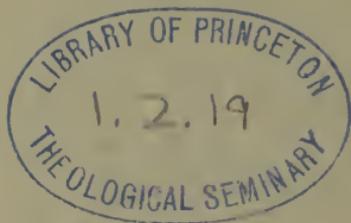


Friends, Society of  
Philadelphia yearly meeting

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A Report of the Meeting  
for Sufferings, Adopted  
by the Yearly Meeting of  
Friends, held in  
Philadelphia.

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# R E P O R T

IN RELATION TO THE FACTS AND CAUSES

OF THE

D I V I S I O N ,

. WHICH OCCURRED IN

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING,

IN THE YEAR 1845.

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A

# REPORT

OF THE

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS,

ADOPTED BY THE

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

HELD IN PHILADELPHIA,

IN RELATION TO THE FACTS AND CAUSES

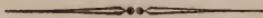
OF THE

## DIVISION,

WHICH OCCURRED IN

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING,

IN THE YEAR 1845.



BOSTON :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1849.



*At a Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia, by adjournments from the 16th of the 4th month to the 20th of the same, inclusive, 1849.*

The Meeting for Sufferings having, in conformity with the directions of this Meeting, by its Minute of last year, entered into an investigation of the facts and causes of the division which has taken place in New England Yearly Meeting, and prepared a report thereon, it was now produced and read; and after a time of discussion and solid deliberation, it was concluded that it would be best to adopt it; and with a salutation of unfeigned regard, and the expression of sincere desire that under the heavenly influences of Divine Love, all parties may be favored to be brought into true fellowship on the only sure foundation, so that we may be enabled to unite as brethren in the promotion of the blessed cause for which the great Head of the church raised us up as a people, it was concluded to forward to each body a copy of the document, and leave it with them for their solid consideration.

Extracted from the Minutes.

WILLIAM EVANS,

*Clerk to the Meeting this year.*

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## TO THE MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS.

THE Committee on the subject of the two Epistles purporting to be from the Yearly Meeting of Friends of New England, referred by our last Yearly Meeting to the Meeting for Sufferings, REPORT, That they have made a full and patient investigation of the facts and circumstances connected with the division in that meeting. From the Epistles and printed documents published, or sanctioned by the two parties respectively, we have compiled the following Narrative, embracing the facts in which both substantially agree; to this are added a Statement

of the views taken by the respective parties of those facts and circumstances; and the conclusions to which we have been led, in the course of the examination, as to the principles, which appear to us to be involved in these transactions.

## NARRATIVE.

In the year 1832, a minister, liberated by New England Yearly Meeting, and then on a religious visit to Friends in Great Britain, addressed to a Friend residing in Liverpool a series of Letters explanatory of the doctrines and practices of the Society of Friends. Upon the return of that minister to this country, the Meeting for Sufferings in New England, appointed a committee to treat with him on account of the publication having been made without the letters undergoing inspection by any body of the Society authorized to examine such publications; but the Friend objecting to the right of the Meeting for Sufferings thus to treat with him, the matter was suffered to rest.

In 1840, Rhode Island Select Quarterly Meeting, in consequence of defective answers to some of the Queries from two of its subordinate meetings, appointed a committee to labor for the restoration and preservation of harmony, &c., which committee brought under its care the minister above alluded to, on account of an alledged improper course in relation to divers Friends whom they said he had represented as unsound in religious faith, and for saying many things tending to close up the way of a minister from England then travelling in this country on a religious visit. The Friend thus brought under care, was a member of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, a branch of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting; and he denied having said or written any thing which could be properly construed as detraction, and alledged in justification of the course he had pursued, and for which he was thus found fault with, that certain parts of the published works of the minister from England were repugnant to the faith of our Religious Society, and he had therefore believed it incumbent upon him, and in accordance with the advice given in the discipline of his Yearly Meeting, to point out several of the sentiments con-

tained in those works which he believed to be unsound, and to use his influence to put Friends upon their guard against countenancing those unsound doctrines or sanctioning their reception within our Religious Society; and that it was his having so done that had been construed into detraction.

After repeated interviews had between the committee of the Select Quarterly Meeting and this Friend, in which he contended for the propriety of the course he had taken, he wrote a letter to one of the committee intended to be explanatory of that course, and to show that the correctness of the charges preferred against him depended altogether upon whether his assertion respecting the unsoundness of certain parts of the works of the author alluded to was an error. 'This letter the committee alledged to contain unjust insinuations against them, and they objected to the premises taken in it and the conclusions drawn, as being untrue. The Select Quarterly Meeting's committee now placed the case in the hands of a committee of the Yearly Meeting which had been appointed from year to year to extend a general care on its behalf, and to assist and advise such meetings and members "as circumstances may require and way open for." This committee of the Yearly Meeting treated with the Friend upon the charges before preferred, and also on account of the contents of the letter last alluded to. He informed the committee of the Yearly Meeting that he had no intention by any thing said in that letter to charge the committee of the Select Quarterly Meeting with holding unsound doctrines, as they appeared to have supposed. The Yearly Meeting's committee thereupon prepared a written acknowledgment to be signed by him, and required him to make concessions to them, both of which he declined doing. Repeated interviews took place between members of the Yearly Meeting's committee and the Friend; he requesting them, as he had previously asked the Select Quarterly Meeting's committee, to give him in writing, a distinct specification of the causes of uneasiness with him, with which request both committees declined complying.

Before the committee of the Yearly Meeting, the Friend maintained the same ground which he had taken before the committee of the Select Quarterly Meeting, viz. that his opposition was solely to the unsound doctrines contained in the

writings of the Friend from England ; while this committee denied this to be the point at issue, or those writings to be involved in the case ; but simply whether he could with impunity violate the discipline, and order of our Society ; alledging, that while the Friend from England was among them, he would be held answerable for whatever he should advance, but that it would be a violation of our order to take any action for acts committed or sentiments advanced prior to the dates of his certificates.

The committee failing to induce the Friend to make such concessions as they required, brought to the Monthly Meeting of which he was a member, in the 4th month, 1842, a written charge against him, and attended at the meeting to advise the course to be taken in the case. The following is the substance of the charge, viz.

That this Friend had circulated an anonymous pamphlet, which impeached the character of our religious Society, and in which some of its important doctrines are reproachfully held up to view ; and in which is printed what purports to be an account of the proceedings of London Select Yearly Meeting, with the sentiments of divers Friends, when the subject of liberating a minister to visit this country was before that meeting ; apparently to induce the belief that the concern did not receive the unity of the meeting, and that the clerk did not act in conformity with the true sense and judgment of the meeting in signing the certificate ;—that while the minister from England was in this country, this Friend had circulated divers letters intended to show that *that* minister was not in unity with his friends at home, and designed to close his way in the minds of Friends here ;—that he had indulged in a spirit of detraction, by which the religious character of divers Friends in New England and in other Yearly Meetings had been much misrepresented ;—that he had made divers assertions tending to induce dissatisfaction among Friends, and with the proceedings of New England Yearly Meeting in various particulars, assertions calculated to produce division therein, and also to disturb the unity of different Yearly Meetings, and to alienate the feelings of the members from each other ;—that he had written a letter to one of the Select Quarterly Meeting's committee in which he made unjust insinuations, and preferred

charges against them which they deny;—that he not having made satisfaction for his deviations the committee recommended his case to the immediate notice of South Kingston Monthly Meeting.

Upon this charge being brought into the Monthly Meeting, the Friend charged remonstrated against its being put on record, though he expressed his desire to have it investigated. By the advice of the Yearly Meeting's committee it was placed upon the minutes, and a committee of four appointed to attend to the case. The charge had not been submitted to the overseers of the meeting, nor introduced to the notice of the Preparative Meeting.

At the next Monthly Meeting, it being the usual time to appoint a Clerk, and the representatives from the Preparative Meetings, who usually proposed a Friend for Clerk, not having agreed upon one to bring forward, a Friend was named by a member in the meeting, and appointed by the meeting to that station, and an addition of five was made to the committee upon the case introduced into the meeting the month before. The Yearly Meeting's committee was not present at this Monthly Meeting.

In the interval between this Monthly Meeting and that which occurred in the 6th month, the Yearly Meeting's committee advised the Friend who had given up his place as clerk, when the other Friend was appointed to that station by the meeting, to keep possession of the Books and Papers belonging to the Monthly Meeting, and he in consequence refused to give them up to a committee appointed by the meeting to obtain them.

