

**THE CHILDREN'S HISTORY OF
THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS:
CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM
SEWELL'S HISTORY**

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The Children's History of the Society of Friends: Chiefly Compiled from Sewell's History by
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WILLIAM SEWEL

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By Elizabeth Bentham.
Cushing

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL years ago, and without any intention of publishing them, the contents of this little volume were extracted from "Sewell's History of the Quakers;" and (interspersed with remarks of my own) were written out merely for my own convenience in reading to my children.

At the request of several Friends, I now lay my work before the public, hoping that other children may take as much interest in it as mine did.

To W. Hepworth Dixon, I am indebted for his kind permission to take from his "Life of William Penn," the extracts which have so much enlivened my book.

THE CHILDREN'S
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

COME, my dear children, let us sit round the bright fire, this cold evening, and I will begin for you the History of the People called Quakers, or as we call ourselves, the Society of Friends: for we are, or ought to be, the friends of all mankind.

Do you remember how the Apostle says, in the New Testament, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." And you may also remember that this Son, our Lord and Saviour, when about to leave the earth, and return to heaven, said to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Com-

forter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of Truth." After our Saviour had ascended to His Father, this Comforter or Spirit of Truth, did come to the disciples, when at the day of Pentecost, "they were all with one accord in one place, and were filled with the Holy Spirit."

You know, too, how, through suffering and persecution, these disciples and apostles travelled about and preached Christ Jesus, the way of salvation: but they have gone to their rest; and during all the centuries that since passed by, the Lord has sent down His Holy Spirit into men's hearts, and often opened their mouths to preach again in His name. Some day I must tell you the stories of some of these also, but just now, we will pass them by, and come to a period rather more than two hundred years ago; a stormy time for Old England, when her people were two centuries less Christian-like and well taught than they are to-day, and civil war distracted the land; when there arose another messenger, named George Fox, the son of a weaver at Drayton in Leicestershire. His parents were religious people (the neighbours use to call his father "righteous Christer," he was so honest and upright), and they had trained him also in piety; so that even when a child, he tried to keep from doing wrong; and afterwards,

when he was apprenticed to a shoemaker (who also dealt in wool and in cattle), he attended diligently to his master's affairs, and they prospered under him.

Meantime he endeavoured yet more and more, to lead such a life as he thought would please his Saviour: and it grieved him much to see people, who professed to be religious, acting in a manner opposed to such a profession. We know, my children, that if we wish to live as our Saviour bade us, we must try to live as he did: to be humble, meek, and self-denying. He did His Father's will, not His own, so we should try to do His will instead of our own, which is very often opposed to His. In the Bible we shall find full and clear directions as to how we should live; and we know that if we try to follow these, and His example, and to draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. How can we draw near to the Lord? Is it not by seeking Him with our *whole heart*? Our hands cannot reach Him nor our eyes see Him, our *spirits* only can approach Him: the soul can send the voice as a messenger to His throne. Our thoughts too, are its messengers they are "heard in Heaven:" and one solitary person, away from all mankind, is able to worship God, "in spirit and in truth," in a manner as acceptable to Him as a whole congregation.

It is within us, then, that we must seek for the Lord's Spirit to come to us: for He can thus visit us now, when it pleases Him, as He did the disciples and apostles formerly. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." And again, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Now when we want the Lord to shew us the way in which He wishes us to go, we must pray earnestly, sincerely, with our whole heart and soul. This was what George Fox did when he found that no man, whether layman or clergyman, could give his soul any comfort, or help to find either rest or peace.

He could not believe that the ministers of the Church of England, or public preachers of that day, were truly anointed by the Lord for His service: for the mere educating of a young man at the University, and the laying on afterwards of a bishop's hand, could not give the Holy Spirit to any one. The bishop ought first to be qualified to give the blessing, as were the Apostles of old; and the Holy Spirit should come down from the Lord himself into the young man's heart. He can send it into the heart of any of us, whether man or woman, without the laying on of any