and without the mind. This was the submission on which the future of Puritan reform depended, put here uncompromisingly in the language of someone who has thrown aside all caution to tell the truth as he sees it. The language is colloquial with strong biblical overtones and the note of personal involvement is insistent throughout. No reader of *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times* will doubt the seriousness and forceful simplicity of Penington's response to what the revolution disclosed about human nature.

Man hates every thing but himself. He hates man, he hates God. The haters of God, it is a Scripture phrase, and it is that which is the temper of man, it might be used for one of the most proper descriptions of him. Would you know what man is? why, this he is, one that hates God, and all thoughts of reconciliation and union with him.¹

The cumulative effect of his indictment of unregenerate human nature is overwhelming. A reader who was in doubt about his meaning when he referred to the self as "the strange woman that flattereth thee with her lips, alluring thee from chaste and pure embraces of thy first love into her unclean bed," would have realized quickly that the Whore of Babylon was by turns the King's party, the Parliament and the Army, all of which fell short of their professed righteousness.² But to condemn was not Penington's natural inclination, and the mystic in him recoiled at the harshness of his own words. They were, however, necessary to explain why "God should deal sharply with us, why he should chide and fight with any of us, why he should contend with the man in us."³ The unprecedented troubles in the nation seemed nothing less than the beginning of a judgment which was to fall indiscriminately on all, at its completion establishing the English nation on a far sounder footing. He was hopeful that, when the process of purgation was complete, happiness would at last be secure, yet this seems a faint hope at the end of a so deeply disillusioned piece of writing.

¹ I. Penington, *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times*, p. 18. It should be said that Penington was not the only one to use such virulent language. See for example Humfry Chambers, *A Motive to Peace and Love Delivered in a Sermon at Pauls the first Lords Day in June, 1648, 1649*. [Wing C916].

² I. Penington, *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times*, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The horror and pity that Penington felt when he viewed the England that had endangered its chance for full spiritual liberation was not less than that of the disappointed Milton when he wrote *Paradise Lost*.

In 1650, the first precarious year of the Commonwealth, Penington issued five pamphlets¹ combining astute political observation with exhortation to the distracted people of England to draw themselves together into a new and more godly brotherhood. While it is difficult to be certain about their exact order of issue, there is no difficulty in finding the direction of Penington's thought. From the arguments for good government offered in *A Word for the Common Weale*² (the date which Thomason³ corrected to 15th Feb. 1649 [1650]) it is significant that Penington moved in the next year towards greater interest in the emergent prophetic sects that seemed to signal the spiritual rebirth for which he called. Political theorizing, temporarily at least, seemed irrelevant. There is a growing concern with the antinomian element in the divided church and a new note of personal urgency in the frequent passages of spiritual autobiography. The pamphlets of 1650 represent a refinement of Penington's religious and political position but they are more tentative and uncertain than *The Great and Sole Troubler of the Times* (1649). As documents of their time they are of considerable interest, and despite formlessness in design, contain passages of great insight and beauty.

It is as well to look briefly at *A Word for the Common Weale* (1650), addressed to a sick nation whose physician, the parliament, had lost touch with the people and their needs. The new government was a welcome change from tyranny, the argument runs, but the people had not yet felt its benefit; government was too centralized and concerned

¹ *A Word for the Common Weale tending towards the begetting and continuing, a right understanding and good opinion betweene the Parliament and the People* [Wing P1148]; *A Voyce out of the thick Darkness: containing in it a few Words to Christians about the late and present posture of Spiritual Affairs among them* [Wing P1217]; *Light or Darknesse, Displaying or Hiding itself, as it pleaseth* [P1177]; *Severall Fresh Inward Openings, (Concerning severall things) which the Day will declare of what Nature they are* [P1189]; *An Eccho from the Great Deep: Containing Further Inward Openings* [P1163].

² Wing P1148.

³ In the collection of Civil war tracts made by George Thomason and presented in 1762 to the British Museum by George III.

with internal disputes, too unsure of its way forward, to bring about a political reordering, let alone the spiritual reawakening of England. The reasons could be traced in the flaws of human nature itself but, Penington suggested, some remedy was nevertheless possible. The text of the pamphlet, advanced in a strong clear prose, challenges parliament to establish sound self-limiting laws that could be executed according to rule. The trouble with the late King was that too much liberty had led to arbitrary action, to which the parliament in its ascendancy had also become liable. The argument for establishing clear principles of reason to guide parliament was based on the realistic assumption that if exploitation of power were possible it would come about, no matter what the will of the people had been. In this sense Penington was no utopian, nor did he so uncritically support the Commonwealth as did his friend, the Independent minister, John Goodwin.¹ He was, rather, humanitarian in his concern for the people, a John Lilburne without a programme. Clear principles agreed upon at this turning point, Penington believed, would prevent encroachment by the parliament or army on the people, or the reverse. His careful analysis of the dangerously unstable political situation in 1649-1650 placed Penington among the more sober critics of the revolution; his caution was exemplary and the position he took above reproach by any in the reforming party who had the people's welfare at heart. It may have been the very high-minded unassailability of his position that accounted for the neglect of his arguments by other theoreticians then writing. In any case, he turned from political to religious matters with a sense of their overriding importance at a time when power seemed to be everything.

While approving only with reservations the political revolution, he wholeheartedly welcomed the spiritual ferment underlying it. In spiritual turmoil, he thought, the hope of ultimate deliverance lay. The following four pamphlets of 1650, then, attempt to clarify the sort of regeneration to be looked for. What could be expected from the clamorous sects that had so recently burst upon the scene? How could their torment be guided into paths of regeneration? Which

¹ John Goodwin (1594-1665), *D.N.B.*

of their apocalyptic expectations were justified and which were deluded? Penington approached these questions with caution and some scepticism but it is clear that his personal interest, his mysticism in fact, powerfully attracted him to other illuminists whose numbers were increasing. One might conclude from the Preface to *A Voyce out of the thick Darkness* that he had ceased to look to political methods for the successful completion of the reformation; indeed, he wrote that those who desired "Universal Freedom" and "Universal speedy impartial Justice" might have done better to submit to the yoke, not abjectly but in the expectation of divine, not human, deliverance, but he was merely saying that he hoped more from God than from man, who seemed blown upon and withered. The challenge was to discover God's will for the nation, and the best index of that seemed to be what was happening to the sectaries about whom he remarked that some were

scattered this way, some that way; some settled this way, some that way; some bemoaning themselves under their Scatterings, others blessing themselves in their Setlings; some seeking, and others glorying, in what they imagine they have found; some complaining of the breaches growing greater and more Spiritual, others crying out as fast, that their Antidotes, plaisters and arts of healing, which would easily help all, were not embraced.¹

A word of explanation will help to bring the social situation into focus. During the 1650's numerous sects became active but the most spectacular of them were the loosely related Ranter sects who claimed that divine inspiration exempted them from any authority external to themselves. They held that the spirit's leading was sufficient to excuse them from the moral law which, their detractors charged, they freely transgressed. The Ranters became a law unto themselves, earning the name of blasphemers who were regarded as a menace to the social order. Their extremism resulted in severe ordinances against them, but to Penington, disillusioned with man-made revolution, they seemed the harbingers of a new spirituality. He thought that they might be precisely what he was looking for, a sanctified people willing to break with political scheming and unhappy church wrangling to attend only to the guiding Holy Spirit.

