

## A Turkish View of Quakerism, 1659.

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The following extracts are taken from *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy who lived five and forty years undiscovered at Paris (1637-1682)* 26th ed., London, 1770, vol. vi., pp. 13-16 :—

### LETTER IV.

#### TO THE KAIMACHAM.

These Nazarenes are very fertile in new religions. Europe is a wilderness over-run with monstrous sects and heresies. Every age produces fresh pretenders to prophecy and divine revelation. Error is prolifick, and multiplies infinitely ; whilst truth remains the same for ever and is comprehended in a few rules.

Of late years there are a sort of people sprung up in England, Holland, Germany, and other parts of the North, boasting of a new commission given them from Heaven to preach the everlasting truth, reform the errors and vices of mankind, and lead people the only infallible way to happiness. Their address is plain and simple, bold and uniform, using no other ceremonies or compliments in their discourse or carriage to persons of the greatest quality, than to the vulgar, and those of the most inferior rank.

They style themselves “ The true seed, the offspring of Jacob, Jews of the promise, Israelites without fraud,” with such-like vain titles ; but by others they are generally called Quakers.

They say the ringleader of this people professes himself to be the Messiah,<sup>1</sup> being, in all parts of his body and features of his face, like Jesus the son of Mary : Or, at least, it is observed, that he exactly resembles the portraiture of him which Publius Lentulus sent to the Senate of Rome out of Judaea, when he was Governor of that province. Hence his followers scruple not to call him “ Jesus, the beauty of ten thousand, the only

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to James Nayler, but the one sad event of his entry into Bristol is described as if characteristic of his usual style of life. [ED.]

begotten Son of God, the Prophet who is to seal up all things, the Prince of peace, King of Israel, Judge, consolation, and hope of the world.”

When he travels, his disciples attend him bare-headed, which, thou knowest, is a token of reverence among the Franks ; yet they never uncover to any other mortal. He rides on horseback, whilst they walk on foot before, behind, and on each side of him, spreading their garments in the way through which he passes. The hoofs of his beast tread only on silks or other costly stuffs. And, as they enter any town or city, they chant aloud his praises, proclaiming him “ The Son of David, and heir of the divine promises.”

All his followers pretend to be prophets, boasting of strange illuminations and raptures, foretelling things to come, and reproaching the vices of Governors and the greatest Princes, with a boldness which has but few precedents. In a word, they every-where preach that God is laying the foundation of a new monarchy, which shall destroy all the rest in the world, and shall never have an end itself.

This gives a jealousy to the States where they live, and therefore they are persecuted in all places. Yet they appear very constant in their sufferings, and tenacious of the doctrines they preach. . . .

If thou woudest have my opinion of these new religionists in Europe, and their leader ; I take him to be an impostor, and his followers to be either fools or madmen. Even just such another crew as those who followed Moseileima, in the days of our holy Lawgiver. . . .

As to these modern seducers, they are not men of arms, but a herd of silly, insignificant people, aiming rather to heap up riches in obscurity, than to acquire fame by an heroick undertaking. They are generally merchants or mechanicks, and are observed to be very punctual in their dealings, men of few words in a bargain, modest and composed in their deportment, temperate in their lives, and using great frugality in all things.<sup>2</sup> In a word, they are singularly industrious, sparing no labour

<sup>2</sup> This is a very interesting testimony to the manner of life and business integrity of Friends at that early period of their history. See *Journal of George Fox*. [EDS.]

or pains to increase their wealth ; and so subtle and inventive, that they would, if possible, extract gold out of ashes. I know none that excel them in these characters, but the Jews and the Banians : The former being the craftiest of all men, and the latter so superlatively cunning, that they will over-reach the devil.

But these are no signs of a pure religion ; for that only prescribes the methods of withdrawing and separating the soul from the contagion of earthly things, and of uniting it to the Diety, which is its source. . . .

Paris, 15<sup>th</sup> of the 11<sup>th</sup> Moon,  
of the Year 1659.

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### Dr. Thomas Lower to Sir Hans Sloane, 1703.

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Doctor Sloane<sup>1</sup>

I woulde request thee to meete mee at ye white Swan & Crabbe In Martyns Streete by three or neere it this afternoone to Consider & Consult with mee of ye best method for a younge man lately Come uppe out of ye Country yt lyes sicke there of ye Small pox : w<sup>ch</sup> will oblige thy reall ffriende & well wisher

THO. LOWER.<sup>2</sup>

Bartholomew close this 28<sup>th</sup> of ye 9<sup>th</sup> 1703.

(addressed) for my much esteemed friende  
Doct<sup>r</sup> Hans Sloane att his house in  
great Russell Street neere Blooms-  
bury Square these present.

Sloane MSS. 4039, fo. 191, in British Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Hans Sloane (1660-1753), Fellow, Secretary and President of the Royal Society ; President of the Royal College of Physicians, 1716 ; created Baronet 1716. " His various collections were purchased by the nation and placed in Montague House, 1754 (afterwards the British Museum)." —(D.N.B.)

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Lower (1633-1720), Quaker, son-in-law of Margaret Fell, brother of the noted Court Doctor, Richard Lower, M.D., F.R.S., and himself a physician.