

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Appendix

'The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.'

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Rouse 1906.

Having freely alluded to the doctrine of the inward light held by the Friends as derogatory to the revealed truth of the Holy Ghost, I am almost bound to add briefly some of the grounds on which a severe censure has been passed on this their fundamental peculiarity. It will be evident to the intelligent reader of G. Fox, W. Penn, I. Pennington, Sewel, and other so-called Quakers, that they call the same principle right reason, grace, the Spirit, the word of God, Christ within, and God in us. Confounding all these and more with that conscience, or knowledge of good and evil, which is the universal property of man since the fall, they thus extend to all, without exception, what Scripture says of Christians only. Mosheim's account is just and calm; and I shall quote no more than is incontrovertible. He had remarked that, though apparently novel, Quakerism was really but a modification of the mysticism of the second century, which had never died out of Christendom, fragments of which were floating about in books, tracts, and men's conversation when Fox wandered about moodily, laying claim to divine inspiration. What he expressed confusedly was systematized by his successors, especially Penn, Barclay, Keith and Fisher. "Their chief dogma then, on which depend all the rest, is that famous and very ancient burden of the mystics, that there lies hid in the minds of all men a certain part of reason and the divine nature, a spark of that wisdom which is in God Himself. Since this is overwhelmed with the weight of the body and the darkness of the flesh which surrounds us, whoever desires happiness and eternal salvation must, by retiring from external things into self, by contemplation and by enfeebling the sensual force, draw it out, kindle, and inflame it. He who does so will feel an admirable light to dawn on him, and a heavenly voice to burst forth from the inmost recesses of his mind, — a conductor into all divine truth, and the surest pledge of our union with the Supreme Being. This treasure, natural to the human race, they call by various names, most frequently 'divine light,' sometimes a 'ray of eternal wisdom,' at others 'the heavenly Sophia,' the dress of whom (married to a mortal) some of these writers set forth magniloquently. The terms more familiar to us are 'the internal word' and 'Christ within;' for since they hold with the ancient mystics and Origen that Christ is the very reason and wisdom of God, and they will have all men to be endowed with a portion of the divine wisdom, they necessarily conclude that Christ or the word of God is, dwells, and speaks in all men.*

* But the modern Quakers, as appears from the latest writings of *Martin* and others, do not know the real sentiment of their ancestors, and perpetually confound that innate light with the Holy Spirit's light operating in the minds of the pious.

"All their singular and marvellous views flow from this parent principle. For since Christ is in all mankind, it follows, — (1.) That all religion consists in calling off the mind from outward objects, in weakening the power of the senses, in a complete introversion, and the most attentive reception of all that Christ, in the heart or the inner life, commands and dictates. — (2.) That the external word, that is, Holy Scripture, neither determines nor leads man to salvation; for letters and words, being void of life, have no adequate power to enlighten and unite man's mind to God. The only advantage of reading Scripture is in rousing and stimulating the mind to hear the inner word, and to attend the school of Christ, who teaches within. In other words, they regard the Bible as a dumb master, which by signs points out and discovers that living master who dwells in the mind. — (3.) That those destitute of the

written word, as Polytheists, Jews, Mahometans, savage tribes, want, it is true, a certain small help toward attaining salvation, but not the way and doctrine of salvation; for if they attend to their inner monitor, who is never silent when the man is silent, they will learn abundantly from him all that is needful to be known and done. — (4.) That the kingdom of Jesus Christ is of vast extent, and embraces the entire human race; for all carry Christ within them, and thereby, though utterly barbarous and in total ignorance of Christianity, they may become wise and happy both here and hereafter. Those who live virtuously, and restrain their lusts and passions, whether Jews, Mahometans, or Polytheists, shall be united to God, both here and eternally, by Christ that lies hidden within," etc. (*Mosheimii Institt. E. E. Saec. xvii sect. ii. pars ii. c. iv. § vii. viii.*)

Take the following extracts from early Friends.