At the Monthly Meeting in the 6th month the Yearly Meeting's committee again attended, and advised the meeting, in order, as they said, to promote harmony among its members, to displace its present clerk, and to reinstate the Friend who had been removed the month previous; but the meeting not being prepared to take that course, the Yearly Meeting's committee continued to participate in transacting the business of the meeting. In the 7th month, six of the Yearly Meeting's committee met the committee of nine appointed by the Monthly Meeting to attend to the case brought into the meeting by the Yearly Meeting's committee. The Yearly Meeting's committee laid

before this committee of the Monthly Meeting their proof for establishing the correctness of their charge ; all which was received by the committee of the Monthly Meeting. Whereupon the Friend charged, proceeded, in the course of his defence, to exhibit those parts of the published works of the minister from England, which he had spoken of as unsound, and in consequence of which alledged unsoundness he said he had considered himself justified in speaking and acting as he had done. To this mode of defence the Yearly Meeting's committee objected, and upon the committee of the Monthly Meeting deciding that the Friend might introduce before them such evidence and documents upon these subjects as should appear to be essential to his defence, the Yearly Meeting's committee stated to them in writing, that as the committee had decided not to confine the investigation to the charges submitted to the Monthly Meeting, but to allow doctrines to be introduced in justification, they declined remaining with the committee. The Yearly Meeting's committee then withdrew without hearing the defence of the Friend as made before the committee of the Monthly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting's committee represented to Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in the 8th month, that from a want of love and unity, and a spirit of insubordination manifest in the management of the concerns of the Society, South Kingston Monthly Meeting was not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the church to the honor of Truth : whereupon that Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to act in its behalf in rendering advice and assistance to that meeting and to Swanzy Monthly Meeting. This committee of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting and the committee of the Yearly Meeting attended South Kingston Monthly Meeting in the 8th month. Two reports from the committee appointed in the case introduced into that meeting by the Yearly Meeting's committee, were presented ; one signed by seven, and the other by two of the committee. The meeting for some time declined allowing that signed by the two to be read, but at the instance of the Yearly Meeting's committee it finally consented to hear both reports. The Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees advised against the reception of that signed by the seven, stating that thereby the Friend would be restored without making any

concessions. The meeting expressed its willingness to hear and consider the advice given, but it claimed the right in such a case as this, to come to a judgment for itself, otherwise what was given was not advice, but a mandate; and after a full consideration of the subject, and hearing all the two committees had to say, it decided to accept the report signed by the seven.

This report, adopted by the meeting, states that upon a full investigation of the case, it was the judgment of the committee that the charges against the Friend had not been sustained, but that his defence is sufficient to exonerate him from the same; that the complaint originated on account of his labors, under an apprehension of religious duty, and in conformity with the discipline, against the introduction into our Society of defective principles and doctrines, and for the preservation of those ancient testimonies of Truth committed to us as a people. The case was thus terminated by the Monthly Meeting, and no further action taken therein.

Two months after this, viz., in the 10th month, the Quarterly Meeting's committee presented to the Monthly Meeting advice in writing to this effect:—Believing the manner in which the present clerk of the meeting was appointed, was irregular and disorderly, and that the addition made to the committee (in the case heretofore narrated) was contrary to the general usage of our Society; and apprehending from their relationship to the individual under care, that they were selected with a view to prevent the impartial exercise of the Discipline, they therefore advised the meeting to remove its present clerk, and reappoint the old one; to dismiss the committee which it had appointed to treat with the latter on account of his retaining the records of the meeting, and likewise that the decision in the case of the Friend (above narrated) as entered upon its minutes in the 8th month, be now set aside, and be made void and of no effect.

The Monthly Meeting recorded upon its minutes this advice of the Quarterly Meeting's committee, spent some time in deliberating upon it, and referred it one month for further consideration.

At Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in the 11th month, its committee reported the advice which it had given to South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and that it had not met on the part

of many with a kind reception ; that their written advice had been read, and its consideration referred to the next meeting ; that they did not consider the Monthly Meeting in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the church in accordance with our Christian Discipline ; and it was their judgment that South Kingston Monthly Meeting be dissolved, and the members attached to Greenwich Monthly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting accepted the report of its committee ; and a minute was made dissolving South Kingston Monthly Meeting, joining its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and directing the books and papers of the former meeting to be delivered to such person as Greenwich Monthly Meeting should appoint to receive them ; and also declaring the proceedings of South Kingston Monthly Meeting with its former clerk, for having retained its records, to be null and void. It likewise declared the minute of South Kingston Monthly Meeting which added five members to the committee to deal with [the Friend heretofore alluded to] and also the decision come to in the 8th month in relation to that Friend, and entered upon the minutes, to be null and void : and it directed all other unfinished business to be transferred to Greenwich Monthly Meeting ; and committees and others under appointment by South Kingston Monthly Meeting to report to Greenwich Monthly Meeting.

The Quarterly Meeting's committee attended South Kingston Monthly Meeting in the 11th month, and there read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting ; whereupon the Monthly Meeting concluded to appeal to the Yearly Meeting. Notwithstanding this appeal, referring the whole matter to the decision of the Yearly Meeting, and notwithstanding the case of the Friend against whom the charge had been brought by the Yearly Meeting's committee had been decided by South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and the committee appointed in the case consequently dismissed ; Greenwich Monthly Meeting, in the first month 1843, directed that part of that committee, which had been first appointed, to make a report to it (Greenwich Monthly Meeting), and at that Monthly Meeting held 1st month 30th, two of the four Friends first appointed on the case, presented a report, in which they state, that they had heard the evidence presented by the Yearly Meeting's com-

mittee in support of the charges brought by it against the member of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and it was in their judgment sufficient to substantiate those charges; which charges (they say) having relation altogether to his departure from Discipline and good order, it was evident to us, that his defence ought to be predicated on that ground alone; and whereas the other part of the committee was willing to allow him to make his defence, by leaving this, the only legitimate ground, and go into a justification of his conduct by allusion to doctrines, which, in our view was entirely foreign to the subject matter under consideration, we therefore felt ourselves bound to dissent from such a course altogether, and it is our judgment that he is not in a situation and state of mind to be continued a member of our Society. The part of the committee which made this report, had had no opportunity of again consulting with their colleagues, who declined meeting again with them, nor had they had any other interview with the Friend in whose case they reported, than that had with him in the 7th month, 1842, when the whole committee was present. This report was received by the Monthly Meeting, and the Friend thereupon disowned by Greenwich Monthly Meeting.

The individual thus disowned appealed to the Quarterly Meeting, which confirmed the judgment of the Monthly Meeting, and upon an appeal to the Yearly Meeting it confirmed the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting.

The judgment of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting from which South Kingston Monthly Meeting had appealed was confirmed by the Yearly Meeting upon the report of thirteen out of a committee of twenty-one: six presented a counter report, and two declined signing either.

In Swanzey Monthly Meeting, another branch of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, a difference of sentiment existed among its members, and for a considerable time there had been no new appointment of clerks and overseers. Committees had been from time to time nominated to propose persons for those stations, but their reports, when presented, not being united with by the meeting, the clerk and overseers who had long served the meeting were continued in their respective stations. In 1844, the Yearly Meeting's committee, which had been continued from year to year, and the Quarterly Meeting's commit-

tee which appears also to have been continued, requested the two committees of Swanzey Monthly Meeting which stood appointed upon clerk and overseers to meet with them; and upon their so doing, the committees of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings united with a part of each committee of the Monthly Meeting, viz. with *three* of the committee of seven on clerk, in recommending a Friend for clerk and another for assistant; and with *two* of the committee of seven on overseers in recommending certain Friends for overseers. At the Monthly Meeting when these reports were presented, the Yearly Meeting's committee likewise presented a written communication advising the meeting to appoint the Friends proposed to the respective stations for which they were nominated. After considerable discussion upon the propriety of adopting the reports thus brought forward, and much diversity of sentiment being apparent, the clerk made a minute referring both subjects to the consideration of the next Monthly Meeting, and under the care of the same committees.

At Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting which occurred soon after the Monthly Meeting just noticed, the committee to assist and advise its Monthly Meetings was released, and another appointed to visit Swanzey Monthly Meeting and assist in its due organization.

At the next Monthly Meeting of Swanzey, after the Friend who had long acted as clerk had taken his seat at the table, but before the Monthly Meeting was opened by the usual minute, and before any minute from the Quarterly Meeting had been read, a proposition was made that the Friend nominated at the previous meeting by part of the committee on clerks, and also then recommended by the Yearly Meeting's committee to be appointed to that station, should now act as clerk of the meeting. This proposition was united with by part of the meeting, and was opposed by another part, when the individual thus selected proceeded to make a minute opening the meeting, and received the reports from the Preparative Meetings. At the same time the Friend who had long served the meeting as clerk, at the request of several Friends likewise opened the meeting by the usual minute, and proceeded to call up the business in the regular order as recorded on the minutes, those who united with his so doing engaging in the transaction of

the business thus brought before the meeting. In the mean time the Friend who had just commenced acting as clerk read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting appointing its committee, and then read a minute of adjournment, whereupon several members of the meeting, together with the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees, withdrew, leaving the other part of the meeting engaged in disposing of the business on the minutes. Thus a division took place in Swanzey Monthly Meeting.

At Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in the 11th month, 1844, two reports, each purporting to come from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, were presented; one signed by the old clerk of that meeting, the other by the individual who commenced acting as clerk at the time and in the manner just narrated. The latter report was received by the clerk of the Quarterly Meeting, and acknowledged as the report from the true Monthly Meeting by him and by those who united with him in so doing; while the other, signed by the Friend who had long acted as clerk, was rejected by them. Whereupon those who disapproved of this course, remained together after a minute of adjournment had been read, and appointing a clerk, received the report from Swanzey Monthly Meeting signed by the old clerk, and proceeded to transact the business of a Quarterly Meeting. A committee to visit the subordinate meetings was appointed. Thus a division took place in Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, which soon extended to all its subordinate branches.

