

ESSAYS.

TESTIMONIES OF TRUTH.

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ESSAYS

ON SOME OF THE

TESTIMONIES OF TRUTH,

AS HELD BY THE

Society of Friends.

BY

THE BOOK ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF PHILADELPHIA.

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1-17-84 Capt. J. H. ...

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work has been undertaken under the belief that a simple and concise exposition of some of the views of the Society of Friends will be acceptable to the honest inquirers, who, not finding in outward ceremonies that nourishment their spirits crave, are looking toward Friends, seeking to know wherein their principles differ from those of other religious professors.

Though these may not find in the following pages much "strong meat," perhaps the *child-like state* may be ministered unto. If one halting traveller be encouraged to go on his way, in obedience to the inshining of divine light, we shall feel that our labor has not been in vain.

The revival and consideration of these testimonies may incite the seeker after truth to a serious examination of the ground upon which they rest, and in this examination such minds may be enabled to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good.

A measure of divine wisdom and of saving knowledge is in every mind; but this well-spring of divine life is often so obstructed that the streams which were designed for our refreshment are stayed in their course. The influence of education or tradition sometimes has the effect of clouding the spiritual perceptions, so that, having eyes, we see not, having ears, we hear not, and thus we are not benefited by the helps which are offered externally as well as spiritually.

Varied are the channels through which the heavenly teachings flow. The *listening* ear hears the divine voice, and the

watchful eye sees the pointings of the divine finger in many of what are called the common occurrences of life; and if the heart be open to receive these ministrations of heavenly good, a flood of instruction will be ever pouring forth, promotive of our spiritual growth.

May we be so watchful and attentive to all the workings of divine power, both *in us* and *around us*, as to profit by the lessons daily given of the wisdom and love of the great universal Parent,—even the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, yet dwelleth with the poor in spirit.

In forming these essays we have extracted from the writings of Friends as well as others for corroborative testimony. Such quotations are marked by foot-notes.

We append to our essays one on “Silent Meetings,” written by Isaac Pennington.



CHAPTER I.

SALVATION BY CHRIST:

OR,

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THAT LIFE WHICH
WAS AND IS THE LIGHT OF MEN.

The manifestation of divine life and power in the soul of man, as a sufficient guide and teacher, may be considered the fundamental doctrine of the Society of Friends. Upon it rests our hope of safe guidance through time, and of an entrance into a state of eternal blessedness, when mortality shall be put off and immortality be put on.

We believe that this *internal manifestation of divine life* is "God's gift for man's salvation." This "*grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*" As we yield to

the government of this *indwelling, redeeming power*, we are preserved in innocence or brought from under the bondage of sin, if it has had dominion over us. The old man (self-will), with all his deeds, is put off, and the "new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him, is put on;" and here we can receive the testimony, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." For, by coming under the influence of Christ, the *anointing power*, knowing it to be our life, we are enabled to bring forth the fruits of the spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and *herein* is the true glory of the Christian.

The Apostle James exhorts his brethren to "receive with meekness the *engrafted word which is able to save the soul*;" and adds, "but be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Salvation by Christ is to be witnessed by becoming subject to divine government. "The fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," and

which, when indulged, bring forth fruit bitter to the taste, must be brought under subjection, and the fruit of the spirit nurtured, which is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.

We are called to yield our spirits, thoughts, and affections to the government of the divine principle, even until, as a little leaven leavens the whole lump, we come to know the same mind to be in us that was also in Christ Jesus, and all is brought into harmony with the divine nature. In thus yielding the whole man to the regulating influence of this internal manifestation of divine life, we know for ourselves *its power*, and can say with some formerly, "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

It has been said, "*The full consciousness of truth rejects the formality of proof.*" This may be measurably true, and yet *proof may be valuable* to those who have not fully realized in their own experience any great truth. We, therefore, in confirmation of the foregoing testimony to the power of divine grace to redeem from all iniquity, quote Robert Barclay, who in pointing out the difference between the outward

law and the gospel (or *divine gift*) says, "In that the law being outwardly written, brings under condemnation, but hath not life in it to save; whereas the gospel as it declares and makes manifest the evil, so it being an *inward powerful* thing, gives also ability to obey, and delivers from the evil. Wherefore, such as come to be acquainted with it, feel greater power over their iniquities than all outward rules or laws can give them. Hence the Apostle concludes, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." This grace, then, which is an *inward* and not an *outward* law, is to be the *rule of Christians*. Hence the apostle recommends the elders of the church to it, Acts xx. 32, to that *spiritual law*, which makes free from sin, Rom. viii. 2, which was not *outward*, as Rom. x. 8, manifests; where distinguishing it from the law, he saith, "It is nigh thee, in thy heart, and in thy mouth, and *this is the word of faith which we preach*." Robert Barclay further says, speaking of "Christ within, the hope of glory," "This is that *Christ within*

which we are heard so much to speak and declare of, everywhere preaching him up, and exhorting people to believe *in the Light*, and obey it, that they may come to know *Christ in them delivering them* from all sin."

In the foregoing extract, the redeeming power, upon which this essay treats, is held' up to view as *a light*. In Scripture it is sometimes called "The light that makes all things manifest," and we are exhorted to "walk in the light, while we have the light, that we may be the children of the light," that "true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

He who walks in this light, or "lives in obedience to this spirit of truth or grace of God, will find a continual growth and increase of strength, by which he will be enabled to resist temptation and to work righteousness; until, at length, it will become his study and delight to do the Father's will and glorify his name on earth. This is the Emmanuel state, in which God becomes the life of the soul; for He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of our salvation."*

* Janney's Conversations.

