A STUDY IN ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

THERE appears in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* an article on the Ministry by Professor Schmiedel, which is the most important contribution upon the subject of church organisation since the publication in Germany of what is known as the Hatch-Harnack literature.* This deepening interest in the beginnings of Church development is of especial importance to Friends, and we may be thankful that the work of Dr. Hatch is being pursued by such able scholars. Schmiedel traces step by step the congealing process which set in so rapidly in the Christian Fellowship.

He makes, of course, short work with the dogma of an unbroken apostolic succession, he is inclined to regard the bishop as a later creation than did Lightfoot, but he remarks "... however far the full consequences of the catholic constitution of the church may have been from having been explicitly drawn up prior to 180 A.D., all the premises were present, and they necessarily pressed forward to their full expression."

Schmiedel recognises the necessary place of organisation even in a spiritual fellowship, indeed not to recognise this is, as history has repeatedly shown, to fling wide the door to anarchy. But while he regards such organisation as, under certain forms, a mark of progress, he sounds at the same time a note of warning.

*Gesellschaftverfassung der Christlichen Kirchen in Allerthum, 1883, with Harnack's Analahion.*
"Such arrangements," that is, arrangements of which Schmiedel has expressed his approval, "may carry within them a danger to the purity of religion. The sharp division between members and non-members lends only too easily to an exaggerated consciousness of selectness and a deprecation of outsiders (Cp. 1 Cor. v. 12 f.). The practically compulsory attendance at the regular meetings, the uniformity of the proceedings there, the formal common prayer, may result in a cooling of the emotions of the heart; such a thing as attachment to the religious principles of the community, yet without full formal assent given and without participation in all ceremonies, is not regarded as admissible; and yet it is easily possible that not only particular institutions but also (and above all) the formulated expressions of the common faith may take such a form as many a one may find himself unable to accept, whilst yet his attitude towards the matter in its religious essence is entirely sympathetic and the impossibility of full membership is felt by him as involving a grievous loss. The interference in private affairs . . . may easily be carried further than is desirable; what is worse, in place of a pure concern for the imperilled individual may come concern for the interests of the community, for appearances, for the maintenance of decisions once arrived at though now in need of reform. . . . Above all there is apt to develop itself only too readily in the persons charged with the duty of ruling and judging an unhealthy sense of superiority. . . ."

We make no excuse for quoting at such length. Coming from a brilliant scholar who has just risen, as it were, from a close and exhaustive scrutiny of the beginnings of the church, the passage is of great significance. We are approaching a time when the question of the character of church fellowship will press with increasing urgency, and it is high time for us to have regard for the lessons of the past. We may be grateful for all impartial and critical study,
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for such study has too often been biassed, the Anglican
or Roman demanding of history the justification of his
claims, the Quaker on the other hand seeking in the
epistle to the Corinthians his ideal meeting, without
proper regard for the practical difficulties so early
encountered.

Signs of flux in the forms of church fellowship
are not wanting. The movement known as the P.S.A.
is in one sense a signal of distress.* Chapels which

* The following extract from a pamphlet entitled "The
Problem of the Mid Town Church," by Bertram Smith and
Francis Wrigley, B.A.; with a preface by T. C. Taylor, M.P., leads
up to an appeal for a P.S.A., and for considerable adaptation in the
methods of worship. It serves to illustrate the point, and describes
a condition not unknown to Friends.

"No one can deny that there is a widespread anxiety as to the
future of Congregationalism. One of the saddest signs of the times is
the great number of decaying city churches—churches that once were
filled to overflowing, but now have been left lonely and desolate by the
receding tide of suburbanism. Here is a church, for example, with
accommodation for a thousand people, with excellent school premises,
splendidly equipped, standing within easy distance of a great in-
dustrial population, yet at no service on a Sunday with a congregation
of more than about 200 worshippers, and most of them not drawn
from the immediate neighbourhood. Every year the burden of
sustaining the cause becomes more difficult. The few families still
loyal to the church of their fathers grow less and less in number;
their children, who have not the same associations with the old place,
find another home in the suburbs, or drift 'to the Church'; a feeling of
depression and hopelessness steals over the hearts of minister
and people," etc.

It may be useful to set against this a quotation from Dr.
Horton's address on Public Worship, p. 97, Free Church Year Book,
1901.