After this Quarterly Meeting occurred, and before the time of holding New England Yearly Meeting, the Meeting for Sufferings in New England issued communications to the Meetings for Sufferings of other Yearly Meetings, and to the subordinate meetings of New England Yearly Meeting; in which they characterize those who had held the Quarterly Meeting which received the report signed by the old clerk of Swanzey Monthly Meeting, as seceders from the Society, and disaffected to its order and discipline; whereupon the body thus denominated Seceders, put forth an Address to Friends, in which they deny this charge, and give their reasons for the course pursued by them, and state the causes which, in their view, had led to the separation.

At the first sitting of New England Yearly Meeting in 1845, the names of the representatives appointed by each body claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting were read and minuted. A proposition was then made to refer the claims of the two bodies to the representatives appointed by the other Quarterly Meetings, for them to report to the Yearly Meeting, which, in their judgment, was the true Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. The representatives from that meeting, which as Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting had received and acknowledged the report from Swansey Monthly Meeting signed by the old Clerk, objected to the proposed reference, on the grounds that several of the representatives appointed by the other Quarters were members of the Yearly Meeting's committee, and consequently had prejudged the case; and because (as they stated) unfair and proscriptive measures had been resorted to in the appointment of representatives in some of the Quarters with special reference to the points in controversy; and they proposed that the whole subject be opened in and be decided by the Yearly Meeting at large. The appointment of representatives with any view to their judging in this case, was denied, and after some time the clerk made a minute referring the case as proposed. A proposition was then made to suspend the rule of Discipline requiring the representatives to meet at the close of the meeting on second day morning, to agree on a clerk for the year and report the same to the adjournment. This was objected to on the part of some, and united with by many others, and a minute was made that the clerks then under appointment should continue to serve the meeting until the question respecting Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting was settled. Soon after the opening of the meeting in the afternoon, a representative from Sandwich Quarterly Meeting, informed the Yearly Meeting that a portion of the representatives had met together, and concluded to report two Friends, whom he named, one for clerk, and the other for assistant. The appointment of these Friends was united with by many, and opposed by a larger number; and the Friends who had heretofore acted as clerk and assistant, continuing in their seats at the table, the two Friends now proposed for those stations, took their seats at another table, and a minute of their appointment was made and read by the one nominated as

clerk. The Friend who had heretofore acted as clerk, called upon the representatives from all the Quarterly Meetings except Rhode Island, to state to the meeting whether they had met in consultation in regard to the nomination of the Friends now proposed for clerk and assistant. All present but four stated that they had not been consulted and now dissented from the appointment. The old clerk now requested those who had been thus nominated as clerk and assistant, and also the Friends who united with them, to desist, and protested against their proceedings. Each party transacted business as New England Yearly Meeting, and adjourned; those who acted with the new clerk until ten o'clock, and the other until nine o'clock next morning. Thus a division took place in New England Yearly Meeting.

The representatives to whom was referred the claims of the two bodies claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, reported on third day morning to that body which had met in the meeting-house at nine o'clock, that in their judgment the meeting which had refused to receive the report signed by the old clerk of Swanzey Monthly Meeting, ought to be acknowledged by the Yearly Meeting as the true Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting; which report was united with.

The other body which met at ten o'clock, finding the meeting-house occupied when they assembled, proceeded to open and to hold their meeting in the yard, and after applying in the name of New England Yearly Meeting, to those sitting in the house, for the use of the clerk's table and for the transfer to them of the books and papers belonging to the Yearly Meeting, which was refused, they adjourned, to meet in another house. Both bodies have continued to claim the character of New England Yearly Meeting.

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The light in which the two bodies claiming to be New England Yearly Meeting view the facts and circumstances here narrated, and the causes which have produced the present state of things within the limits of that Yearly Meeting, is widely different. Each body asserts that it is sound in the faith of

Friends, and attached to the Discipline and order of our Religious Society.

**THE LARGER BODY SAYS**—that they apprehend the cause of the disunity and schism, is to be found in a spirit of disaffection and desire for individual liberty, that is not willing to submit to that necessary subordination recognized in our Discipline of inferior to superior meetings, and of each member to the body, which has ever been found essential to the welfare and preservation of our Religious Society ; and they sanction and approve the course pursued by the committees of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings, and the proceedings of those meetings respectively, as related in the foregoing account.

**THEY MAINTAIN**—that the Friend placed under dealing in South Kingston Monthly Meeting, by the Yearly Meeting's committee, was justly liable to the charges brought against him by that committee ;—that much labor had been bestowed upon him ; that his attempted justification upon the ground of the unsoundness of some of the writings of the Friend from England was untenable ; that it was not right, or according to order, to take exception to acts committed or sentiments advanced by that Friend prior to the date of his certificates ; that doctrines were not at issue ; and that as further labor by the Yearly Meeting's committee would have been unavailing, that committee took the proper course in prosecuting the case.

**THEY ASSERT**—that the Discipline of New England provides no specific mode for bringing the case of an offender before a Monthly Meeting ; and although the general practice is for complaints to come from the overseers, through the Preparative Meeting, yet that the support of good order and discipline have in divers instances rendered a departure from this course necessary.

**THEY ALLEDGE**—that those who attempted to control the proceedings of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, were not qualified to conduct the affairs of the church, that the meeting was bound to take the advice given by the Yearly Meeting's committee, and that in not doing so it rendered itself liable to be reported to its Quarterly Meeting as insubordinate.

**THEY STATE**—that the reception by the Monthly Meeting of the report of seven of the committee in the case of the Friend placed under dealing in it by the Yearly Meeting's committee,

restored him to membership contrary to the expressed sense and judgment of divers well-concerned and consistent members of that meeting.

**THEY ASSERT**—that the Monthly Meeting was bound by the Discipline, to comply, at the time when it was given, with the advice presented to it by a portion of the Quarterly Meeting's committee, and then, if not satisfied therewith, to appeal therefrom.

**THEY STATE**—that the Friend, after being disowned by Greenwich Monthly Meeting, appealed to the Quarterly Meeting, which confirmed the judgment of the Monthly Meeting ; and that this decision of the Quarterly Meeting, was, upon an appeal to it, confirmed in the Yearly Meeting by a very united voice.

**THEY MAINTAIN**—that the spirit of insubordination which existed in New England Yearly Meeting was manifested in Swanzey Monthly Meeting, where, they say, there had long been a want of that love and unity which are essential to the right conducting of the affairs of Truth. That the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees had bestowed much labor to remedy the difficulties existing in that meeting, and to produce that organization which would enable it to carry into effect the Discipline ; the administration of which, they say, had been seriously affected.

**THEY ASSERT**—that when the names of the Friends, who, by the advice of the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees, were reported to that Monthly Meeting for clerk and overseers, were so proposed in the meeting, the reports were fully united with by the large body of the members of the meeting, and that the clerk refused to record the clearly expressed sense of the meeting, though advised to do so by the Yearly Meeting's committee ; and they state that at the next Monthly Meeting he still persisted to hold the station of clerk, notwithstanding the meeting again, with the exception of those persons who had manifested their opposition in the last meeting, united in the appointment as clerk of the Friend who had been selected at the previous meeting. That notwithstanding the meeting had thus appointed this Friend to be clerk, and he was acting in that capacity, yet the other continued to sit at the table, to form and read minutes, and that to prevent confusion, Friends

adjourned. They also state, that the persons who sustained the former clerk, in his decision against the judgment of the meeting, were disaffected towards the Society, as were those within the other Monthly Meetings of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, who united in forming what they denominated Monthly Meetings.

**THEY ASSERT**—that when in New England Yearly Meeting, in 1845, the proposition was made that the representatives from the other Quarterly Meetings should constitute a committee, which should take the subject into consideration, and report to that meeting which of the two bodies claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, was in their judgment the true Quarterly Meeting, in unity with and entitled to send representatives to the Yearly Meeting, it was united with by the meeting, and no objection was made to the case being opened in the meeting, in its collective capacity, should that subsequently be thought best. That the charge of unfairness in the appointment of representatives in the Quarterly Meetings was denied, no Friend having had any expectation of such a reference when the representatives were appointed. That the Yearly Meeting concluded that no other subject could with propriety be entered on by it, until the case of Rhode Island Quarter was determined; and it decided that the clerks then under appointment should continue to serve the meeting until the question was decided.

**THEY ALLEDGE**—that when, in the afternoon sitting, a representative proposed the name of the Friend for clerk, and of another for assistant, the course proposed was, by a very general expression of the meeting, disapproved, and forty-one of forty-five representatives informed the meeting that they had not been consulted in relation to the nomination, and entirely dissented from it. That the clerk of the Yearly Meeting, by its fully expressed direction, solemnly protested against the persons thus nominated acting, against their proceedings and the proceedings of their adherents.

**THEY ASSERT**—that the accusation brought against them by those who have withdrawn from them of having departed from the doctrines and testimonies borne by our early predecessors in the Truth, is untrue. Friends of this Yearly Meeting, they say, have not so departed; but on the contrary, the ancient

doctrines held by our Society, in all their fullness and in all their excellence, are unabatedly dear to them.

