

**A TESTIMONY FOR THE TRUTH, AS
ALWAYS HELD AND PROMULGATED BY
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
AND AGAINST THE DEPARTURES FROM
THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIETY, WHICH
HAVE APPEARED OF LATTER TIME**

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A Testimony for the Truth, As Always Held and Promulgated by the Religious Society of Friends and against the departures from the principles of the Society, which have appeared of latter time by Various

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VARIOUS

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WHICH HAVE APPEARED OF LATTER TIME.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1865.

" At a General Meeting of Men and Women Friends of Ohio, held at Concord, Belmont County, by adjournments, on the 18th, 20th, and 21st of second month, 1865 :

" The following document, having been prepared and produced to this Meeting by a member thereof, was deliberately read, and fully united with, and adopted by the Meeting; it being the judgment of Friends, that this testimony is required of us, for the Truth, and against the many innovations upon, and departures from, our principles, made by those professing to hold the faith and name of Friends.

" The Clerk was directed to sign it on behalf of the Meeting; and a committee was appointed to have it printed and circulated.

" Taken from the Minutes by

" JOSHUA MAULE, Clerk."

" A TESTIMONY for the Truth as held by our ancient Friends, and against sundry perversions and innovations which have appeared of late years, and the misrepresentations which have been put forth by some in print, to the reproach of the Truth, having been issued by the General Meeting of Friends of Ohio, has been read in this Meeting; and on solid deliberation the Meeting unites therewith and adopts it, and concludes to unite with our brethren of Ohio in the printing of a sufficient number of copies for distribution. In a view of its weighty and important contents, we feel it to be our place to recommend it to the serious perusal and consideration of our members, and of seekers after the truth.

" Extracted from the Minutes of a General Meeting of Men and Women Friends for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, &c., held at Fallsington, Bucks Co., Pennsylvania, by adjournments, on the 7th, 8th and 9th of third month, 1865, by

" SOLOMON LUKENS, Clerk."

TESTIMONY FOR THE TRUTH.

WHEN the Society of Friends first appeared, and the preaching of George Fox was first heard, it was a time of great departure from primitive simplicity and purity in the professed Christian Church; as much so, perhaps, as any before or since. It was a day when corruption in the profession of religion, and apostasy from true Christian doctrine and practice prevailed; when the spiritual character of the Gospel dispensation of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, appeared to be much lost sight of and denied; and the nominal profession of Christianity consisted of outward forms and rules, and divers rites and ceremonies and bodily performances, into which the people were led by a hired and mercenary priesthood, who fed themselves and not the flock; making a trade of religion, perverting the truths of the Gospel, and teaching men to believe their carnal construction and explanation of the doctrines of Christianity. They preached a faith which allowed and embraced many of the evil practices and sins of the heathen world; expounding the doctrines of the New Testament to admit of professed Christians being engaged in war, slavery, the use of oaths, a hireling ministry, and many other practices which were rejected and denied by the early Christians, and which are opposed to the spirit and plain teaching of the faith "once delivered unto the saints."

In the midst of this low and lapsed state of religion, this

people was raised up (a little more than two hundred years ago, in England), through the mercy and power of the Most High, and qualified to see the lifeless and corrupt nature of the forms and practices, and the profession of that day, and was enabled to testify against them. And through obedience to the light and spirit of Christ Jesus revealed in their own souls, they were led and instructed in the true spiritual nature of the new covenant, the Christian dispensation. They were shown that true religion does not consist in types and shadows, and outward performances, the work of the natural will and wisdom of man; but that it must work regeneration and change of heart; that the followers of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, must walk in the path of self-denial, and take up their cross daily to the carnal and unsanctified will of the unregenerate heart. They were convinced that "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." And as their minds became enlightened by the "dayspring from on high," they were given to see that the precepts and doctrines of the Saviour, as they are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, must be obeyed; and through obedience to the manifestations of His Spirit in their hearts, their lives and the lives of all who look for and obtain salvation through Him must be brought into conformity thereto: agreeably to his declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." They believed his teaching and commandments, as they are recorded in the New Testament, were intended to mean what they say, and that they condemned and forbade all swearing, saying, "Swear not at all;" and all wars and fightings and violence in man, by eradicating the

passions and lusts that lead to violence and war, and promising the blessing to the peace-makers; that all tithes, or payment of a ministry which was constituted through the authority and ordination of man, were forbidden by the precepts of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life;" who hath declared, "Without me ye can do nothing," and again, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." They were clearly shown that they must not conform themselves to the vain customs, fashions, and maxims of the world, or take part in the forms of religion that prevailed. And as they walked faithful in their testimony to the requirements of "the grace of God that bringeth salvation," and "hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," their labors in the Gospel were owned by Him, who is "head over all things" to his church and people, to the convincing of many. The truth prospered and spread greatly through that land and into other countries. The meek, the humble, the sincere, honest-hearted seekers after the true and living substance in religion were gathered unto them, and they became as a city "set on a hill" which could not be hid; a numerous people, a united church; worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, giving all praise, and glory, and honor unto him.

It seems right for us now a little to bring these things to view, and in consideration of the present condition of the Society, to recur to first principles; to revive in our recollection and in the recollection of all whom it may concern, the language of that honorable elder and dedicated servant of the Lord, George Fox, when he was commanded and sent forth to revive and preach the pure doctrines and principles of the everlasting Gospel. He says (page 73 of his Journal):

"The Lord commanded me to go abroad into the world,

which was like a briery, thorny wilderness. When I came in the Lord's mighty power with the word of life into the world, the world swelled and made a noise like the great raging waves of the sea. Priests and professors, magistrates and people, were all like a sea, when I came to proclaim the day of the Lord amongst them, and to preach repentance to them.

"I was sent to turn people from darkness to the light, that they might receive Christ Jesus; for, to as many as should receive him in his light, I saw he would give power to become the sons of God; which I had obtained by receiving Christ. I was to direct people to the Spirit, that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all truth, and up to Christ and God, as those had been who gave them forth. I was to turn them to the grace of God, and to the truth in the heart, which came by Jesus; that by this grace they might be taught, which would bring them salvation; that their hearts might be established by it, their words might be seasoned, and all might come to know their salvation nigh. I saw Christ died for all men, was a propitiation for all, and enlightened all men and women with his divine and saving light; and that none could be true believers, but those who believed therein. I saw that the grace of God, which brings salvation, had appeared to all men, and that the manifestation of the Spirit of God was given to every man, to profit withal. These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter; but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God by whom the holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures; they were very precious to me; for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me, I afterwards found was agreeable to them. I could speak much of these things, and many volumes might be written;