¹ I. Penington, *A Voyce out of the thick Darkness*, 1650, Sig. B1. [Wing P1217].

It is easy to see how his strictures on human nature led him to this position. There was nothing left for man but to deny his creaturely self and lay himself open to direction by the Holy Spirit. If this were done with dedication and consistency, social relations would be transformed as God intended. But the means of judging what was a true dispensation were uncertain, there being no fool-proof test for authenticity of revelation laid down in scripture. It was left to the observant individual to apply such tests as he could devise, and it was in this exercise that Penington engaged in his pamphlets of 1650.

A Voyce out of the thick Darkness, which Thomason dated 1st April 1650, makes clear the terms of Penington's call to renunciation. Convinced more than ever that the nation was living through last times, he wrote: "There is a Consumption determined to pass through the whole earth, upon every earthly person, and every earthly thing in persons truly spiritual."¹ When all that was not pure spirit was thrown together in an apocalyptic upheaval then, he asked, "what will become of persons who have very little better then a Form, whether of Presbytery, Independency, Anabaptism, or any other kinde?"² There was no threat in this, only expectation based on biblical prophecy, for the failure to order affairs in church and state left no alternative but to expect a swift judgment. There is a new note of urgency in what Penington wrote:

If ever there was a time for tears without, and grief of spirit within, this seems the season: when after such an expectation of Light and Glory, of Settlement and Establishment in the things of God, such thick darkness, such universal shame, such dreadful Shatterings, have so apparently overtaken us, and are so likely dayly more and more to overtake us. Not only our Superstruction, but our very Foundation is shaken; and when we have striven and tryed to the utmost to settle again, we may be forced at length to confess, that there is no setling any more upon it, but we must come to a deeper bottom, or sink for ever.³

We have seen that Penington believed the deeper bottom might be established by the sectarians. The pamphlet is not a finished statement but an exploration of this possibility; it does not develop in an ordered way but moves by nervous

¹ I. Penington, *A Voyce out of the thick Darkness*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

abruptness from section to section. Inserted between "A Post-Script About Darkening the Counsel of God" and "Certain Scripture-Prophecies" we find a brief section addressed to "those who speak such lofty language with such high confidence, saying God is All. There is nothing besides the Lord. All is good. All is alike, &c." These were the Ranter tenets that Penington was to prove either misled or inspired. If their light had been that of "inward and spiritual understanding" then Penington hastened to accept its authenticity. He allowed their claims even if they were in a state of uncertainty, but if, as was entirely possible, the Ranter's new notions merely inhabited the "old vessel," the creaturely imagination or understanding, they were an abomination to be purged. He was severe against the unredeemed flesh entertaining notions of its own virtue ("she loves to get upon the pinnacle of knowleg"¹) when it was self that had to be put down. It was evidence of pure mystical passivity, absolute obedience, that Penington looked for as the way through the political and religious impassé. The mystical temperament comes out more strongly in the next pamphlet.

Light or Darknesse, Displaying or Hiding it self, as it pleaseth, which Thomason assigned to 22nd May, 1650, opens with a personal confession revealing what at first looks like a sharp turning towards antinomian irrationality. Penington seems to have had at this time religious experience that destroyed all confidence in earlier divine favour and in natural reason. He described himself as being "so toss'd and tumbled, melted and new-molded, that I am changed into that which I thought it utterly impossible for me ever to be. I am grown at peace, if not in love, with folly."² A loss of former wisdom and a new passive moulding in the hands of an "unknown Potter" mark this phase of Penington's quest. It was a condition of utter abandonment to this unnamed will and a readiness to follow it anywhere, no matter the cost in social disapproval. Offensiveness did not matter at a time when new light was breaking, light intelligible only to the changed nature. Penington had in mind the folly of Christ that confounded the wise; a higher obedience would bring man-made disputes under control. This seemed

¹ I. Penington, *A Voyce out of the thick Darkness*, p. 34.

² I. Penington, *Light or Darknesse*, Sig. A2v. [Wing P1177].

to him the last refuge in the unabated party strife that aroused in each contender claims to exclusive truth. By appealing to higher principle against enmity, rage and excessive zeal he was showing the way to a resolution of disputes by denying their final importance since in the true mystical life they would be irrelevant. There follows in "The Preface" to "A Sermon to All Sorts of People" (concerning God's destruction of the perfect and wicked alike) an example of Penington's most potent style. It is a style in which the impact of the words counts for everything, yet the structure of thought remains entirely sound, while driven by "a kinde of inward impulsion."

O what a brutish thing is man, that can never beleeve or be made sensible of any thing, until he come to feel it! Though houses round about him be on fire, and he have that within which kindles the flame, yet he makes no question but he shall live secure. From the day that Man has been upon the face of the Earth, still has he been blessing himself, and pleasing himself with his own condition, magnifying it beyond others (whom he is very wise in accusing and condemning,) in the mean while not truly knowing, either whence he came, what he is, or whither he goes. O foolish justifier of thy self, O foolish condemner of others, being ignorant both of thy self, and others! Thine eye is dark, The light whereby thou seest is darkness; What meanest thou to be so forward & confident in judging either thy self or others? O God, put out this eye of Man, put out this light of Man, cover it with an Eternal Night. Bring forth a true, a substantial state of things, with an Eye that may behold it, an Heart that may comprehend it, a Life that may quicken and live in it.¹

It appears from this and from "A Letter Impleading A Conversion," inserted in the pamphlet, that despite apparent antinomian sympathies, Penington remained staunchly independent in judgment, certain that all selfishly human desires would be confounded in a larger evolving plan. Self-appointed prophets and those with vain notions would be brought low:

I like well to see the creature with its waxed wings mounting up towards Heaven, and soaring aloft beyond the reach of the sight of its fellow creatures: But I like it much better to see the wax melted by the heat of the Sun, and the poor foolish forward creature tumbling down into the Sea, or unto the Earth again.²

The remainder of the pamphlet, including "Several Inward Openings," is a warning to fallen man, still convinced of his

¹ I. Penington, *Light or Darknesse*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

righteousness, that a judgment was taking place, as indeed it must have seemed to many.