Fox: "And as I was walking by the steeple-house aide, in the town of Mansfield, the Lord said unto me, That which people do trample upon must be thy food. And as the Lord spake, he opened it to me, how that people and professors did trample upon the life, even the life of Christ was trampled upon; and they fed upon words, and fed one another with words; but trampled upon the life; and trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God (which blood was my life); and they lived in their airy notions, talking of him. It seemed strange to me at the first, that I should feed on that which the high professors trampled upon; but the Lord opened it to me clearly by his eternal Spirit and power.

"Then came people from far and near to see me; and I was fearful of being drawn out by them; yet I was made to speak and open things to them. There was one Brown, who had great prophecies and sights upon his death-bed of me. And he spake openly of what I should be made instrumental by the Lord to bring forth. And of others he spake that they should come to nothing: which was fulfilled in some that were something in shew. And when this man was buried, a great work of the Lord fell upon me, to the admiration of many who thought I had been dead. And many came to see me for about fourteen days' time; for I was very much altered in countenance and person, as if my body had been new-moulded or changed. And while I was in that condition I had a sense of discerning given me by the Lord, through which I saw plainly that when many people talked of God and of Christ, etc., the serpent spake in them. But this was hard to be borne. Yet the work of the Lord went on in some, and my sorrows and troubles began to wear off, and tears of joy dropped from me, so that I could have wept night and day with tears of joy to the Lord in humility and brokenness of heart. And I saw into that which was without end, and things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be express by words. For I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through the power and over the power of Satan, by the eternal, glorious power of Christ; even through that darkness was I brought which covered over all the world, and which chained down all, and shut up all in the death. And the same eternal power of God, which brought me through these things, was that which afterwards shook the nations, priests, professors, and people. Then could I say I had been in spiritual Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, and the grave; but by the eternal power of God I was come out of it, and was brought over it, and the power of it, into the power of Christ. And I saw the harvest white, and the seed of God lying thick in the ground as ever did wheat, that was sown outwardly; and none to gather it And for this I mourned with tears. And a report went abroad of me, that I was a young man that had a discerning spirit. Whereupon many came to me from far and near — professors, priests, and people; and the Lord's power brake forth. And I had great openings and prophecies, and spake unto them of the things of God

"And they were discoursing of the blood of Christ. And as they were discoursing of it, I saw through the immediate opening of the invisible Spirit, the blood of Christ. And I cried out among them, and said, 'Do ye not see the blood of Christ? See it in your hearts, to sprinkle your hearts and

consciences from dead works to serve the living God. For I saw it, the blood of the New Covenant, how it came into the heart.' This startled the professor, who would have the blood only *without* them, and not in them. . . .

"Now was I come up in Spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus; so that, I say, I was come up to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me; and it was showed me how all things had their names given them according to their nature and virtue. And I was at a stand in my mind whether I should practise physic for the good of mankind, seeing the nature and virtues of the creatures were so opened to me by the Lord. But I was immediately taken up in Spirit to see into another or more stedfast state than Adam's in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall. And the Lord showed me that such as were faithful to him in the power and light of Christ should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell: in which the admirable works of the creation, and the virtues thereof, may be known, through the openings of that divine word of wisdom and power by which they were made. . . .

"And on a certain time, as I was walking in the fields, the Lord said unto me, 'Thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life, which was before the foundation of the world.' And as the Lord spake it, I believed, and saw it in the new birth. Then, sometime after, the Lord commanded me to go abroad into the world And I was to turn them to the grace of God, and to the truth in the heart, which came by Jesus. . . . For I saw that Christ had died for all men, and was a propitiation for all; and had enlightened all men and women with his divine and saving light; and that none could be a true believer but who believed in it. I saw that the grace of God, which brings salvation, had appeared to all men, and that the manifestation of the Spirit of God was given to every man to profit withal These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter (though they are written in the letter); but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God, by whom the holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures; but they were very precious to me. For I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me, I afterwards found was acceptable to them. . . .

