

Henry More¹ to Lady Conway, 1675

By special permission of the Editorial Secretary of the Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., we have extracted several valuable references to early Friends from letters printed in *Conway Letters*, edited by Marjorie H. Nicolson (Yale: University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press).

“George Whitehead and John Whitehead gave me a visit, the later of which brought me a book of his own writing, which I read over in my passage from London to Cambridge.

“That John Whitehead looked like a more sensible tender person, and indeed his book seemed to have a good spirit in it. But George Whitehead had an aspect more smug and plump, and more expert, but the ayre of his countenance was more hard and opaque, and I could not hitt it so well in my converse with him, as I could with the other, but asking him some questions, in which I meant him no ill, touching the soul of Christ, he found himself so ill at ease that he told me (which I must confesse I marvell’d at) that he came not thither to be catechised; but the other Quaker easily agreed with me in those questions, which only amounted to this, that Christ besides his body had also a soul, and a soul like ours in all things, sin onely excepted.

“George Keith some dayes before brought in a few little bookes of the Quakers, and amongst them two of Isaak Penington. There’s none reades more like a down right good man then he. So that I do not wonder your Ladiship expressed yourself so well pleased with him at Ragley.”

Nicolson, *Conway Letters*, 1930, 404.

¹ Henry More (1614-1687), the Cambridge Platonist, held a very low opinion of Quakerism in early life, owing to reports of some of their “odnesses,” but in later days, when better acquainted with person and principle, he entertained a more favourable view, although he never became reconciled to Lady Conway’s adherence to Quakerism. Of “William Penn and Isaac Penington he had never anything but good to say, and his letters are the best proof of his sympathetic interest in George Keith, George Fox, and the Whiteheads. . . . The meeting of Henry More and George Keith at Cambridge, and at Ragley, remains one of the significant episodes in the history of seventeenth-century religion.” (*Conway Letters*, p. 413.)