When we come to the pamphlet entitled *Severall Fresh Inward Openings* (which Thomason assigned to 20th July 1650), we find the same desire to promote national unity coupled with burning conviction that apocalyptic times were at hand. "Who knoweth," he wrote in the preface, "how sweetly and harmoniously we lay tumbling together in the same womb of Eternity, before we were brought forth in these severall strange shapes, wherein we now appear?"¹ But the chance had been lost for the simple political resolution of difficulties, so Penington turned to the only remaining hope:

The time is at hand, wherein time shall be no more; and then whatever had a Being in time, shall cease from so being any longer. We must all to the grave, to the dust; We must all sleep an Eternall sleep, when once the last Night comes; where we shall bury all our quarrels and contentions, and awake in perfect life and love: and then we shall be, both to our selves and to one another, what now we cannot so much as desire to be.²

With this he in effect dismissed himself from the public realm "to lament and bewail that Misery and Desolation, which is seizing upon all things." His plea was again for understanding, "a more piercing eye, which is able to look through all this," preserving the detached onlooker from the full measure of suffering which those blinded by pride might expect.³ In no pamphlet is the sense of exasperation and helplessness greater for, as tensions grew among sects and parties, so did the necessity to leave affairs entirely in the hands of God. Penington was unusual among pamphleteers in his attempt to rise above the situation exercising so many to purely partisan efforts. The text concerns reconciliation and union which it seemed God might still effect but wholly on his own terms. Again Penington tried to point out how illusory were the objectives for which the factions were warring by using the image of the artificial partition, a wall which when pulled down revealed that the ground beneath was the same on both sides. Image and illustration enliven the arguments suggesting that Penington knew preaching

¹ I. Penington, *Severall Fresh Inward Openings*, Sig. A3-A3v. [Wing P1189].

² *Ibid.*, Sig. A3v-A4.

³ *Ibid.*, Sig. A4.

methods well, but above all he was a Puritan publicist in whose sentences the abrupt, almost broken movements both convey and hold in check the emotion with which they were written.

The plea to reconsider hardened positions was not merely emotional and apocalyptic, it was solidly rational. He saw as clearly as anyone the spectre of social chaos. Despite repeated appeals for divine intervention, responsibility for improving the state of affairs was after all placed with his countrymen. Earnest pleading is curiously combined with the deep disillusionment that made Penington say that only in newness of spirit could perfect union be brought about. The main work of the pamphlet is to offer an elaborate proof to persuade Christians of the need for greater seriousness in their profession. The strongest words of admonition, however, were reserved for "The Mad Folks," no longer inspired fools in the sense used earlier, but those numerous persons whose religion had deranged them. They were a cause for wonder being "so slain to [their] Religion, that the very sweetness, life, vigour, power, purity of it [stank in their] nostrils."¹ If this were true spiritual death it might anticipate rebirth, but Penington doubted that it was. Their setting up of "all manner of sin, wickedness, filthiness, abomination" as a testimony against the empty forms of Christianity was dangerously self-deceived.² When he warned against being "too forward to throw away Christ, and Salvation by Christ" he was not affirming an orthodoxy but counteracting an extremism, the danger of which was manifest.³ In a personal letter to a Ranter printed following "A Word to the Mad Folks" he was more particular in his criticism, asking for the full arguments in support of the proposition "That God is all, that all things are good, that all things are alike, &c."⁴ The warrant for sinful behaviour could not be an expression of "Original Light." Self-deification was abhorrent, yet it was to the sense of God within that Penington appealed when he asked for completion of the spiritual revolution begun in the last century by Puritan reformers. The dilemma presented by the Ranters

¹ I. Penington, *Severall Fresh Inward Openings*, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

seemed inescapable; if they were judged in error, and untrue to their calling, it had to be said what true obedience was, and moreover shown how it was exemplified. To escape the problem Penington resorted to a sort of confession, characteristic of the left-wing Puritan pamphleteers—Nayler, Lilburne, and Winstanley, for example.

To look upon my self as God by virtue of a Notion (how ever conveyed or received) and finde my self but a Creature in life, in motion, in power, is very irksom to a Noble Spirit, which loves not to make a sound above what it is or feels. This I have felt, Power enough to batter to confound me in every thing; but no power to build any thing, or so much as to fix me in a state of confusion.¹

The entire weight of Penington's argument in the closing section of the pamphlet is thrown toward caution, sobriety and the careful sifting of religious experience. He attempted to outline the manner of true Christian seeking, in meekness and long-suffering while keeping close to scripture in thought and language. The plan offered is nothing less than that of the mystical way, the lone spiritual pilgrimage towards oneness. His closing exhortation sounds with renewed prophetic ardour that adds to accustomed Puritan eloquence the call to mystical passivity.

So let the glory of Man fall for ever. So let the Reason, Understanding and Wisdom of the Creature always prove a broken reed to run into it, pierce and wound it; that none may ever come to know or enjoy God, or any thing of God; but as he freely imparts himself, or of himself, unto them.²

The last pamphlet in this series, *An Eccho from the Great Deep: Containing Further Inward Openings* (assigned by Thomason to 24th November 1650) is an extension of its predecessor taking up many of the arguments necessary to distinguish between true and deluded mystical Christianity. Its main purpose was to settle finally a view of the principles and practices of "The Mad Folks" whose brokenness, Penington affirmed in his preface, paralleled his own. As a people whose shattered religion earned them only ridicule, the Ranters suffered doubly; but to Penington their sickness was "more lovely in my eye than that health which others enjoy and please themselves in."³ Only from those who had been

¹ I. Penington, *Severall Fresh Inward Openings*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³ I. Penington, *An Eccho from the Great Deep*, Sig. A2. [Wing. P1163].

reduced to complete spiritual destitution could the new birth emerge, yet Penington remained troubled by the excesses of Ranter behaviour; its pretentious casting aside of all tradition was less worrying than the wild immorality to which inspiration led. Penington made himself clear on this point.

My heart tells me that ye are not thus shattered, broken, and made so odious for nothing: yet let me withal tell you, that my spirit thinketh you never the neerer either for your principles or practises, which carry more unloveliness to me than any principles or practises of any sort of men upon the face of the earth.¹

And he went on to show that he had distinguished the way of his own inner life from theirs:

And for such of you who break forth through Visions and Revelations into new apprehensions, I profess I know you not, this is not the way of the breaking forth of my life, which must not be steered by these, but be able to judg these, which when once I feel with cleerness, Majesty and power, I may then be drawn to beleeve that I begin to taste life.²

His words do not amount to a total rejection. It was to clarify their vision and demonstrate how true light might be found that Penington wrote the exhortation. The preface arouses its readers to "Behold a Soul burnt up into perfect misery by the flames of its own love!" preparing us for an enraptured outpouring, a chastening spiritual reply to Ranter revelations.³ But the pamphlet is remarkably restrained in tone. It consists of a series of twenty-four neatly constructed essays each probing a question of belief in which the Ranters had gone astray. It is fair to say that Penington was doing nothing less than pointing out the proven way of European mysticism and showing the compulsion to rediscover it as the necessary outgrowth of Puritanism. He believed that his scriptural learning, which helped temper the fantastic side of mysticism, would make his views more desirable than those of the self-exalted prophets. It was a clear case of pleasing man or pleasing God. We may doubt whether the Ranters appreciated much of the subtlety of Penington's thought. For the most part, their chaotic and irresponsible tracts stand apart from his, though both look to the inner light. Penington's are simply

¹ I. Penington, *An Eccho from the Great Deep*, Sig. A2v.