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The other body claiming to be New England Yearly Meeting, say, that the origin of all the difficulty within the limits of that Yearly Meeting, has been the attempt to uphold and defend certain unsound doctrines, published by a minister of our Society in England; and a manifest determination on the part of many of the leading members of New England Yearly Meeting, under the profession of a great concern for the maintenance of its order, to make use of their station and influence to deprive of their dearest rights and privileges, not only individuals, but Meetings which have endeavored to withstand these innovations. In proof of this, and of the violation of the order and discipline of the Society, on the part of those who have, as they declare, separated from it, they state, among other things,—That the letters written by the minister from New England, while on a visit in Great Britain, were published by the Friend to whom they were addressed; that after they were so published, the minister who wrote them was furnished by the London Morning Meeting with a full returning certificate of unity; and that the true cause of the dissatisfaction expressed by the Meeting for Sufferings, with the Friend, on account of their publication, was, because those letters exposed the unsound doctrines then making their appearance in England.

THEY ALLEDGE—that when the Friend from England, the author of the works containing the unsound sentiments alluded to, was in New England, this minister had a private interview with him, in which he informed him of the uneasiness of many Friends on account of sentiments contained in his works; but that not obtaining any satisfaction, he believed it to be his religious duty to caution Friends against receiving or imbibing those unsound doctrines; and that this was the ground of all the complaints preferred against him. That the course pursued by him was in accordance with the advice given in the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting.

THEY ASSERT—that at the time when Rhode Island Select Quarterly Meeting appointed its committee on account of de-

fective answers from some of its subordinate meetings, those defective answers did not come from the meeting of which this Friend was a member; and that that committee went aside from the business for which it was appointed, and beyond the authority with which the Discipline clothes such committees, when it undertook to deal with him as narrated; and that the reason why this Friend did not comply with the advice of those committees which treated with him, was, because the stand that he had taken was against unsound doctrines and unjust proceedings in defence of those doctrines; and that he requested their objections to him to be specified in writing, because the alledged objections had been repeatedly changed.

THEY MAINTAIN—that the manner in which the charge preferred against this Friend by the Yearly Meeting's committee, was brought into the Monthly Meeting, without first informing him of its purport, and that it was to be brought there; and also without submitting it to the overseers of the meeting, or to the Preparative Meeting, was contrary to the usage and order of our Religious Society, and a direct violation of the order of proceeding plainly laid down in the Discipline, in relation to a charge of detraction. That the rights of South Kingston Monthly Meeting were violated by the Yearly Meeting's committee compelling it to act immediately on the case, by threatening that unless it complied with their advice and took the charge on record at once, they would carry a complaint against it to the Quarterly Meeting; and THEY SAY, that when it was proposed to delay the case one month, (on account of its being an important one, and the meeting small by reason of the day being wet, and the place where it was then held remote from the greatest number of its members,) the committee insisted that the meeting should proceed, and said that an addition could be made to the committee now appointed, should it afterwards be desired.

THEY ALLEDGE—that when at the next Monthly Meeting an addition was made to the committee appointed in this case, it was the clearly expressed judgment of the meeting so to do, and was in accordance with the frequent usage of the Society, and also with the suggestion of the Yearly Meeting's committee itself, made at the previous meeting; and that the Yearly Meeting's committee acknowledged the authority of the com-

mittee as thus constituted, by taking part in the examination of the case submitted to it, and laying before it their evidence of the charges brought by them against the member of the Monthly Meeting; though they (the Yearly Meeting's committee) refused to allow any others than the committee of the Monthly Meeting to be present. That when the committee of the Monthly Meeting was investigating this case, the Yearly Meeting's committee, after producing all the evidence they thought proper in support of the charges brought by them, claimed it to be their province to join the committee of the Monthly Meeting in judging the case; to dictate the matter which should be introduced by the Friend in his defence, and the course which the committee of the Monthly Meeting should pursue in investigating the case. And they say, that the Yearly Meeting's committee had gone into the subject of doctrines in proof of one of their charges, but that when the committee of the Monthly Meeting decided to allow the Friend accused (who stated that it was on account of his objecting to certain doctrines, that he was complained of) to introduce such evidence in relation to those doctrines, as should appear essentially to relate to the same, the Yearly Meeting's committee refused to stay and hear what was produced, but immediately left, and consequently did not hear the Friend's vindication of the course he had pursued, as made before the committee of the Monthly Meeting.

THEY STATE—that after patiently investigating the whole case, seven of the committee were of the judgment that the charges brought were not sustained. That the only evidence adduced of the Friend having circulated the pamphlet mentioned in the charge, was his having sent it to a Friend with an injunction not to spread it. That the letters alluded to in the charge as having been written by him, and tending to close up the way of the minister from England, which were produced by the Yearly Meeting's committee, had little or no allusion to that Friend's personal character, but rested upon his doctrines—as did also those letters which he had received. That no proof was adduced of the Friend having made assertions of the character stated in the charge. That when the Friend's appeal came before the Quarterly Meeting, and he claimed the right given by the Discipline of New England to those charged

with detraction to object to a certain number named on the committee, it was asserted by a member of the Yearly Meeting's committee, that the complaint against the Friend was not for detraction and he was thereupon deprived of that right, unless the Monthly Meeting should also be allowed to object to an equal number; for which no provision is made in the Discipline of New England.

THEY ASSERT—that when the report, signed by seven of the committee in this case, was given in, there was a very full expression by the members of the Monthly Meeting in favor of receiving it; that it was fully united with, and at its final adoption only one member of the meeting spoke decidedly against it.

THEY ALLEDGE MOREOVER—that the advice of the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees not to receive this report, (which advice, they say, the committee claimed to be as binding upon the Monthly Meeting as the Discipline,) was not complied with for the following reasons. Because that the Yearly Meeting's committee had itself brought the charges against the member of the Monthly Meeting, had labored to sustain them, and had refused to hear the vindication made by the Friend charged, upon which the report of the committee of the Monthly Meeting was founded; and that the committee of the Quarterly Meeting, which had been appointed but a short time before, was altogether uninformed of the merits of the case; had never heard the defence made, and therefore had not the requisite understanding of the facts upon which the committee of the Monthly Meeting acted. And moreover, that the Monthly Meeting believed that the Discipline makes Monthly Meetings the judges of all complaints against their own members, until appealed from to a superior meeting. They admit, that the meeting should hear and weigh the advice given in such a case, but it being the only body authorized by the Yearly Meeting to deal with and disown members, it should be left to act conscientiously, so long as it remains sound in our doctrines, and faithful to our Discipline. But, they say, if the advice of a Yearly or a Quarterly Meeting's committee must be binding in such a case, the right of appeal can afford no protection; for an individual appealing from the judgment of a Monthly Meeting acting under the control of such a committee, would

appeal to the same body at whose bidding he was disowned in the first instance.

THEY MAINTAIN—that the statements made in the written advice given by the Quarterly Meeting's committee to South Kingston Monthly Meeting are altogether incorrect. That the Quarterly Meeting's committee did not attend the Monthly Meeting at which the clerk was appointed, and consequently their knowledge of its proceedings was only through reports abroad, which reports, they say, must have been of a very deceptive and partial character. That the practice of naming, as well as of appointing the clerk immediately by the meeting, had been the ancient practice and usage of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, from its organization until within a few years, and that the time for which the former clerk had been appointed had expired. That the Friend appointed to the station was placed there by the expression of three-fourths of the members of the meeting present, and without any expressed objection to the individual by any one. That the Friend had likewise been recognized as clerk of the meeting by both the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committee.

THEY STATE—that the objection to the addition made to the committee appointed in the 4th month, 1842, in the case of the Friend against whom the charges were brought by the Yearly Meeting's committee, as being contrary to the usage of Society, is also incorrect; it being the frequent usage in the Society to make such additions; and that moreover the Yearly Meeting's committee, when the Monthly Meeting was urging the propriety of deferring the appointment of a committee at the time the case was brought forward, itself suggested that the meeting might make such addition at a future time. That the objection to some of the committee on the score of relationship, is unfounded and unjust. That two of those who were first appointed when the Yearly Meeting's committee was present, were relatives, but none on the committee were nearly related to the Friend accused, and that there is no Discipline which excludes relatives from such services, it being discretionary with Monthly Meetings to appoint such of their members as are thought most suitable for the service.

THEY ALLEDGE—that the Yearly Meeting's committee fully acknowledged the whole committee, and no complaint was

heard of any part of it, until after their report was made. That it is a dangerous assumption of power, for a Quarterly Meeting's committee to require a Monthly Meeting immediately to remove its clerk, they selecting a successor without allowing the meeting a voice in the matter. That the advice to set aside and make void and of no effect the decision recorded on the minutes of the Monthly Meeting, in relation to the case of one of its members, was unprecedented ; and that the Monthly Meeting could not see that the committee had any right to reverse that decision, affecting, as it would, the rights of an individual whose case had once been decided by the proper tribunal, and he acquitted.

THEY SAY—that it was because South Kingston Monthly Meeting did not disown its member, whose offence consisted in his faithful testimony against those things which were calculated to lay waste the true bond of unity among our members, and not on account of any disorderly proceedings therein, that it was dissolved ; and that its insubordination consisted in its standing for those rights which the Discipline gives to it as a Monthly Meeting in the appointment of its officers, inasmuch as when the Yearly Meeting's committee reported it to the Quarterly Meeting as insubordinate, the case of the Friend complained of by that committee was still in the hands of the committee of the Monthly Meeting.

