

Divisions in the  
Society of Friends

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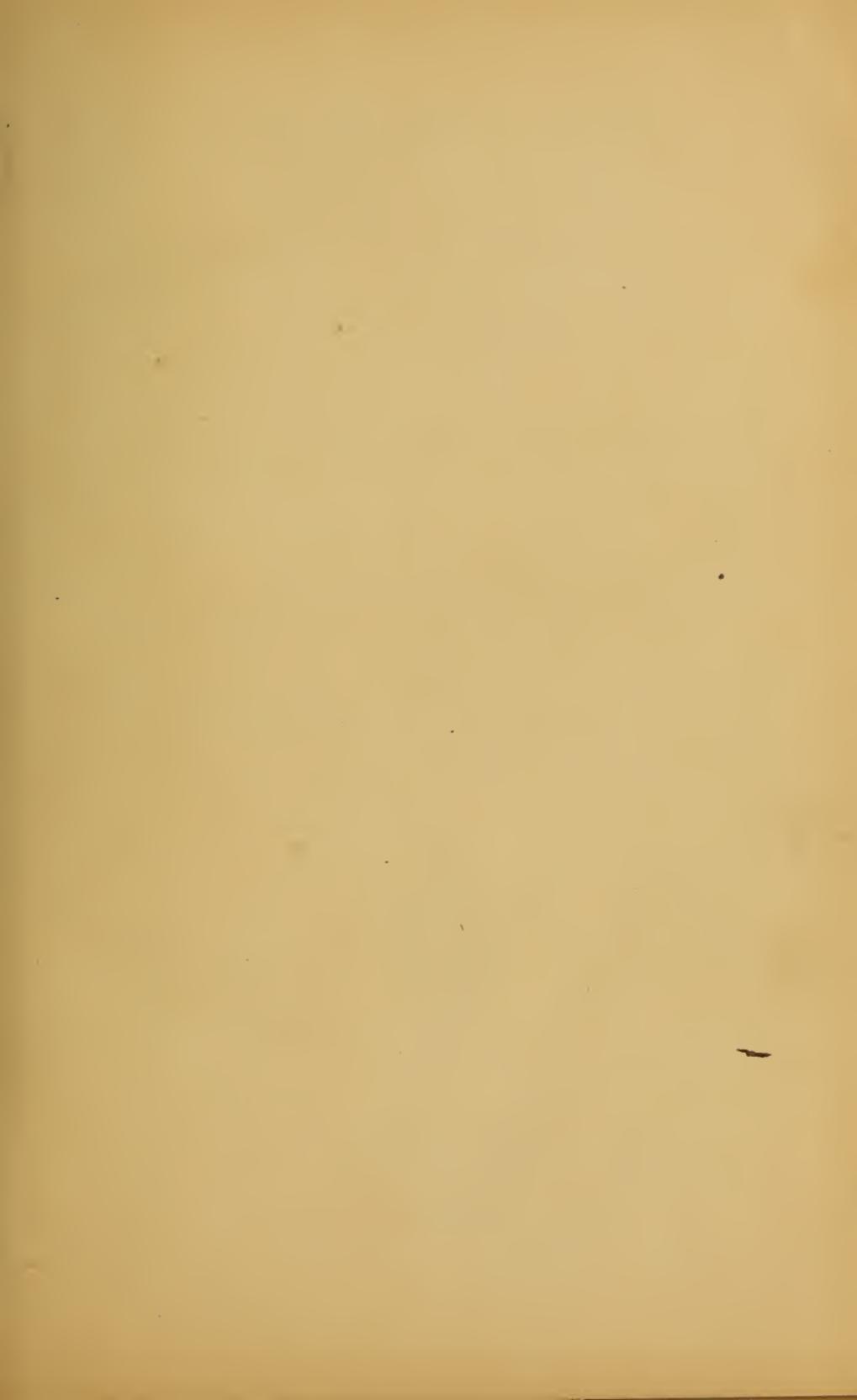
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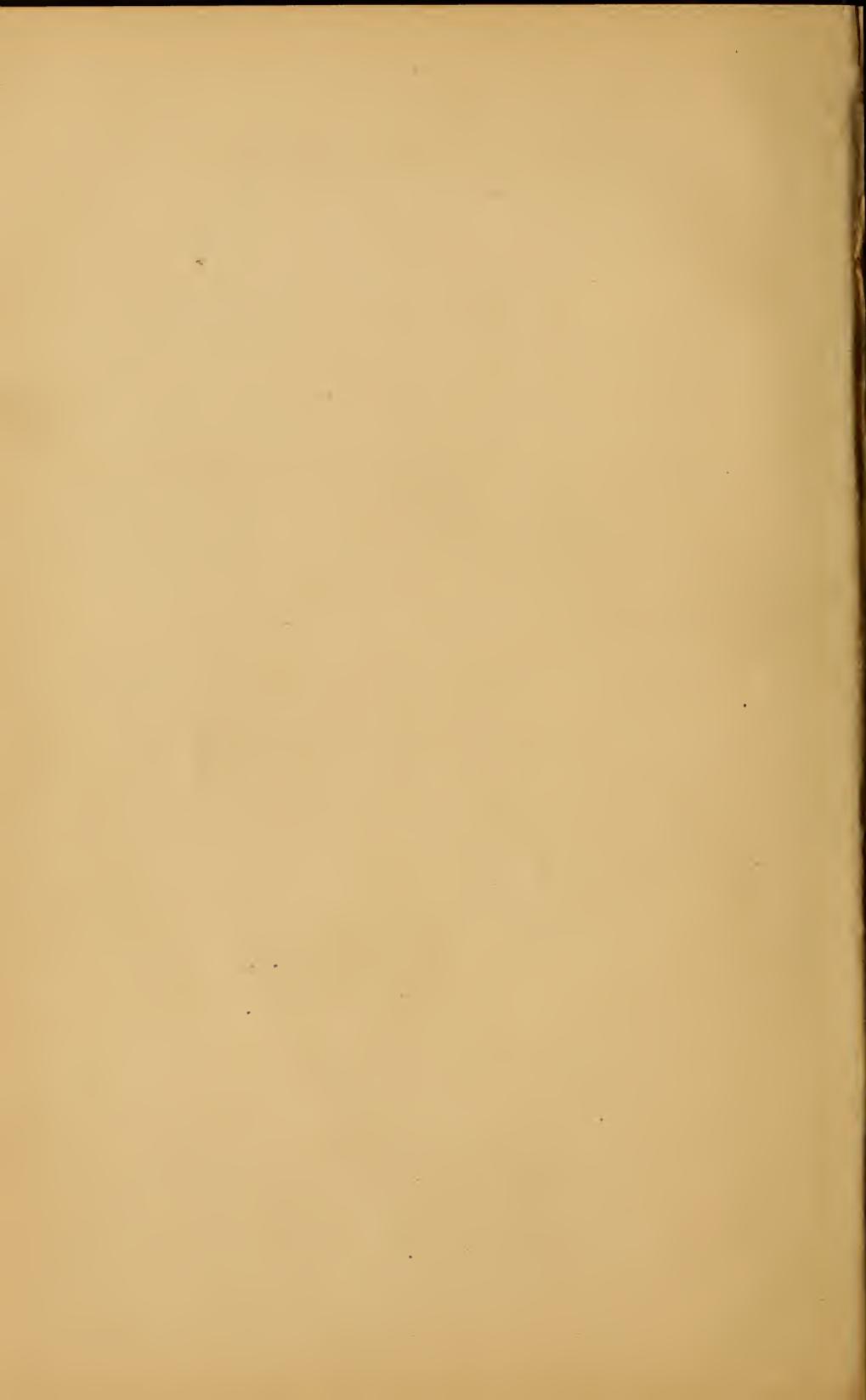




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# DIVISIONS

IN THE

## SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY  
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THOMAS H. SPEAKMAN.  
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PHILADELPHIA:  
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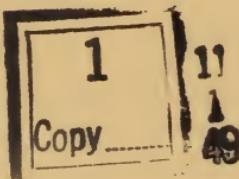
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## PREFACE.

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THE immediate occasion of the following essay was the appearance of the article in "Friends' Review," which is made a subject of comment. It may seem odd to write a book, even though a small one, in reply to a newspaper editorial, but the writer has long been impressed with the conviction that the subject treated of needs a general review, and a fitting opportunity appears to be now presented.