Sewell says, "This light, then, Christ the truth, &c., is that which makes manifest and reproveth sin in man; showeth him how he is strayed from God; accuseth him of the evil which he doth and hath committed; yea, this it is which judgeth and condemneth him. Again this is the preaching to every creature under heaven, though they have never read nor heard of the Scriptures. This it is which leads man in truth into the way to God; which excuseth him in well-doing, giving him peace in his conscience, yea, *brings him to union with God, wherein all happiness and salvation do consist.*"

Much Scripture testimony might be adduced in confirmation of the great truth that man's reliance for present guidance and preservation must be upon the one strong arm—even the great Jehovah, and that an acknowledgment of His supremacy, and an *obedience* to His law, made manifest within, is the ground of our acceptance with Him. The Most High, speaking through one of His prophets, says, "I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to

graven images.”—“I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.”

We conclude this essay in the apostolic language, which, referring to the sufficiency of divine power and its immediate workings, is full of beauty, and rich in teaching. “Now, unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.”

CHAPTER II.

WORSHIP.

THE word *worship* is derived from two Saxon words, which signify *worth* and *ship*,—the state of worth or worthiness; though sometimes applied in Scripture to an act of respect or obeisance to man, it is now generally understood as implying adoration and reverence to the Supreme Being.

Various postures of the body, such as prostration, bowing, or uncovering the head, bending the knee, &c., have been adopted among various nations, to express the feelings of adoration and reverence; therefore, it is easy to see how actions, connected with the religious sentiment, and handed down from age to age, come to have a sacredness in our view, which does not belong to them. It was, no doubt, this consideration which led the Society of Friends to dispense

with most forms, as obligatory, and to adopt only those which appeared to them to be essential to their mingling together for one common object.

The sentiment of respect and reverence is an internal, spiritual feeling, and can only be fully expressed by the attitude (if we may so speak) *of the spirit*. *When the human will is bowed before the Divine will,—when all the powers of the understanding are offered up and consecrated to God, then alone may we be truly said to worship.*

“God is a spirit, and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth,”—therefore, worship is not the mere act of assembling in an appointed place,—neither is the performance of acceptable worship confined to the time when we are thus assembled; but every thought turned unto the great Jehovah, under a feeling of our dependence upon Him, is worship; and every act performed in a devotional spirit, and in accordance with the laws He has established, is also worship.

The *subjugation of self* is acceptable worship,

whether it be offered when our hands are employed in our secular affairs, or while assembled with our friends in the place appointed for the purpose of worship.

The profession or form of worship of the Society of Friends, has less in it to come in, as it were, between the soul and its God, than the forms of most other religious professors,—less that is calculated to interfere with *immediate communion with Deity*. We believe, that when assembled for public worship, an observance of outward rituals or ceremonies has the effect to draw the mind or feelings away from the true place of waiting and of prayer, and leads to a dependence upon *outward ministrations*, for that strength which comes direct from the Fountain of Life, which may be found in the inmost temple of every heart.

Neander, one of the most approved ecclesiastical historians, says, “The kingdom of God, —the temple of the Lord, were to be present, not in this or that place, but in every place where Christ himself is active in the spirit, and where, through him, the worship of God in

spirit and in truth, is established. Every Christian in particular, and every church in general, was to represent a spiritual temple of the Lord. The true worship of God was to be only in the inward heart, and *the whole life* proceeding from such inward dispositions, sanctified by faith, *was to be a continual spiritual service.* This is the great fundamental idea of the gospel, which prevails throughout the New Testament, by which the whole outward appearance of religion was to assume a different form, and all that was once carnal, was to be converted into spiritual, and ennobled.

“Christianity impelled men frequently to seek the stillness of the inward sanctuary, and here to pour forth their heart to God, who dwells in such temples; but, then, flames of love were also lighted in their hearts, which sought *communion*, in order to strengthen each other, and to unite themselves into one holy flame, which pointed toward Heaven. The *communion of prayer and devotion* was thought a source of sanctification, inasmuch as men knew that the Lord was present, by His spirit,

among those who were gathered together in His name; but they were far from ascribing any peculiar sacredness and sanctity to the place of assembly.”

The foregoing extracts are very expressive of the views of the Society of Friends. True worship is a sanctification of the whole life; and while this is an object of *individual* concern, we may yet fully appreciate the benefit resulting from “*a communion of prayer and devotion,*” and feel it an incumbent duty, as well as a reasonable service, to gather with our friends in public assemblage, as an acknowledgment of allegiance to the King of kings, and of our dependence as *finite* beings, upon that strength which is *Infinite*; and, when rightly gathered, concerned minds experience, at times, not only a communion with the Father of spirits, but one with another in Him: and thus their spiritual strength is renewed.