² *Ibid.*, Sig. A3.

³ *Ibid.*, Sig. A4v.

the more profound in their understanding of what inner transformation amounted to. Almost certainly he was misled in believing that wise pleading could sober the Ranters and persuade them to wait patiently for the dawning of a purer light, but effective or not he had to say what he did. His abandonment of direct political commentary for the less promising attempt to direct the confused steps of anti-nomians explains why his writing has not figured in recent studies of seventeenth-century revolutionary politics. For Penington politics had a transparency through which the deeper politics of men could be seen, and he took it as his task to picture them in the language of mysticism. Practical affairs were of little substance apart from what they showed about the heart's desire and its fidelity to the highest Puritan idealism. Altercations with the Ranters were valuable only as they showed how a right conception of God, to be found only in submission of the will, was linked with good politics. Penington's discussions seek this fundamental level where they associate rigorous Puritan spirituality with the events of the day. Almost always the balance tips in favour of eternity against time, so Penington's significance is to be judged finally in the sphere of religion. His purpose in *An Eccho from the Great Deep* was to disclose himself on general questions of mystical pursuit, and it is clear that this sort of undertaking was most congenial to him. Through this and other writings he effectively entered the English mystical tradition consolidating and enriching the best of European mysticism that had filtered into the mid-seventeenth-century separatist movement. This at least was the opinion of William Law, who read Penington with warm approval. The quality of Penington's mystical awareness is often of the highest as a passage from the essay "Of Love" shows.

Love is the spiritual affection between God and this new child. As they know one another, so they love one another: and as their knowledg is the straitest knowledg, so is their love likewise the closest love. There is no such union besides as is between them, nor are there any such streams of love any where else to carry hearts up and down to one another, or to center them in one another.¹

He continues in this graphic, almost emblematic, manner:

The streams of this Love run (though sometimes insensibly) forward and backward from each towards each in the midst of

¹ I. Penington, *An Eccho from the Great Deep*, pp. 14-15.

all the varieties, changes, and strange unlovely disguises that both are clothed with. And O what torment is it to have this Love chained up! How doth it consume and burn up the poor spirit within, when it cannot find its God to go forth upon, for it cannot move towards any thing else!¹

There is a gentle beauty about this longest and most unified of Penington's essays that contrasts with the angry vehemence and condemnations of his earlier pamphlets. Something of his Quaker manner appears as the essential Penington comes forward; what he really wanted to say was at last finding words as argument, tone and placing of emphasis work together to produce an essay worthy of the seventeenth-century familiar manner. The appeal of Cowley or Sir William Temple to the reader's personal responses is found here too. Penington's literary gift shows at its best when the mood is still and quiet with just the echoes of his troubled search in the background. The quality of his best passages calls for comparison with some of the century's most admired religious prose, that in Richard Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*. Baxter maintains exactness and clarity while being movingly personal; and the same can be claimed for Penington who could adjust his style to remain at a level of emotional urgency without running off into the obscurity which was so often a product of enthusiasm. It is the nakedness of heart, the suggestion of spiritual travail in which the pamphlet was written that invite comparison with the personal style of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, a book also close to being spiritual autobiography. Penington relied on the strong affective power of his own religious experience, which, like Baxter, he freely adapted for didactic purposes. The obvious dangers are avoided—extreme privacy, sectarian bias, and excessive importunity. Rather than dramatically exploit the strange windings of his religious pilgrimage, like the exhibitionistic Ranters Abiezer Coppe² and Laurence Clarkson,³ Penington dwelt on the universal aspects of his experience. He wrote mainly about the demonstrable truths of wayfaring—rejection, reconciliation and love—and in doing so gave sharp definition to Puritan quietism.

Penington sought not just to convince his readers but

¹ I. Penington, *An Eccho from the Great Deep*, p. 15.

² Abiezer Coppe, *alias* Higham (1619-72), *D.N.B.*

³ Laurence Claxton *or* Clarkson (1615-67), *D.N.B.*

to move them. Polemic and exhortation are less central to the general effect of his writing than is the expression of personal striving. It is the sense of spiritual exposure in a hostile atmosphere, the repeated attempts to find a formulation that would ease despair and show a way to liberation that give Penington's pamphlets their lasting interest. The best passages—unfortunately seldom sustained—show him capable of using the language of Puritanism with a new depth and precision. In setting down with such personal emphasis his reasonings and struggles of spirit he brought vigour to an idiom that was beginning to lose its immediacy. His quickness of response to public events, and his eagerness to see their religious meaning, clearly called for a prose more flexible and idiomatic than that handed him by preachers such as Goodwin. Penington's language is biblical enlivened by the authentic tones of speech that crisis had turned into a new and more searching instrument. His imagery of fall and redemption, of light and darkness, seem exactly suited to the unprecedented situation in which he found himself. In short, Penington is an underestimated writer as well as being a figure of key importance in the quietist phase of Puritanism. The next figure of his stature was William Law, and he resembles him in combining shrewd social analysis with mystical insight in a prose of great force and beauty. The time must come when this is taken into account in discussions of seventeenth-century literary developments. But what concerns us is the kind of influence Penington brought to bear on Quakerism. Here again there has been some undervaluing of his importance.

By turning inward from the carnage of the civil war and entanglements of parliament, Penington virtually denied himself a place in the official annals of revolution (S. R. Gardiner mentions him only in passing), while in fact his writings are as important as those of the committed activists in forming a picture of the English mind during the Republican interlude. Without mention of excursions into quietism the general picture remains incomplete and the Quaker picture obscured. Penington was among the articulate few who effectively attacked churchmen resting on outward symbols and fine points of doctrine. Yet he as vigorously opposed those who were too zealously reformist, including we may suppose, members of his own sect. A weariness of

superficial dispute had set in which Penington met by turning attention to the hidden riches of mystical Christianity. True obedience was the inner harmony with God exemplified by Christ and his disciples, and Scripture was not to be read in the letter but in the Spirit. The set forms of worship that got between the heart and the Holy Spirit were to be put aside. Prayer was an opening of the heart, and brotherhood a sense of unobstructed oneness among all believers. These were some of the radical conclusions to which his objections led, an attempted restatement of primitive Christianity in all its prophetic ardour, the essential message of Quakerism. All this was in Penington's mind well before Quakerism became an issue and he had worked through it with great subtlety. The pamphlets of 1650 pointed to a religion of depth and incontrovertible simplicity. They spoke with an eloquence that no other commentator on the state of religious affairs managed, and looked at human nature with a realism uncommon in the century. But as the bitterness of revolution was absorbed into Restoration calm, Penington's early tracts ceased to speak his mind. He had moved beyond them into a fuller mystical life within the Society of Friends.

