

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

YEARLY MEETING

OF

CONGREGATIONAL FRIENDS,

HELD AT WATERLOO, N. Y.,

From the 3d to the 5th of Sixth month, inclusive, 1850.

WITH AN APPENDIX.



AUBURN:
HENRY OLIPHANT, PRINTER.
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1850.

PROCEEDINGS, &c.

MINUTES, &c.

At a Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held in Waterloo, Seneca County, New York, by adjournments from the 3d to the 5th of the sixth month, inclusive, 1850.

Susan Doty, Amy Willson, Oliver Mitchell, Benjamin Fish, Stephen Estes, and Margaret Pryor were appointed a Committee to bring forward, at as early a period of our sessions as practicable, the names of friends to serve this meeting as clerks. The present clerks are requested to officiate till such appointment be made.

Epistles were read from Green Plain and Michigan Yearly Meetings of Friends, and an epistle from Edward Hull, on behalf of a Committee appointed by a Conference of Friends of Marlborough and Nine Partners, relative to an Epistle from this meeting last year. The brotherly love, and sympathy in great principles, these communications breathe, have been truly encouraging and cheering to us. The following were named to prepare answers to them, and addresses to such other bodies as they may apprehend would be productive of good—viz: Azaliah Schooley, Thomas Rogers, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Margaret Schooley, Griffith M. Cooper, Ruth Dugdale, Elias DeGarmo, Thomas M'Clintock, Rhoda DeGarmo, Benjamin Fish, Joseph A. Dugdale, Susan R. Doty, Jolly Longshore, Lydia Ann Jenkins, Hannah Pennock, Mary Jane Estes, and Stephen Estes.

The Committee named to that service, proposed Rhoda DeGarmo and Thomas M'Clintock as clerks to the meeting, which was united with, and they accordingly appointed.

The following were named to prepare an Address to the Peace Congress to convene in the 8th month next, in the city of Frankfurt, in Germany, expressive of our sympathy with the great object that is to call them together—viz: Harriet Brainard, Edmund Jenkins, Lydia Ann Jenkins, Martha Stevens, Sarah M'Clintock, Nehemiah Merritt, Griffith M. Cooper, and Lewis Burtis.

Then adjourned to the 11th hour to-morrow morning.

4th of the month. Met agreeably to adjournment.

The attention of the meeting was called to a consideration of the evils of sectarianism, in the political, and especially in the religious associations of men. The subject was presented in various aspects, showing the prejudicial influence it exerts in the human family, and principles were instructively exhibited, by the action of which it may be removed.

The subject of the condition of woman in society—deprived generally of the rights which belong to her as a human being, in common with the other sex—obtaining the consideration of the meeting, Elizabeth C. Stanton, Joseph C. Hathaway, Charles Lenox Remond, Ruth Dugdale, Harriet Longshore, Lydia Ann Jenkins and Eliab W. Capron were appointed to draft a suitable appeal on her behalf.

The condition of our brethren and sisters who continue to be held in slavery in this nation, also feelingly engaged our deliberations. Benjamin Fish, Washington Weeks, Reuben P. Mosher, Margaret Pryor, and Susan Doty were named to produce to our next sitting a Memorial to Congress, and one also to the Legislature of this State, urging those bodies to use the influence they possess to effect the abolition of this system of iniquity.

Adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

5th of the month. The meeting again convened.

The following Epistles were adopted, and directed to be signed by the clerks and forwarded—viz:

To Green Plain Annual Meeting of Friends.

BELOVED BRETHREN AND SISTERS.—Your Epistle, so deeply imbued with sentiments of regard and affection, was read in this meeting. The elevated and truthful testimony it bore to the inherently religious nature of man, met the full accord of those assembled here. The religious sentiment has too often been impeded in its beautiful developments by ecclesiastical codes and disciplinary restraints opposed to progression, setting limits to man's advancement in righteousness, virtually saying, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." What presumption to attempt to assume the Divine prerogative!

A feeling of religious and social freedom has pervaded this assembly. Existing evils of society, and customs adverse in their tendency to man's true interest, have been lucidly and feelingly brought into view; and while we desire the advancement of reform by the removal of whatever is of hurtful tendency, we would not unsettle the minds of any in regard to practices not plainly immoral, and which they esteem sacred, without being able to present to them a better way.

The position woman occupies in society, has claimed a portion of the deliberations of this body. We confidently believe the day is not distant when the women of enlightened and Christian na-

tions will cease to acknowledge the right in man to interpose obstacles to their assuming in society that position which the Author of their being has designed, and the progress of the age demands, they should occupy; that ere long they will break the chains with which an unjust public sentiment has bound them, and stand up in the dignity of their nature on an even pedestal with man. We earnestly desire that this subject may increasingly receive the attention of our brethren and sisters everywhere, that light may be diffused respecting it, and especially that the women of our country, and the world, may be led duly to appreciate their rights and responsibilities.

The subject of Peace has been feelingly discussed; the result of which has been the adoption of an Epistle to the Peace Congress to be held at Frankfort, in Germany, during the present summer. We entertain a hope that beneficial effects will result from the congregating annually of delegates from different nations to discuss this momentous subject. The great truth must increasingly force itself on the mind, that all of "the human form Divine" are brothers, children of one Father, though located in different parts of our common heritage. The higher and holier feelings of man revolt at the horrid practice of war, and we apprehend that he needs but to have his attention awakened and sympathies enlisted, and the desolating effects presented to his view, stripped of military splendor, to arrive at the conclusion that the practice is not only a relic of barbarism, but inhuman and demonic. Oh, how much have mankind suffered by not realizing the omnipotence of love, and by not cultivating in themselves and each other this Heavenly attribute!