This united travail of spirit promotes the circulation of that life in which their fellowship consists, and unites them in feeling one for and with another: in which state they know some-

thing of the experience described by the apostle, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

“ Holding our meetings under these impressions, it very frequently happens that they are continued throughout in silence; a state which, when attended with a right exercise of mind, we consider as best adapted to the performance of the great duty of divine worship: for here, every individual who feels his own condition and necessities, can secretly pour out his soul unto God, without distraction or interruption; and here, also, we can freely partake of those divine influences upon the soul, which, when mercifully afforded, constitute the highest enjoyment of man upon earth. //

“ But we are sensible that these effects are not always experienced in our religious meetings. We fear many who attend them have not their minds rightly exercised. We know that divine good is not at our command, and we believe that the sensible enjoyment of it is often withheld for a season, and sometimes for a long

season, from the truly exercised mind. But even in this situation, we think it much safer to wait in a state of passive silence, than, by the activity of the creature, to rush, unprepared, into those external acts of devotion, which we believe are no further acceptable, than as they come from a heart rightly prepared to offer them.”*

Jehovah, speaking through his prophet Isaiah, says, “Keep silence before me, oh islands, and let the people renew their strength; let them draw near, then let them speak; let us draw near together in judgment.”

Upon this introversion of spirit, rests the testimony to *silent worship*. A state wherein we are found *waiting upon God for the help of his good spirit*; that, man being silent, *God may speak in him*, and the good seed arise and reign, bringing “every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.”

“*Silent waiting* in an assembled capacity, is a lively testimony to the omnipresence of God (the great I AM), and to the eternal and blessed

*H. Tuke.

truth, that, "The Lord is the teacher of his people."

Robert Barclay, alluding to his early acquaintance with the Society of Friends, says, "When I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them; hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed."

But there is need that we watch diligently, lest we settle into a *lifeless* silence; and if by any special posture of the body which the present feeling does not lead into, or by the maintenance of an *assumed* stillness, we seek to convey the idea that we are *thus* performing an act of worship, we are as justly chargeable with formality, as are those whose forms are more elaborate and numerous.

The author before quoted, after holding up to view the excellency of *silent waiting*, says, "Yet I do not so much commend and speak of silence,

as if we had bound ourselves by any law to exclude praying or preaching, or tied ourselves thereto, not at all; for as our worship consisteth not in words, so neither in silence, but in an holy dependence of the mind upon God, from which dependence, silence necessarily follows in the first place, until words can be brought forth, which are from God's spirit."

Scripture record tells us, that, "When the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and God said let there be light, and there was light." This is an apt illustration of the experience of the Christian mind, sometimes witnessed when gathered with other minds for social worship.—A feeling of weakness, of instability and of nothingness prevails. But, in this state we are made sensible of the workings of the Divine Spirit upon our spirits. We feel the movings of an heavenly influence, gradually quieting our unsettled feelings and bringing all into an holy order. And if entirely passive under this experience, and open to receive this visitation

of heavenly love, or manifestation of divine power, the command goes forth, "Let there be light," and there *is* light. The understanding is illuminated, and the eye can perceive the unfoldings of the divine law.

This is one of the blessed effects of waiting upon the Lord, *in the silence of all flesh*, for then it is, we can hear the divine voice, and understand the teachings of the Good Spirit; and it is in this state of self-abnegation, that we receive strength sufficient for the performance of every manifested duty.

Let none weary with this exercise, for it is as marrow to the bones, and health to the inner life.

Robert Barclay also illustrates very happily in the following simile, the excellency of silent waiting as in the presence of the Lord, for the teachings of his spirit.

"He that cometh to learn of a master, if he expect to hear his master and be instructed by him, must not continually *be speaking* of the matter to be taught and never be quiet, otherwise how shall his master have time to instruct

him? Yea, though the scholar was never so earnest to learn the science, yet would the master have reason to reprove him as untoward and indocile, if he would be always meddling of himself and still *speaking*, and not patiently wait in silence to hear his master."

Silent waiting, so expressive of what should be the attitude of the creature toward the Creator, is to some extent adopted by other religious societies in their public assemblies; and this will no doubt be increasingly the case, as more exalted views of the Divine Being, and of his intimate relation to his creatures, shall obtain among professing Christians.

CHAPTER III.

GOSPEL MINISTRY.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

THE apostle Paul in this lucid language leaves no room for doubt, respecting the authority of his mission—an authority on which alone a living gospel ministry rests.

The apostle Peter is equally decisive in his teachings. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it in the ability which God giveth.”

Many other testimonies may be found in Scripture, corroborative of the view held by the Society of Friends, that the gift of gospel ministry is not received through human learning nor worldly wisdom, and that authority for its exercise cannot be conferred by man, neither

can it be purchased with money. The immediate and quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, is recognised in Scripture as the alone qualification to preach the gospel of Christ.

The disciples were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until they received power from on high, and we are told that the holy men of old spake as the spirit gave them utterance.

Friends believe that the gift of gospel ministry must be received in this day, even as the apostle received it, not from man, neither by the teachings of men, but by the immediate inspiration and renewings of Divine Power, and under the influence of this power alone, the minister must act, if he preach baptizingly, or minister to the state of the people.

The descendings of the quickening spirit must be waited for, and it is good not to utter words *hastily*, even when the spirit of the Lord moves upon the face of the waters. If, under this exercise, or sense of divine power, the minister waits in holy stillness, ability will be received to divide the word aright, and sometimes he may perceive that the revealings of the

spirit, or the openings with which he may have been favored, are designed for his own profit, and not to be handed to those assembled.

We have a clear illustration of the power which attends a rightly authorized ministry, in one of the early appearances of George Fox as a public minister. We give the account as found in Samuel M. Janney's "Life of George Fox." "Being at a great religious meeting at Mansfield, he felt constrained, by a sense of duty, to appear in prayer; and the Lord's power was so eminently manifested among them, that the house seemed to be shaken, so that some of the congregation remarked, 'it was now as in the days of the apostles, when the house was shaken where they were.' The effect of this prayer on the audience, encouraged another professor to pray; but he, not being under the same influence, brought a sense of deadness over the assembly, whereupon George was asked to pray again, 'but he could not pray in man's will.'"