THEY MAINTAIN—that the manner in which that Monthly Meeting was laid down, was a violation of the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting, which provides that the Quarterly Meeting shall first come to a decision in the case, and communicate it in writing to the Monthly Meeting, and if the Monthly Meeting is not satisfied therewith, it may appeal to the Yearly Meeting ; but if it refuses to take the advice of the Quarterly Meeting, and also refuses to appeal, then the Quarterly Meeting may either dissolve the Monthly Meeting or bring the case before the Yearly Meeting. And it also provides that after a Monthly Meeting is dissolved, if its members, or any part of them, appeal to the Yearly Meeting, the members of the Monthly Meeting are not to be annexed to another Monthly Meeting until the appeal is decided. Whereas, they say, South Kingston Monthly Meeting never received the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, until it received the minute dissolving it ;

and that its members were annexed to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, before it was known to the Quarterly Meeting whether they would appeal or not. That the writing which the meeting did receive, was the advice of four out of a committee of fifteen, appointed three months before, the other members of the committee not having been consulted, and moreover, this advice was not refused by the meeting.

**THEY ALLEDGE**—that inasmuch as South Kingston Monthly Meeting appealed to the Yearly Meeting from the decision of the Quarterly Meeting respecting the course pursued by it in the case of the Friend placed under dealing by the Yearly Meeting's committee, it was altogether irregular and out of order for Greenwich Monthly Meeting, which was officially informed thereof, to take any action in this case pending the appeal. That this case had been decided in South Kingston Monthly Meeting and the business finished; and that after a case of alledged offence has been duly tried and decided in one Monthly Meeting, and the accused acquitted, it is contrary to Discipline for another Monthly Meeting to attempt to try the same case. Nor is there any discipline which authorizes a Quarterly Meeting to place a member of a Monthly Meeting under dealing.

Notwithstanding this, **THEY STATE**—that Greenwich Monthly Meeting directed the committee originally appointed in the case to report to it; and upon the report of two of its members who had had no other interview with the Friend than that in which the whole committee of nine was present, proceeded to make a minute of his disownment; and that all who spoke in favor thereof, except two, were members of either the Yearly or Quarterly Meeting's committee, while several members expressed their disunity therewith.

**THEY MAINTAIN**—that a diversity of sentiment in regard to the doctrines published in the works of the minister from England, broke the unity in Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and gave rise to the difficulties in relation to the appointment of clerk and overseers in that meeting, and that the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees always took part with those who advocated and defended the author of those unsound doctrines, and would agree to no arrangement which did not ex-

clude from official stations the Friends who objected to those doctrines.

**THEY ALLEDGE**—that the report upon clerk and assistant presented to Swanzey Monthly Meeting in the 7th month, 1844, and which the Yearly Meeting's committee urged the meeting to accept, was signed by but three of a committee of seven; the other members of the committee not having received information where it was prepared and signed—that the report upon overseers was signed by but two of a committee of seven—and that one of those named as overseer, had been added by the Yearly Meeting's committee, and was objectionable to a large number of the members of the meeting, on several accounts. That at this time the Monthly Meeting appointed representatives to the Quarterly Meeting, by whom were sent answers to the Queries, and other necessary accounts signed by the clerk, and that the Quarterly Meeting received them so signed as from a duly organized Monthly Meeting.

**THEY ASSERT**—that at the next Monthly Meeting, when the public meeting had concluded, the clerk took his usual seat at the table in order to proceed with the business of the meeting, when a Friend, not a member of the meeting, after narrating the action of the Yearly Meeting's committee, and the proceedings of the last Monthly Meeting, informed the meeting that the Quarterly Meeting had dismissed its former committee, and appointed another for the due organization of the Monthly Meeting; but he exhibited no minute from the Quarterly Meeting. That this individual then proposed that the Friend who acted as clerk should leave the table, and that another whom he named should take his place. That this proposition was united with by several others, who, they say, were also not members of the meeting; and who, though repeatedly requested to present to the meeting any credentials clothing them with authority for such a course, did not do so; and who therefore had no right thus to meddle in the business; and that the Yearly Meeting's committee having, at the previous Monthly Meeting, withdrawn their minute of appointment, its members who were present, were there in their individual capacity.

**THEY MAINTAIN**—that although the proposition was united with by a number of the members of the meeting, yet quite as

large a number objected to it, and that the Monthly Meeting had not been opened by the usual minute. That the whole proceeding was a violation of the order and usage of our Society, and that those who took part in it, and commenced acting as a Monthly Meeting, separated from Swanzey Monthly Meeting and set up a spurious meeting. That Swanzey Monthly Meeting was opened in the regular manner by the clerk reading the usual minute, transacted such business as came regularly before it, and then adjourned.

**THEY ALLEDGE**—that when the clerk and prominent members of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, many of whom had been active in the disorderly proceedings at Swanzey, refused to receive or acknowledge the representatives and report from the ancient Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and did receive and acknowledge those from the spurious meeting, they thereby implicated themselves in the separation, and a necessity was laid upon those who would remain faithful to the precious principles of our Religious Society, to endeavor to sustain the Quarterly Meeting, and its subordinate branches, upon their ancient foundation; and that hence they were constrained to remain after the others had adjourned and hold the Quarterly Meeting.

**THEY ASSERT**—that the charge brought against those Friends who sustained Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, of having long manifested a want of unity with Friends, is unfounded; their disunity being solely with the unsound doctrines of the Friend from England, and with the measures taken to defend them. That those who have thus sorrowfully manifested a disposition to lower the standard of our Christian profession, have not hesitated to lay waste the good order and discipline of the church, and to disregard the rights of individuals and of meetings, whenever the testimonies of the one, or the conclusions of the other have stood in their way; and that they have repeatedly rejected from service worthy and substantial Friends, by refusing to take their names when offered in all their meetings for discipline, from the Preparative to the Yearly Meeting; for no other reason than because they have declared them out of unity with the body.

**THEY ALSO MAINTAIN**—that the Meeting for Sufferings in issuing the circular in which it testified against those meetings and individuals which, they say, had maintained their integrity

and allegiance to the discipline and usages, the doctrines and testimonies of our Religious Society; interfered with, and decided upon matters of discipline, not determined by the Yearly Meeting; and thus violated the Discipline of the Society.

**THEY FURTHER ALLEDGE**—that the reasons why the representatives from the true Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting objected to referring to the representatives from the other Quarters, the investigation and decision of the question, which were the true representatives, as proposed in the Yearly Meeting, were that many of those representatives were members of the Yearly Meeting's committee, and were implicated in the separation; that in one Quarterly Meeting, all who were suspected of being opposed to the previous proceedings of the Yearly Meeting in relation to this matter, were excluded from appointment as representatives—that the members of one Monthly Meeting belonging to that Quarter were wholly excluded both from being appointed and from nominating others as representatives—and that at another Quarterly Meeting, members of the Yearly Meeting's committee attended and advised against the appointment of such as had not unity with their proceedings.

**THEY STATE**—that it was the judgment of Friends, after the Yearly Meeting had suspended the rule of discipline which requires the representatives to meet at the close of the sitting on second day morning, and agree upon a clerk for the year, that in order to sustain the Yearly Meeting in conformity with its long established discipline, and upon its original ground, with the ancient doctrines and testimonies of our Religious Society unimpaired, it was indispensable that the representatives should meet and agree upon, and propose a clerk to the next sitting, as by Discipline and former usage is required.

**FINALLY THEY MAINTAIN**—that those who united with the clerk then proposed, and transacted business with him at the table, were the true Yearly Meeting of New England, and continue so to be; while those who opposed them separated from it.

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Such is a concise statement of the facts contained in the Documents which have been submitted to us, and of the light in which the two parties respectively view them. Two sets of Epistles have been presented to the Yearly Meeting, both from bodies which assert that they maintain, in their original purity, the doctrines, testimonies and discipline of the Society. The subject is therefore placed before us for consideration without any agency of ours, and common Justice and the cause of Truth demand that the claims of each should be impartially examined.

Although each Yearly Meeting is the judge of its own discipline, there is an understood and implied necessity of conforming in its decisions to principles of religious duty and Christian doctrine, of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all, and always acknowledged and held as inviolable by us. For we are one people the world over. The right of membership in one Yearly Meeting, is a right of membership—when duly conveyed by certificate—in all. A member, let him belong where he may, has the right of attending meetings for transacting the ordinary affairs of the Society, wherever they are held. When, therefore, as in the present case, two bodies come before a Yearly Meeting, both under the same title, and each claiming to be the co-ordinate branch of the Society bearing that name, it becomes its duty, under the guidance of Divine Wisdom, to inquire into the circumstances of the case, so that it may not withhold from those to whom they belong, the precious rights and privileges which membership in our Society confers.

From the statements put forth by both bodies it appears clear to us, that important principles and usages of the Society, as well as private rights, have been disregarded in the progress of the transactions therein recorded. Some of the more prominent points in which this has been done, appear to us to be the following, viz :

*First.* In the attempt to procure the disownment of a minister in the Society upon an accusation of detraction and upon

other charges, based upon or growing out of his endeavors, in accordance with what he believed to be his religious duty, to prevent the reception and spread of sentiments contained in printed doctrinal works, written and published by a Friend from England then in this country; which sentiments, in common with many other Friends, he believed to be opposed to the acknowledged doctrines of the Society.

