



his fellow bishops had sufficiently considered the nature of the conception and parturition of this offspring.

Catholics, too, should give their minds to the nature of the Puritan movement for it reveals the responsibility of the faithful in the matter of the abuse of the good things of the Church. There can be no doubt that by the 15th century a great deal of the outward manifestations of religion had become the playground of lax and lustful clergy on the one hand and superstitious laity on the other. It was the abuse of the material element in the worship of the Church—her sacraments and the central act of the Mass—and in ecclesiastical government which encouraged men swinging away from the Church to let themselves be carried across to the opposite extreme. As has so often been remarked, the abuse of the good thing leads by reaction to its denial. The responsibility therefore always lies in the first place with those to whom the precious gifts are entrusted.

But what is of particular interest in the English scene is that the swing-over was so scattered, and it is the contention of the High Church party that the Church of England never did swing far. However this may be, it is clear that the result of standing out against abuses to the degree of breaking unity led to a disintegration into varying units, some of which wished to go to the extreme, others only to the denial of a central authority. Yet this latter was in effect as extreme as any. For once the linch-pin of authority is removed individuals are left to decide for themselves how far to re-form religious practice and belief. The Protestant doctrine of private judgment shows itself more and more clearly as individuals or groups within the Church of England after its break with Rome began to work out the principles of Luther and Calvin. Horton Davies in his *The Worship of the English Puritans* follows this movement as the Separatists desiring 'Reformation without tarrying for any' left the other Puritans behind within the National Church. These latter, however, found too much of Catholicism even in the Book of Common Prayer and in the hierarchical constitution to feel confident that Luther, still less Calvin, would ultimately prevail. The Parliamentary Directory offered with the revolution some hopes of the final triumph of the principles of the reformation. But the Restoration dashed all these ideals and the various non-conformist bodies were set up, each with its own interpretation of the Church and of the Word of God. The Separatists were already Independents, Brownists, Barrowists, Anabaptists; and then came the Baptists, Congregationalists and so on until the Quakers appeared as the natural outcome of this movement away from any 'outward' religious forms. For all these different kinds of the new religion the touchstone of

truth was the Spirit; they knew that to hold it to be the Church would be Papistry (cf. Nuttall p. 43-4). And for that reason they were unwilling to be tied down to any form since the new movement was leading on to unknown breadths under the Spirit—'the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of his holy Word'.

The point of great interest, however, is that the Puritan movement was a liturgical movement. Horton Davies makes this the foundation of his thesis: he suggests that the Church of England had accepted and worked out the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation, the adherence to the Word of God, and Puritanism was the second stage, that of applying the doctrine to the unreformed worship of the Church. 'Puritanism in England was, therefore, of necessity a liturgical movement. On its positive side it wished to restore English worship to the simplicity, purity, and spirituality of the primitive Church. On its negative side, it wished to reject those symbols in which Romanism expressed its character'. (p 8). But the movement was an exact reverse of the twentieth-century liturgical reform which has spread from Rome to almost every form of dissident Christianity. Now most Christians are coming back to the central importance of the Eucharist to which is linked the solemn beauty of all types of religious art and drama. Bishop Gorton remarks, 'Every negotiating Christian body at this moment does believe that the Eucharist is the instrument in the Church given us by the Lord to bring Christians together' (p. 26). But in those days it was a movement away from any outward forms and the severe limitation of the few remaining Ordinances (as they called the Sacraments). From a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper they moved to a monthly and the Presbyterians only performed the service four times a year. There was, naturally, divergence on the principles of liturgical reform. Luther had not been so radical and had graciously admitted the five senses to share in divine worship; and this, although regarded even by Horton Davies (p. 18) as inconsistent with the doctrine of the Word of God, left room for the ceremonious worship of the Book of Common Prayer. Calvin is regarded strangely as more logical: 'he did not for a moment waver in his conviction that all worship must proceed from the divine inspiration, and human traditions therefore carried no weight with him' (Davies, p. 21). Attempts to reconcile these two views, such as the 'Savoy Liturgy', never came to anything so that the different groups continued to disagree as to whether they should kneel, stand or sit for the reception of the eucharistic bread; whether the ministers should use gowns and girdles and coats; whether they should preach funeral sermons or bury their dead without any formality.

It was remarkable that the first members of these new branches of religion were very great men in their own way. Not only had the leaders like Luther and Calvin minds of great power, but the apologists for the early Puritans, men like Sibbes and Baxter, were extremely balanced and used common sense in their application of the principles of reform. But it was inevitable that the movement should grow in its simplicism and so comparatively quickly come to enthrone in over-emphasis what it had set out to destroy. The 18 'Exceptions against the Book of Common Prayer' drawn up by the Presbyterian Ministers in 1661 make interesting reading in view of this tendency (cf. Davies, p. 147). The new liturgy, they demand, must be agreeable to all the substantial of Protestantism, it must avoid 'repetitions and responsals', saints' days must be abolished, and a return to a primitive worship is required—as to this they 'cannot find any records of known credit, concerning any entire forms of liturgy within the first three hundred years'.