"Therefore what I want to urge upon you is that you deliberately
and even ostentatiously, put aside all these attractions, which are
supposed to draw people to the House of God. I am asking for a
great reversal of a tendency that has been growing amongst us;
I am asking for a revolutionary change, and I would not venture to
do it were it not that I understand that the effect of the present
method is that our congregations are smaller and our churches
worse attended than they were thirty years ago. I do not dog-
matically say that these methods are wrong. I simply point out that
they have failed. The masses are more indifferent to public worship
than they were . . . I will have no attractions in my church
unless they are the austere and awful attractions of Mount Sinai
and Mount Calvary."
can no longer "draw" by the ordinary means, adopt special "popular" services. The Adult School Movement, on the other hand, stands as a practical comment upon the insufficiency of the Church, and a most suggestive indication of some neglected conditions of fellowship. Its proper place and its relation to existing church organisation is as yet hardly understood.

In the Anglican Church a remarkable transformation, of which more anon, has been in full progress, tending to exalt the authority of the clergyman, or rather, as he prefers it, the "priest"; an increasing elaboration of the service and a corresponding decline of the sermon.* Changes in the social and intellectual environment have doubtless emphasised, if they have not induced these "adaptations," and if a just estimate is to be formed of them these must be properly weighed.

Confining our examination to the Society of Friends, we are met with the same type of evidence. There is a generally expressed sense of imperfect adaptation to existing needs. The report of the Home Mission Committee "On the use of Meeting-houses on First-day Evenings" is a document that should be carefully pondered, not so much for what it actually contains, though that is valuable, as for the suggestiveness of its facts. Having made an extensive inquiry into the practice of Friends in their various localities the Home Mission Committee reviews the situation as follows:

* See address by the Bishop of Durham at the Church Congress at Leicester reported in the daily press.
*“... it seems clear that the Morning Meeting for Worship continues to hold a very high, perhaps even an increasingly high place in the attachment and esteem of our members.

“Evening Meetings for Worship held as in the morning have evidently been widely discontinued, and when held are, with a few notable exceptions, poorly attended.” 139 out of 332 Evening Meetings reporting (two-fifths of the number) are held “on the same basis as an ordinary Friends’ Meeting with additions—as for example, the reading and exposition of Scripture, arranged addresses on Christian truth as held by Friends, greater liberty in the giving of Gospel addresses and of singing”; but “the ground plan is still largely that of individual responsibility and equality of opportunity.”

Forty-eight meetings (a seventh of the number reported) “are more distinctively classified as Gospel or Mission Meetings with a large amount of definite pre-arrangement throughout.” The report practically sums up the situation in its fifth “conclusion.” “The trend of thought among our members seems generally to be in one of two ways—viz. (a) the desire for meetings providing more teaching; (b) the desire for freer Gospel Meetings.”

The existence of the Home Mission Committee is in itself not without bearing upon the subject under discussion. In their last annual report thirty-five Friends are enumerated as working under the committee, and forty-nine meetings as being regularly

* P. 39 f., Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1902.

† A remark of a correspondent is quoted which is of no little significance, “The Evening Meeting is a Friends’ Meeting for worship made homely.”

‡ See p. 19 f.; Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1902.
visited by them. Grants in aid of Friends engaged in various parts of the country including office salaries amount to £3,957, and the principle of supported residence in a meeting is frankly accepted.

The natural alarm which this departure from the later practice of Friends called forth has now, to a large extent, evaporated. It is recognised that the work of the Home Mission Committee is, on the whole, conducted with caution, and that there are special practical needs which cannot be met by spasmodic or even by fairly regular visits of travelling ministers. There are, in fact, conditions which call for the more or less prolonged residence of a real Friend with the needful spiritual qualities, if permanent results are to be attained. Meetings which have been allowed through various causes to fall into decay need medicinal treatment, and the constant attendance of a doctor, until normal health is restored.

But while we accept the situation as of practical necessity, we are deeply impressed with the importance of steadily maintaining the fundamental Quaker conception of worship. A Friends' Mission ought not to be the same as any other mission, for its object is different. If it be here demurred that the object in all missions is to bring people to Christ, we answer: True, but the statement requires definition. Men view Christ differently from their various standpoints, and Quakerism, as one particular view of Christ, must express itself according to its own standpoint. This implies the true priesthood of all believers, with its practical consequences in the fellowship. An Anglican or a Wesleyan mission, for example, may gather people
to Christ, but in either case, if a congregation be formed, a clergyman or a pastor is set over it, and the freedom of spiritual exercise inevitably confined.

