

**AN ADDRESS OF THE YEARLY
MEETING OF FRIENDS: HELD IN
PHILADELPHIA, TO ITS MEMBERS,
AND TO THE MEMBERS OF OTHER
YEARLY MEETINGS**

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An Address of the Yearly Meeting of Friends: Held in Philadelphia, to Its Members, and to the members of other yearly meetings by Various

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VARIOUS

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*At a Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia, by adjournments
from the 20th of the 4th month to the 24th of the same,
inclusive, 1868.*

The Meeting for Sufferings, under a renewed religious concern for the welfare of the members of our Society, having prepared an Address to them, in which some of our long-established Christian doctrines and testimonies are revived, and counsel given on subjects connected with a consistent support of them, it was now read, and being deliberately considered, was fully united with and adopted, and the Clerk is directed to sign it on behalf of the Meeting.

JOSEPH SCATTERGOOD,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

ADDRESS.

IN considering the present condition of our beloved religious Society and the many changes taking place within it, we have been introduced into deep concern and solicitude, under the conviction that, in many respects, it is falling short of that spiritual standing and full exemplification of the doctrines and requirements of the gospel, which the blessed Head of the Church calls for at its hands, and for which it was once conspicuous.

Our hearts are saddened with the belief, that through unwillingness on the part of many of the members, to submit to the restraints and mortifications of the cross of Christ, and from the leavening influence of the love and spirit of the world, that clearness of vision which in time past was vouchsafed to us as a people, whereby the emptiness of an outside religion was plainly seen, has become dimmed, so that many are resting in a profession of truths, which, though sound and good in themselves, are not practically experienced by them. Many things have also crept in and found place in the Society, out of which our forefathers were led by the unerring and unchangeable Spirit of Truth, and against which, by the same Spirit, they were constrained to bear testimony.

This belief, and a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency, have led to searching of heart, and affectionate desires have been raised that not only among the members of this Yearly Meeting, but also among those composing our beloved society wherever scattered, there may be a true sight and sense of our shortcomings begotten, and a willingness manifested honestly and impartially to examine the principles and measures which are obtaining sanction among us, and the end to which they are tending. That so, under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit—which will not be withheld if humbly and sincerely sought—we, as a united company of believers, may be enabled to promote and commend the doctrines and practices that have ever characterized Friends, and thus be brought to occupy that position in the militant Church, which He who first gathered the Society designed for us.

Under a lively feeling of Christian love we would tenderly exhort the members of this Yearly Meeting, in the language of the Apostle, "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;" beseeching them to remember there are but two paths pointed out by the Saviour of men as set before us, with the power of choice which to pursue. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." To go in at the strait gate and continue in the narrow way, there must be a renunciation of self, and a childlike dependence on the guidance and support of the Holy Spirit manifested in the heart; because the propensities of the natural man, his pride and unsanctified intellectual wisdom, combined with the temptations of his unwearied enemy, strongly urge and entice him to

choose the broad and easier path. Every one who is willing to walk in the highway of the Lord, must turn his back on the world, take up his daily cross, and not shrink from being accounted a fool for Christ's sake. But these have the soul-sustaining presence of their Saviour, who purchased them with His most precious blood, that He might redeem them from all evil, and who is a present help to them in every needful time. Being thus brought among the flock of his companions, they can testify from blessed experience and in humble gratitude, that the faith derived from Him overcomes the world and gives a foretaste of the rest and peace of the redeemed in heaven.

It is not to our own members only that, on the present occasion, we would, in the flowings of gospel love, extend the exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," and to seek for ability to tread in the way of holiness and self-denial. Our interest in the best welfare of our beloved brethren of the same household of faith in other parts of the Society has not lessened, and we are concerned for the establishment of all professing to be Friends, in the faith of the gospel as it was promulgated by our worthy predecessors; and for the restoration of that unity and harmony which become the followers of Christ.

Dear Friends, wherever situated, we make a high profession of the glorious gospel that has brought life and immortality to light. We believe that in this last dispensation the prediction of the Prophet is fulfilled, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: after those 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."

The doctrine that Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, is clearly set forth in the New Testament. Friends have ever believed in it, and we have ample evidence in the blameless lives, the religious growth, the experience and establishment in righteousness; as well as in the triumphant deaths of thousands who have practically adhered to it, that it is no cunningly devised fable, but the truth as it is in Jesus.

The great Head of the Church, in bringing our forefathers out from other religions professors, giving them to see that the rites and ceremonies so generally observed by them were without authority from Him, and dangerous in proportion as they are relied on, and causing them to understand the means by which alone any can become members of the mystical body of Christ, we believe designed that Friends should be faithful witnesses for Him; speaking, acting, and worshipping as true believers in the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. They were called to be as lights in the world, as a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid; bearing testimony, not only against all evil between man and man, against spiritual wickedness in high places; but also against all will-worship, and the intrusion of man's unregenerated will and wisdom into the work of salvation or the service of God; and to call others away from lifeless observances which mar the religion of the professing church, to that acceptable worship which is in spirit and in truth.

Very many are the blessings, both spiritual and temporal, bestowed on us as a people, and our responsibility is commensurate with those blessings. The queries should therefore come home to each one of us, with solemn weight: Am I living in conformity with the self-denying religion I profess? Am I maintaining, in life and con-

versation, the doctrines and testimonies of the gospel, in that purity and spirituality in which it pleased the Lord to open them to the understanding of the founders of the Society of which I am a member? so that I contribute to its mission being carried on, and to the maintenance of its right position in the militant Church.

In this day of unsettlement and contention in what is called the religious world, the attention of different classes among both the learned and the unlearned, is turned to questions involving the fundamental principles of Christianity, as well as to the diversified modes in which it is professed by the various religious denominations.

The human intellect, trained in the schools, and unsubjected to the regenerating power of Christ, is very busy in its investigations of the evidences of the truth of the gospel dispensation. Some are striving to undermine all belief in the foundation of Christian faith—Christ crucified and risen from the dead; while others, within almost all professing churches, seeking the living among the dead, are laboring to bring the people back, some more, some less, to services and rituals, from which, it was reasonably hoped, the whole body of Protestant professors would have been entirely freed ere now. Thus the adversary of God and man is working, with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to entrap the souls of the unwary and unstable, and by blinding the eye to the true nature and spirit of the Gospel, to prevent the spread of the kingdom of the dear Son of God in the earth.

Amid this general commotion and strong disposition to overlook the Spirit and be made perfect by the flesh, it behooves us all to watch unto prayer, lest instead of building on the Rock of ages and foundation of many