Friends, in common with other religious professors, have set times and places for publicly

assembling; but when thus met, they have no pre-arranged course of active devotional exercises or religious services. They show, by their practice, that the ability to preach or to pray is not at their command; and in this, they have a precedent in the experience of Jesus, when he says, "my time is not always." The minister of Christ must, on every occasion, wait to feel the quickening influence of divine love to inspire and put him forth. Some other religious organizations unite, to *some extent*, in the admission of the necessity of an *inward call* before entering upon the work of the ministry; but they consider a course of theological study as also a necessity. Friends *stand almost alone* in considering scholastic learning a *non-essential* in this service.

The apostle Paul, though a man of great learning, disclaimed it, as the qualification under which he acted, for he says, "I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit and of power, that

your faith might not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."

Friends as a religious body do not lightly esteem literary knowledge. They are disposed to promote and rightly use it, but they entirely abnegate it, as an essential qualification for the work of gospel ministry, and they believe "without the holy unction, the most learned and eloquent ministry is vain and unprofitable, and with it, the most illiterate may be instrumental in leading the soul to God."

The command of the blessed Jesus to his disciples, "Freely ye have received, freely give," brings to view another point of difference between the Society of Friends and other religious professors.

The gift of the ministry, having been bestowed *freely* by the great Head of the church, should be exercised freely by those upon whom it is conferred.

"I seek not yours, but you," was the noble testimony borne by one of the apostles, when engaged in calling men to repentance and amendment of life; and thus, also, can the

minister among Friends speak, if he stand faithful to his high calling. He can have no mercenary views. He stands in his allotment, as called of God, and unto Him he looks for his reward. Having received freely of the manifold gifts of a gracious God, and being *by Him commissioned*, he imparts freely, without money and without price, that which he has seen and handled of the word of life.

In thus giving *freely*, he has not the temptation to preach to suit his hearers that he might have, had he to feel he was dependent *for a living* upon those to whom he spake. We believe this is a great snare in the path of those who “preach for hire, and divine for money,”—those who make merchandise of the gospel,—a snare by which many are taken captive, even when there has been a call to the work. The chains thus thrown around them, prevent the free exercise of their calling, and, instead of standing upright as advocates of truth, and testifying against evil wherever found, they bow to the thralldom of human opinion, and compromise their testimonies.

We have reason to believe that Paul preserved a noble independence, and preached not for hire; for when he was preaching at Corinth, "one of the most opulent and luxurious cities of Greece," he supported himself by tent-making, thus not only preserving the freedom of the gospel, but giving an example of honest industry to those of the same high calling.

The gift of gospel ministry being at the disposal of the Head of the church, is bestowed upon whomsoever He will; and as with Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, so woman is an equal recipient with man, of this gift, and, among Friends, she is admitted to a full participation in its exercise.

We are aware that much stress is laid by the opposers of our practice in this respect, upon Paul's prohibition against women's speaking and teaching in the churches; but, "the words used by the apostle on this occasion, cannot mean the exercise of gospel ministry, because in the very epistle in which he first mentioned this prohibition, he gives particular directions

respecting the manner in which women are to exercise that gift, which he denominates praying or prophesying, and which he, no doubt, considered as different from speaking, teaching, or usurping authority. It cannot reasonably be supposed that the apostle would give directions for the exercise of that which he thought should never be exercised.”*

There are many allusions in Scripture to the *prophetesses* of those days, which might be quoted as confirmatory of the views we have expressed; but they can be referred to and read as they stand on the record.

We will close this essay with the prophecy uttered by Joel in view of the gospel-day: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,—your old men shall dream dreams,—your young men shall see visions,—and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

* H. Tuke.

CHAPTER IV.

WAR.

“Ye have heard that it has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.” “Ye have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies.”

THE teachings of Jesus Christ forbid all wars and fightings; and they also have controversy with that spirit whence all discord springs. Yet, is it not strange that nearly nineteen hundred years after he declared, “My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight,” it should be necessary to remind *the professors of his gospel, that war is inconsistent with Christianity?*

The teachings of that pure spirit which speaks in the inner sanctuary of every mind,

call emphatically upon us to "do unto others as we would they should do unto us," and on the authority of these teachings, which are the voice of God to the soul, rests our testimony against war.

The Christian's armor is *love*. This enables him to suffer long and be kind. It is also effectual to overcome evil or unkindness,—not by resistance, but by patient endurance,—not returning evil for evil, but contrariwise. blessing for cursing. This spirit will work wonders in overcoming opposition; and, by the nature of our profession, we are called to acknowledge it our governing principle, and to act under it. Did we do so, we would, on all occasions, bear an uncompromising testimony against wars and fightings. If, as a people, we were faithful to the testimony given us to bear against *all evil*—did we, in our dealings with our fellows, act in accordance with the secret monitions of divine truth, which call us to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly, others, not of our fold, attracted by the beauty of these principles, would lay down at its standard their

weapons of carnal warfare, now so sadly productive of human suffering, and acknowledge the government of that kingdom whose heavenly anthem is "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men."