In the matter of worship, then, as in all other things, the Puritans introduced 'the freedom of the Spirit' in such a way as to deny the body any part in purely religious matters. Thus unwittingly did they open the door to materialism, for the body having been left so much out of consideration eventually set up its own religion in triumph. But at first this was not perceived. The world had entered through the reformation into the age of the Spirit and the millennium had plainly dawned for mankind. In his *Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution* Dr Schenk shows how popular among the 'Levellers' and their kin was the idea of the second coming of Christ to restore equality among men. And the idea that they were living in the age of the Spirit comparable to that looked for by the Abbot Joachim was even more widespread. 'Therefore the third dispensation', says one of them, 'will be more spiritual yet; for though Christ was in the days of his flesh, yet he was not full come, till the Spirit was sent; therefore this second coming will be more in the Spirit yet. . . .' (quoted by Nuttall, p. 106). They thus regarded themselves as inheritors of the Spirit and free to be moved entirely from within. The social doctrine coupled with the expectation was not in fact an illogical insistence on the physical aspect of man among such spirituals. It was quite often prompted by political ideals for establishing a kind of theocracy through the army (Samson, cf. Nuttall, p. 105), a free antinomian society in which no man is ruled by any other (cf. Schenk, pp. 68 sqq.). Those men had this in common with the communist: they heralded a new era but were fundamentally more concerned with the politics of the new kingdom than with the needs of their fellow men. Some of them attacked private property as a source of evil,

but it was then for a spiritual rather than material political ideal that they fought. In this they differed mightily from the modern communist. Yet it was the beginning. They were emphasising the Spirit, and they hardly considered the body except as an encumbrance in worship. The material side of life was important but outside worship and religion, and so the leaders of the Puritan revolution as a whole were well-to-do gentlemen who regarded poverty as due to idleness or lack of thrift. Men like William Walwyn were far more spiritual in their aims, and by insisting on 'practical Christianity' and the power of love they did not allow material considerations to enter into their ideals. But Walwyn recognised already in the middle of the seventeenth century that the prosperous Puritan was encouraging the spirit of capitalism (Schenk, p. 31). There can be no doubt that the religion of the spirit heralded by this full acceptance of the principles of the Reform opened the way to the present religion of matter which is given its constitution in communism.

The same process is observable in the movement towards the complete acceptance of the Word of God. The first principle of Puritan religion was 'the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible' (Davies, p. 67 and *passim*). The Scriptures were the touchstone of truth in their worship; they could teach nothing, they could do nothing which was not actually to be found in the Bible. In this acceptance of the written Word they jettisoned all the earlier teaching on the different senses of Scriptures, coming down exclusively in favour of the literal meaning. This amounted to a claim for each to understand the literal meaning as it appeared best to him, so that at once they had to search about for a principle of discernment. Here again they sought refuge in the Spirit within them. Without the help of any external criterion urgent questions immediately arose: 'Can the Spirit save, or even speak to, man apart from the Word in Scripture? Is the Word to be interpreted by the Spirit? or should the Spirit's leadings, rather, be tested by the Word? How can men know that it is God's Spirit which speaks to them and not their own fancy?' (Nuttall, p. 23). This Spirit was the light which illumined the words, but soon the Quakers were claiming as it seemed 'that their spirit is not to be tried by the Scripture, but the Scripture by their Spirit' (id. 30).

A maid named Isabel said that the Spirit assured her she had Christ. It was demanded how she knew it to be a true Spirit? She answered, by the effects and not by the Scriptures; for she tried the Scriptures by the Spirit. . . . (quoted Nuttall, p. 30). This was an inevitable consequence which must surely have contributed to the ultimate disregard for the Bible as of any real con-

sequence which we notice in our own day. And it is very remarkable that despite all this insistence on the Spirit and of how it dwells in a man, and the concern as to whether it can give new revelations and leadings, never do the writers of those times seem to have considered the nature of the Holy Spirit nor even the nature of his sanctifying presence in the soul. Throughout the whole of Dr Nuttall's book, in spite of its title *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, these two questions are entirely absent. Dr Schenk tells us that the pious John Hales of Eton set about trying to avoid ambiguities by distinguishing different meanings of 'spirit', but he seems not to have come very far. The whole attitude was in effect outward, being bound up by the abuses they were reforming; they were more interested in the *gratiae gratis datae* in matters of the Spirit because these were manifest in the new attitude to the Scripture, the new worship, preachings and prophesyings. And it is, we hope, not too bitter a judgment to say that this attitude in itself held the seeds of the ultimate denial of the Holy Spirit, of the evangelical conception of grace, and of the holiness of the 'perfect'. Even the religion of love so vigorously and honestly advocated opened no avenue toward contemplation or mysticism. A man like Lilbourne at the time of his conversion and under the persecutor's lash could say, 'this I counted my wedding day in which I was married to the Lord Jesus Christ' (Schenk, 26), but at the best such experiences were passing and cannot be compared with the subject about which St Teresa or St John of the Cross was concerned. The whole Spirit is active and outward.