ANDREW BRINK

The Early Life of John Bright's Father

THE following extract from an autobiographical fragment written by John Bright in 1879 is quoted in G. M. Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*:¹

"My dear father" (Jacob Bright) "was born in Coventry in the year 1775. His father and mother were Jacob and Martha Bright. My grandfather was in his later days in bad health and in humble circumstances. My father was sent to Ackworth School when about nine years of age, and remained there about five years."²

Trevelyan adds this footnote: "He 'remained there' in the most literal sense. His parents were too poor, and journeys too difficult to permit of his returning to Coventry for holidays. When he first saw his parents again after five years' absence he did not at once recognize them, nor they him. This he told his son John."³

The following letter from Martha Browett (1) of Anerley, Kent, a second cousin of John Bright, to her nephew James Cramp (2) of Coventry, throws some light upon Jacob Bright's early life,⁴ and looks in one place like a direct comment upon the passages quoted above. (Trevelyan's *Life* was published in the year previous to the date of the letter.) The people mentioned may be identified by the numbered references to the genealogical tree which follows the letter. Miss Browett was nearly 90 when she wrote it; she lived almost 10 years longer. Her house in Anerley was named after the Coventry home of her grandfather William Bright (3); the district in Coventry still bears the name "Holbrooks."

¹ G. M. Trevelyan, *Life of John Bright*, 1913, p. 6. A slightly fuller account appears in *The Diaries of John Bright*, 1930, pp. 1-2.

² Jacob Bright of Coventry entered Ackworth 1785, left 1789 (Ackworth School, *List of the boys and girls*, 1879, p. 17).

³ Regular school vacations did not begin until 27th July 1847, when Ackworth broke up for the first time in 68 years (Elfrida Vipont [Foulds], *Ackworth School*, 1959, p. 87). For the discussions preceding this move, see H. Thompson, *History of Ackworth School*, 1879, pp. 246-8.

⁴ "Of this boy's earliest years we know nothing." (J. T. Mills, *John Bright and the Quakers*, 1935, i. 101.)

Holbrook
Feb 27 [19]14

My Dear James

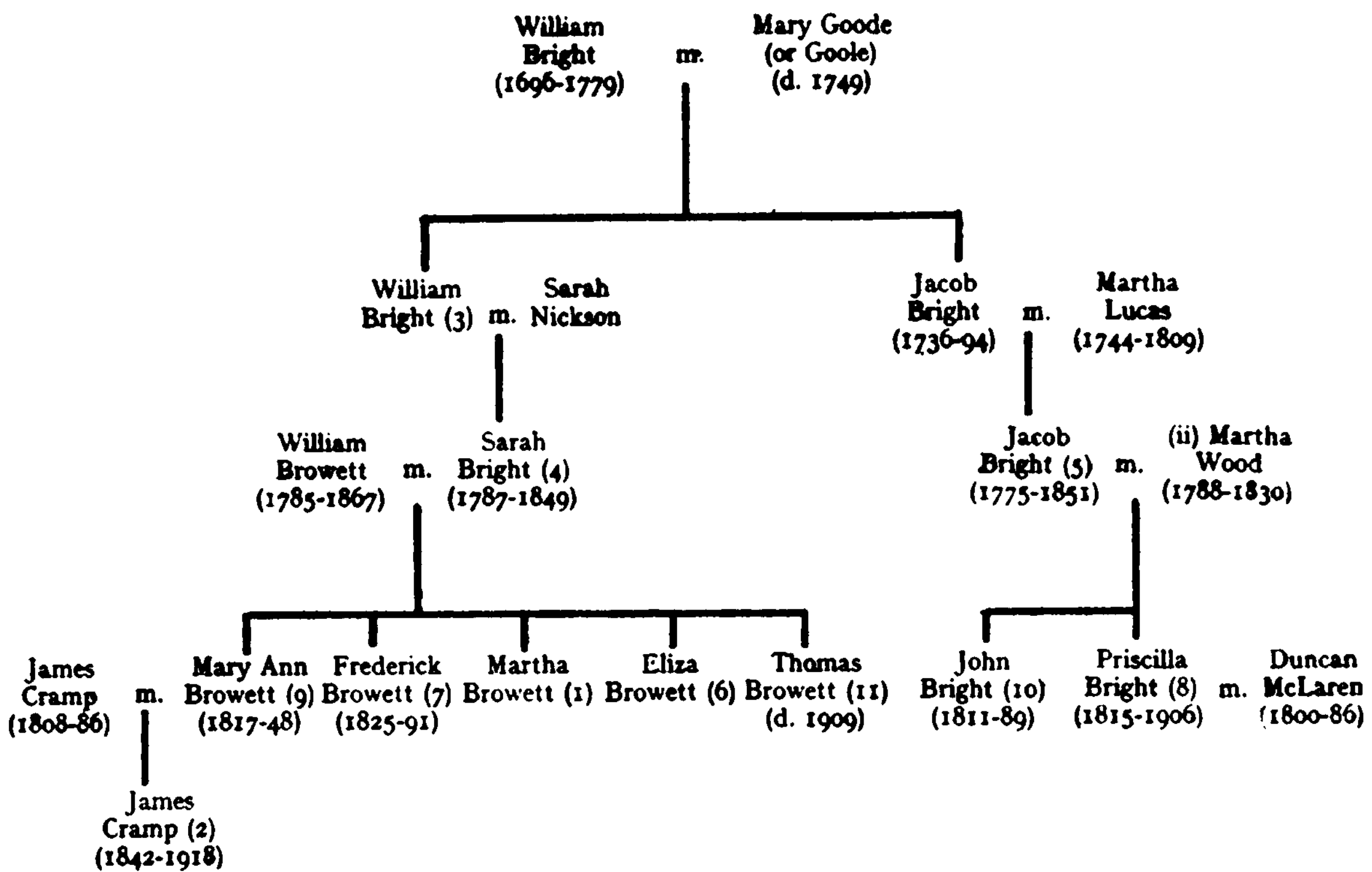
My recollection of what Mother (4) told me more than once about Cousin Jacob (5) is perfectly clear and is the same as Eliza (6) and Fred^k (7) told you—that her Father married rather late in life and took his nephew Jacob with the idea of adopting him. Then he married and Mother was either the first or the second child. They were brought up together until more sons were born—Mother was the only daughter—and Grandfather found he could not do as much for Jacob as he intended and no doubt he consulted the chiefs of the Coventry Friends Meeting and between them it was settled the boy should go to Manchester. The poverty theory is absurd, or that the boy was away for five years previously to going to be taught to earn his own living. Better in support of my memory of Jacob Bright & Mother being as brother & sister I enclose the touching letter he wrote on her death, also the two from his daughter Priscilla (8)—Mrs. McLaren on the death of your dear Mother (9) 1848 and of her brother John (10). In them there is no cursory liking for Mother or dear Mary Ann—Cousin Jacob's breathes of deep affection from near and intimate relationship. It was written three weeks before our beloved Mother's death, when Thomas (11) wrote the Doctors could do no more and the end was near. I shall never forget his devotion. He rarely left her all the last week right up to the end of her sweet life.