It is believed, too, that loss has been sustained by Friends carrying the non-resistant principle so far as to suffer to go almost unrebuked the imperious deportment and defamatory imputations of their Orthodox brethren. There is something due to truth for its own sake. It is scarcely less essential to the author than to the victim of wrong that it be ventilated and exposed, and the sentiment which prompts this, is, in the divine economy, one of the most potent instrumentalities of good. All are liable to err, and all need corrective influences. It is an undue passive-

ness, therefore, which submits to wrong without seeking its correction by proper means, and which sacrifices dignity and self-respect.

Such are the sentiments which have prompted this essay. It has been written, and is put forth, so far as the writer can know himself, in no feeling of enmity, but with a design and earnest desire to do good, and a belief that such will be its tendency, however harsh and controversial it may at first view appear.

The writer has many near and dear relatives and friends of the Orthodox persuasion, and feels that outspoken frankness is consistent with the truest cordiality, and the only basis upon which the various bodies of Friends can hope to draw nearer together.

It is proper to say that the writer only is responsible for the sentiments expressed and statements made. If injustice has, in any particular, been done to the Orthodox brethren, or any of them, it is sincerely regretted.

T. H. S.

PHILADELPHIA, 10th Mo., 1869.

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# DIVISIONS IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

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## CHAPTER I.

Friends' Review—Action of Philadelphia Orthodox Yearly Meeting of 1869—They claim the children of Friends as members—Arrogant attitude of Orthodox Friends—Their abuse of Friends—Some suggestions for their consideration.

“FRIENDS’ REVIEW,” a paper published in Philadelphia in the interest of what is known as the Gurney party of Orthodox Friends, under date of 5th Month 22d, 1869, in a lengthy editorial article, introduces the subject of the separation of 1827. The article is entitled “Discipline respecting Unclaimed Membership,” and its object is stated to be the introduction and review of the action of their late Yearly Meeting in relation to “those individuals *who separated from our religious Society in 1827*, as well as their de-

scendants *who have not been disowned.*" The editor makes it the occasion of sundry remarks in regard to the separation of 1827, and questions connected with it, which seem to require some counter exposition.

Before proceeding further, however, it may promote brevity and perspicuity to have it understood in the course of what may hereafter be said, that when the Friends who hold their Yearly Meeting at Fifteenth and Race Streets, Philadelphia, are referred to, they will be designated simply as Friends; and when the Friends who hold their Yearly Meeting at Fourth and Arch Streets are referred to, they will be designated as "Orthodox Friends;" and when italics are used, they will be those of the writer.

The action of the Yearly Meeting referred to by the editor of the "Review," consisted in the enactment of certain disciplinary amendments to the effect,—"That in all cases of the descendants of those who *separated from our religious Society* in the year 1827, who have not been *dealt with and disowned*, and who do not attend our religious meetings, Monthly Meetings may inform them of their existing right of mem-

bership," and that if they intend "renewing their connection with *the Society*" they must inform the Monthly Meeting or its overseers within one year, in default of which the Monthly Meeting "may make a record of the facts, and that such individual has thus forfeited all claim to a right of membership *in the religious Society of Friends*;" and that "should any person thus ceasing to be a member of our religious Society" afterward apply "to be received into membership, and the Meeting, *after careful inquiry*, believe him or her to be *prepared for religious fellowship with Friends*, he or she may be received into the Society, *without any acknowledgment being required for former association with those who separated in 1827.*"

It will thus be seen that the Orthodox brethren contemplate an invasion of the religious domain of Friends, and their social and family circles, in order to claim, and if possible entice away from them, in many instances, their children and young people. A proceeding so extraordinary, superadded to the disrespect shown in the arrogant attitude assumed, and language used, seems to require, at least, a measure so far counterac-

tive, as the endeavor to present from the stand-point of Friends, for the perusal and consideration of the members of both branches, an unreserved and true exposition of the general subject.

In alluding to the happy condition of the Society of Friends, as it existed within the limits of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting half a century ago, the editor remarks: "The seeds of *Socinianism*, it is true, had commenced their germination, but the growth was unperceived and unsuspected by the masses." Again, in connection with the imputation that in the "unhappy separation of 1827," there being no "sharp dividing line of doctrine," many went with Friends from "misapprehension of facts, sheer lack of individuality," personal connections, etc., "having little comprehension of the true issue," he says; "and it is sad to reflect that after this division, by the very existence of an organization which owed its establishment to a controversy upon this point, *Socinian views* have been furnished with an opportunity for growth." And again, in connection with the subject of reunion, he says, "To be subjected to the preaching of *Socinian doctrines* in

our meetings, would be worse than our present division into two distinct organizations."

What Socinian doctrines are, the writer does not care to inquire. It is enough, for the present purpose, to know that, in the estimation of the editor of the "Review," they are something very pernicious; inasmuch as to have to listen to the preaching of them would, as he declares, be worse than the present division into two distinct organizations, which he so much deplores.

The object in referring in the outset to these offensive imputations is to suggest for the serious consideration of the editor of the "Review," as well as his religious associates,—for this is no new thing,—whether it is not unkind and ungenerous, as well as unwise, and unbecoming the high profession they make, thus publicly, and in an obvious spirit of enmity, to assail Friends, and accuse them of maintaining some false and monstrous doctrines, so pernicious, that the editor of the "Review" assumes, of his own motion, without provocation, to denounce and abjure them in the face of the religious world. Is there any call for such conduct, or any good likely, or even intended, to be accomplished by it? Is it in ac-

cordance with either the precepts or example of Him for whom our Orthodox brethren profess so great a reverence? “As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.” Have Orthodox Friends ever paused to consider whether, by the various forms of slanderous abuse, and other means by which they have sought to injure Friends, they have not really much more injured themselves? Such is believed to be the fact, and a result in harmony with the Divine law as inherent in the nature of things, and as declared by Christ in his sermon on the mount: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

The editor of the “Review,” in further imputation of heresy against Friends, and pursuant to the predilection for doctrinal theology that seems so prevalent among his sect, proceeds to say: “We do not abate in the least our Christian testimony against the *great fundamental errors* underlying the separation; when the precious doctrine

of the Spirit's influence and guidance was upheld at the expense of a belief in the testimony of the Scriptures, and of Christ concerning himself, and of the *sacrificial and atoning death upon the cross, which was the purchase of our salvation, the only atonement for our sins*, and upon which the sending of the blessed Comforter was consequent. We do not cease to regard with *horror* a system of belief which would regard the *blood of the covenant* as not a holy thing.” The accusation thus made against Friends in regard to *great fundamental errors*, and the holding of Socinian doctrines, coupled with the remarkable assumption of the Orthodox brethren that they were and are *the Society of Friends*, implies the assertion that Friends have departed from, and Orthodox Friends maintained, the doctrines and principles held by the Society from the beginning; and this assumption it is next proposed to consider.

## CHAPTER II.

Which body most nearly represents the original—Position as to speculative doctrines—Origin and cause of the separation—New doctrines adopted by Orthodox Friends—Doctrine of the Trinity adopted upon the authority of a spurious passage of Scripture—Mediation and atonement—The Scriptures—Chief departure of Orthodox Friends their attempt to set up a compulsory creed founded in speculative opinions.

IN the inquiry as to which body of Friends most nearly represents the orginal one, it is not intended to go into a discussion of the refinements of speculative doctrines and opinions. The allegation that Friends do or do not believe in this or that theological dogma is neither admitted nor denied. It does not properly appertain to Friends to call in question the soundness of each other's opinions, nor to prescribe or attempt to coerce any fixed standard of belief upon any such matters. Enough may be found in a comparison of the action and conduct of the two parties about the time of the separation and

since, to determine which occupies the original ground.

First may be noted the important fact that Friends retain to this day the ancient discipline of the Society as it stood for several generations before the separation, unchanged by the erasure or addition of a single word on doctrinal points. Neither have they made any change as to modes and forms, except as to the manner of appointing elders, the performance of marriages at the dwellings of the parties under the care of the Monthly Meeting instead of in the public meetings for worship, and perhaps a few other unimportant matters.