Every man has the natural and religious right to express his honest opinions, in a proper spirit and manner upon any published sentiment, which he approves or disapproves. If he spreads opinions in opposition to the principles of the Religious Society to which he belongs, he is liable to excommunication for a departure from its faith. But to attempt to bring a man under censure for defending the Society against error, by warning the members against the unsoundness of certain published works, not only violates a plain unquestionable right, but would be censuring him for the faithful discharge of his religious duty as a watchman, and giving support to opinions which as a body the Society entirely disapproves. The object of our Christian compact, is to bear testimony to the truth and against error, to comfort and strengthen one another in a faithful adherence to the truth, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that by sound doctrine and a consistent example we may convince gainsayers, and that the kingdom of Christ may prevail over darkness and error in the earth. In a work on church government, written by Robert Barclay, and owned by the Society every where, these views are held forth. He says, "We being gathered together into the belief of certain principles and doctrines, without any constraint or worldly respect, but by the mere force of truth upon our understandings and its power and influence upon our hearts; these principles and doctrines and the practices necessarily depending upon them, are as it were the *terms* that have drawn us together, and the bond by which we became centered into one body and fellowship, and distinguished from others. Now if any one or more so engaged with us, should arise to teach any doctrine or doctrines contrary to those which were *the ground of our being one*, who can deny but the body hath power in such a case to declare, this is not according to the truth we profess, and we

therefore pronounce such and such doctrines to be wrong, with which we can have no unity nor any more spiritual fellowship with those that hold them, and so cut themselves off from being members, by dissolving *the very bond* by which we were linked together."

This is a plain declaration of the powers of the Society, and of the reasonableness of exercising these powers, and that a departure in doctrine breaks the bond which had united the party to the Society. After expressing the same sentiments on the next page, Barclay contends that it is the duty of all the members, to protest against every departure from its faith. He says, "Have not such as stand, good right to cast such an one out from among them, and to pronounce positively, this is contrary to the truth we profess and own, and ought therefore to be rejected and not received, nor yet he that asserts it, as one of us. And is not this obligatory upon *all the members*, seeing all are concerned in the like care, as to themselves, to hold the right and shut out the wrong? I cannot tell if any man of reason can well deny this." Again he says, "In short, if we must preserve and keep those that are come to own the truth, by the same means they were gathered and brought into it, we must not cease to be plain with them, and tell them when they are wrong, and by sound doctrine both exhort and convince gainsayers."

If unsound doctrines are not to be testified against, and the flock warned of their pernicious influence, but the consistent exercised members are to be accused of detraction, when they declare their dissent from published errors, then "farewell to the maintenance of any sound doctrine in the church of Christ." This would be an inlet to the greatest innovations, and in time might overturn the Society. How would it be possible for ministers of the gospel, and other religiously concerned members, to discharge their duty as watchmen, if they are forbidden to warn the flock of surrounding danger, arising from erroneous doctrinal works? The most substantial Friends in this land, nobly and firmly testified against the errors of Elias Hicks, both publicly and privately, even while he travelled with certificates as a minister, and they were instrumental in guarding many from imbibing his unsound sentiments.

*Second.* In a committee of the Yearly Meeting summoning a member before it to answer certain charges made by it, dealing with him as an offender, and requiring him to make concessions to them, and endeavoring to induce him to sign a written acknowledgment, drawn up by a part of their own body.

The right to treat with their members, and to disown or to accept acknowledgments from them, for their errors, belongs exclusively to the Monthly Meetings, under certain rules prescribed by the Discipline. Even when a Quarterly Meeting appoints a committee to be incorporated with a weak Monthly Meeting for the support of the Discipline, the members of the committee, when named in the latter meeting to treat with offenders, do not serve as a committee of the Quarterly, but of the Monthly Meeting, having no more power than any other members of it. And it is, we think, altogether incompatible with the station which a Yearly Meeting holds in the Society, and with universal practice, for that body, either itself or through its committees, to attempt to deal with a member as an offender. For as it is the highest body to which an appeal can be made against the decisions of inferior meetings, the application to it for redress, must be in vain, if it has already made itself a party and prejudged the case.

*Third.* In the same committee's drawing up a charge against a member, bringing it immediately before his Monthly Meeting and insisting upon its being recorded on the minutes, against the urgent request of the accused that it should be previously investigated; thereby assuming to itself functions which rightfully belong to the overseers and to the Preparative Meeting.

The right of an accused person to have a charge against him brought before the overseers or the Preparative Meeting, is of essential importance. There he has the liberty of attending and of meeting the charge before it is permanently recorded, and if he should convince the overseers or the meeting that it is unfounded, or if it can be settled without going to the Monthly Meeting, the matter would end without any record to hand his name down to posterity with discredit. Whereas his rights as a member are virtually suspended, so long as a charge against

him remains unsettled on the records of the Monthly Meeting. We should regard such a proceeding in our own Yearly Meeting as an unconstitutional exercise of power, dangerous to the peace and subversive of the established order of the Society.

*Fourth.* In the same committee's bringing the power and authority of the Yearly Meeting to bear upon the Monthly Meeting, by claiming the right to join the committee of the latter in treating with the Friend and refusing to him the right of opening and explaining what he alledged to be the ground on which he had acted in the discharge of an apprehended duty. The members of the Yearly Meeting's committee had neither been incorporated with the Monthly Meeting nor appointed to deal with the member. Their presenting themselves in this anomalous manner, seemed to show a determination to carry a purpose respecting the Friend, without regard to the usages and order of the Society or the rights of the Meeting. Where a member's character and privileges are at stake, the spirit and uniform practice of our Discipline require the greatest liberality to be shown in allowing him time and any arguments or explanations he thinks necessary to his defence. Were he denied the opportunity of producing evidence to clear himself, such denial would quash the proceedings against him, in an appeal before an impartial tribunal, for the great object in the administration of Church Discipline is, not to criminate but to convince and reclaim those who have erred; and if that cannot be done, to leave no ground for charging the church with harshness or injustice.

*Fifth.* In the same committee's objecting at a subsequent Monthly Meeting to the reception and adoption of a report signed by seven of the committee who had investigated the case and declared that the charges had not been sustained, while they advised the reading of a report of an opposite character signed by two of the Monthly Meeting's committee, although it was strongly objected to in the meeting.

Such a proceeding in treating with offenders is, we think, contrary to any practice in the Society that we have ever been acquainted with; the principle governing in such cases, being, that of leaning to the side of mercy and forbearance.

*Sixth.* In the attempt made, first, by the Quarterly Meeting's committee and afterwards by the Quarterly Meeting itself, to render null and void the minute of South Kingston Monthly Meeting which accepted the report in the case of the Friend alluded to, dismissed the charge against him and restored him to all his rights as a member and minister; and in afterwards taking up his case by another Monthly Meeting on the same charge and there disowning him without even going through the regular course prescribed by the Discipline.

It is a great maxim of law and justice, that where a man has been tried and acquitted he cannot be again tried for the same offence. When, therefore, Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting set aside the minute in the case alluded to, and directed a new trial, it violated what must ever be held to be a fundamental principle in the administration of justice. The only reasons assigned for this decision, were certain appointments made in the Monthly Meeting, which it was clearly within the power of that meeting to make, which appointments had been recognized as valid by the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's committees, and for which the individual was in no way responsible.

South Kingston Monthly Meeting being laid down, and its members joined to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, contrary to the course prescribed by the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting; the latter meeting, five months after the case had been closed, and the member fully acquitted by his own Monthly Meeting, and thereby, according to the admission of both parties, "restored to membership," took his case upon its minutes, called for a report from the committee originally appointed in South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and at the next meeting received a report signed by two of that committee, similar in all respects to that made five months before to South Kingston Monthly Meeting by the same two members of the committee of nine, and which was rejected by it; and in a summary manner immediately disowned the individual without his having met the committee again, or the whole committee having been together.

The Society of Friends has always guarded with scrupulous care, the rights of its members. It has carefully avoided seeking to make a man an offender; and even when a Friend has

directly violated the Discipline, if he has not been treated with and disowned in strict conformity with its provisions and order, he is, where justice is done to him, reinstated on his appeal. It is an acknowledged principle among Friends, that it is better an offender should escape disownment, than that his rights, guaranteed by the Discipline, should be disregarded. For if meetings and committees do not keep to the Discipline themselves, under the direction of the Head of the Church, on what right ground can an individual be disowned for his error? We therefore regard the whole proceeding as at variance with the organization and discipline of the Society.

*Seventh.* In disregarding the provisions of the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting, in the manner of laying down South Kingston Monthly Meeting, by Rhode Island Quarter, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting.

That Discipline prescribes the following course to be pursued in such a case; "When a Quarterly Meeting 'hath come to a judgment respecting any difference, relative to any Monthly Meeting belonging to them, and notified the same in writing to such Monthly Meeting, the said Monthly Meeting ought to submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting; but if such Monthly Meeting shall not be satisfied therewith, then the Monthly Meeting may appeal to the Yearly Meeting, against the judgment and determination of the Quarterly Meeting.

"And if a Monthly Meeting shall *refuse* to take the advice and submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting and notwithstanding *will not appeal* against the determination of the said meeting, to the Yearly Meeting; *in such case*, the Quarterly Meeting shall be at liberty either to dissolve such Monthly Meeting, or bring the affair before the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting.