"Therefore I exhorted the people to come off from all these things, and directed them to the Spirit and grace of God in themselves, and to the light of Jesus in their own hearts, that they might come to know Christ, their free Teacher, to bring them salvation, and to open the Scriptures to them."

"Whosoever witnesseth Christ within, they witness the end of imputation, they witness the thing itself, and they possess their sanctification, and such come to know faith and love. And such as may have all the Scriptures, and preach of justification and sanctification without them, and not within them, be as the Jews, be as the witches and reprobates."

PENN: "The same Christ, Word-God, who has lighted all men, is by sin grieved and burdened, and bears the iniquities of such as so sin and reject his benefits. But as any hear his knocks, and let him into their hearts, he first wounds, and then heals; afterwards he atones, mediates, and reinstates man in the holy image he has fallen from by sin." Again: "All the disadvantages the Protestant is under in this is that of his greater modesty, and that he submits his belief to be tried, while the other refuses under the pretence of unaccountable infallibility. To that authority reason demurs; right reason, I mean; the reason of the first nine verses of the first of St. John; for so Tertullian, and some other ancient as well as modern critics, give us the word *Logos*; and the divine reason is, one and all, the lamp of God which lights our candle, and enlightens our darkness, and is the measure and test of our knowledge."

"I have chosen to speak in the language of the Scripture, which is that of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth and wisdom, that wanted no art or direction of man to speak by, and express itself fitly to, man's understanding. But yet that blessed principle, the Eternal Word, I begun with to you, and which is that light, spirit, grace, and truth, I have exhorted you to in all its holy appearances or manifestations in yourselves, by which all things were at first made, and man enlightened to salvation, is

Pythagoras's great light and salt of ages;

Anaxagoras's divine mind;

Socrates's good spirit;

Timaeus's unbegotten principle and author of all light;

Hieron's God in man;

Plato's eternal, ineffable, and perfect principle of truth;

Zeno's Maker and Father of all; and

Plotin's root of the soul: who as they thus styled the Eternal Word; so for the appearance of it in man they wanted not very significant words:

'A domestic God or God within,' say Hieron, Pythagoras, Epictetus, and Seneca.

'Genius, angel, or guide,' say Socrates and Timaeus.

'The light and Spirit of God,' says Plato.

'The divine principle in man,' says Plotin.

'The divine power and reason, the infallible, immortal Law in the minds of men,' says Philo; and

'The law and living rule of the mind, the interior guide of the soul, and everlasting foundation of the soul,' says Plutarch."

"The condemnation or justification of persons is not from the imputation of another's righteousness, but the actual performance and keeping of God's righteous statutes or commandments; otherwise God should forget to be equal. Therefore, how wickedly unequal are those who, not from Scripture evidences, but their own dark conjectures and interpretations of obscure passages, would frame a doctrine so manifestly inconsistent with God's most pure and equal nature, making him to condemn the righteous to death, and justify the wicked to life from the imputation of another's righteousness — a most unequal way indeed!"

"The way to justification and sonship is through the obedience of the Spirit's leadings; that is, manifesting the holy fruits thereof by an innocent life and conversation."

"The Trinity of distinct and separate Persons in the unity of essence may be refuted from Scripture, and also from right reason. "

"If each Person be God, and that God subsists in three Persons, then in each Person there are three Persons or Gods, and from three they will increase to nine, and so on *ad infinitum*."

"The vulgar doctrine of satisfaction, being dependent on the second Person of the Trinity, is refuted from Scripture and right reason."

"The same light and life which afterwards clothed itself with that outward body."

"Though we believe that the eternal power, light, and life, which inhabited that holy Person who

was born at Bethlehem was and is chiefly and eminently the Saviour, yet we reverently confess the holy manhood was instrumentally a Saviour, as prepared and chosen for the work that Christ, the Word-God, had then to do in it."