The first symptoms of the dissensions which culminated in division, in 1827, consisted in the unsuccessful endeavor of a party of members, prominent among whom were several English Friends, then on a religious visit to this country, to procure the adoption and promulgation, by the Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia, of certain doctrinal views in the nature of a creed or declaration of faith. This was followed by accusations of unsoundness and by overbearing conduct on the part of those inclined to ortho-

doxy, including the English Friends before mentioned, which was persisted in for several years, giving rise to strife and recrimination, in which both parties were doubtless highly censurable, till relief could only be found in separation. Here, then, is found the origin and cause of the schism, and it is told in few words,—the introduction of speculative theology, and the attempt to set up and enforce a fixed standard of dogmatical opinions.

In what particulars the ancient and simple faith of the Society was considered incomplete by Orthodox Friends may be found from the additions which were made when they came to be a separate body. At their first Yearly Meeting after the separation they commenced the work of remodeling the discipline in accordance with the new views of which they had sought to procure the adoption several years before. A number of doctrinal amendments were made to the discipline that year, some of which are quite significant of the altered sentiment which prevailed. The first which will be noticed is the following.

“We receive and believe in the testimony of

the Scripture simply as it stands in the text—  
‘There are three that bear record in heaven,  
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and  
these three are one.’”

This is no other than the formal adoption, as an article of faith, of the theological doctrine of the *Trinity*, as professed and understood by most of the religious denominations of the day. It is true that the language used is that of the Bible now in use; but why give to this particular passage so much prominence as specially to incorporate it in the Book of Discipline at that particular juncture, after the Society had been in existence nearly two hundred years without it, unless the object was to establish it as a new article of faith?

Orthodox Friends were, however, unfortunate in selecting as the foundation of this new article of their faith the clause which they have incorporated in the discipline, “There are three that bear record;” etc. This clause, as it stands, is now admitted to be spurious. It seems that it is not found in any of the Greek manuscripts written before the sixteenth century; and of one hundred and thirteen copies now extant, it

is found in but one, that of Trinity College, Dublin. Neither is it found in any of the earlier Latin copies, or quoted by any of the Greek or Latin fathers in their religious controversies. It is wanting in the editions of Erasmus and Luther, in both the Syriac versions, the Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Ethiopic, and Arabic. In concluding his notes upon this text, Albert Barnes says: "The passage is now omitted in the best editions of the Greek Testament, and regarded as spurious by the ablest critics."\*

Another addition made to the discipline the same year (1828) was the following in regard to the Scriptures: "We have always asserted our willingness that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; and admit it as a positive maxim that whatever any do, pretending to the spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil."

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\* Those who may desire further satisfaction as to the spurious character of this passage are referred to the Notes of Albert Barnes, on the Epistles of John; the Commentaries of Adam Clarke, and those of Karl Braune, translated from the German by J. Isidor Hombert, and published by Scribner & Co., New York, 1867, and the further references given by these authors.

This is mainly a quotation from Robert Barclay. Barclay said many other things in regard to the Scriptures which might, with equal if not much greater propriety, have been selected as expressive of the views of Friends on that subject. He said, for example, “ Yet we may not call them (the Scriptures) the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners; because the principal fountain of truth must be the truth itself; *i.e.* that whose certainty and authority depend not upon another. When we doubt of the stream of any river or flood, we recur to the fountain, and having found it, there we desist; we can go no further, because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable.”

And again he said, “ The principal rule of Christians under the Gospel is not an outward letter, nor law outwardly written and delivered, but an inward spiritual law, engraven in the heart, the law of the spirit of life, the word that is nigh in the heart and in the mouth.”

But the passage from Barclay thus selected by Orthodox Friends as part of their system of be-

lief would seem to have been selected because, standing by itself, it goes further than any other passage in contradiction of the great leading doctrine which he himself maintains on this subject,—that of the paramount authority of the Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures over the Scriptures themselves. The object appears to be to give prominence to a doctrine which they are afraid openly to assert, because denied emphatically by our early Friends, to wit, that the Scriptures are the word of God exclusively, and denying the continuance, at the present day, of the spirit of revelation through which they came. It is the doctrine of the so-called Evangelical churches, which virtually denies the existence of the divine principle as a guide and preserving influence in the souls of men, degrades the sacred writings to the level of a lifeless tradition, and makes an object of worship of the mere letter.

In the year 1834 Orthodox Friends revised the discipline, and they then formally placed on record their adhesion to the doctrine of the mediation and atonement, as understood and upheld by church professors, by interpolating

the words “mediation or atonement” in a clause of the then existing discipline. At the same time they adopted the following as part of their declaration of faith :

“By the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ without us he hath reconciled us to God, even while we are enemies; that is, he offers reconciliation unto us, and puts us into a capacity of being reconciled; and we, truly repenting and believing, are, through the mercy of God, justified from the imputation of sins and transgressions that are past as though they had never been committed; and by the mighty work of Christ within us, the power, nature, and habits of sin are destroyed; that as sin once reigned unto death, even so now grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is quite possible, though we need not stop to inquire as to that, that this also is a compilation from the voluminous writings of some of our ancient Friends; for coming, as many of them did, from various religious denominations in which dogmatic theology was taught, they were not entirely free from the bias of their early training. But that Orthodox Friends

of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting should, in the year 1834, adopt and publish this as part of their creed, must be cause of astonishment and regret to those who desire to see the Society of Friends, as it was in the beginning, a pioneer in the reform of the Church from priestcraft and superstition.

A number of other doctrinal additions were made to the discipline by Orthodox Friends within a few years immediately following the separation, but the foregoing are the principal ones, and it is needless to specify them further. However objectionable any of them may be as a departure from the views generally entertained among Friends, and as going back to the priest-devised theology from which Friends obtained their deliverance at so great a sacrifice, the greatest objection to them is yet to be stated, and that is, setting them up as a creed or confession of faith, and asserting the right to enforce them upon all as compulsory articles of acceptance and belief. However these tenets of the popular theology, or any of them, may have been indorsed by individual writers among early Friends, in the desire to narrow the ground of

difference between them and other Christian denominations, and however unobjectionable, or even excellent, they may be in themselves, it was never before attempted to set them up as vital principles of faith that *must be believed* and upheld by all; and herein consists the chief departure of Orthodox Friends.

## CHAPTER III.

Results of the course pursued by each body as bearing upon the question which is the true one—Divisions and subdivisions among Orthodox Friends—The condition of Philadelphia Orthodox Yearly Meeting—Its assurance—Troubles in London Yearly Meeting.

As bearing upon the question which branch of the Society most nearly occupies the ground of the original one, we may next inquire as to the results of the course pursued by each. From its origin to the commencement of the difficulties, which culminated in the separation, the Society of Friends had been, with few and unimportant exceptions, a united and harmonious body. It was well said of them, “See the Quakers, how they love one another!” The editor of the “Review,” in his article, gives a beautiful picture of the harmony then existing, when he says, “Personal introductions were scarcely necessary,—the sight of a stranger Friend in the street caused a kindly heart-glow,—the love of the brethren was

both a principle and a practice,—hospitality was a matter of course,—warm and close friendships passed, almost by inheritance, to children's children, and the larger gatherings of the Church were not merely times of spiritual refreshing and renewing, but of social reunion also, when those who rarely met, except upon such occasions, were filled with each other's company, and helped one another forward on the heavenly journey, ‘after a godly sort.’”

*Friends*, embracing six Yearly Meetings in the United States, are and have been since the separation, a united and harmonious body, and to them the foregoing language would, it is believed, still apply. But how has it fared with Orthodox Friends? But a few years had elapsed (after they became a separate organization), when charges of unsoundness in doctrine began to be made among themselves, entailing party strife, bitterness, and recrimination, till they became involved in a second separation, extending throughout all their Yearly Meetings, in this country, except Philadelphia, the two parties designating each other as “Wilburites” and “Gurneyites.” And, in regard to their Yearly

Meeting of Philadelphia, though the members continue to meet together, they are composed essentially of two distinct parties under the same names. In some places, also, a further division has taken place by a split of the Wilbur party into two separate branches.

