

**A WORD OF
ENCOURAGEMENT TO
THE FRIENDS OF TRUTH**

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A Word of Encouragement to the Friends of Truth by Anonymous

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WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

TO THE

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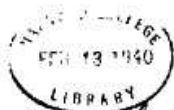
"Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

PHILADELPHIA.

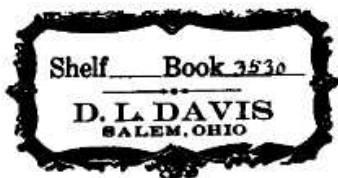
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A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

As the mighty arm of Him who first gathered us out of the world and its spirit, to be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," is still extended for our help and preservation—for the promotion of the welfare of Zion, and the enlargement of her borders—there is no cause for discouragement to those whose trust and confidence are in him alone; for he remains to be the invincible Captain of our salvation, who is going on with his blessed work in the hearts of his people, conquering, and to conquer, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, to the glory of God in the highest, and the establishment of peace on earth and good-will to men. As he who is the head of his living body continues to be unchangeably the same, and his wisdom, power, and mercy undiminished, infinite, and ever-enduring, there is no good ground for the belief, or the fear, that the testimonies committed to us for our support will ever be permitted to fall to the ground, however many may forsake them, by turning aside to lying vanities; and we have reason to be encouraged and thankful in the well-grounded belief, that *many* are yet preserved amongst us, who are preferring to suffer affliction with the people of God, to enjoying the pleasure of sin for a season, are made willing to continue with Christ in his temptations, for his body's sake, which is his Church, and enabled to detect and withstand the subtle wiles of the evil one, who fain would persuade us that the mission of the disciples of Christ is accomplished, so that we are now at liberty to return to the doctrines, customs, and fashions of the world about us, adopting its *spirit*, manners, and

language, even as those of old when the Prophet Elijah was led to take so dark a view of the state of the Church of God, as to believe, and complain, that he alone was left, and that even his life was in jeopardy. But let us remember, for our encouragement, the gracious and comforting assurance that was given to the desponding prophet, at this sorrowful juncture, when libertinism, time-serving, and persecution, so far prevailed, as, in his view, to almost dismember the visible and militant Church; for we may believe it is alike applicable to the apparently discouraging state of things in the present day, when so many seem to have forsaken the standard of Truth, for the exercise of their own wisdom and wills, walking in ways of their own choosing, and seeking the good of themselves, and to promote the welfare of the Church, by means of *their own* devising, not willing to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high—to abide under secret exercise until the helping Hand is stretched forth for their deliverance from bondage to the sin and corruption of *their own* hearts, until a separation of the precious from the vile is wrought for them, that they may be enabled to go forward, under the holy anointing, and at the Divine command, without offence either to God or his anointed, or the consciousness of there being sought against them which should stand in the way of the exercise of their gift, either in the ministry, or the administration of the discipline of the Church. While a cloud rests upon the Tabernacle, we are required to stand still. If in such a case we go forward, it is at the peril of our spiritual life, and to the endangering of the same in others, within the sphere of our influence.

O, the utter impotency of human wisdom and power to effect, or even promote, the work of reformation—to prepare the heart for the reception and reign of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom is not of this world, that his servants should seek to devour one another by bitter contention, and unholy strife and persecution; but an inward and peaceable kingdom, set up and established in *the hearts* of those who are subjects to His blessed and holy will, following the direction of his holy Spirit whithersoever this may lead them, having no confidence in the flesh, nor any desire after lordship or outward masteries, but rather after *the dominion of life in their own hearts*, for which they are daily exercised in watching unto prayer.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are his," though Abraham may be ignorant of them, and Israel acknowledge them not. We may deceive ourselves and others in respect to the state of our own hearts, but the Searcher of hearts we cannot deceive. We may be possessed of a feeling of wholeness, and so profess and dissemble as to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, and yet be estranged from the love of God, and from the true evidence of our having passed from death unto life, which is found in the *unfeigned* love of the brethren.

The Gospel dispensation being a dispensation of mercy to the souls of men, those who are living under it are bound by the very nature of it to the exercise of kindness, forbearance, and love, even to our enemies, and to those who oppose themselves by the entertainment and indulgence of the spirit of the world, which is at enmity with God, leading into errors upon the *right* hand as well as on the *left*; and any other course is sure to bring down the judgments of heaven upon us for assuming to ourselves the prerogative of Him who hath ordained that we should avenge not ourselves, declaring that vengeance is his, and he will repay—that as we mete to others, so shall it be measured to us again—that with what judgment we judge we shall be judged, and that they shall receive judgment without mercy, who have shown no mercy.