✓ Dymond, in his excellent treatise on war, says, "I would recommend to him who would estimate the moral character of war, to endeavor to forget that he has ever had presented to his mind the idea of a battle; and to contemplate it with those emotions which it would excite in the mind of a being who had never before heard of human slaughter. The prevailing emotions of such a being would be astonishment and horror. If he were shocked at the horrible-ness of the scene, he would be amazed at its absurdity. That a large number of persons should assemble, by agreement, and deliberately kill one another, appears to the understanding a proceeding so preposterous, so monstrous, that I think a being such as I have supposed, would inevitably conclude that they were mad. Nor is it likely if it were attempted to explain to him some motives to such conduct, that he

would be able to comprehend how any possible circumstance could make it reasonable.”

“There is an advantage in making suppositions such as these: because, when the mind has been familiarized to a practice however monstrous and inhuman, it loses some of its sagacity of moral perception; the practice is, perhaps, veiled in glittering fictions, or the mind is become callous to its enormities. But if the subject is, by some circumstance, presented to the mind unconnected with any of its previous associations, we see it with a new judgment and new feelings; and wonder, perhaps, that we have not felt so or thought so before.”

The learned Thomas Dick thus speaks of war:—“It is an indelible disgrace to nations in modern times who designate themselves as civilized and enlightened, that such a mode of settling disputes and differences should be resorted to as that of warfare. It is glaringly unchristian; it is atrocious and inhuman; it is a violation of the fundamental laws which unite the moral universe; it is accompanied with

almost all the evils that can afflict humanity; it is subversive of the wealth and prosperity of nations, and carries an absurdity in the very idea of it."

Benjamin Franklin was a staunch opposer of the war system. "I have been apt to think," he says, "there never has been, nor ever will be, any such thing as a good war, or a bad peace. All wars are follies, very expensive, and very mischievous ones. We daily make great improvements in natural philosophy; there is one I wish to see in moral—the discovery of a plan that would induce and oblige nations to settle their disputes without first cutting one another's throats."

[Robert Southey asks: "Whence is it that wars still disgrace the self-styled Christian world? It is owing to the doctrine of expediency. If Christians had boldly looked in the face of their duty, as developed in the New Testament, this senseless system of wholesale butchery must, long ago, have ceased."

The continuance of the desolating evil of war is perhaps, in great measure, owing to the

blinding influence of custom, and to the fact, that war has become a trade, on which thousands and millions of people are dependent for their daily bread. The light of Christianity is, no doubt, dispelling this terrible delusion—though its progress is so slow, that the professed followers of “the Prince of peace” may well examine, whether faithfulness to their high calling is keeping pace with knowledge, or whether, through a conformity to surrounding influences, they are throwing obstacles in the way of the advancement and growth of the blessed testimony to peace.

S. M. Janney, in his introduction to “History of Friends,” says, “To impoverish, to devastate, to maim and to kill, are not the dictates of Christian love; nor can such deeds be reconciled with that heavenly charity which ‘suffereth long and is kind, which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, * * hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth.’ It is a well attested historical fact, that the primitive Christians, during nearly three centuries, did not bear arms, nor engage in battle; and the

reason assigned for it by Tertullian, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and others, was, that *war was unlawful for a Christian.*”

The printed Discipline of the Society of Friends brings *war* before us very clearly, as a great evil from a participation in which, we must wash our hands, before we can consistently claim to have come under the Gospel dispensation.

We extract from “The Book of Discipline,” as follows:—

“Friends are exhorted faithfully to adhere to our ancient testimony against wars and fightings, and in no way to unite with any in warlike measures, either offensive or defensive, that by the inoffensiveness of our conduct, we may convincingly demonstrate ourselves to be real subjects of the Messiah’s peaceful reign, and be instrumental in the promotion thereof, toward its desired completion, when, according to an ancient prophecy, ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,’ and its inhabitants ‘learn war no more.’

“This meeting fervently recommends to the deep attention of all its members, that they may be religiously guarded against approving or showing the least connivance at war, either by attending or viewing military operations; or in any wise encouraging the unstable deceitful spirit of party, by joining with political devices or associations, however speciously disguised under the ensnaring subtilities attendant thereon; but that they sincerely labor to experience a settlement on the alone sure foundation of pure unchangeable truth; whereby through the prevalence of unfeigned Christian love and goodwill to men, we may convincingly demonstrate that the kingdom we seek, is not of this world. A kingdom and government whose subjects are free indeed; redeemed from those captivating lusts, from whence come wars and fightings.”

CHAPTER V.

SLAVERY.

THE position taken by the Society of Friends against a participation in the great wrong of human slavery, rests upon the broad ground that man *has no right* to make of his fellow-man a *chattel personal*.

The Christian feeling cannot acknowledge *the right of property in man*, for, "Though our brother be guilty of a skin not colored like our own," he is a being, accountable like ourselves, and equally endowed by the Universal Parent and great Former of us all, with rational powers.

That one thus endowed, should be degraded to a level with the brute creation, made as a beast of burden, and deprived even of the ownership of his own body, is a direct violation of truth's testimony against *oppression*; this

testimony a Christian must sustain, if he obeys the injunction, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

The Scripture record is sometimes quoted to prove that the holding of slaves was sanctioned under the Mosaic dispensation; but admitting such was the case, the condition of the Hebrew servant was very different from that of the enslaved African. The seventh year was to the Hebrew a year of release, when he was sent out free, then he was not to go empty away, for he was liberally to be furnished out of the flock, and out of the floor, and of that wherewith the Lord had blessed them they were to give unto him. The Mosaic law expressly declares, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him."