An instructive but sorrowful lesson may be drawn from the experience of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends, as well as a convincing argument as to its departure from the true ground of the Society of Friends. It was there the separation of 1827 commenced by the intolerance of a few, who resolutely attempted, in a spirit of overbearing arrogance, to put down all who would not bow to their dictation and conform to the standard which they had set up; and this spirit has continued on the part of Orthodox Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting toward Friends from that day to this, now over forty years, with little abatement, as shown by the article in the "Review," and the action of their late Yearly Meeting. The schism thus created in Philadelphia in 1827, spread through nearly all the meetings in this country. The Orthodox schism of Gurney and Wilbur,

following from the same general cause as the other, also spread through all their meetings except Philadelphia; and as the result of the two, their Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia now stands alone, unrecognized by, and having no intercourse or correspondence with, any other body of Friends in this country or elsewhere. And agreeably to the estimates of a writer in "The Friend," the organ of the "Wilbur," as the "Review" is of the Gurney party, in Philadelphia, they have laid down and discontinued, from 1830 to 1868, thirty per cent. of their meetings; while in the number of members they have declined, from 1839 to 1868, a period of twenty-nine years, over forty-two per cent.\* Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends thus stands alone, a mere wreck, and a monument of its own folly, amidst the wide-spread ruin it has created, the combined result of speculative theology, intolerance, and fossilized ritualism.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends, as late as the year 1868, had the presumption to issue

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\* See "The Friend" of 1st Mo. 23d, 1869.

an elaborate address “to its own members and to the members of other Yearly Meetings,” and by its terms addressed to all who take the name of Friends, in which their theological creed is again put forth, and by which, with characteristic assurance, they assume to lay down, as it were, the law and the gospel to Friends everywhere.

London Yearly Meeting, which took sides with the Orthodox, in 1827, has not been exempt from the troubles which the same policy has entailed upon its advocates in this country. The proceedings of their meeting, as published from time to time in the “British Friend” and “The London Friend,” show the prevalence of dissensions there also, arising from a spirit of intolerance, manifested in accusations of unsoundness in matters of theological opinion. But it is gratifying to find that there are many there who, though themselves perhaps opposed to the views alleged to be unsound, have yet the liberality and independence to proclaim the absurdity of the Church attempting to interfere with private opinion in matters of a purely speculative character.

## CHAPTER IV.

Conduct of each body toward the other as showing which best represents the principles and spirit of true Quakerism—The Orthodox assume to be *the Society of Friends*, and claim all the property—They commence litigation—Deny right of burial to Friends—Imprisonment of Friends—Disownments for attending Friends' meetings or marriages—The Shelter for Colored Orphans—Orthodox retain all the valuable property of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, including Westtown School and also Monthly Meeting property, and make no tender of any part to Friends—Insane Asylum at Frankford.

THE impartial inquirer after truth may also find some assurance as to which body of Friends most nearly represents the principles and the spirit of true Quakerism, by comparing and considering the conduct of each toward the other at the time of the separation and since.

In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and in all the subordinate meetings of that city except Green Street Monthly Meeting, the Orthodox party generally embraced those occupying official positions, and the more active and influential class

of members, though as to the whole Yearly Meeting they were but about one-third in numbers. Having on their side the Clerks, who, according to the established practice, decide, not according to numbers, but according to what they deem the sense of the meeting, and the weight of the expression, the Clerks assumed that their party constituted *the meeting*, and that those of the other side were of no weight or consequence, and thus virtually disfranchised them. The then Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, in his testimony in the chancery suit in New Jersey, said of those who were in opposition to him, "I never considered them entitled to any weight or influence at all."

The charges of preaching "unsound doctrines," made and reiterated in the meetings for several years prior to 1827, came from Orthodox Friends. And though it must be admitted that Friends too freely entered into the prevailing strife, when, on the assembling of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827, it became apparent that a division *must take place*, Friends, though nearly if not quite two to one in point of numbers, prepared quietly to withdraw and reorganize the Yearly Meeting upon its original basis. Whether in

thus abandoning their undoubted right as the larger body they acted wisely, as to the best interest and future good of either, may well be questioned; but if they erred, all must admit that it was on the side of peace and quietness, those virtues which had ever so prominently marked the character of the Society of Friends.

The schism accomplished, Orthodox Friends, though so greatly in the minority, immediately asserted themselves to be exclusively *the Society of Friends*, and entitled to all the property acquired by the common contributions, and that Friends were not entitled to be considered or recognized as Friends at all. Pursuant to this high-handed and most extraordinary assumption, they proceeded to carry out the form of laying down all those meetings where they had few or no members, and serving certificates of disownment in all other cases, and for that purpose obtruding themselves upon and into the houses and premises of Friends.

The writer is one of those who was thus disowned. While at work in his father's field he was visited by a Monthly Meeting Committee, composed of two Orthodox Friends, who then

and there, by means of tracts and representations founded in doctrinal theology, and intelligible only to a student of divinity, sought to convince him that they were the true Society of Friends. The reply was that enough was found in the uncharitable conduct of Orthodox Friends, in claiming to be exclusively the Society of Friends and entitled to all its property, to preclude religious fellowship with them.\*

Further evidence of the faithfulness of Friends to their peaceable principles is found in the fact that there is no instance on record of these extraordinary proceedings of Orthodox Friends ever having resulted in a breach of the peace. And these doings Orthodox Friends now propose to repeat by visiting, in certain cases, the children of Friends, to notify them of a right of membership which it is assumed they have with them.

It has ever been one of the cardinal testimonies of the Society that the members should not

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\* The certificate of disownment, still in the writer's possession, certifies that "*he is no longer a member of the religious Society of Friends until he becomes sensible in his own mind of his transgression, and is thereby rightly qualified to condemn the same to the satisfaction of Friends.*"

go to law with one another unless in extreme and exceptional cases, yet one of the first measures of Orthodox Friends was to appeal to law in support of the assumption that they were *the Society of Friends, and entitled to all its property*. Suit was instituted in the Chancery of New Jersey, designed to be a test as to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, which embraced that State; and an action was also instituted with a view to dispossess Friends of Green Street Monthly Meeting of their meeting-house: but this was afterward abandoned. The law was likewise appealed to by Orthodox Friends in New York, and also in Ohio; but no real advantage was gained in either case by this infraction of an important testimony. A temporary success in the suit in New Jersey merely resulted in the enactment of a law providing for a division of property according to numbers.

Friends of Green Street Monthly Meeting were *denied even the right to bury their dead* in the ground they had purchased jointly with several other Monthly Meetings. Orthodox Friends having control, through a majority of the trustees, Friends of Green Street could only ob-

tain access to their grounds by scaling the wall with ladders and breaking the lock at each funeral, unless they would bow to a decree by which it was alleged their meeting was laid down and the members annexed to an adjacent meeting of Orthodox. And when, in order to put an end to this state of things, Friends, having obtained the consent of a portion of the trustees, proceeded to make an opening in the wall on the opposite side of the grounds, so as to put in a gate through which they might enter peaceably, the Friends engaged in the work were caused to be arrested upon a warrant issued by the then Mayor of the city, and they refusing to give bail from a conscientious conviction they had done no wrong, were committed to prison, where they remained until discharged by the Court.

At the Orthodox Yearly Meeting, in 1828, an article of discipline was adopted making it an offense punishable with disownment for any of their members to attend the meetings of the "Separatists," as they designated Friends, or to attend a marriage among them, or sign a certificate of marriage, even though it might be of a

brother or sister, child, or other near relative; the gravamen of the offense consisting, as they state, in “acknowledging these meetings *as though they were meetings of Friends.*”

There is an institution in Philadelphia called the “Shelter for Colored Orphans,” which originated among members of the Society of Friends anterior to the separation, and for the establishment and maintenance of which all alike contributed; and even since the separation, though exclusively under Orthodox control, Friends have been asked, and have made contributions for its support. Yet, by a rule established by the Orthodox managers of the institution, the children under its care are allowed to be put out to members of any religious denomination except Catholics, Unitarians, and “Hicksites,” the latter being the name by which they designate Friends.

At Frankford, near Philadelphia, is an asylum for the insane, established by members of the Society of Friends. Of this institution, Orthodox Friends, by surreptitious means, managed to get the control after the separation, and from the management of it, Friends have since been wholly excluded.

