

**CALUMNY REFUTED:
OR A GLANCE AT
JOHN WILBUR'S BOOK**

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Calumny Refuted: Or a Glance at John Wilbur's Book by Abigail Barker

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ABIGAIL BARKER

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the seventh month, 1837, our beloved friend, Joseph John Gurney, of Norwich, England, arrived in Philadelphia; with certificates from his monthly, quarterly, and yearly meeting of ministers and elders—all expressive of their full unity with his concern, to visit, in gospel love, Friends and others on this continent, and also some of the West India islands, “he being a minister in unity and good esteem.” This weighty prospect having engaged the serious and deliberate consideration of Friends in the different meetings, near unity and tender sympathy was felt and expressed, and he encouraged to pursue his labours of love; his friends commending him to the brotherly care of those among whom he may be called, and certifying “that he is concerned for the upholding of our Christian testimonies, and consistent in maintaining them,” and “that his life and conversation are consistent with his Christian profession.”

His certificate, from the monthly meeting, was signed by not less than sixty Friends, and that by the meeting of ministers and elders, by the clerks thereof.

We have heard them read many times, to our satisfaction, with the confirming evidence of his devotion to his Divine

Master's service ; and he is accordingly received by many as a brother beloved in the truth.

Since his sojourn amongst us, he has been travelling in the service of the gospel through different parts of this land, exemplifying, by his daily walk, the character given of him by his friends at home ; and leaving many seals of his ministry being under the direction of Him who bade his disciples, " Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

But, as has been the experience of the most devoted of the Lord's servants in all ages, this humble follower of Jesus has been permitted to endure deep conflicts and close proving of his faith.

Some years previous to his coming to this country, our dear friend, Joseph John Gurney, had written several excellent works upon religious subjects, with all of which his friends were well acquainted at the time they gave him their certificates ; and those which treat of the doctrines and principles of the Society had been examined and approved by the morning meeting in London, whose business it is to judge of works of this character.

But the style being modern, and therefore unlike that of the early writers in the Society, a spirit of jealousy sprang up in the minds of some Friends in this country, that they were not in accordance with the sentiments and views of our predecessors. In short, he was by these denied the character of a genuine Quaker, and much effort was used to propagate this opinion.

Among the means devised to lessen the confidence of Friends in him, and in his religious sentiments, a work was got up by disaffected individuals, consisting of extracts from Joseph John Gurney's works, taken in a very unfair manner ; beginning and closing a sentence at a comma, or semicolon, and, in some instances, where there was no stop ; omitting the preceding and subsequent parts, though they are in such close connexion, that the true sense, in some instances, is thereby destroyed.

Another perversion is no less palpable : where the literal sense of the author has been misrepresented by the compiler, and made to bear a spiritual signification ; deeply underscoring certain sentences to make them emphatic. Short and broken sentences have also been taken from his writings on different subjects, and designated by titles of the compiler's own invention.

These deceptive extracts are placed in contrast with long selections from the writings of Fox, Penn, Barclay, &c., &c. ; and, to a cursory or prejudiced mind, might seem to contain the difference of sentiment which the compiler so much wishes to prove.

A sense of justice due to the character of our friend Joseph John Gurney, and to the cause in which he is engaged, has induced a careful examination of the writings from which these garbled extracts are taken, and a fair comparison of his sentiments with those set in opposition to them, which, with the comments upon them, we desire may obtain a careful, deliberate, and candid perusal. This we think cannot fail to convince those who are honestly desiring to know the truth, that Joseph John Gurney has been grossly misrepresented by these disingenuous selections from his works.

These contrasted extracts have, in a private way, been circulated far and wide ; and it is surely most unkind and unjustifiable to bring charges against an individual, without giving him an opportunity to defend himself. It is contrary to the letter and to the spirit of the gospel, as well as to the long-established discipline of the Society of Friends. In short, no man is safe in the exposition of his sentiments, whether religious or moral, when such liberties are taken or countenanced by the community.

The respective subjects are given under the titles chosen by the compiler of the mutilated extracts ; the comments and the annexed selections under the same titles ; and they follow each other in regular succession, giving the reader a clear view of each subject separately.

The paragraphs from which the garbled extracts are taken are presented in full, with their preceding and subsequent parts; the broken sentences taken by the compiler being enclosed in brackets, showing to every candid reader their unfairness; to which are appended, selections from the works of Joseph John Gurney, and from approved writings of other Friends, evincing the unison of sentiment existing between them.

COMMENTS, &c.

ON THE TRUE SOURCE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

MUTILATED EXTRACTS.

"Now, the information which the Bible gives respecting the Supreme Being, whether considered as a harmonious whole, or viewed in its principal details, is to be found originally in the Bible alone."—Portable Evidence, p. 31.

"It is the Bible, and the Bible only, which declares a standard of morals, universally applicable to our need, and liable to no change."—p. 35.

"Now, it is in the Scriptures only that the attributes of our heavenly Father are fully made known to us."—p. 101.

"This delightful science [geology] has done much to confirm the Scripture record, and to complete that natural proof of a supreme intelligent Being on which all religion hinges."—Address to the Mechanics of Manchester, p. 12.

Compare the extracts from Joseph John Gurney with the following:—

"Seeing no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him; and seeing the revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit, therefore the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be, only revealed."—R. BARCLAY, Apology, Prop. ii., p. 18.