"And in case a Quarterly Meeting shall dissolve a Monthly Meeting, the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or any part thereof, in the name of the said meeting, shall be at liberty to appeal to the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting, against such dissolution; but if the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or a part thereof in its behalf, *shall not appeal* to the Yearly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting shall join the members of the said late

Monthly Meeting, to such other Monthly Meeting as they may think most convenient; and until such time, shall take care that no inconvenience doth thereby ensue to the members of such dissolved meeting, respecting any branch of our Discipline." Rules of Discipline, &c., 1826, pp. 118, 119.

This, to us, appears clear and explicit, rendering it necessary for the Quarterly Meeting, first to come to a judgment in relation to the difficulty existing in the Monthly Meeting, proposed to be laid down, and to communicate that judgment to it in writing; and then to ascertain whether the meeting, or any portion of its members, intend to appeal from that judgment, prior to proceeding to dissolve that meeting and to attach the members of the Monthly Meeting to another. Now unless we admit the assumption that the advice of a committee, or of a small part of a committee, is equivalent to the recorded judgment of the meeting which appoints it, (an assumption which would totally change the long established practice of the Society,) we think it clear that this portion of Discipline was disregarded in the dissolution of South Kingston Monthly Meeting and the disposal of its members; for that meeting had received no written judgment from the Quarterly Meeting in the case, until it received the minute by which it was declared to be dissolved; and at the same time, before the Quarterly Meeting could have known whether the Monthly Meeting, or any part of the members, would appeal from that judgment, they were joined to Greenwich Monthly Meeting; and the latter meeting forthwith proceeded to exercise jurisdiction over them, in direct violation of their rights, as guaranteed by the Discipline.

*Eighth.* In the manner in which the members of the Quarterly Meeting's committee interfered to produce a separation in Swanzey Monthly Meeting.

The accounts given by both parties of the Monthly Meeting of Swanzey, at which the separation took place, agree in stating, that although the clerk of the meeting (whom both acknowledge to have been in that station, when the meeting adjourned the month before) had taken his seat at the table, the whole transaction of proposing a new clerk by one who was not a member of the meeting, his being united with by a

part of the members and by others who were not members, and the Friend proposed proceeding to act as clerk, was consummated before any minute opening the meeting had been made, or any minute from the Quarterly Meeting read. Now we think it undeniable, that no portion of the members of a Monthly Meeting, even supposing them to be a greater number, which in this instance does not appear to have been the case, could be justified in thus acting; but that they must by such an act, subject themselves to all the consequences of separating from their Monthly Meeting and setting up a meeting unauthorized by the Discipline. And those members who thus separated from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, cannot plead the authority of the Quarterly Meeting for the course they pursued, inasmuch as those who proposed it and assisted therein, had exhibited no minute from that meeting, directing the Monthly Meeting to be reorganized, and clothing them with power to act in the case. To us, therefore, it appears clear, that the meeting which, with its old clerk at the table proceeded in the transaction of its business after the others had adjourned, in no way lost its standing as Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and that the others separated from it; and that those who in Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, received the report from the latter, and rejected that from the former, identified themselves with the separate meeting.

The Discipline points out the course to be pursued where a Monthly Meeting is refractory and unwilling to take the advice of its superior meeting, regularly conveyed to it, but it nowhere clothes a Quarterly Meeting with the power to select clerks and overseers for its subordinate meetings, and to oblige these meetings to accept and appoint them.

The acts to which we have now referred, we believe to be the most prominent among the causes that produced the separation in New England Yearly Meeting in 1845. The manner in which that separation was effected, is, we presume, known by most, if not all our members. Many of those who now constitute the smaller body in New England, thought that the Yearly Meeting was not authorized suddenly to suspend the important rule of Discipline which requires the representatives to meet at the conclusion of the first sitting and agree upon a

clerk for the year, and report the same to the adjournment. Four of the representatives thus thinking, together with those appointed by one of the bodies claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, met and agreed upon Friends to be nominated for clerk and assistant. Upon these names being proposed in the afternoon sitting, and being united with by some and disapproved by more, the separation which now exists, immediately followed.

Although the manner in which this separation was effected was not such as, we think, affords a precedent safe to be followed in the organization of a Yearly Meeting, yet inasmuch as those Friends who compose the smaller body appear to have acted from a sincere desire to maintain the doctrines and discipline of the Society, and the rights secured by it to all its members; and had been subjected to proceedings oppressive in their character, and in violation of the acknowledged principles of our church government, we believe that they continue to be entitled to the rights of membership, and to such acknowledgment by their brethren as may be necessary for securing the enjoyment of those rights.

The obstruction which exists in our Yearly Meeting, to the holding of a correspondence with that body in New England which has authorized or sustained the proceedings upon which we have animadverted, does not arise from any feelings of hostility to them, nor from partiality to any man, but from a conscientious belief that whatever may have been the motive, their acts have gone to condemn many who have been standing for the ancient faith of Friends and against the introduction of error; that, in so doing, wrong opinions have received support, and the discipline and rights of members have been violated; and that it was the course pursued by them in these transactions which led to the separation. Until, therefore, those proceedings shall be rectified or annulled, we see not how unity is to be restored.

We have endeavored to take an impartial view of the proceedings set forth in the printed documents, and to express a candid opinion respecting them, and inasmuch as it is needful that the accountability of members to their respective meetings and the subordination of inferior to superior meetings should be

maintained according to the Discipline, and inasmuch as divisions and subdivisions must always be attended by consequences more or less destructive of the peace and welfare of meetings and families; and of the strength and influence of the Society in supporting its testimonies, it is our sincere and fervent desire that all parties, under a deep sense of the greatness of the cause and the excellence of the church government which our Society has been intrusted with, and called to support, may, in the sight of the Lord, examine the respective grounds they have taken; and that where any infraction of private rights or of the Discipline, has been committed, they may be willing, under the constraining power of Truth, to acknowledge and do it away. We all profess to act under the government of the same blessed Head of the Church who laid down his life for our sakes, and taught us that we should lay down our lives for one another; and we believe that if all classes stand open to the softening influences of the love of God, through his mercy and goodness, every thing that has divided and alienated from each other may be entirely removed, and a re-establishment on the right foundation witnessed in that faith and love and unity which in former years bound together the members, and the different Yearly Meetings of our Society.

It is important that such a reunion should be sought after by the members of the two bodies in New England, not only for their own sakes, but for the promotion of the peace and harmony of the Society every where.

We fear that a serious lapse has taken place in our Society, from a humble and steadfast reliance upon the inward and immediate leadings of the Holy Spirit, and that the wisdom and contrivance of man have sorrowfully taken its place in many; so that through the influence of the spirit and love of the world, they have despised the simplicity of the cross, and thus some of our doctrines and testimonies have been brought into disrepute. All the efforts of man, without the immediate power and wisdom of Christ, will prove altogether ineffectual to guide the church and to preserve it from apostacy, or to restore the unity of the Spirit, and the love and fellowship which subsists among his humble followers. It is only as the members are brought back to an inward abiding in Christ, listening

to and obeying his voice in their own hearts, that we shall be enabled to rise as a Society, shake ourselves from the dust of the earth and put on the beautiful garments of salvation and strength. Then would there be a solid ground for hope, that He would still give gifts to sons and daughters, who, maintaining the watch and relying upon him for direction, would be qualified to occupy them under the anointing that is received from him, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ and the spreading of his cause and kingdom in the earth. The glory which has greatly departed from us would be mercifully restored, and the love and life which circulates through the members of the mystical church would eminently prevail, making us one another's joy and helpers in the Lord.

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*At our Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, held on Rhode Island, by adjournments, from the 10th of the 6th month to the 15th of the same, inclusive, 1849.*

The committee to whom was referred, for further consideration, the Document prepared by the Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in relation to the Facts and Causes of the Division which has taken place within our limits, and which was adopted by a minute of that Yearly Meeting, and directed to be laid before us for our solid consideration;—both of which were received and read at our first sitting, reported at this time. And upon solid deliberation, it appears to us that our Friends of that Yearly Meeting have been enabled to enter into an impartial examination of the momentous subject, to obtain a correct understanding of the transactions narrated, and favored to come to a right conclusion respecting the important Principles which are involved therein.