BARCLAY: "it will not from thence follow that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the examination either of the outward testimony of Scripture, or of the human or natural reason of man, as to a more noble and certain rule and touchstone. "

"We may not call them [the Scriptures] the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners, because the principal fountain of truth must be the truth itself; *i.e.*, that whose authority and certainty depends not upon another." Again: "God hath committed and gives unto every man a measure of light of his own Son — a measure of grace, or a measure of the Spirit. This, as it is received, and not resisted, works the salvation of all, even of those who are ignorant of the death and sufferings of Christ."

"Though we affirm that Christ dwells in us, yet not immediately, but mediately, as he is in that seed which is in us; whereas he, to wit, the Eternal Word, which was with God and was God, dwelt immediately in that holy man."

"From this large description [John 6] of the origin, nature, and effects of this body, flesh, and blood of Christ, it is apparent that it is spiritual, and to be understood of a spiritual body, and not of that body or temple of Jesus Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary, and in which he walked, lived, and suffered in the land of Judea, because that it is said that it came down from heaven, yea, that it is he that came down from heaven. . . . That this body and spiritual flesh and blood of Christ is to be understood of that divine and heavenly seed, before spoken of by us, appears both by the nature and the fruits of it. . . . So, then, as there was the outward visible body and temple of Jesus Christ, which took its origin from the Virgin Mary, so there is also the spiritual body of Christ, by and through which he that was the Word in the beginning with God, and was and is God, did reveal himself to the sons of men, in all ages, and whereby men in all ages come to be made partakers of eternal life, and to have communion and fellowship with God and Christ For as Jesus Christ, in obedience to the will of the [father, did by the eternal Spirit offer up that body for a propitiation for the remission of sins, and finished his testimony upon earth thereby, is a most perfect example of patience, resignation, and holiness, that all might be made partakers of the fruit of that sacrifice: so hath he likewise poured forth into the hearts of all men a measure of that divine light and seed wherewith he is clothed; that thereby, reaching unto the consciences of all, he may raise them up out of death and darkness by his life and light; and they thereby may be made partakers of his body, and there-through come to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son."

PENNINGTON: "How came the Scriptures to declare of Christ? Was it not from the Spirit? And is not that same light still with the Spirit, by which the Scriptures were given forth? And can he not give it forth without the letter, where he seeth need of it, and vouchsafeth so to do? Why may not men now by the light of the Spirit come to know that Christ is come, dead, and risen, as well as these things were known and believed before the Scriptures were written"

"But we believe the Spirit to be a touchstone beyond the Scriptures, and to be that which giveth ability to try and discern, not only words, but spirits."

"The light is near all mankind, to discover to them and help them against the darkness. The knowledge of those, and belief of those who own the light, is owned by God's Spirit (in this our day) for the true believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for that knowledge which is life eternal; and the knowing and believing on him, as men account it, according to their apprehension of the letter, without

this, is reckoned with God for ignorance and unbelief."

Answering the question, "Whether the writings of any now be of equal weight with the Scriptures?" he says, "Yea, the immediate word of the Lord, spoken and declared this day by any man to Whom it pleaseth the Lord to commit the same, is of no less authority, nor more to be slighted now, than it was in his servants in the days past, by whom the Scriptures were given forth."

"I will grant a great deal to the letter and ministration outward, but I must attribute more to the inward, or else God's light, and the holy experience he hath given me, will condemn me." Again, "The Holy Spirit of God and the Scriptures are not always joined together; for some in the dark corners of the earth may be visited by the Spirit, and receive the Spirit, who never heard of the Scriptures."

"The Scriptures give testimony concerning the one thing necessary to salvation; but the thing itself, Christ himself, the seed itself, is not contained in the Scriptures, but revealed in the shinings of the true light, and so received or rejected inwardly in the heart."*

* For most of the quotations from Pennington, I am indebted to "The British Friend" of November, 1867; and he who extracts them subscribes himself "a believer in our first principles," and commends strongly these and other such statements of an author who, he allows, was "by no means the most extreme in his views, or the most trenchant in his expressions."