

Sufferings be appointed annually by the Yearly Meeting and out of the several Quarters, which we submit to the Meeting

Signed by direction and on behalf of the Representatives by

10mo 30th 1828

Thomas P. Habler Clerk

The Committee on the Treasurers account produced the following Report which was accepted and Quarterly and Monthly Meetings were directed to forward their Quotas accordingly to wit:

To the Yearly Meeting now sitting

We the Committee appointed to examine the Treasurers account &c have performed the service and find in his hands the Balance of \$195 40 besides \$50 appropriated last year for the pasture lot and there yet remains \$305 ⁶⁰/₁₀₀ to be paid in of the Quotas from the different Quarters. We recommend the sum of \$200 to be raised the ensuing year all which we submit to the Meeting.

Signed on behalf of the Committee by George Elliott William Maxwell

10mo 29 1828

Edward Walker, John Husband

The Committee on the Treasurers account also Reported that they had believed it right to propose to the Meeting that the friend who heretofore has stood appointed Treasurer to this Meeting be released & that William E. George be appointed to that service and that he be authorised to receive from the late Treasurer the Balance of money & other property in his hands belonging to this Meeting, which being considered was approved.

The following Epistle addressed to the Members who constitute this Yearly Meeting was produced by the Representatives & being read & deliberately considered the Meeting after a time of solid quiet united therewith & appointed John Beeves, John Livingston and Thomas Elliott to assist the Clerk in superintending the printing of a sufficient number for distribution. They are also authorised to call on the Treasurers for the amount of expense incurred. to wit

Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Baltimore, by adjournments, from the 27th of the 10th month to the 31st of the same, inclusive, 1828. To the Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative Meetings, which constitute this Yearly Meeting, and to our members individually.

Dear Friends,

Having been favoured through the renewed extension of Divine Goodness, once more to assemble in the capacity of a Yearly Meeting, our minds have been drawn into near affection towards our absent brethren, and in this feeling we cordially greet you, being deeply solicitous that the peace of God which passeth all understanding, may preserve you to your several allotments.

It is our earnest desire that Friends every where may be honestly engaged to ascertain for themselves the ground of their profession, and the foundation of their hopes, unawed by human authority, unbiased by earthly affections, firmly believing that it is only by yielding an unqualified obedience to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus our Lord, that this knowledge can be attained, or that we can witness in ourselves, as Paul testified he did, a redemption from the law of sin and death, and a solid establishment in the unchangeable Truth.

It was by a steadfast adherence to the discoveries of Divine Truth in their own minds, that the primitive worthies of our Society were strengthened to maintain their ground against all the opposition and persecution they had to encounter, and in many instances even to turn the hearts of their enemies, so that they became the faithful advocates of that which they had formerly opposed.

Through the medium of the same light of Divine Truth, it was that they were enabled clearly to see many evils prevalent in the world, and became qualified to bear a faithful testimony against them, though some of these were countenanced and even sanctioned by the highest earthly authority. By no other means than by those appointed in infinite wisdom for the salvation of the rational creation, can we hope to be empowered to stand forth as firm advocates of the glorious cause of truth and righteousness in the earth, and to raise a standard against the evils that abound at this day. May we, therefore, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Soon after Friends were known as a separate Society, many of them emigrated to this country, and brought with them their religious principles and testimonies; their sober correct manners and their industrious habits. Though far separated from each other, and widely scattered over this large continent, they constituted but one family; continued to correspond with one another, and maintained without abatement, these friendly and social relations that ought to subsist among brethren. In the gradual progress of their settlement on this continent, they formed themselves as circumstances seemed to render it necessary, into eight Yearly Meetings, in addition to one in London, each independent of the others, distinctly and confessedly possessing equal rights and powers as regards making and enforcing Discipline, and every other prerogative; acknowledging no supremacy or head, He alone excepted, who declared himself to be the only Shepherd and Bishop of His Church, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Although this was the state of our Society as regards its municipal economy, harmony prevailed through all its departments, and the right of membership in any one of these Yearly Meetings, conferred the same rights throughout them all. At the same time a regular Epistolary correspondence was kept up between all these meetings, and the acknowledged ministers of the Society under the apprehension of religious duty were frequently engaged in the exercise of their gifts, to travel and attend these meetings, in which they were kindly received and fully acknowledged; and the Society exhibited to the world a community more firmly and more cordially united, than all the outward creeds or articles of faith formed by human contrivance, had ever been able to effect in any other religious association in our times. The reason we think is clear, the Society was, as we believe, measurably "by one spirit baptised into one body."

The great fundamental article of Faith inculcated upon by the Society from the time of its first establishment, has been the necessity of obedience to the manifestations of Divine light and life upon the soul; that grace which, according to the testimony of the Apostle, "hath appeared unto all men" with saving energy; that Comforter referred to by our blessed Lord himself when, during his outward manifestation he declared to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." In a word to that witness for God in the heart, of the efficacy of which ample testimony is borne throughout the Scriptures, by the Prophets and Apostles and servants of the Lord, in every age and generation of the world.