Seeing, then, that these things are so, how vain is all our outward profession of love for the truth, and of standing for its testimonies, while the spirit of vindictiveness, accusation, and fault-finding is found lurking in our bosoms, leading us to defame and persecute those who may have erred from the truth, or by whom we may have been slighted or injured, under the profession of contending for the faith, while we are practically denying it by a resort to carnal weapons, instead of obeying the Divine injunction to "overcome evil with good?" What will all our adherence to outward simplicity and plainness, and pleading for them, and all our outward show of worship avail us, if our hearts are set upon seeking worldly riches, honor, and pleasures, or punishing our own, or Truth's enemies, even to the trampling under foot of our Christian Discipline, and sacrificing the peace of society to the accomplishment of our own wills?

Let us seek to try the spirits which are amongst us, that we may

be able to distinguish between the wisdom from above, and that which is from beneath, lest we be suffered to become as wolves in sheep's clothing, as whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones. Let us prove our own selves, whether we be in the faith of Christ, which overcometh the world, or in that which is overcome by the world and its spirit, as was that of the disciple who smote the servant of the high priest in vindication of the blessed Master; which act of presumption was followed by the unalterable decree, that "he that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword."

How often has this been verified in the experience of the over-zealous advocate of truth, who, for his unmerciful dealings with the erring, or those who may have not been able to see eye to eye with himself, has been permitted to fall into temptation, until, through persisting in a pharisaical and self-righteous course of censure and persecution, hardening his neck against the reproofs of instruction, judgment has overtaken him, and he has partaken of a full measure of that which he has meted unto others. How often has this been witnessed in the experience of those who have set themselves in the seat of judgment over their brethren, carrying themselves aloft because of an apprehended superiority, and holding themselves aloof from those whose views of propriety were not in harmony with their own, even as Peter did before his memorable vision, by which he was taught to "call no man unclean," and shown that the Holy Ghost was shed upon the Gentiles as well as upon the Jews; both alike being heirs of the same blessed inheritance, under the universal dispensation of Divine grace, wherein the love of the Gospel extends to the very ends of the earth, enabling the Apostles to declare that "where sin abounds there doth grace much more abound;" a doctrine which we gladly recognize as applying to ourselves, when under conviction for sin, and which is equally applicable to others, making it of binding obligation upon the servant of Christ to seek to restore the wanderer and bind up the broken-hearted, which is the effect of the operation of the Holy Spirit, in and through us, as the objects and instruments of Divine mercy.

If any man sin, saith the Apostle, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous. Wherefore then should we seek to destroy the hope of the erring in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus—which is freely shown to every repenting

soul—by bitter denunciation, and an unholy endeavor to bring them under the cruel and disheartening power of accusation and reproach? Is the servant above his master, or the disciple above his lord, that he should spurn and resist the pleadings of the Holy Spirit for those who are out of the right way, or resort to violence and force for their punishment, rather than persuasion and entreaty for their recovery? Having known the terrors of the Lord for sin, therefore, saith the Apostle, we persuade men. He had been a persecutor of the Church of Christ, for which cause he was made blind to the wisdom whereby he had been made to believe he was doing God service by the cruel exercise of lordship and oppression, until, through the restoring power of Truth, he was convinced of his error and induced to pursue an *opposite* course.

The power of the Gospel has ever been a convincing and persuasive one, wherein it has differed from the spirit of the world, which seeks to establish the truth by violence and force—holding it in unrighteousness—slaying the just and inward witness, through the exercise of enmity and ill-will. This is the fruit of the religion of the world, which has ever stood opposed to that of the heart, bringing forth the evil fruits of enmity, contention, and strife, which are attended with confusion, and every evil work, to the diverting of the mind from the work of righteousness through the *gentle, peaceable*, and *uniting* influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, which breathes peace on earth and good-will to men, and the desire for the conversion or restoration of every son and daughter of Adam.

Under the inspiration of this holy power, how many have been made willing to spend and be spent in the blessed cause of gathering souls unto Christ, through the exercise of that charity which shuns any just occasion of offence either to Jew or Gentile, and seeks to be made all things to all men, not to secure human favor or praise, or the exaltation of self, but in order to win unto Christ the hearts of all flesh, according to the Divine will and purpose, even that all should be brought into the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is declared to be life eternal.

This is the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit, either through instrumental means, or by the *immediate* influences of its redeeming and saving power, which is *now going forward in the hearts of the people*, notwithstanding all the hindrances of our common