

**THE ANCIENT TESTIMONY OF THE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
COMMONLY CALLED QUAKERS,
RESPECTING SOME OF THEIR CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES**

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The Ancient Testimony of the Religious Society of Friends, Commonly Called Quakers,
Respecting Some of Their Christian Doctrines and Practices by Various

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RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

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PRACTICES.

REVIVED AND GIVEN FORTH BY THE YEARLY MEETING,

Held in Philadelphia in the Fourth Month, 1843.

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*At a Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia, by adjournments,
from the 17th of the Fourth month, to the 22nd of the same,
inclusive, 1843,—*

THE MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS having been brought under much exercise, on account of the attempts of the enemy of all righteousness to lay waste some of the principles and testimonies of our Religious Society, as set forth in the Writings of our early Friends, particularly in the Apology for the true Christian Divinity, written by Robert Barclay,—a work with which we have divers times declared our unity; they have prepared and produced to this Meeting, an address to our members, reviving those Christian doctrines, and some of the practices of our ancient Friends, which having been read, and time spent in solidly deliberating upon its important contents, it was united with by this Meeting, and the Clerk is directed to sign it on our behalf. The Meeting for Sufferings is authorized to print such number as they may deem proper, for general circulation amongst our members and others.

THE
ANCIENT TESTIMONY

OF THE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



IN taking a view of the state of our religious Society, and of the great unsettlement which prevails in the world, in regard to various subjects of a religious and moral character, we have been brought under feelings of earnest and affectionate solicitude, on behalf of our beloved brethren and sisters; and agreeably to our ancient practice, are religiously engaged to address them.

We feel a fervent desire, that by humbly seeking for and following the leadings of Christ Jesus, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, we may all experience preservation from the many dangers and temptations which abound in this day of shaking and commotion, and witness an establishment upon that Rock which cannot be moved, and which has been the unfailing refuge and support of the righteous in every generation.

We are persuaded that this is the only ground of preservation and of safety. It is not in the power of any man, whatever may be his intellectual endowments, or his acquired knowledge, to withstand, by his own efforts, the force of temptation, or to direct

his steps safely through the difficulties and dangers which attend his earthly pilgrimage. It is only as we "trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and lean not to our own understanding," that we shall be enabled, through the inshining of the light of Christ Jesus, to detect the various snares which the enemy of man's happiness is insidiously laying for our entanglement, and be endued with strength and wisdom to escape them.

Under the guidance of this divine Light, the holy ancients in all ages were enabled to overcome the wicked one, and to obtain a good report as those that pleased God. It was this that separated our worthy predecessors from the corrupt manners, friendships and religions of the world; led them in the way of the daily cross and self-denial, and made them living witnesses of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus. Through its immediate discoveries, they were given to see the emptiness of an outside religion—resting in a profession of truths which, though good in themselves, were not livingly and practically experienced; by it, they were released from those forms and ceremonies imposed by the will and wisdom of man in this glorious gospel day, which is a dispensation of life and substance, not of types and shadows; and were constrained to bear a constant testimony to the necessity of resisting and overcoming sin in all its motions; and of witnessing the inward life of righteousness begun, carried on and perfected in the soul, by the immediate manifestation of the power and spirit of Christ Jesus, as the only solid foundation for the hope of everlasting life and happiness.

We believe that a loud and solemn call is renew

edly extended to the members of our religious Society, to come up fully and unreservedly in the belief and observance of those spiritual doctrines and holy practices, which conspicuously distinguished our honourable predecessors; that being brought more entirely under the government of the Spirit of the Lord, the source of all saving knowledge, we may really be taught of God the things which belong to the soul's salvation, and humbly and steadfastly walking in the light, may have true fellowship one with another, and know the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin.

The present is a period wherein we apprehend the enemy of souls is busily at work, endeavouring, with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to beguile the unwary, and to draw us away from a steadfast adherence to those doctrines and practices into which our primitive Friends were thus divinely led; in order, if possible, to frustrate the work of regeneration in individuals, and to hinder the spread of those principles and testimonies which, we believe, we were raised up as a people, to uphold and promulgate in the earth.

The doctrine of the immediate manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, and the necessity of submission to his renewing and transforming power there, by which sin is effectually withstood and overcome, and Christ faithfully followed in all his requiremings, aims a more direct and deadly blow at anti-christ's kingdom, than any other; hence his enmity against it is the greater, and he is busy in endeavouring to pervert and obscure it; while as it stands directly in opposition to the unregenerate nature of man, so he is most willing to have it concealed from his view.