The thoughts which naturally arise from a study of Hatch, McGiffert, or Schmiedel, bear very directly upon all these phenomena; and especially when we view the state of flux in the Society of Friends in all its Yearly Meetings.

Do Friends at all realise the magnitude or the import of the change which is taking place? Do they know at all where they are steering? Have they given penetrating thought to the practical issue before them? We do not think so, and that at present they are drifting without a proper knowledge of their course is not the least of the dangers attending the transition.

Let us briefly state the facts.

The number of Friends of all branches throughout the world is in round numbers 134,000, made up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Yearly Meeting</th>
<th>Membership in 1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana, U.S.A.</td>
<td>20,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Hicksite,&quot; &quot;Wilburite,&quot; and other branches of Friends not in correspondence with London Yearly Meeting* (estimated)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London (i.e. England) not including 236 resident in Australasia</td>
<td>17,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western U.S.A.</td>
<td>15,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas, U.S.A.</td>
<td>11,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa, U.S.A.</td>
<td>10,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington, U.S.A.</td>
<td>6,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio, U.S.A.</td>
<td>5,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina, U.S.A.</td>
<td>5,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England, U.S.A.</td>
<td>4,532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name of Yearly Meeting.

Philadelphia (Orthodox, not in correspondence with London Y.M.),* probably over-estimated
New York, U.S.A.
Ireland
Oregon, U.S.A.
California, U.S.A.
Baltimore, U.S.A.
Canada
Australasia (probably under-estimated, including 236 who retain English membership)
Scattered (certainly under the mark)

Membership in 1901.

4,400
3,606
2,609
1,607
1,567
1,217
1,059
786
257

134,096

This table may be analysed thus:—

America.

In correspondence with London Y.M.
Not in correspondence with London Y.M.

Rest of the World.

England
Ireland
88,804 All other

24,400

20,892

113,204

We would call particular attention to a feature at present confined to the Quakerism of the United States. In America a system known as the “Pastoral” has found wide acceptance. Writing in an earlier number of this journal† we expressed our opinion of it as follows: “The system which may now be studied in

* i.e.; exchanging Epistles with London Yearly Meeting, which implies official recognition. These bodies separated from the parent body at different times, on theological and other grounds.

all the stages of its development, has overrun the Western Yearly Meetings, and has made large inroads into the Conservative Quakerism of the East. . . . We have no sympathy with that policy of criticism which English Friends have sometimes unhappily pursued. But we feel bound to state clearly that this development is to us a matter of the gravest concern, and that after the most careful investigation we believe it involves the increasing departure, more or less conscious, from our fundamental conception of worship. The point of importance for us is this: the Pastoral system, whether we approve it or no, was established as a consequence of previous failure."

To these opinions we adhere, but on this occasion it seems desirable to state more clearly what the Pastoral system is. Believing that its initiation was of importance not only from the standpoint of Quaker Church polity, but of Church history as a whole, we devoted some months to a close personal study of the system at first hand, and gathered a mass of material to which we have from time to time been able to add.

We venture to draw upon the knowledge thus obtained for a brief and confessedly incomplete sketch of the origin and course of the movement. And considering the movement, the origin is all important. It was briefly the failure of the ministry under the old order. We shall be opposed with the objection that the immediate cause of this must have been a decline in spiritual life. Granted, but why did the spiritual life decline? We have not space for an exhaustive examination into an interesting question which is really of present moment, but we are satisfied that an im-
important cause was the absence of adequate provision for teaching, and the practical impotence, arising from an exaggerated dread of arrangements, which tended to increasing feebleness in the congregational life. The ministry was too often ineffectual, to use no harsher term, and the central conception of the Quaker ideal, inadequately portrayed both in preaching and practice, failed to provoke evangelical effort.

Here and there as early as the 'sixties, and doubtless in response to the influence of Joseph John Gurney amongst others, there were uneasy stirrings. Some changes were locally effected in the practice of worship, which led to serious discord, but broadly speaking, a somewhat formal conservatism prevailed.