How different with the son of a bondwoman in this age of the world? He is a bondman according to legal enactment *all the days of his*

natural life: his health, his happiness, subject to the control of another; he is denied the power of improving or elevating himself, and if he escape from his master he is hunted and returned at the point of the bayonet. While these things are so, can we as Christians expect to escape the condemnation, "inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me?"

John Woolman, one of the worthies of the 18th century, was one of the pioneers in the great cause of emancipation. Previous to his day, our members held slaves. His attention was arrested and called to an examination of the subject by the immediate workings of the Spirit of Truth, and yielding to the blessed and sanctifying operations of this redeeming principle, he was enabled not only to wash his own hands clean from a participation in this gross evil, but he was qualified to labor availingly with those in profession with him, until they also were gradually prepared to stand separate from it; so that now, no one can have a right of membership in the religious Society of Friends, who

holds *ownership in man*. In acting out, through the practice of daily life, the great Christian injunction of doing as we would be done unto, and in obedience also to the positive command, "Be ye not partakers of other men's sins," there are many who cannot indulge in the fruit of the labor of the slave. Were there no market for such produce, the inducements to hold the laborer in unpaid servitude, would be so lessened, that we may reasonably believe, the shackles would soon fall from this now greatly oppressed people.

If, in any measure, we are accessory in using our neighbor's service without wages, and giving him nought for his work, we cannot expect to receive the blessing promised to them "that keep judgment," and to him "that doeth righteousness at all times."

We append to this essay the following extract from our Discipline:—

"It appears to have been the concern of this meeting, revived from time to time with increasing weight, to testify their entire disunity with the practice of enslaving mankind; and

particularly to guard all in membership with us, against being concerned in the purchase of slaves from the coast of Africa. Yet, as we have, with sorrow, to observe that in some parts of our country, this shameful practice is still continued and connived at, we think it proper to revive the advices heretofore issued, and again exhort our members *to be no way accessory* to this enormous national evil, but to discourage it by all the justifiable means in their power: it being obvious that wherever it prevails, it tends to corrupt the morals of the people, so as not only to render them obnoxious to the displeasure of the Almighty, but deaf to his warnings, and insensible and regardless of his impending judgments."

CHAPTER VI.

OATHS.

THE testimony *for truth*, and *against swearing*, rests upon a broad basis.

If we “speak every man the truth to his neighbor,” where will there be room found for oaths? And where truth dwells not in the heart, how can the taking of an oath induce confidence?

When we examine the principle on which the precepts or laws of the gospel of Christ are founded, and compare them with those which are cognizable in many of the precepts or laws of Moses, given to the Jews, we may perceive how greatly in advance are those of the gospel.

“Ye have heard it has been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But, I say unto you, swear not at all.” Thus, we see that while *false swear-*

ing was forbidden by Moses, *all* swearing is forbidden by Jesus. The teachings of Moses have been superseded by the ushering in of the gospel dispensation, under which the command is, "Swear not at all, but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay." This is a positive requirement, and cannot be disregarded by the professed followers of the great Lawgiver, without incurring the application of His reproofing language—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

The apostle James also gives his testimony against swearing; and the Society of Friends testify against it as an antichristian practice, that should not be found among a people professing the name of Christ. We believe nothing can be added to a simple, truthful assertion, that will make the testimony of greater force: for nothing can add value to truth.

Perhaps no testimony borne by the Society of Friends has been more opposed by a corrupt worldly spirit, and consequently been a source of more suffering to its faithful supporters, than

the testimony *to truth*, as it stands in the simple Scriptural language, yea and nay.

The time of the rise of this society was a period of great civil commotion, when the oaths of allegiance and supremacy could be legally tendered to any man. Thus, when our friends stood forth in the advocacy of *a free gospel ministry*, their testimony against oaths was made, by a mercenary priesthood, a pretext for much abuse. When George Fox and others, whose doctrines were offensive to the priests, were arraigned before those then in power, and no other valid ground of commitment being found upon which they could be deprived of liberty, it was very common to tender them the oath of allegiance. This was done with the knowledge, on the part of their persecutors, that they could not conscientiously take it; and thus very many were summarily sent to loathsome prisons, the commitment resulting, in some cases, in death.

On one occasion, when they were brought to trial, and the oath tendered to them, they answered thus: "We do not deny to swear be-

cause of any guilt that is upon us, but in obedience to the command of Christ, who saith, 'Swear not at all,'—and *we will not come under the condemnation of an oath, for the liberty of the outward man.*"*

The acknowledgment of the superiority of speaking the truth to swearing, was not first made by the Society of Friends. Polybius said, "The use of oaths in judgment, was rare *among the ancients*; but, by the growing of perfidiousness, so grew also the use of oaths."

Thus, it is very apparent that oaths took their beginning from the want of truth, and were only called in as helps, when the people had ceased to speak every man the truth to his neighbor.

"Every practical believer in the teachings of the gospel, will manifest that he is governed by the spirit of Christ; and from the principle of truth in the heart, he is under far stronger obligations to speak the truth on all occasions, than all the penalties of perjury, or the supposed sanctity of oaths, can possibly produce."†

* Sewel.

† J. Comly.

CHAPTER VII.

DRESS.