Orthodox Friends have also retained to this day all the valuable property belonging to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in its aggregate capacity, including the school at Westtown, and also the property belonging to most of the Monthly Meetings of Philadelphia, from the use of all of which Friends have ever since been excluded, and no part or portion of it has ever been tendered to them.

We may now contrast with all this the conduct of Friends toward their Orthodox brethren. Notwithstanding the uncourteous and overbearing manner in which they were treated, Friends have not retaliated, but sought to adhere to their religious profession. In the address of the reorganized Yearly Meeting, held in Philadelphia in the 10th Month, 1827, to the Quarterly, Monthly, and other meetings, they used the following language: "Our profession is high and holy; and let us be increasingly concerned to walk consistently therewith. The patient sufferings of our faithful predecessors finally established for them an excellent name, even among their persecutors. They held up with practical clearness a peaceable testimony against 'wars

and fightings,' and by a scrupulous adherence to the principles of justice, became proverbial for their integrity. In the present afflicting state of things, we feel deeply concerned that their example in these respects may be kept steadily in view,—that our religious testimonies may never be wounded by contending for property and asserting our rights; that no course be pursued, although sanctioned by the laws of the excellent government under which we live, that may be at variance with the spirit of that holy Lawgiver, who taught his disciples, 'If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.'

"And we tenderly exhort, that in places where our members constitute the larger part of any meeting, their conduct be regulated by the rule laid down by our blessed Lord : 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.' The discipline under which we act positively discourages members of our Society from suing each other at law. To violate this discipline, in a meeting capacity, is not only a departure from our established order, but is calculated to injure us in the eyes of sober inquirers

after truth, and to disturb the peace of our own minds."

It is believed that Friends as a body have lived up to the peaceable principles here enunciated. Desirous, in a spirit of Christian charity, to accord to their Orthodox brethren the same sincerity and integrity of purpose that they claimed for themselves, and in imitation of the example of Abraham and Lot, they have been willing their Orthodox brethren should follow their own convictions, and go which way they would, not seeking to impose upon them any restrictions or inflict any penalties. Excepting the Meetings in the city of Philadelphia, in the majority of cases throughout Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, as well as those of New York, Baltimore, and Ohio, Friends, being the larger body, retained possession of the common property, Orthodox Friends withdrawing and setting up other meetings. Yet there were no disownments of Orthodox Friends as separatists and offenders, and in every instance, as is believed, Friends tendered to their Orthodox brethren their due proportion of the common property, an offer which was generally rejected, they refusing to treat with Friends,

or do anything that might be construed into a recognition of them as Friends, or entitled to any rights as such; and as to the property, demanding, in a spirit which seems peculiar to modern orthodoxy, *all or none*.

The world knows something of the character of Friends in generations that are past. They have not lived wholly in vain. History records the peaceable spirit which has ever marked their conduct toward one another, as well as to those around them. Whatever less commendatory may be said of them, it is believed they will be accorded the reputation of having ever loved justice and right. In the light of all these considerations, let the impartial inquirer judge which body has, since the year 1827, by its conduct, best earned the right to be considered in harmony with the Friends of generations that are past.

## CHAPTER V.

Gurney and Wilbur division among Orthodox Friends—Present status of the two extremes—Which departed furthest from common-sense Quakerism—Tendency of each—Attire and manners—Diversity of temperament, etc., acknowledged to be beneficial, but not tolerated by Orthodox.

IT may serve further to illustrate the departure of Orthodox Friends from the true ground of the Society to take a glance at the Gurney and Wilbur separation, and see where the respective parties now stand. In the chancery suit in New Jersey, in 1828, Orthodox Friends entered largely into doctrines, and took the ground and sought to maintain that the Society of Friends agreed in substance with *other Protestant Trinitarian sects*, and their tendency was, as we have seen, toward the popular Evangelical churches of the day, by the establishment of a system of theological opinions or articles of faith similar to theirs. It was this tendency,

proceeding to its natural result, which produced the Gurney and Wilbur separation. Many there were who saw ere long whither their new lights were leading them, and the consequence was the second separation, and the establishment of two extremes, the inevitable result of hostile reaction.

The Gurney party has reached its present climax in Illinois and Indiana, an exponent of their views and mode of proceeding being found in the "Herald of Peace," published at Chicago. One of the editors of the *Herald*, writing from Richmond, Indiana, for his paper of 5th Mo. 22d, 1869, says:

"The Friends' meeting-house on Fifth Street is crowded nightly with Christians, seekers, and some who are drawn thither out of curiosity, who often remain to pray. Few persons in Richmond seem quite to have escaped the influence of the revival. The most reckless and hardened men, the most gay and careless women, the most indifferent and 'gospel-hardened' church-members, are melted by the mighty power of God. There seems to be a deep, quiet, but irresistible current of salvation flowing through the

community. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Words must ever be inadequate to give a correct understanding of the work in progress here. A short description of one meeting may be interesting. The meeting gathered at eight o'clock, and was opened by the reading of a chapter from the Bible. Then it was thrown open for short, concise, and pointed remarks or prayers. The greatest liberty is allowed and encouraged; but long sermons or cursory remarks are discouraged. After an hour spent in this manner, during which time very many spoke, testifying of the loving-kindness of the Lord, or earnestly invoking the blessing of God upon the congregation, an opportunity was given for any who felt that they needed the prayers of Christian people to stand up, and quite a number arose. An opportunity was then allowed for any who wished to retire to do so, while those who were burdened on account of their sins were invited to come forward, that their Christian friends might gather around them and unite in prayer for a blessing upon them. More than a score came and took their places on the front seats, many kneeling together in the open space in

front of the seat usually occupied as the head of the meeting, while their friends moved about among them, conversing and praying with them.

“One striking and beautiful feature of the meetings is the part taken by the young, especially the young women, whose bright, cheerful faces, united with their sweet voices in praising God, inviting sinners to Christ, or pleading for some seeking soul, is a feature calculated to move all hearts and arouse the most indifferent. Occasionally a hymn is sung, sometimes by one alone,—sometimes joined in by many in the congregation. Nothing is forced or crowded, but nothing is repressed. The spirit is allowed to have free course ; members of other denominations are invited to take part, and the evidence is abundant that God is glorified thereby. Above sixty are believed to have been converted at these meetings up to this time, and the work still goes on.”

It is not intended to find fault with the people who are concerned in these meetings. They certainly have a right to do as they think best, and their mode of proceeding *may be* a great improvement; but it must strike most persons as

rather a misnomer to call such gatherings, so conducted, meetings of Friends. They certainly partake more of the character of the meetings of that excellent people, the Methodists, than those of Friends, as understood in days that are past.

The other extreme is to be found in the Wilbur party, of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and its status may be ascertained from its organ, "The Friend." A writer in that paper of 1st Mo. 30th, 1869, holds the following language: "It has appeared a plain fact to the writer that the feeling of open or secret opposition to those testimonies of truth which distinguish Friends from the world in general, and which feeling seems to pervade so large a portion of our members, was exerting a highly baneful influence among us, and is a potent cause of the weakness and decay that have spread like a pall among our several congregations. It seems to draw a sharp line of distinction, in our meetings for discipline, between those who are considered to live consistently with their profession, and those who do not; cutting off, with the latter class, from almost all active participation in

the services of the church, a body of young men and women of noble and cultivated intellects, as well as high moral and social worth, whose help is sorely needed within its pale, but whose *attire and manners* are not such as to give evidence of preparation for service. This class, even if they attend disciplinary meetings for a time, very naturally feel but a feeble interest in affairs that they cannot participate in; and although many of them profess, and doubtless feel, a strong desire for the spread of Christianity in the world, they gradually decline to frequent such assemblies, and the church is paralyzed in its exertions through their defection."

This may be called the extreme of *conservative ritualism*. All that is left of Quakerism there seems to consist in the maintenance of outward forms. The "testimonies of truth which distinguish Friends from the world in general" appear, according to the view of this writer, to consist exclusively in the maintenance of a certain prescribed formula as to *attire and manners*, and he laments that the young will not conform to their requirements in these respects. It is strange that this branch of Orthodox Friends has never

waked up to the conviction that they cannot thrive on the emptiness of mere sanctimoniousness; and that that which they propose as the remedy, to wit, a more rigid conformity in regard to "attire and manners," is itself the chief cause of their difficulties. Their climax in this particular is the enforcement of a sectarian uniform upon even the children at their schools. The idea is often held up that these outward observances constitute the index to a life of true resignation to the divine will; but, unfortunately, with the class who attach so much importance to "attire and manners," the *index* has come to be regarded as the thing itself, and all of religion to consist in these mere outward forms.