The Liverpool Brights—not the ship owners—are the descendants of Cousin William Bright, nephew to Jacob Bright, formerly of London, kindly induced by his Uncle Jacob to come north & set up as a cotton-broker in Liverpool, whose sons succeeding to the prosperous business thus created. The Family Tree dear Eliza so cleverly designed of which she made three copies, one for dear Thomas, one for Jacob, one that was mysteriously taken away of which printed copies were bound up with the first published Life of John Bright, I expect W^m has his Father's & that would tell you all you want to of the family history.

I must leave anything else I may think of till another time as I am tired and supper is ready.

Much love to you all
from y^r attached Aunt Martha.

The family tree, with dates as far as they are known to the writer, is as follows:



The above information comes from various sources, which are gratefully acknowledged: from Charles F. Freeman and Ena M. Lynn, who kindly searched the records of Coventry Preparative Meeting and Warwickshire Monthly Meeting respectively; from Mr. T. B. Bright and Brigadier C. I. E. Rabagliati, both direct descendants of Jacob and Martha Bright; and from Edith M. Carter, the writer's mother, youngest daughter of the second James Cramp, who found Miss Browett's letter among some family papers.

GEOFFREY W. CARTER

Jeremiah Dixon: Dixie and Coal Gas

AN extended footnote in *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (William Fordyce, Newcastle upon Tyne: A. Fullarton & Co., vol. 2, 1857, pp. 78-79) gives interesting information both on one of the constructors of the famous Mason-Dixon Line and on the origin of gaslighting. Jeremiah Dixon, born at Cockfield, County Durham, was clearly a man of many parts. Although lacking public school or university education, he was selected by the Royal Academy of Woolwich to observe, on St. Helena, the transit of Venus across the sun. After success in this assignment, Dixon was employed by the Academy in setting the limits and bounds of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

In a quite different connection, Jeremiah Dixon originated many mechanical contrivances for coalmining and associated work. It has been stated that he was the original discoverer of coal gas, and that his garden wall on the edge of Cockfield Fell was the first place ever to be lighted by that material. This discovery is, of course, generally attributed to William Murdock, and Fordyce states that it is probable that the two men made the discovery simultaneously and that, from Dixon's "residence in an obscure locality, and unostentatious disposition, his discovery did not become known till after that of Murdock. His first experiment is said to have been made—like that of many other embryo philosophers—with rather a crude sort of apparatus; his retort being an old tea kettle; and for pipes, to convey it along an orchard wall, he used the stalks of hemlock."

Dixon was a Friend and died in Cockfield, being buried at a little chapel (*sic*) belonging to the Society of Friends at the village of Old Raby, near Raby Park. The building was pulled down many years prior to 1857 by the Duke of Cleveland, to improve the park and road near Raby Castle, and a dog kennel was built upon its site, so that the grave of this man of genius has neither line nor stone to indicate where his bones are laid. The Victorian writer attributes the neglect of the burial place in a great degree to the peculiarity of Friends in objecting to monuments and tombstones. Although Dixon was a Friend, at least in later life, the

Woolwich Academy which employed him in astronomical surveying work was a military one, and ever afterwards he sported its uniform, a red coat and a cocked hat. We are not told the reactions of his Monthly Meeting or Overseers to this!

FRANK M. WRIGHT

SHEFFIELD CITY LIBRARIES

Guide to the manuscript collections. Supplement I, 1956-1962. Extracted from the annual List of accessions to repositories, with additions and index. (Libraries, Art Galleries and Museums Committee.)

1961 accessions includes the following item:

Friends Meeting records

Woodhouse (Sheffield) Meeting: Catalogue and issue register of books belonging to Woodhouse meeting, 1793-1899. [Printed] rules of the Reading Room, 1877 and catalogue of books, 1890; registers of burials in Handsworth Friends Burial Ground, 1883-1909; plans of Friends Burial Ground at Woodhouse, 1887.

Reports on Archives

The National Register of Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission) *List of accessions to repositories in 1963* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965), reports the following additions to the manuscript collections in various institutions which may interest workers on Quaker history.

Birmingham University Library, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 15.
Single letters and small groups: John Bright.

Cambridgeshire Record Office, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge.
Society of Friends: additional records of various monthly and preparative meetings in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Norfolk, 1712-1919.

Devon Record Office, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter.
Letters, Catherine Thompson of Stockport to Miss — Pease, Darlington, 1864.

Durham Record Office, County Hall, Durham.
London Lead Co., deeds etc., Teesdale, Weardale, from 1593.

Guildford Museum and Muniment Room, Castle Arch, Guildford, Surrey.
Society of Friends: Guildford Monthly Meeting and Preparative Meeting, 1668-1947.

Lancashire Record Office, Sessions House, Lancaster Road, Preston.
Society of Friends: Bishop's transcripts of Society of Friends' burial grounds, Toxteth Park, 1864-97, Penketh, 1865-66.

Newcastle upon Tyne Archives Office, 7 Saville Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1.
Society of Friends: deeds, Friends' Meeting House, Newcastle, 1600-1937.

Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, Central Library, Norwich.
Society of Friends: 3 vols. registers; draft about Friends' Meeting House, Thetford, 1719.

Nottingham Public Libraries, Central Library, South Sherwood Street, Nottingham.
Society of Friends: Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire meeting, additional records, 1710-84.

Somerset Record Office, Obridge Road, Taunton.
Society of Friends: Bristol and Somerset Q.M., minutes, sufferings books etc., 1656-1883.

University College, London (The Library), Gower Street, London, W.C.1.
College collection and misc. MSS.: Letters from J. Bright (1847-87).

The *List of accessions to repositories in 1964* includes the following:
Birmingham University Library, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 15.

Single letters and small groups: John Bright.

Durham Record Office, County Hall, Durham.

Mining and industrial: Pease & Partners, 1873-1900.

Essex Record Office, County Hall, Chelmsford.

Courage & Barclay Ltd.: deeds of Essex public houses, 1688-1924.

Flintshire Record Office, The Old Rectory, Hawarden, nr. Chester.

Society of Friends: calendar of Meeting House certificates, 1753-1806.

Gloucestershire Records Office, Shire Hall, Gloucester.

Society of Friends: Gloucester Monthly Meeting (additional) minutes, 1820-34.

National Library of Scotland (Department of Manuscripts), Edinburgh, 1.