“No *peculiar form* of dress has ever been prescribed by the Society of Friends. The first members of the society wore the dress then common among serious and religious people in England, and it was much more simple than that worn in fashionable society; and when, in the reign of Charles II., the nation became infected with that passion for gaudy and extravagant apparel which distinguished his court, the Friends still adhered to their plain and simple costume, and thus became peculiar by refusing to follow the changing fashions of the world. They maintained that the only proper objects of dress were decency and comfort, and that useless ornament and gaudy apparel are inconsistent with the Christian profession.”*

* Janney's Life of Penn.

The foregoing extract is given to show that the testimony of the "Society of Friends" is a testimony to *simplicity* and *moderation*—a non-conformity to the changing fashions of the world, rather than a conformity to any peculiar form or color.

Dress, considered in itself, would seem to be of small moment, but viewed in relation to our highest interests, it becomes important. The tyranny of fashion is so powerful that considerations of health, convenience, and propriety all bow before it; and this sway is exerted not alone upon the vain and thoughtless, but even upon the intelligent and sedate, who, while they despise the tyranny, yield themselves to it. Surely the emancipation of the mind from such a thralldom is not unworthy of the exertion of our highest powers.

It need not then surprise us, particularly when we consider how much *time*, *thought*, and *means* are spent in the adornment of the person, that the first requirements of the newly-awakened mind very often have reference to dress: and when the inquiry of the humbled

spirit is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" there is sometimes unfolded to view the discipline requisite for a growth in the truth. If a vain spirit has had the ascendancy, it may be needful that the superfluous adornments of the person be laid aside, and a simple attire be adopted; and the experience of many will bear witness that, in yielding to the impressions of duty on this point, the bondage imposed by fashion and custom has been broken, and the once shackled thoughts and affections set free.

In this state of experience a seasonable watchword may be found in the ancient injunction, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount," and the young traveller will find safety in adhering to it, although that "pattern" may differ from the apparel of those who are considered consistent members of the religious community.

When William Penn was convinced of the principles of "Friends," and became a frequent attender of their meetings, he did not immediately relinquish his gay apparel; it is even

said that he wore a sword, as was then customary among men of rank and fashion.

Being one day in company with George Fox, he asked his advice concerning it, saying that he might perhaps appear singular among Friends. George Fox answered, "I advise thee to wear it as long as thou canst." Not long after this, they met again, when William had no sword, and George said to him, "William, where is thy sword?" "Oh," said he, "I have taken thy advice; I wore it as long as I could."

"This anecdote, derived from reliable tradition, seems to be characteristic of the man and the times. It shows that the primitive Friends preferred that their proselytes should be led by the principle of divine truth in their own minds, rather than follow the opinions of others without sufficient evidence.

"It must have been manifest to George Fox, that his young friend, while expressing his uneasiness (and asking his advice) about his sword, was under the influence of religious impressions, that would, if attended to, lead

him not only into purity of life, but likewise into that simplicity of apparel which becomes the disciples of a self-denying Saviour.”*

The consistency of an *inexpensive* and *simple* costume with a life of practical righteousness must be so apparent, that it would seem *no other* reason need be urged for its adoption by those who make a profession of religion. But we must not confound this “fruit of the spirit” with *that form of dress* which custom has made peculiar to us as a people; because in so doing we set up an outward standard which cannot be applicable to every mind, and may throw a serious obstacle in the way of those who have not felt it incumbent upon them to adopt a *peculiar garb*, and yet have been called to renounce the gaities of fashionable life.

A simple attention to the revealings of the “*light within*,” in a matter of apparently so little importance as the raiment in which we are clothed, will bring glory to the great Name. Every act of obedience to the divine law is an

* Janney’s Penn, Chapter 3d.

acknowledgment of our loyalty to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The testimony to simplicity has not been exclusively confined to the Society of Friends. The example of some of the early Christians gives evidence of their belief in the necessity of *showing through externals* the power of Christianity to redeem from the vain fashions of the world. "'Tis not enough," says Tertullian, "that a Christian *be* chaste and modest, but he must *appear to be so*—a virtue of which he should have such great store and treasure, that it ought to flow from his mind upon his habit, and break forth from the retirement of his conscience into the superficies of his life."

CHAPTER VIII.

PLAINNESS OF SPEECH.

THE blessed Jesus, in his admirable sermon on the mount, after holding up to reproof the desire of the high professor to be exalted above his fellows, and to receive honor from man, says to his disciples, "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

This exhortation leaves no room for the use of "pompous titles, or flattering appellations;" for, if obeyed, it would bring the whole Christian world to one level; where, in lieu of those distinctions which lead to the bowing of the head, the scraping of the foot, and the use of ceremonious titles as tokens of respect, there would be a simple acknowledgment of brotherhood and the one common Father. Under this feeling, we could address each other in such language as the feelings of the heart would

prompt us to use; and then our yea would be yea, and our nay, nay.

Early Friends had much to suffer in consequence of their non-compliance with the customs of their day, in respect to outward ceremonies. They bore these sufferings unflinchingly. They labored, and we, through their labors, are now at liberty to act out our sense of right in most matters pertaining to conscientious scruples, without fear of persecution, imprisonment, or death.

They labored, and it is our place now to enter into and *go on* with the labor, carrying on the work of *our day* with equal fidelity to the unfoldings of truth. Are we thus doing? Are we worthy of our present privileges? or are we, through fear of the world's dread laugh, proving recreant to duty, and violating truth's testimony to plainness of speech?