In comparing the two extremes, as developed at Richmond, Indiana, and Philadelphia, it is perhaps difficult to tell which has wandered furthest from the standard of true common-sense Quakerism. The one course leads backward, and tends to undo all that the Society of Friends has ever done, and to destroy true spiritual worship in the boisterous confusion of a popular religious revival; and the other, by dependence upon a mere routine of traditional forms, and opposing

all innovations and progressive movements, leads to inevitable death and extinction.

The editor of the "Review," in his article before alluded to, admits the loss which Orthodox Friends sustained by the separation of 1827. He says: "There is, perhaps, scarcely a congregation in which the gifts and the individuality are not needed of those who walk not with us. In those olden days, which in memory are familiar to us still, a congregation was composed of nearly every grade of talent, temperament, and position in life. There were uses for all members, and members for all uses. The rending came, and those whom God had joined men put asunder. Among the sorrowful results was this, that the congregations were left to be composed of persons too much alike. There was often lacking that native diversity which, when combined and sanctified, gives perfect efficiency, affords scope for charity, and promotes the truest unity."

It is encouraging to find that at least one of our Orthodox brethren has at last come to a realization of the great truth here expressed. But to render this truth available there is some-

thing to be learned that is still more important (because to Orthodox Friends, as it seems, more difficult of comprehension), and that is that the advantages of a diversity of talent and temperament cannot be enjoyed by any religious organization which will not tolerate diversity, but maintains and enforces a fixed standard of speculative theological opinions, and which practically excludes the young, liberal-minded, and most essential portion of its members, by regarding as a requisite qualification for church service, compliance with an antiquated and senseless ritual as to "attire and manners."

## CHAPTER VI.

Friends solicited to become Orthodox—Comparative inducements to membership as between the two principal branches—Objectionable features of Orthodoxy the work of a few members only—Great principles underlying the Quaker faith in its original simplicity—Orthodox subordinate them to theological dogmas—The true creed of Friends—The every-day virtues which adorn the life of the practical Christian.

AFTER what has been shown of the consequences resulting to Orthodox Friends from the separation and the policy which produced it, and seeing the present condition of their Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, we might almost suspect the editor of the “Review” of perpetrating a joke in inviting Friends to join them. In speaking further of the new rules in regard to membership, before alluded to, he says : “ All those who have been disowned on account of the separation of twoscore years ago, and who of course are not of the class covered by the new rules, would find easy access by application, if truly possessed of the faith by which Abraham and holy men of all

generations pleased God, and without which we are assured that it is impossible to please Him. And the willingness on the part of Friends in their congregate capacity to welcome the return of such, ought to partake of the nature of the joy of angels on each accession to the armies of the Lamb." Doubtless, in their present extremity, Orthodox Friends would rejoice over any accessions to their numbers from that quarter; but to expect them, denotes a degree of faith in the excellency of their system, and satisfaction with their present situation, which must be incomprehensible to all but themselves.

In reviewing the general circumstances of the separation of 1827, and especially the doctrinal creed and standard of opinions adopted and enforced by Orthodox Friends and its results, and the conduct of that body toward Friends as before set forth, there are no doubt some, perhaps many, associated with Orthodox Friends, particularly of the younger class, to whose minds the subject has never before been thus fully presented, and who will feel that they have no unity or sympathy with any such proceedings, and do not really belong where the accident of birth, family connection,

or other circumstances have placed them. It is apparent, and there is consolation in the reflection, that the doings for which the body of Orthodox Friends stands responsible, were, and are, the work of a comparatively few of their number, who, by their persistent intolerance, have thus far succeeded in controlling the action of the body, and have brought it to its present condition.

Friends, though much the larger body, have never assumed to be exclusively the Society of Friends, nor disowned their Orthodox brethren as offenders, nor sought to traduce them in the eyes of the Christian world; but have permitted them to go their way in peace, trusting that if they were in error they would some day come to see and acknowledge it. The meetings of Friends have ever been open to any of the Orthodox brethren, who are regarded still as members in a state of voluntary suspension, and who may at any time avail themselves of the privileges of actual membership.

The principles and testimonies upheld by the Society of Friends, in their original purity and simplicity, and as interpreted by the light of a

liberal and progressive intelligence, cannot but commend themselves to every earnest seeker after truth. The remarkable wisdom and penetration of early Friends in laying the foundation of our religious system, when truly comprehended, must strike the mind with admiration as a work of Divine origin, marking one of the most important epochs in the religious history of mankind.

In ignoring theological creeds and standards of belief they at once laid down a great principle, which, like the discovery of any great truth in natural science, serves as a landmark in the advance of thought and of truth, illuminating the dark recesses of error and superstition, and shedding radiance in every direction. *This principle constitutes the corner-stone of all true religious liberty.* It is simply absurd that men shall assume to prescribe opinions one for another. Opinions are convictions founded upon evidence, and are not subject to the will; and hence the great folly of the persecutions for opinion's sake, which in times past have deluged the world with blood, and which, as we have seen, still exist in the form of accusations of heresy and unsound-

ness, keeping alive a spirit of enmity and intolerance which drives all nobler feelings from the breast, and makes the profession of religion mere mockery.

In declaring their testimony against the creeds and standards of faith, the controversies about which had convulsed the world and brought disgrace upon the name of religion, Friends merely asserted the simple but important truth that true religion is not *a mere system of opinions and theological speculations*, but that its object is to make men better; to promote peace, love, and goodwill, and all those virtues which in every-day life most assimilate man to his Maker.

A principle still more important is that of the paramount authority and universality of the spirit of Christ, or light of truth, in the soul,—that light which the Apostle John asserted to be “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Jesus declared to the woman at Jacob’s well, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. \* \* \* The hour cometh, and now is

when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. \* \* \* God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

This doctrine of the spirituality of religion is coming to be more and more recognized among intelligent religious professors; it is the Quaker *leaven* gradually doing its work. It is the monitor within, the ever-present guide and director given to all men alike. It makes religion to consist in the intercommunion of the soul with the Father of Spirits, in a prayerful seeking for guidance in the right, and not in outward forms and observances, and in beautiful harmony and consistency with it is the Friends' mode of silent worship;\* and hence, too, the fallacy of dependence

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\* In declaring this approval of silent worship, the writer must, however, give expression to a conviction long and earnestly entertained, that in the advancing spirit of the age something more is required in order that Friends may continue to live and fulfill their mission as a religious organization,—some mode by which, as a regular order of society, the varied gifts and acquirements of all the members may be employed and developed for the good of one another, in a manner that shall be free from the restraint proper to the more solemn exercises, but yet not to change the form of silent worship, or the ministry, as now existing. The consideration of this subject is not, however, within the scope of the present essay.

upon a professional ministry. While not actually denying this general doctrine, Orthodox Friends have, nevertheless, virtually set it aside, and made it secondary to the theological dogmas which they have adopted and set up as a creed or standard of faith.

It may be asked, have the Society of Friends, then, no platform or common ground of faith or union other than the simple propositions before stated? It may be answered that they have an ample creed, though not usually called by that name; a creed founded, not in the refinements of scholastic theology nor theoretical opinions, but a faith reduced to practice, and rendered tangible by the habitual exercise of those virtues which adorn the every-day life of the practical Christian. A principal part of the exercises of the business meeting of the Society of Friends for a long period, has consisted in the periodical reading and answering of certain queries, which bring up for consideration the state of society, and the conduct of the members generally. A few selections from these queries, and the advices laid down by the Yearly Meeting many years ago, will make apparent what

have been regarded as the chief essentials of Quakerism.

“Are love and unity maintained among you? Are tale-bearing and detraction discouraged, and where any differences arise, are endeavors used speedily to end them? Are Friends careful to live within the bounds of their circumstances, and to keep to moderation in their trade or business; and are they punctual to their promises and just in the payment of their debts? Are they clear of the distillation or sale of spirituous liquors, and careful to discourage the use thereof as a drink, and the unnecessary frequenting of taverns? Do you maintain a faithful testimony against oaths, bearing arms, training, and other military services; being concerned in any fraudulent or clandestine trade; buying or vending goods so imported, or prize goods; and against encouraging lotteries of any kind? Are poor Friends’ necessities duly inspected, and they relieved or assisted in such business as they are capable of, and do their children freely partake of learning to fit them for business?”

