

## Extracts from a Vicar's Diary, 1655-79

THE following entries from a country clergyman's diary in the 17th century indicate the feelings aroused by some Friends in those whose beliefs and practices they felt called upon to oppose. They are contributed by J. W. Mathews of Earls Colne, Essex.

*Extracts relating to Quakers from the Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin, (1616-83), Vicar of Earls Colne, Essex from 1640 till his death. He was "a devoted adherent of the Parliament". The Diary was printed, in part, by the Royal Historical Society : Camden third series, Vol. xv, in 1908.*

3.vii.1655. Preacht at gaines Coln y<sup>e</sup> quakers nest, but no disturbance ; God hath raised up my heart not to feare, but willing to beare, & to make apposicon to y<sup>r</sup> wayes in defence of truth ; it is an evill that runs much in all places ; some think it will be dangerous to Cromwells interest, and is so ; God knows, I doe not, yett I think he feares them not, & perhaps y<sup>e</sup> clause in his declaration, not to disturb y<sup>e</sup> minister in exercise, was to hint to them they might doe it after, if they would, securely, for y<sup>t</sup> is y<sup>r</sup> practice.

15.vii.1655. Those called Quakers, whose work is to revile the ministry made a disturbance at Cogshall, and were sent to goale ; oh, many feare y<sup>e</sup> Quakers to ruine Cromwell ; tis not words y<sup>t</sup> alter governm<sup>ts</sup>, and rout armies ; it must forme it selfe into a military posture first, and when that appeares, then enemies of y<sup>e</sup> state, disturbers of y<sup>e</sup> peace, seiseth on them.

28.vii.1655. The Quakers set up a paper on the Church door at E. Coln.

29.vii.1655. This corner begins to feel y<sup>e</sup> Quakers ; some of y<sup>e</sup> heads its said are among us, the Lord bee our refuge ; an infallible spirit once granted them, what lies may they not utter, and what delusions may not poor men bee given up unto ?

10.ii.1656. Great noise of people called Quakers ; divers have fits about us, and y<sup>r</sup>by come to bee able to speake ; the Lord helpe us to stand fast against every evill and error.

16.ii.1656. Heard for certain y<sup>t</sup> one Wade, a Quaker as called, comes to our toune.

9.iv.1656. Heard and true y<sup>t</sup> Turners daughter was distract in this quaking busines ; sad are y<sup>e</sup> fits at Coxall like the pow wowing among the Indies.

11.iv.1656. Heard this morning that James Parnel the father of the Quakers in these parts, having undertaken to fast 40 dayes & nights, was *die* 10, in y<sup>e</sup> morning found dead ; he was by Jury found guilty of his own death, and buried in y<sup>e</sup> Castle yard.

Mr. R. H. told mee as seing y<sup>e</sup> letter sent by Fleetwood to release Parnel, but he was dead first ; had he been delivered y<sup>e</sup> triumph his partie would have made ! Its s<sup>d</sup> in y<sup>e</sup> contry that his partie went to Colchester to see his resurrection again.

31.x.1656. In y<sup>e</sup> lane sett upon by one called a quaker, the Lord was with my heart that I was not dismayed ; I had some discourse with him, the Lord bee my helpe.

21.viii.1659. A quaker wench came boisterously into y<sup>e</sup> church up almost to the deske, I perceived persons expected some disturbance, but shee staid y<sup>e</sup> end & then went out quietly, blessed bee God.

30.vi.1660. The quakers after a stop and silence, seeme to bee swarming and increased, and why Lord onely knowest.

7.vii. 1660. My soule mourneth to see how quakers and profanesse increaseth ; Gods holy day is most mens vain day.

8.ix.1660. Y<sup>e</sup> price of corne riseth much, much sicknes in many places ; the quakers busy about us.

3.i.1662. The quakers meetings are in great places disturbed, driven from thence, and other meetings of the non-conformists much omitted.

15.xii.1674. Quakers increasd ; John Garrod their head in O<sup>r</sup> town, building them a meeting place, appointing to meet once a week. I am not ov<sup>r</sup> solicitous of the effect, having seen Abbotts meeting house left, expecting God will appear for his truth, and I hope in perticular for mee in this place who truly desire to feare his name. I doe not determine why, but this morning viz 26, y<sup>t</sup> Garrods wife died, within 6 weeks of the use of that house ; I onely desire to feare and tremble, but doe not question y<sup>e</sup> downfall of that sect under y<sup>e</sup> feet of Christ & his servants.

25.i.1679. Allen the quakers speaker buried, the men & women following severally in some order.