Single letters and small groups: John Bright.

Newcastle upon Tyne Archives Office, 7 Saville Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1.

Society of Friends: microfilms of records of many meetings, Newcastle and Northumberland.

Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, Central Library, Norwich.

Society of Friends: Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting, minutes 1938-48, 7 vols. monthly meetings, 19c.

Northamptonshire Record Office, Delapre Abbey, Northampton.

Society of Friends: Northampton and Wellingborough Monthly Meetings, registers 1647-1837, minutes 1700-1957, etc.

Nottingham Public Libraries, Central Library, South Sherwood Street, Nottingham.

Society of Friends: Mansfield monthly meeting, additional minutes etc., 1671-1905.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Law Courts Building, May Street, Belfast 1.

Goff family, Horetown (Wexford), corresp. as Quakers, 1691-1873; account book of Richardson family, linen manufacturers, Lisburn (Antrim), 1784-1817.

Royal Army Medical College (Library and Muniment Room), Millbank, London, S.W.1.

Testimonial to Surgeon General Jameson, signed by Lord Lister and others.

Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.

Joseph Lister, Lord Lister (1827-1912): 24 autograph letters, 1889-99.

Wellcome Historical Medical Library, The Wellcome Building, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

Letters: c. 150 private letters to and from Sir George Newman (1870-1948).

Recent Publications

You und Thou. Studien zur Anrede im Englischen (mit einem Exkurs über die Anrede im Deutschen). By Thomas Finkenstaedt. Berlin, de Gruyter, 1963. pp. xi, 301.

Professor Finkenstaedt has produced a valuable and welcome work on a subject which has hitherto received scant attention from historians of English, and he is to be warmly congratulated on providing us with a scholarly, lucid, and (mercifully) succinct study of the pronouns of address, from Old English to the end of the seventeenth century. His study is enlivened by the inclusion of numerous quotations, few of them familiar, from primary source-material. A particularly interesting section on "Das Quaker Thou," illustrated with a variety of quotations (some perhaps a little repetitive) from early Quaker tracts, provides a valid reason for reviewing this book here. But before commenting on Professor Finkenstaedt's *esquisse* on the traditional Quaker form of address, a few general remarks on his book may not be out of place.

Although this is scarcely the proper place for an extended critique of Professor Finkenstaedt's book, this reviewer feels justified in criticizing certain features of the book which have a general relevance. Although the author has demonstrated throughout the comprehensiveness of his search for original source-material (the Bibliography lists 619 works used, of which about half are works of a secondary nature), there is one type of material, listed in the Bibliography under "Grammatiken and Schulbücher" (nos. 286-319), which is quite inadequately covered. There would, of course, have been little point in examining *all* the extant English and interlingual grammars published before 1700, but the inclusion of a mere handful of these early grammars (33 out of a total corpus of perhaps 200), not all of them of the first importance, may legitimately be regarded as a serious weakness. The importance of the early interlingual grammars lies not so much in their prescriptive rules as in the quantity of illustrative material which is to be found in the "Familiar Dialogues" and "Familiar Phrases" with which they were frequently supplied, and which provide a most valuable (and, alas, unstudied) record of seventeenth-century speech. It is also a pity that the Bibliography should be vitiated by so many errors, and incomplete references. Thus, it is common knowledge that *New Dialogues or Colloquies*, London, 1639 (no. 286) is an edition of Noel van Barlement's *Colloquia et Dictionariolum*, reprinted many times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (most editions having an English text); the item entered under E.A., *Grammaire Angloise et Francoise*, Rouen, 1595, is, in fact, a reprint of James Bellot's *Le Maistre d'escole Anglois* (London, 1580), and was printed in 1695, the error on the first title-page being corrected on the second to 1695; the authorship of *Manuductio: or, a leading of Children by the Hand to the Latine Tongue*, London, 1656, has always (and authoritatively)

been ascribed to J[ames] S[hirley]; Claudius Hollyband's *The French Littleton* could not, as has frequently been pointed out, have been printed in 1566, and the date as given on the title-page must be an error for 1576; Alexander Hume is given as Hulme, and Kathleen Lambley's *The Teaching of the French Language* (Manchester, 1920) hardly belongs with "Schulbücher."

Professor Finkenstaedt's treatment of the Quaker "Thou," which will have special interest for readers of this journal, is confessedly an *esquisse*, but provides nevertheless a useful summary of the views of the apologists and antagonists alike, with apt quotations from contemporary sources. The classic source-book is, of course, that extraordinary compilation *A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors* (by Fox, Stubs and Furley) published in 1660, but although the book is occasionally quoted, one would have appreciated a fuller comment on its significance.

Although it does not strictly belong to the period dealt with in this study, I cannot forbear mentioning a little work (apparently unknown to philologists) by one J. J., published in 1752, and entitled *Prittle prattle. Or, a familiar discourse on the persons I, Thou, He or She. We, Ye or You, and They. Designed for the use and benefit of the youth of the people called Quakers, who have not had the opportunity of learning a grammar*. There are four copies in the library at Friends House, in London, and another in the library of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham. Its interest is that, having dispensed with the traditional arguments in favour of "Thou and Thee," the author proceeds to a grammatical rationale of the usage, and an analysis of the English pronoun in particular. The parts of speech are also briefly dealt with, and English usage is compared with the prescriptions of Latin grammar. One particularly interesting (and relevant) observation occurs on page 26:

The Word *Thee*, the Accusative Case of *Thou*, never comes next before, or next after any Verb of the Second Person Singular. Well; I lately heard two Friends talking together, and the one said to the other, *How dost do*; The other reply'd pretty well, *How dost thee do*; Did not both these Friends speak the plain Language? I answer, No. The first Friend spoke the plain Language; but the other spoke a Linsey Woolsey Language: Such as God's People heretofore were forbidden to wear a Garment of.

It is a pity that space does not permit a fuller appreciation of the positive virtues of this work, and it should be understood that the criticisms offered above in no way detract from the merits of Professor Finkenstaedt's useful historical study of a complex grammatical feature covering a thousand years of English usage.

R. C. ALSTON

Friends of Humanity (with special reference to the Quaker William Allen, 1770-1843). By L. Hugh Doncaster. Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, London W.C.1. 1965. 5s.

The "Friends of Dr. Williams's Library" (the famous theological library in Bloomsbury) are responsible for the series of lectures of

which this represents the nineteenth; we believe it is the first to be given by a member of the Society of Friends. As was only proper, Hugh Doncaster took a largely Quaker subject; his purpose was, as he puts it, "to look at some of the ways in which, under the influence of the Evangelical Movement, Christians of different traditions found themselves bound together in a network of witness and relationship while working on behalf of deprived and downtrodden men and women." He does this largely through the eyes of one man, William Allen, partly because he feels that the extraordinary philanthropic achievements of this Friend are insufficiently recognized, no adequate biography having yet been written. Hugh Doncaster's hope is that he will tempt future social historians to make further researches into this fascinating period of interdenominational endeavour.

