

Prize Essays on the Causes of the Decline of the Society of Friends.

In Third Month, 1858, advertisements appeared in various newspapers notifying that "A Gentleman who laments that, notwithstanding the population of the United Kingdom has more than doubled itself in the last fifty years, the Society of Friends is less in number than at the beginning of the century . . . offers a prize of One Hundred Guineas for the best Essay that shall be written on the subject, and a prize of fifty Guineas for the one next in merit." The adjudicators were Frederick Denison Maurice, Professor J. P. Nichol, of Glasgow, and E. S. Pryce, of Gravesend. Their decision on the over 150 Essays submitted was given in 1859.

The name of the "Gentleman" is still unknown. A correspondent writes that it was not any Friend of the name of Rowntree, as appears to be implied on p. 28. Can any reader state certainly who gave the prizes?

The following Essays, printed about this time, formed part of the "Decline" literature. The titles of others written for the competition would be welcomed.

<i>An Essay on the Causes of Decline</i> , by "Quantum Mutatus"	1858
<i>Quakerism Past and Present</i> , by John Stephenson Rowntree, first prize	1859
<i>The Peculium</i> , by Thomas Hancock, second prize	1859
<i>Essay on the Society of Friends</i> , by Samuel Fothergill	1859
<i>The Society of Friends</i> , by Joseph John Fox ("Ora et Labora")	1859
<i>A Fallen Faith</i> , by Edgar Sheppard, M.D.	1859
<i>The Hibernian Essay on the Society of Friends</i> , by a Friend of the Friends ("Seek and ye shall find"), said to be by Joseph Fisher Alexander, of Limerick	1859
<i>The Society of Friends, its Strength and Weakness</i> , by Edmund Fry	1859
<i>The Quakers or Friends, their Rise and Decline</i>	1859
<i>The Decline of Quakerism</i> , by Robert Macnair, M.A.	1860
<i>An American View</i> [by Samuel M. Janney?]	1860

<i>The Society of Friends and their Powerful Witness</i> [by Hudson Scott ?]	1860
<i>The Sure Foundation</i> , by William C. Westlake	1860
<i>Quakerism versus The Church</i> , by an Ex-member	1860
<i>Man's Restoration</i> , by William Brown, jun.	1860
<i>An Inquiry into the Laws of Organized Societies</i> , by William Logan Fisher.	1860
<i>Quakerism, Catholic and Evangelical</i>	1863
<i>Friends or Quakers?</i> by a Friend to Quakers	1864
<i>An Honest Confession of the Cause of Decadence</i> , by a Member	n.d.
<i>Nehushtan. A Letter addressed to Friends, on Peculiarities of Dress and Language</i>	n.d.
<i>The Principle of Ancient Quakerism</i>	n.d.
<i>Reflections on the Early History and Present Declension of the Society of Friends</i> , by "Clemens."	n.d.

A Friend writes, "I believe William Thistlethwaite also submitted an essay to the judges, a good deal of which was afterwards published in his *Lectures on the Early History of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire*, 1858."

Numerous reviews of above books, and references to the subject they deal with, may be found in the periodicals of the time. See also Susanna Corder's *Remarks on the "Prize Essays,"* 1860.

A fresh interest in the competition has been recently aroused, and various enquiries on the subject have of late reached the Library Department at Devonshire House.

Nicholas Waln to Arthur Howell.

Arthur Howell, an eminent minister, was in the habit of leaving his communications till late in the meeting, often beginning when it was nearly time for meeting to close. One day, Nicholas [Waln, another well-known minister] walked up to him and said,

"Arthur Howell; what's the reason;
Thou art always out of season?
When it's time to go away;
Thou must always preach and pray."

From "Centennial Celebration of Arch St. Meeting House, Philadelphia," 1904.