The subject having been thus weightily revived and left with us for our serious consideration; we have been afresh led into a careful re-examination of the part which we have felt called upon to act;—and while we are sensible of much weakness, we can with reverence

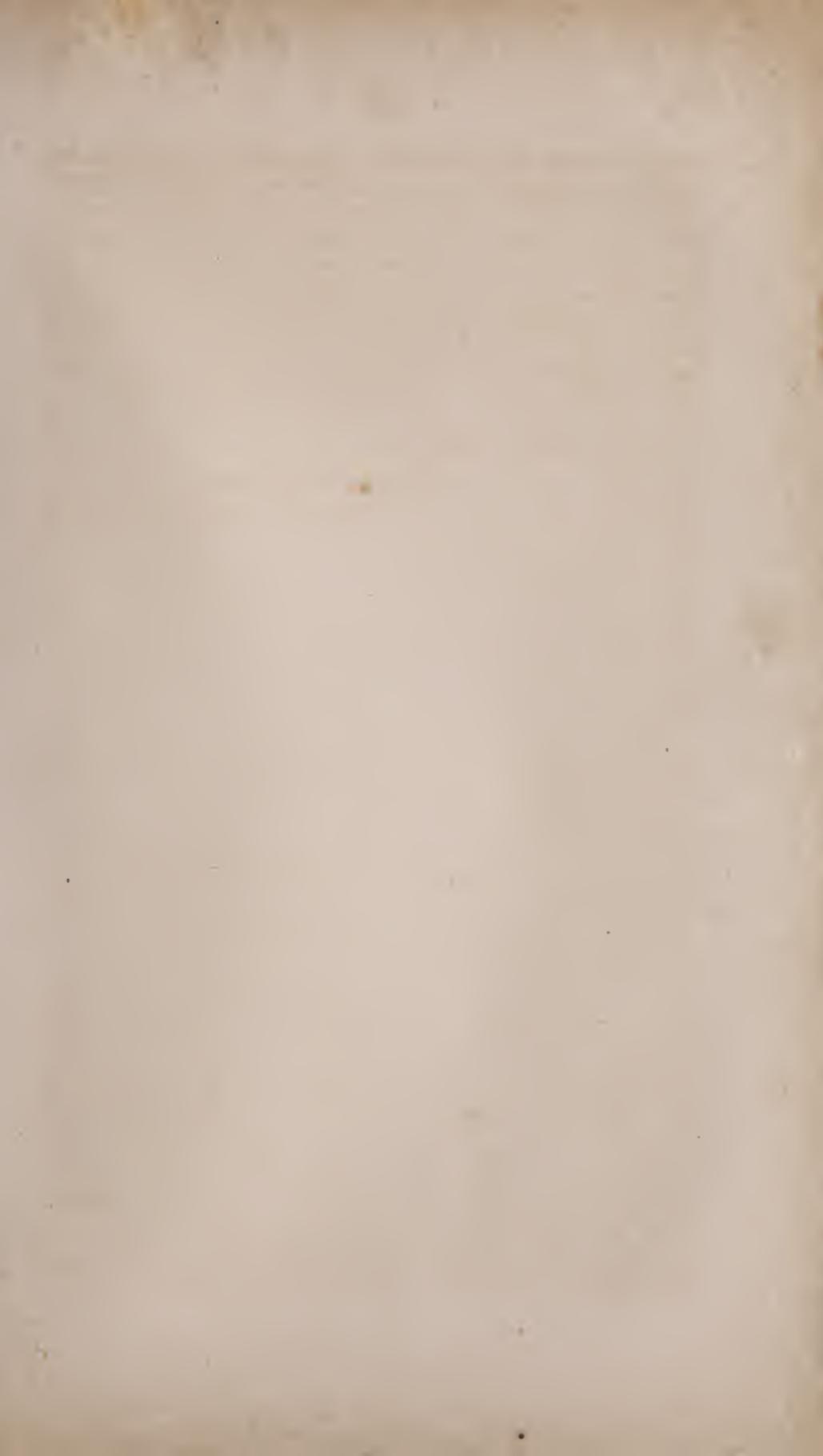
and thankfulness acknowledge the continued evidence of Divine regard. And, as we humbly trust, under the cementing influence of Heavenly Love, our minds have been brought into near unity with the concern expressed by our dear Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting;—That all those who have occasioned uneasiness, or been instrumental in bringing our Religious Society into the dangers and difficulties in which it has been mournfully involved, by the transactions alluded to in their Report, as having “gone to condemn many who have been standing for the Ancient Faith of Friends,” may be brought to see their error, and to a right sense of the support which we continue to believe has been and still is given to unsound Doctrines and wrong practices in violation of the Discipline—to the subversion of the peace and order of our Religious Society, and of the acknowledged rights of its members. And as in the course of the re-examination which we have been led into respecting the manner of our proceeding, we have not seen cause either to forsake the ground, or to retrace the steps which we have taken; neither have we been able to see in what other way we could have sustained the Yearly Meeting in conformity with the Discipline, and upon its original foundation. And we believe it to be right for us, and our duty at this time, again to express the earnest and sincere desire which we continue deeply to feel, that all who have erred from the Faith, and given their support to the unsound Doctrines which we have been engaged to testify against, or who have been concerned in the oppressive measures which resulted in their separation from us, may be so humbled under the Divine Hand, as to experience, individually, unfeigned repentance unto a condemnation of their errors, and a full acknowledgment of the Truth; and so come to witness an establishment upon the sure Foundation, and a right preparation of heart to unite with us in religious fellowship and communion. Having also been engaged at this time in the consideration of “An Appeal” for the Ancient Doctrines of our Religious Society, issued by the same Yearly Meeting in the year 1847, which was unanimously approved and adopted by this Meeting; believing it to have had its origin in the Truth, and under a similar concern for the faithful maintenance of our Principles, to that which has repeatedly led us, both as individuals and as a body, to bear testimony against the unsound sentiments and Doctrines promulgated by one of the authors alluded to in the Appeal; and our Meeting for Sufferings having heretofore recommended it to the serious perusal of all our members, we unite therewith; and we especially recommend it to the careful perusal of all who have been drawn aside by the dissemination of those views; earnestly desiring that the forcible manner in which they have been fully refuted, may have the effect to restore such

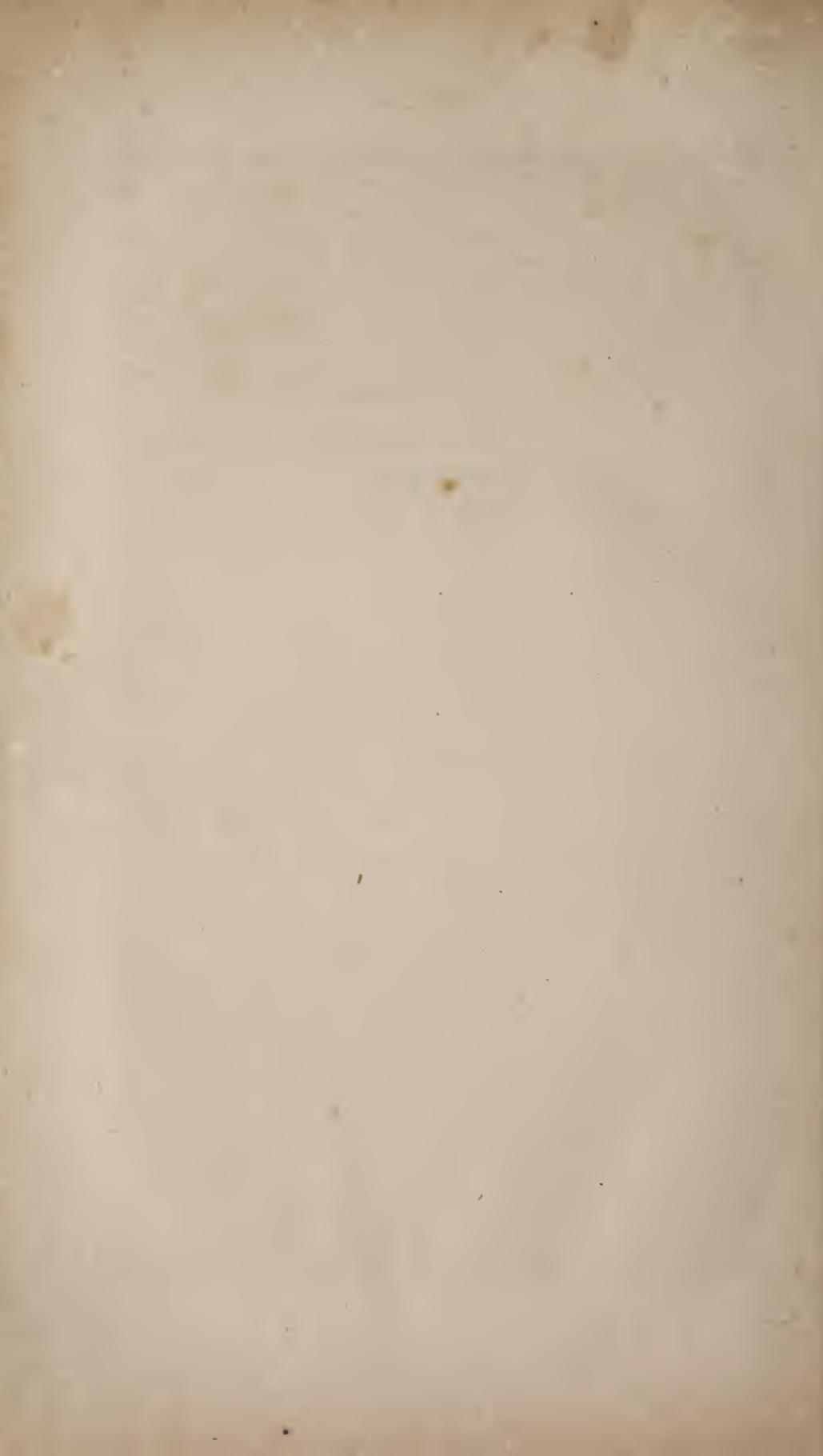
to that precious unity which once characterized us, and that they may be prepared, as the heart of one man, for a full acknowledgment and faithful support of the principles set forth in that "Appeal," firmly believing them to be in strict accordance with "the Truth as it is in Jesus, and as it has always been held by our Religious Society." And it is the conclusion of this meeting to refer the Document, with the minute received from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, to the Meeting for Sufferings, to be published for the information of our members, at such time and in such manner as best Wisdom may direct, and they are authorized to append thereto a copy of this minute.

Extracted from the Minutes.

THOMAS B. GOULD,

*Clerk to the Meeting this year.*









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