In a work recently issued,* the writer, speaking of George Fox, when he was called to testify to the great truth "that a measure of

* Janney's Life of Penn.

the same power and spirit that guided the prophets and apostles, may now be experienced by the faithful," says, "Although this doctrine met with much opposition from the professors of religion, there was, in the plain and unflattering address of George Fox, a cause of offence that rendered him still more obnoxious to opprobrium and abuse. When sent forth on his mission of love, to preach the gospel in its ancient simplicity, he felt himself restrained from giving to his fellow man, the usual tokens of reverence, which, having originated in human vanity and pride, were, in his view, calculated to nourish the same pernicious passions.

"He could not 'put off the hat' to any man, how exalted soever his station or rank; he durst not use vain compliments nor titles; and, in speaking to a single person, he was required to adhere to the ancient Scriptural language, *thee* and *thou*. These deviations from popular manners, although small matters in the eye of human reason, were, by the persecution they occasioned, shown to be important to the progress of truth; for the love of worldly honor

had taken deep hold of the public mind, not excepting the ministers and professors of religion, who received honor one of another, and sought not the honor that cometh from God only."

The practice of Friends in using numerical names to designate the months and the days of the week, as it differs from general usage, may call for some notice in this essay, as also the use of the pronouns thee and thou, when addressing a single person.

The same desire for simplicity which led to the rejection of the merely ornamental and superfluous in dress, and the laying aside of unmeaning and complimentary phrases or modes of expression, such as Mr., Sir, &c.; also led from the use of the plural pronoun you to a single person.

The names of the months and weeks then in use, having been given in a far back idolatrous age, *in honor of heathen deities*, Friends believed themselves required to relinquish them, and to adopt the simple and convenient mode of naming them numerically.

These requirements led into a form of address, the simplicity and reasonableness of which, it is presumed, none will deny, even if they do not allow its necessity.

Applying the plural number to one individual, and giving complimentary titles to one another, surely originated in pride. Beside this consideration, our practice of using the singular number to a single person, and of calling one another by the proper name, is both more correct and more perspicuous.

As to our refusal to take off the hat, as a mark of respect to our fellow man, we would call attention to the fact, that it is a token of reverence enjoined and used in our solemn approaches to the Supreme Being; and, therefore, it is not right to confound this act of reverence to the Almighty, with the marks of respect to our fellow creatures.

Many are apt to plead *general custom*, as a sanction to practices, which, were they impartially examined, would be acknowledged erroneous and improper, and it is to be regretted that the professors of Christianity should retain

so much that is inconsistent with its purity and simplicity. If these things cannot be styled "the weightier matters of the law," and we allow they cannot, we believe they may be considered as the externals of religion, and as things which we "ought not to leave undone."

CHAPTER IX.

SILENT MEETINGS.

BY

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of that man, who is run from the inward life, into outward observations. He cannot see either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby; but to the mind that is drawn inward, the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another therein, is sweetly felt; and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord, received by *them* who singly herein wait upon him, according to the leadings and requirings of his holy spirit.

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul

to wait upon him, and for his further appearings, in that measure of life, which is already revealed.

Now, in this measure of life, which is of Christ, and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul, there is the power of life and death;—power to kill the flesh, and power to quicken to God;—power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul, what God requires and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this, God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually, both in private and in public, according as his spirit draws and teaches.

For the Lord requireth of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship; and they that are taught of Him dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is, but watch against the temptations and snares which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship:

They are to wait upon the Lord,—they are to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of His life, and the breaking forth of His power amongst them. And, in the breakings forth of that power, they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, &c., according as the spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But, if the spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place—in his heavenly place, I mean—feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom into his spirit what the Lord giveth. Now, *in this*, is edifying—pure edifying—precious edifying; *his* soul, who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then, also, there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; insomuch as the warmth of life in each vessel does not only warm the particular, but they are like a heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigor of life flows into all. And if any be burdened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down,

overborne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, &c., the estate of such is felt in spirit, and secret cries, or open, as the Lord pleaseth, ascend up to the Lord for them; and they many times find ease and relief in a few words spoken, or without words if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For absolutely silent meetings, wherein there is a resolution not to speak, we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel Him in words, or in silence of spirit without words, as He pleaseth. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to by the spirit of the Lord as to silent meetings, is, that the flesh in every one be kept silent, and that there be no building up, but in the spirit and power of the Lord.

Now, there are several states of people; some feel little of the Lord's presence, but feel temptations and thoughts with many wanderings and roving of mind. These are not yet acquainted with the power, or, at least, know not *its dominion*, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them; and this is a sore, travailing, and mournful state; and meet-

ings to such as these, many times, may seem to themselves rather for the worse than for the better. Yet, even these, turning as much as may be from such things, and cleaving, or at least, in truth of heart, desiring to cleave to that which disliketh or witnesses against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein; and continuing to wait in this trouble and distress, keeping close to meetings in fear and subjection to the Lord who requireth it, though with little appearing benefit, do reap a *hidden* benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wasteth and weareth out that in them, wherein the darkness hath its strength.

God is to be worshipped in spirit, in His own power and life, and this is at His own disposal. *His church is a gathering* in the spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the oracle of God, as the vessel out of which God speaks; as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound. Therefore, there is to be a waiting in silence, till the spirit of the Lord move to speak, and also gives words to speak. For a man is not to

speaking his own words, or in his own wisdom and time; but the spirit's words, in the spirit's wisdom and time, which is, when it moves and gives to speak. Yea, the ministry of the spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words than with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified by many witnesses. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man how, and what things God reveals to his children by his spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in spirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water."

THE END.