And so the pendulum swung on, carrying with it many good and wholesome things. Prayer must not be bound down by outward forms, it must not be 'stinted'; and so the *Our Father* itself comes to be discarded by some except as a model on which to base their own extempore prayers. Sacraments and ceremonies, purified and spiritualised, vanish away in favour of the gifts of the Spirit. So Orders disappear as a traditional consecration and remain only as a kind of spiritual dedication. It is perhaps only the English with their genius for compromise who could have continued for so long and so profitably organisations remaining under the general title of 'church' and yet containing the elements of self-annihilation and in particular the principles completely destructive of ecclesiasticism. Anticlericalism, arising from the ecclesiastical abuses, accounted for a good deal of this, and Dr Schenk remarks with some insight, 'one could perhaps argue that the free religious inquiry of men like Walwyn, which inevitably resulted in a weakening of dogma, and their extreme anticlericalism may have ultimately hindered the resistance

of Christianity against that complete secularisation of which we are the bewildered heirs'. (p. 58).

Puritans cut away the organised and legalised Church, and all living

With tremendous enthusiasm for the freedom of the spirit those traditions, only to enclose themselves in a box of materialism and literalism flowing from the dualism inherent in their too easily won simplicity. No wonder, then, that the Oxford movement was fired by Newman's sudden light on the nature of the development of doctrine. The Puritans were 'not traditionalists but spiritual pioneers, who with Barrow would condemn "traditional divinity" as wholly derived from other men's books and writings and not springing from the fountain of God's spirit in themselves' (Nuttall, p. 16). The only reply to this is the balanced view of the progress of doctrine ever new in the Spirit but ever old, set in the rock of tradition and real origins. Was it then that Newman discovered that the Puritan, Protestant principles were in fact inherent in the Church of his birth and upbringing so that this understanding of living growth drove him into the arms of Rome? Certainly some of these modern writers would like to encourage the idea of the Protestantism of the Church of England so that she can meet the Nonconformists on an equal footing. Particularly does it seem to be the design of Horton Davies to show how closely allied are the English State Church and these other Puritan groups. Certainly the nature of the Puritan origins and the nature of their fundamental teachings are of the utmost importance to those who are considering ways and means of linking the Church of England with these Puritan groups. But there is something rather quaint in the fact of a large gathering of Bishops considering how they can pool resources and join up as one Christian body with all those others who in fact deny the orders and the functions of a bishop. Bishop Gorton of course finds the Holy Spirit working equally (?) in all these bodies and his great desire is to join these various 'spirits' into the one Spirit. There is no doubt that the subject demands careful consideration, but it is likely that the spirit of compromise will prevail and that the less clarity is given to these ideas the more easy will it be to envelop all in a wonderfully wide and woolly good will. But at least the subjects bothering Lambeth have suggested these excellent books which provide food for much thought.

THE EDITOR.

NOTE: The books referred to in this article are:

(a) Neville Gorton: *The Anglican Church and Christian Unity* (Longmans; 2s.), a lecture of great sincerity and with the excellent suggestion of using the Eucharist as the point of orientation in all these discussions.

(b) Horton Davies: *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Dacre;

25s.), suffers from the defects of being a doctorate thesis with its inevitable repetitions and the desire to leave nothing out. But the book is eminently readable and the idea of this 'primitive' liturgical movement is of great interest. His conclusion that the evangelical worship of the Puritans was characterised by purity, simplicity and spirituality should be studied in view of the contention in the article above.

(c) G. F. Nuttall: *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Blackwell; 15s.) is another doctorate thesis but with fewer of the defects of its kind. The author shares with Dr Davies a lack of appreciation of the religion of those who lived before the reformation; but the book gives a comprehensive view of the Puritan mind in regard to its central tenets. The same author has since published a small companion volume (*The Holy Spirit and Ourselves*; Blackwell, 5s.) to popularise the doctrines and attitudes revealed in his work of scholarship. This latter is a practical little book in which the author attempts to give some idea of the meaning and nature of 'Holy Spirit', which had been so neglected by the authors whom he had studied.

(d) W. Schenk: *The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution* (Longmans; 15s.) is a most balanced and delightful book of scholarship. Based on the well-known work of R. H. Tawney, the author reveals some modifications which must be made to the former thesis. He shows wherein a comparison could be made, but mostly wherein it cannot be made, with the modern Marxists. 'One could indicate the historical position of the Puritan Radicals by saying that in their criticism of society they had much more in common with William Langland than with Thomas Paine or Karl Marx'. (p. 161).

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## IN PRAISE OF QUAKERS

**I**N the year 1924 the Society of Friends, which cherishes an ancient 'testimony' against the celebration of special days, waived its scruples to celebrate the birth of George Fox, who, if not exactly the founder, was the coherer of those wandering souls who became known as Quakers.

About the time the Quakers [I must be forgiven if from time to time I call them Friends] are, if not celebrating, at least turning their minds to the tercentenary of their existence as a religious body. I believe also that other religious bodies, especially Christian bodies, will according to their capacity give thanks to God for the Quakers. Even that Christian body to which I have been given the grace to belong, that body without which there could not be in any sense a Christian body, very properly and without retracting in the slightest