Moses in his last advice to the Tribes of Israel, of whom he had long been the leader through the wilderness, says, "This commandment" (meaning the Spiritual life of the Law by which they might discover through the outward veil or type, the great antitype to which it pointed) "which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, it is not in heaven that thou shouldst say who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it; neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." A Prophet under the law, after he had clearly shown the people that their afflictions and distresses were the effect of their transgressions, directs them to that within them which would lead them in the way they ought to go. "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." "The Law made nothing perfect," "for if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second;" "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, (to those under the Law, through one of the Prophets,) that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Not that the Law of the Spirit was ever withheld from them, but because their views and affections being centred on visible things, their attention was engrossed "by the Law of a carnal commandment" and outward ordinances; they had lost sight of the enduring substance to which the Law pointed; they had cast off the Law of the Spirit and turned to dumb idols: it was necessary that they should return unto the Lord, from whom they had so deeply revolted, and experience in their souls a renewed impression of the Divine Law written, not as was the Law of Moses, on Tables of stone, but on the Tables of the heart. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, thus testified, "I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the Garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Though constituted the administrator of water baptism, John had a clear sight of the distinction between that outward, and superficial rite, and the inward, substantial and efficient nature of the spiritual baptism of Christ; a distinction well illustrated by the two elements, water and fire. "Water which utterly cleanse the surface, was used by John as a lively figure of an internal purification. In the spiritual baptism, no natural element can reach the moral disease in man; but as fire can thoroughly purify any natural substance subjected to its operation, so that Divine Principle in man which from the analogy of its operations on the soul, to the effect of fire on matter, is illustrated in Scripture by the same name. As saith a Prophet, 'Behold I will send my Messenger

and he shall prepare the way before me, but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver." And again, "the day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble," and "the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." This operation of refinement and purification can render the human soul a fit temple for the most sacred to dwell in. "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, "that ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus on the nature and importance of the new birth, says "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." And again on another occasion, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." To adduce all the evidence that the Scripture furnishes of the spiritual nature of the Gospel dispensation, we might transcribe the greater part of the Book.

Whilst Friends remained on the simple ground to which they had been manifestly called, out of the many superstitions and dark errors into which Christendom had fallen, there was no schism, rent, nor division among them. In the mean time, though despised and neglected by the world, though ridiculed by the inconsiderate, and contemned by the learned, accused by some of being fanatics, by others as being infidels, because they could not conscientiously unite with other denominations of professing Christians, in many of the principles and practices admitted by them; yet amongst themselves peace, concord, and charity greatly abounded.

Divers charges have been circulated against us such as that we contemn the authority of the Scriptures; and deny the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Which charges, however strenuously urged, and however often reiterated are nevertheless unfounded. In relation to the Scriptures; we are free to acknowledge what has always been acknowledged by the society, that as Peter says, "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is true we do not call them The Word of God, because that appellation is in the Scriptures themselves appropriated to a Principle higher than any written Testimony can be. "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD WAS GOD," before all Scripture or writings. The Scriptures contain a record of the Lord's dealings with his rational creation in different ages and generations of the world. They also contain many declarations of Spiritual Truth, and the testimony of many who have come to the experimental knowledge of the living and saving operation of Truth in themselves; but they do not constitute the highest and most certain and infallible Rule of Faith and practice. Christ said to the Jews of the time of his outward manifestation, "ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye might have life." The Law and the Prophets were read in the synagogues every Sabbath day, yet this did not remove the veil that was over the minds of the people; George Fox in a letter to the Princess Elizabeth, says, "All Christendom are on heaps about those Scriptures, because they are not led by the same Holy Ghost as those were that gave forth the Scriptures; which Holy Ghost they must come to in themselves, and be led by, if they will come into all the Truth of them, and to have the comfort of God, Christ and them. For none can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and all that call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, take his name in vain." Every Friend who has come to the experimental knowledge of the living substance to which the Scriptures point, loves them and encourages others to read them, because, as the Apostle testifies, "that which was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," and because he can set his seal to their truth.

In answer to the charge that we deny the Divinity of Christ, we say that we believe what is written in the Scriptures concerning Christ, both as to his outward manifestation in the flesh, and in relation to that Divine Principle of Light and Truth in man, which in Scripture is called "the Christ;" we have

and he shall prepare the way before me, but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver." And again, "the day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble," and "the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." This operation of refinement and purification can render the human soul a fit temple for the most sacred to dwell in. "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, "that ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus on the nature and importance of the new birth, says "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." And again on another occasion, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." To adduce all the evidence that the Scripture furnishes of the spiritual nature of the Gospel dispensation, we might transcribe the greater part of the Book.

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