Again, quoting from the advices of the Yearly Meeting: “It is the earnest desire of this Meet-

ing that in all our dealings and transactions among men, strict justice may be observed; and that no motives of pecuniary interest may induce any of our members to impose on each other, or on their neighbors; and it is desired that Monthly Meetings may be careful to extend suitable admonition against a spirit of covetousness, and against every appearance of deviation from strict justice in any of our members."

And again: "And it is the sense of this Meeting, that if any member thereof, disregarding the Gospel order prescribed by our discipline, shall arrest or sue at law another member, not being under such a necessity so to do, as may satisfy the overseers, or other solid and judicious Friends of the Meeting to which the latter belongs, he or she, in so doing, doth depart from the peaceable principle we make profession of, and if, on being treated with by the Monthly Meeting to which they belong, they cannot be prevailed with to withdraw the suit and pay the costs thereof, they should be disowned."

An active sympathy for suffering and down-trodden humanity everywhere, and the zealous support of all works of charity and benevolence,

have also ever been cardinal principles with Friends. Do not all these much better comport with the character and precepts of Him who went about the world doing good, than all the high-sounding cant and sanctimonious pretension of popular evangelicalism which Orthodox Friends seem so desirous to imitate?

## CHAPTER VII.

Reconciliation and reunion—Reunion in a Society capacity improbable—Implacability of Philadelphia Orthodox Yearly Meeting—Reunion only possible by return to first principles and original simplicity under a modernized policy, guided by common sense—Hope from individual action.

THE subject of a reconciliation or reunion of the several divisions of Friends naturally presents itself as our concluding topic. Reunion in a society capacity can scarcely be regarded as a probable event in the present state of enlightenment on these subjects. Upon religious subjects more than any other, men seem to be governed by prejudice rather than reason; and especially does this seem to be the case among the several branches of Friends toward each other in reference to their several points of difference. We have seen that for more than forty years the spirit of intolerance and vituperation has been kept alive on the part of the Orthodox Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

In New York and Baltimore Yearly Meetings Friends, having been largely in the majority, retained possession of the common property at the separation, but tendered to Orthodox Friends their due proportion according to numbers, which they refused, claiming, like their brethren of Philadelphia, to be *the Society of Friends*, and entitled to all. Within a few years past they have, however, so far changed their ground as to treat with Friends upon an even footing, and to accept their proportion of property as originally offered, and a much more fraternal feeling is now said to prevail. But in Philadelphia, where Orthodox Friends generally obtained possession of the common property, no advance toward a division of the common property, or other step toward reconciliation, has ever been made by them.

The separation of 1827 had its origin, according to the view of the writer as before expressed, in a departure from the simple faith of the Society by the introduction of speculative theology, and the attempt to enforce uniformity of belief in regard to certain dogmatic theories. If this be so, how simple would be the process of re-

union,—merely to come back to first principles! and yet how improbable when we consider that Orthodox Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting only a year ago put forth an address reasserting the same dogmatical speculations as the chief essentials of their religious faith, and imputing the charge of heresy against all who do not profess to believe just as they do!

Reunion can only take place through not merely a return to first principles and original simplicity, but by a general acquiescence in the necessity for renewed life, through a modernized system as to forms and usages, under the guidance of common sense; untrammelled by senseless peculiarities and slavish ritualism, and unbiased, either by the teachings or the example of the popular religionists of the day, beyond a recognition of whatever in them may be inherently good and true,

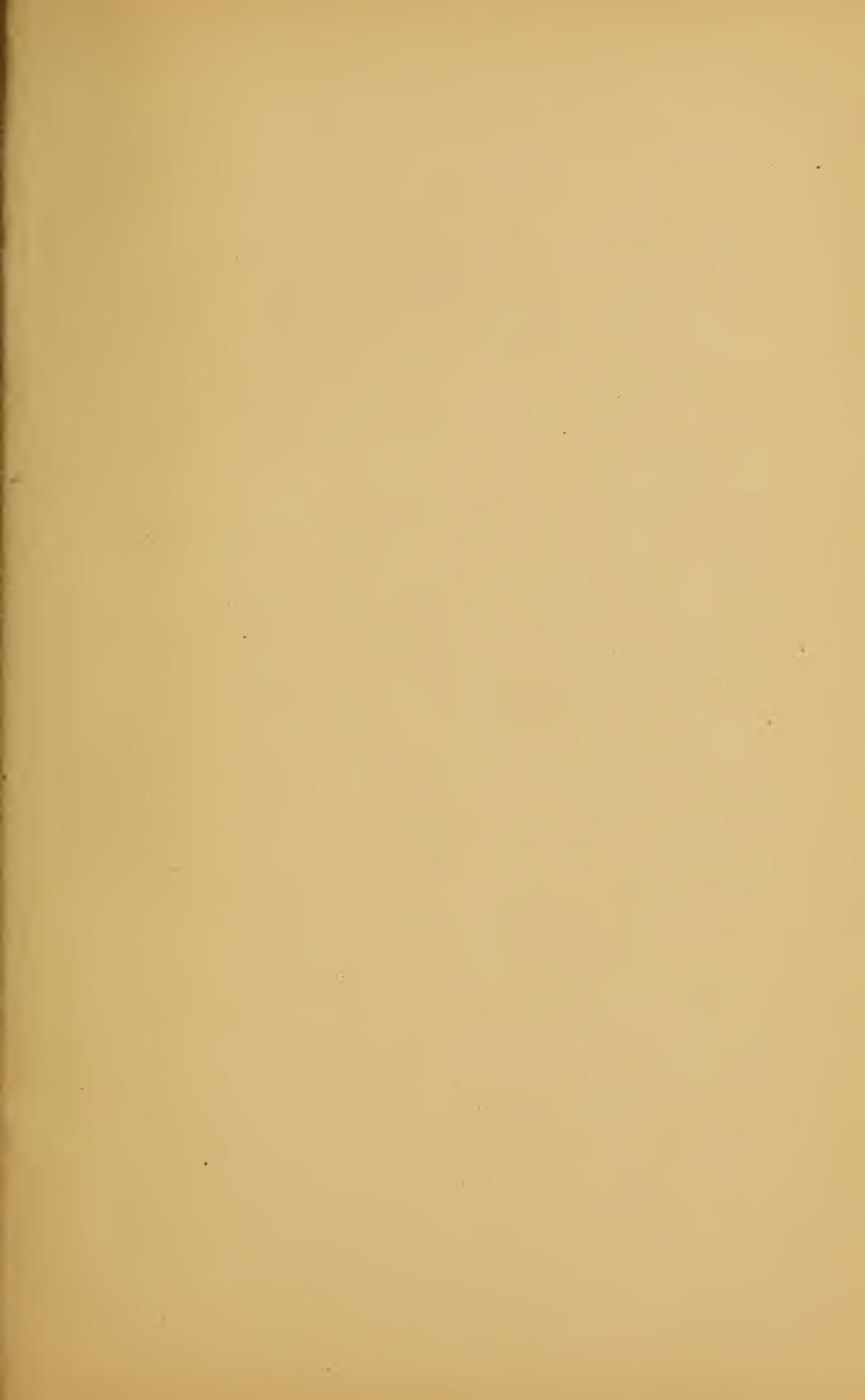
Orthodox Friends of some of the Meetings in the Western States of this Union are to be commended for their activity and zeal, and doubtless too, in some respects, for their liberality; but in the judgment of the writer they have departed from the simplicity in matters of faith and calm