Into this atmosphere of suspended animation swept the hurricane of Moody's revival.* Many Quakers were carried off their feet. For the first time in their lives they felt the uplift of congregational singing when the heart is in the voice, and abandoning the old restrictions, flung themselves with fervour into the revival campaign. There was little or no distinction between the Methodist and the Quaker. In a Quaker village, the Methodist missioner sent his converts to claim the fellowship of the Meeting-house, and in a Methodist village, the Quaker returned the compliment.

When the hurricane passed, the landscape was changed. Crowds converted in the Mission Hall had found their way into the Meeting-house. They were not prepared for the silence nor for a ministry of tangled

* It should be said that the leading evangelists among Friends had commenced their work before D. L. Moody began his revival. The latter undoubtedly added great impetus to the Friends' work.
texts set to a Gregorian chant. They chafed, hesitated, and slowly drifted away.

But there were Friends who, having laboured to draw them in, were not prepared to let them out! Adaptation became the watchword. There must be more freedom, there must be singing, there must be direct preaching.

Step by step changes came, tardily perhaps at first, but, early in the 'eighties, with an increasing sweep. Admirable as was the spirit, there was nevertheless behind these changes a fatal misconception. After the "split" (for American Christianity is ever fissiparous, and before the great revival, discord had thrown her apple into the Quaker Church) the progressive or "fast" Friends, as they were called, found themselves in possession.

They concluded that the old conception of the Free Ministry was impracticable, and it became their aim to draw close to what they regarded as the successful Evangelical Churches. The "meeting-house" became a "church" with stained glass windows, and with a bell which summoned the congregation to worship; the gallery became a platform and the platform became smaller; the body of the meeting became the "audience" or the "auditorium"; the service was pre-arranged, and a practised choir with conductor, solos and anthems, an organ, little or no silence, a preacher supported by the congregation, who dismisses his people with uplifted hands and the Benediction, and before whom Friends are married kneeling, are the inevitable outward marks of this inward policy.
The whole of this description will not, of course, apply to every case, but we have in our possession a pile of notebooks, the contents of which are conclusive as to the general and inevitable drift. Every stage of evolution is represented, but unless some unforeseen counter-movement is developed, of which there is no present sign, and unless history is without meaning, the freedom of the ministry, the individual exercise in worship, and the basis of silence upon which these must necessarily rest, seem doomed. A pastoral superintendent of one of the largest of the Yearly Meetings pointed out that a meeting without a pastor was in the black books of the Pastoral Committee, and would be under pressure until it fell into line. He definitely asserted that the Pastoral system was intended to be permanent, and that the old order was effete; in fact, "all the premisses are present" and at the moment seem "pressing forward to their full expression." We might multiply instances did space permit, but perhaps have sufficiently sketched the situation. We would only remark that the sketch is drawn without malice.

American Friends must work out their own salvation. They have faced great difficulties with splendid courage, and have set an example in devoted earnestness and practical effort, which English Friends may well emulate.*

Whether they have taken sufficient count of the

* It would be an error to suppose that we have fully described the Pastoral system. In many respects it is simply a practical recognition of the necessity for pastoral care, and there is much to be learnt from it. We are concerned primarily, however, with what we regard as its dangerous elements.
lessons of Church History we must however gravely question.

Our desire is that with a full knowledge of the facts, Friends on both sides of the Atlantic shall face the problem of the Free Ministry as a problem not solved but still awaiting solution.

It is not yet too late for American Friends to give such a direction to the pastoral movement that the conclusion which seems at present inevitable may be averted, and they will do a great service not only to themselves and to us, but to the Church of Christ, if by avoiding the weakness of both the free and the paid ministry they can point out for us a safe line of advance.

Meanwhile, let us return to our figures. Appended is a table setting out the statistical relationship of Pastoral to Non-pastoral Quakerism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Pastoral.*</th>
<th>Pastoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>America:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Correspondence (estimated)</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Correspondence</td>
<td>24,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total America</strong></td>
<td>30,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of World</td>
<td>20,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-Pastoral</strong></td>
<td>51,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Pastoral</strong></td>
<td>82,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(or 38 per cent. of the world’s total).

(or 62 per cent. of the world’s total).

* i.e.; conducting worship; etc.; according to the practice of London Y.M.
The fact that already only 38 per cent., or considerably less than half of the Friends in all the Yearly Meetings of the world, worship substantially upon the basis of the practice of London Yearly Meeting, surely offers food for serious reflection.