Notes and Queries

FRIENDS AROUND PENDLE

"The Forest of Pendle in the 17th century" by Mary Brigg appears in the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 115, 1963, pp. 65-90. The author mentions that in 1690 "the house of Henry Sagar, of Roughlee, was licensed as a Quaker meeting house. In the area east and south of Pendle Forest, from Foulridge to Burnley, twelve other Quaker meetings were licensed in the same year." Notice is also given to the Barcroft family, of Noyna, in Foulridge, some of whose relations were in Ireland. One son had gone to Pennsylvania to assist in surveying the land.

QUAKERS AT BOWES, YORKS

The parish register of Bowes, 1670-1837 (Bishop's transcripts, 1615-1700) (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Parish Register section, publications, vol. 127),

1964, includes the following entries mentioning Friends:

Marriages Dec. 31, 1696. James Rain and Margret Sayer, Quakers.

Baptisms March 31, 1701. James son of John Ripling a quaker born.

Oct. 1 Margret daughter of James Rain (a quaker) of Stony Keld born.

Jan. 20, 1705 [1706]. Jonathan Browne ye son of John Browne aged about 17 years his Father dead & his Mother a Quaker.

JONATHAN LAYCOCK OF SKIRCOAT

Rowland Bretton, secretary of the Halifax Antiquarian Society, in the course of a paper on "Gibraltar Farm" mentions Jonathan Laycock (d. 1696) and his family, including his wife Mary, and Joshua and Elizabeth Laycock. (*Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1963, pp. 77-89.)

FRIENDS HOUSE LIBRARY

C. E. Welch writes on "Archives and manuscripts in nonconformist libraries" in *Archives*, vol. 6, no. 32 (Oct. 1964), pp. 235-238. In discussing the central denominational libraries he says "The Society of Friends library is by far the best known and probably the best organized."

YOU AND THOU

A review article in *The Review of English Studies*, N.S., vol. 15, no. 60 (Nov. 1964), pp. 410-12, by B. D. H. Miller deals with Thomas Finkenstaedt's *You and Thou. Studien zur Anrede im Englischen* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, N.F.10. Berlin, de Gruyter, 1963). Dr. Finkenstaedt notes that about 1700 *thou* disappears from spoken Standard English. The singular *you* had been gaining ground from the thirteenth century, until by 1650 only the humblest still answered to *thou*, and the final decline was probably more hastened than not by the Quakers' insistence in the use of "thee" and "thou." The zeal of Friends in this matter did not appeal to the public of *Hudibras*. It was Lord Chesterfield who said that "the characteristic of a well-bred man is, to converse with his inferiors without insolence," and such said *you* even to servants.

[A fuller review of this work, by Dr. R. C. Alston of the Leeds University School of English, appears on pages 61-62 of this number.]

CHELTENHAM FRIENDS

Gwen Hart's *History of Cheltenham* (Leicester University Press,

1965, 42s.) includes a few short notices of Friends in the town. She has used the Quarterly Meeting records, now deposited at the Gloucestershire Record Office. Persecution seems to have ended by the time of the Toleration Act, and by 1696 Friends were contemplating building a meeting house. This was licensed in 1703. The building was replaced by a larger building in 1836 (and the original one was for a time occupied by the Unitarians) in Manchester Place. The church rate controversy is mentioned in the 1840's.

LONDON COMPANY OATHS

In the 2nd edition of P. E. Jones's *The Worshipful Company of Poulters of the City of London. A short history* (Oxford University Press, 1965) the author recites the words of the Oath demanded of the master and wardens of the company in addition to the usual oath of supremacy, and then proceeds (p. 34):

"Benjamin Mason, who was a Quaker, signed an affirmation instead of taking an oath when he was elected Warden in 1708. Upon his election as Master in 1710 he refused to take office until the opinion of Sir Peter King had been obtained that it was permissible for him to hold office, and to make an affirmation without incurring penalties. These and similar affirmations signed by freemen, John Smith and John Thornton in 1717 and Henry Snooke in 1723, are to be found at the back of the Poulters' first Minute Book."

Supplements to the Journal of Friends' Historical Society

7. THOMAS POLE, M.D. (1753-1829). By E. T. Wedmore. 1908. 53 pp., 10s. 6d., post 9d.
 - 8-11. EXTRACTS FROM STATE PAPERS relating to Friends, 1654-1672. Ed. N. Penney. 1910-13. 4 parts. 365 pp., 21s., post 1s. 6d.
 12. ELIZABETH HOOTON, First Quaker woman preacher (1600-1672). By Emily Manners. 1914. 95 pp., 10s. 6d., post 9d.
 13. TORTOLA. By C. F. Jenkins. 1923. 106 pp., 10s. 6d., post 9d.
 14. Record of the SUFFERINGS OF FRIENDS IN CORNWALL, 1655-1686. 1928. 152 pp., 15s., post 9d.
 15. QUAKER LANGUAGE. F.H.S. Presidential address by T. Edmund Harvey. 1928. 30 pp., 5s., post 3d.
 - 16-17. PEN PICTURES OF LONDON YEARLY MEETING, 1789-1833. Ed. Norman Penney. 1930. 227 pp., 25s., post 1s.
 21. AN ORATOR'S LIBRARY. John Bright's books. Presidential address 1936 by J. Travis Mills. 1946. 24 pp., 2s., post 3d.
 22. LETTERS TO WILLIAM DEWSBURY AND OTHERS. Edited by Henry J. Cadbury. 1948. 68 pp., 8s., post 3d.
 23. SLAVERY AND "THE WOMAN QUESTION." Lucretia Mott's Diary. 1840. By F. B. Tolles. 1952. 7s. 6d., cloth 12s. 6d., post 6d.
 24. THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY OF THE EARLY FRIENDS. Presidential address by Frederick B. Tolles, 1952. 3s. 6d., post 3d.
 25. JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, The Quaker. By C. Marshall Taylor. 1954. 3s. 6d., post 3d.
 26. JAMES NAYLER, A FRESH APPROACH. By Geoffrey F. Nuttall, D.D. 1954. 2s. 6d., post 3d.
 27. THOMAS RUDYARD, EARLY FRIENDS' "ORACLE OF LAW." By Alfred W. Braithwaite. 1956. 2s. 6d., post 3d.
 28. PATTERNS OF INFLUENCE IN ANGLO-AMERICAN QUAKERISM. By Thomas E. Drake. 1958. 1s. 6d., post 3d.
 29. SOME QUAKER PORTRAITS, CERTAIN AND UNCERTAIN. By John Nickalls. 1958. Illustrated. 3s. 6d., post 4d.
 30. "INWARD AND OUTWARD." A study of Early Quaker Language. By Maurice A. Creasey. 1962. 3s. 6d., post 4d.
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