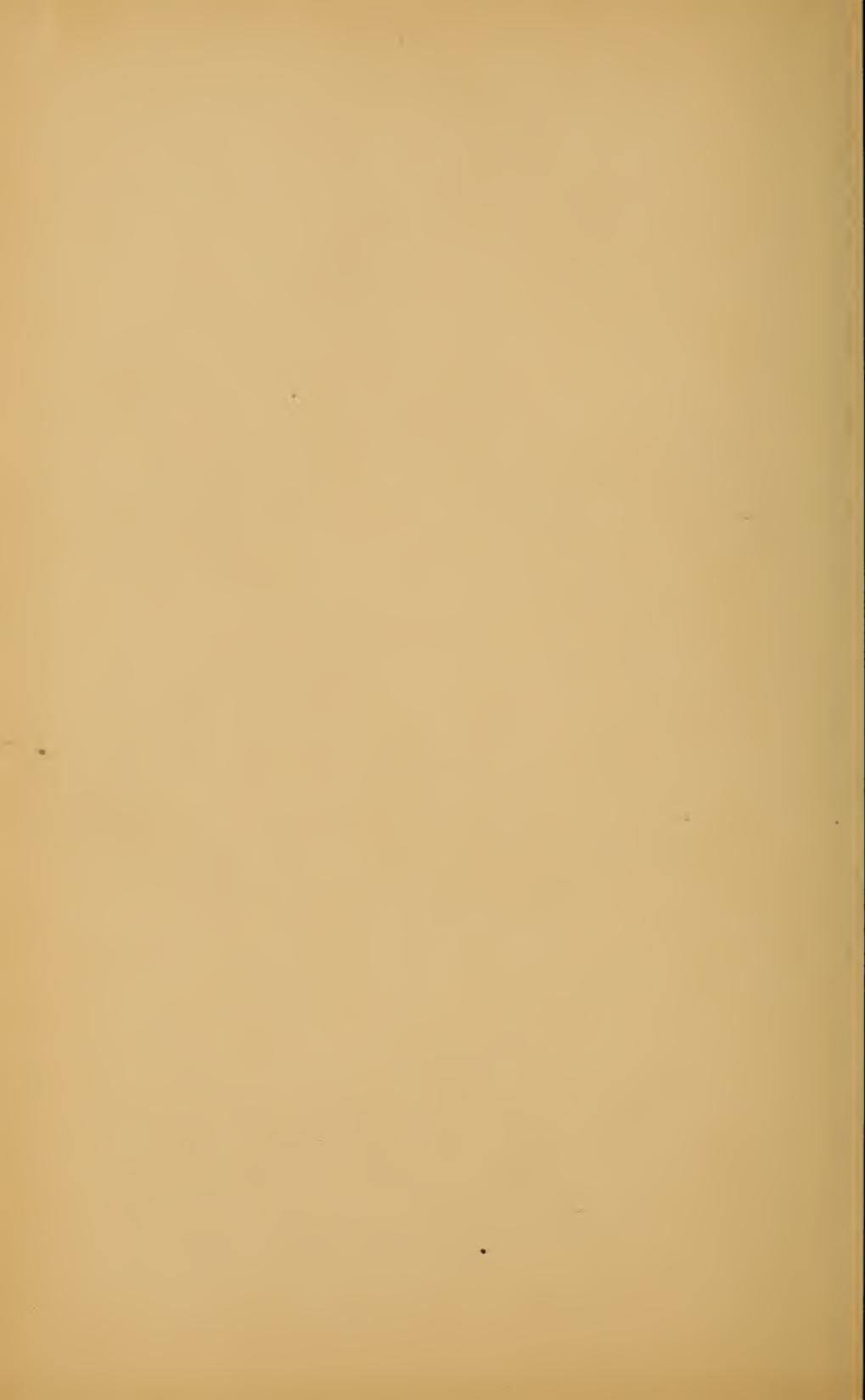
stability of deportment which come only from looking to the *internal* instead of the *external*. Activity and zeal in the service of the Almighty do not necessarily and alone consist in the form of devotional observances common among Evangelical professors, nor depend for their effectiveness either upon the amount of clamor produced, or sanctity assumed, but may find an ample field in the more enlarged view, which regards religion as a thing entirely compatible and co-ordinate with reason and common intelligence,—which recognizes as a religious exercise, and one of the highest obligation and importance, the culture and development of the intellectual and moral nature; and which finds the highest motive for the love and adoration of the Deity in the study and contemplation of His works.

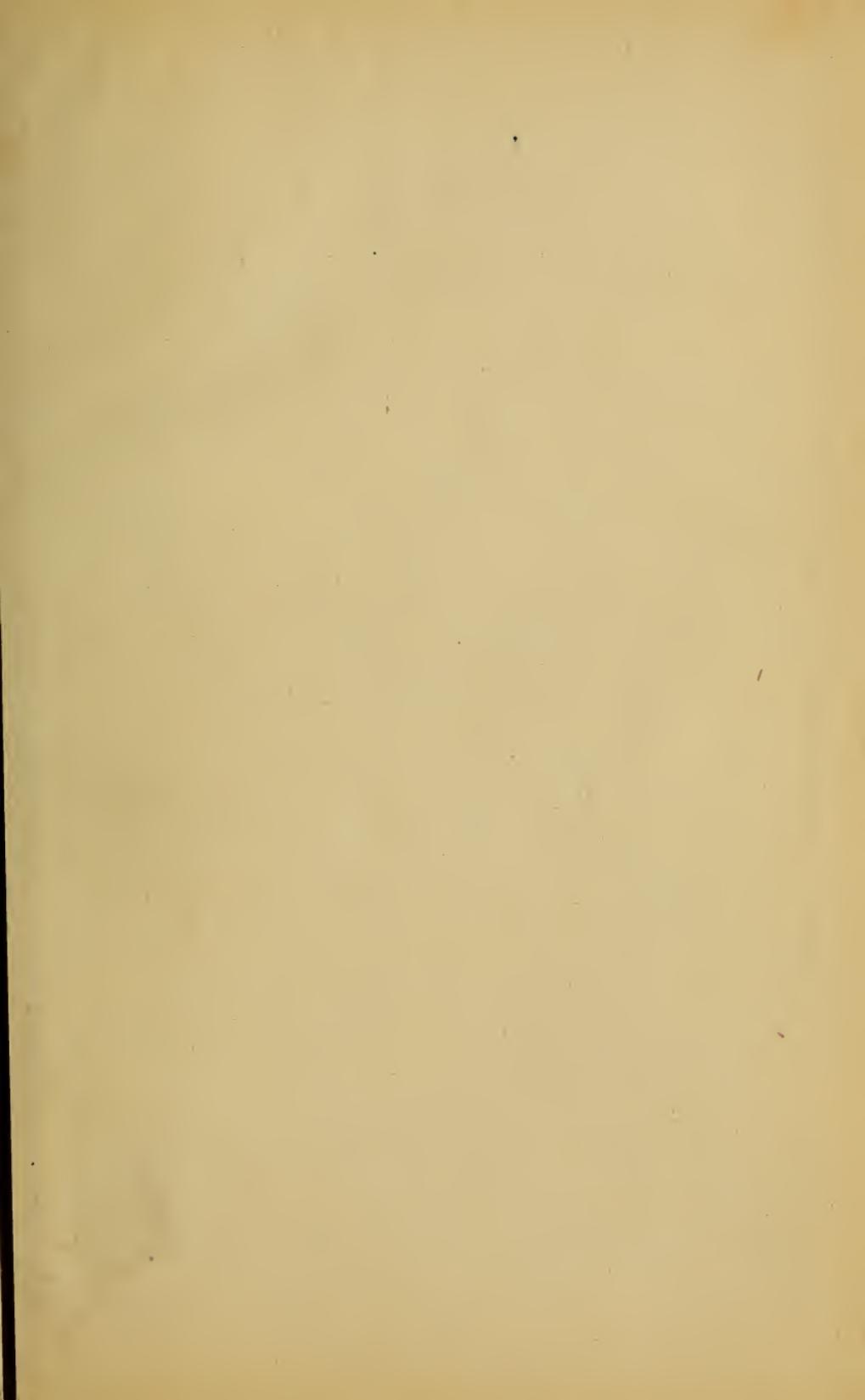
We have seen, by the accounts given of the condition of the Meetings of the Orthodox Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, that many of them are in a state of rapid decline; and this state of things is by no means confined to that body. The causes of this are apparent, but they do not affect the vital principles of Quakerism.

The time may come when individual members, free to follow their own convictions, and loving the principles of Friends, may find kindred spirits, and be prepared to unite under the ancient standard, animated by a new life, and willing in sincerity of heart to lay aside past differences and animosities, and join in the anthem “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”













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