The lesson of the American situation appears to be twofold. It points, on the one hand, to the danger of undisciplined freedom, and the disregard of the human conditions of church fellowship, which are the temptations of mystical religion; and on the other hand, of haste and the disregard of historical teaching in relation to church organisation, which are the temptations of evangelising zeal. Already it is clear from the facts that the position of present-day Quakerism is critical. Friends are being called by the peculiar circumstances of the time to vindicate the Free Ministry as a practicable ideal, and the question remains, Will they have the self-sacrifice and the statesmanship that the occasion demands? They are no longer a leisured body cut off by legislation from many of the channels of public service; the pressure of commerce, and the increasing necessity for virile religious teaching, emphasise the difficulties which the artificial seclusion of the past has served in part to conceal.

Unless there be a spiritual awakening expressing itself in practical measures, there is danger lest the Society of Friends as an organised body cherishing a spiritual conception of fellowship shall melt like a late snow before an April sun.

We may be charged with pessimism, but the charge does not touch us. We recognise with gladness many
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signs of life. Nevertheless we must insist that the crucial nature of the situation is not understood. Until Friends see things as they really are, and give evidence as a body that they intend to face the facts, we must continue to set them forth, especially as it appears to us that the opportunity for "Quakerism"—and we must never be interpreted as using the term in its narrow sectarian sense—seems prepared in a most remarkable degree.

At the Free Church Congress in 1901, Dr. Horton delivered an address on "The Lord's Day,"* and spoke as follows: "I believe that the sanctuary as a place of open communion and of the restoration of the spirit would be a Godsend to many human beings to-day; and some of our friends like Professor Rendel Harris, who believe in a quiet worship, have a great mission for the present day if they can only make clear to strained modern nerves that worship is settling down quietly in the presence of God, and that life may be recovered by contact with Him. We cannot disguise the fact that the tendencies of the present day are strongly against public worship." Here is a challenge! It is the more interesting that it comes just when the movement towards sacerdotalism and ritual appears at its height. And yet it is timely. One first and natural result of the intellectual upheaval in religious thought—we can call it nothing less—is to accentuate the desire for an authoritative church.

First and natural, but not ultimate. In the long run an intellectual awakening must make against all claims which are based upon superficial, unhistorical

* Free Church Year Book, 1901, p. 95.
or irrational grounds. It is the first shock of the new movement which frightens men and drives them to seek refuge behind the walls of sacerdotal pretension or within the citadel of an infallible book. The final consequence must be to drive men back upon their inner consciousness and to deepen the bases of faith. That final consequence is our opportunity. Is our spiritual message ready? Can we articulate it? Do we comprehend the philosophical content, the tremendous spiritual import of Fox's "gospel"? Can we give it a vital and modern interpretation?

At present the answer is no! The Society of Friends does not understand itself. It is a loose fellowship, bound partly by tradition and habit and only to a comparatively small extent by the living ties of a common consciousness. Almost every range of doctrinal thought from Calvinism to Unitarianism is to be found amongst us, and Fox was neither a Unitarian nor a Calvinist. Wild fantastic forms of thought from time to time run riot here and there, for lack of a steadying central conception. If we attempt to speak we are a discord.

An iron uniformity is neither possible nor to be desired. Our quotation from Professor Schmiedel may remind us of its fatuity, and the terrible crudity of the Richmond Declaration of Faith may give us pause. But a greater measure of unity, of intellectual apprehension, and of affinity with a spiritual ideal is of cardinal moment.

Outward effort, social earnestness, missionary enterprise, these can have no permanence unless they radiate from a common centre of quickening life.
John Morley has somewhere said that "the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the average interest, curiosity, capacity, are highest." We are not concerned to produce a race of merely clever giants, but if we are to take the opportunity that Time is waiting to give, it will be by increasing the sensitiveness to spiritual tuition, and raising the general average of spiritual knowledge and experience.

This can be achieved by no one process. Various practical measures will have their place, various influences directly and indirectly "religious" must be brought to bear, and every method and every influence must be steeped in self-sacrifice.

We want thought, we want vision, we want the touch of soul with soul. The Summer Schools have given us some taste of the power of fellowship dominated by the sense of union with God.

A rare opportunity has now opened to give further definition to the work already achieved. May we have the courage to accept it in the light of our own great need, and of the widening range of service which the future reveals.