During the sessions of this meeting we have been strengthened and cheered, by the presence and co-operation of several beloved friends from a distance, and also by encouraging Epistles from bodies and individuals sympathizing with us.

Accept our affectionate salutation.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held at Waterloo, New York, by adjournments, from the 3d to the 5th, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1850.

RHODA DE GARMO, } Clerks.
THO'S M'CLINTOCK, }

To Michigan Yearly Meeting of Friends.

DEAR FRIENDS,—By permission of the "Author of every good and perfect gift," the prime mover of every right reform, we have again met to unite our sympathies and efforts in the cause of human welfare, that the immortal mind may be made free by the power of Truth and Love. We greatly desire that those who have long been bound by the fetters of superstition and bigotry, and crushed by senseless dogmas and ceremonies, may experience a glorious emancipation and be brought into the Divine illimitable light of eternal progression.

We are aware that we are able to administer but in small part

to the wants of humanity ; that truth, beautiful though it be, and in harmony with the inherent principles of the human mind, can be perceived only in parts ; yet if all are engaged faithfully to labor in their respective spheres of action, with the ability received, a great work may be accomplished toward freeing the human family from thralldom both physical and mental. Superstition, Bigotry, Priestly and Kingly power, still hold potent sway in the world. But we are encouraged by evidence on every hand, that the axe is increasingly being laid to the root of the corrupt trees that cumber the ground ; and as these are felled and removed out of the way, trees of righteousness, of God's own right-hand planting, will spring up to supply their place.

Some of the prominent reforms that are engaging the attention of many among the various denominations of Christians, have been presented to this meeting and acted upon. Among these is the Peace movement going on in Europe, the emancipation of the slaves in our own country, and the restoration to woman of those natural and equal rights with the other sex, of which she has been so long and cruelly deprived.

We feel that it is our duty to endeavor to ameliorate the condition of fellow beings wherever suffering, and to "break every yoke." It is cause of rejoicing that we are enabled to meet together and mingle our thoughts, and hear the counsels of our fellow-workers in the various humanitarian reforms. It thrills our hearts with joy to receive from distant friends proofs that they too are engaged in the spread of christian charity and fraternal kindness throughout the world.

We are here from various parts of the moral vineyard, but Truth is omnipresent. The fruit that has been presented by those in attendance from different localities, was evidently plucked from the same tree, that Tree of Life planted in the human mind by its Divine Author, the fruit of which is for the healing of the nations—Justice, Mercy, Love, Purity, Fidelity. These blessed "fruits of the spirit" we desire to see dispensed by and to every member of the human family. Thus will they be healthful, united, and happy.

We have been much strengthened by the company of dear friends from a distance, who have labored among us for the elevation of humanity to its true dignity in the Divine order. Your truly acceptable and very excellent Epistle of 10th month last, has also ministered to our edification and joy.

With feelings of deep affection we are your friends.

Signed, &c.

To Friends of Marlborough and Nine Partners.

DEAR FRIENDS.—We received a communication authorized by you and signed by Edward Hull, through our esteemed friend Herman Benson, who has very agreeably composed one of our number. And next to the enjoyment of the company of our dear friends, is the privilege of epistolary correspondence ; and in the

absence of meeting with many more of your number, as we hoped, at this meeting, we are induced to offer you this tribute of our regard, and interest in your welfare, believing that you are desirous with ourselves of pursuing the right path and attaining a higher idea of the right, and a more consistent and practical righteousness than generally characterizes the present systems of professed Christianity.

Every age has its work of redemption to perform, and the true reformer is *he* who is willing to cherish and strengthen in himself and others the progressive principle in our nature, and is not afraid to utter and to live out the newly perceived truths that are ever dawning on the mind, if we cultivate the desire of knowledge and wisdom. Many in the present day are realizing the truth of the doctrine, "Seek and ye shall find." And the promulgation of truths revealed to the minds of the benevolent and humane, is demanded by the crushed and oppressed victims of power, avarice, and a false theology, which pervade the world and render miserable a large portion of mankind.

Many interesting subjects, War, Slavery, Sectarianism, and the unequal condition of Woman in society, have been ably presented and discussed in this meeting, and some action taken, as far as seemed practicable, towards the removal of these evils. And we greatly desire the co-operation of all intelligent minds to aid us in this work of benevolence, by casting the weight of their influence, be it small or great, on the side of mercy and love.

For the spread and carrying out of these testimonies of truth, which are not exclusive but belong to all that reverence and obey the Light, associated action increases efficiency, and the exchange of thoughts and feelings adds strength to strength. It has seemed to us there would be an enjoyment and increase, if you could occasionally meet together and encourage each other in the good work of "Peace on earth and good will to man;" exercising on all occasions the spirit of kindness towards those who differ from us and condemn us. O kindness! who of us have learned the omnipotence of that word! Love is the strongest power on earth, the only fortress that cannot be overthrown; for God is love, and they that dwell in love dwell in God; and from this source emanates all that is good.

Some of us know that it is a season of close trial of faith and patience to many of you; but we beseech you be not discouraged; be firm in faith and constant in hope. The moral vineyard is preparing for the seeds of truth. The vital currents of love and peace are beginning to flow. The religious sentiment in the hearts of the people is awakening. Oh, cherish it and keep it flowing. If all are faithful in whom the light is so brightly burning, there will yet be thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

We have received several communications from other meetings and individuals, filled with life and hope, evincing that the electric stream of love reaches from sea to sea and from shore to shore. Will it not in due time warm and fertilize the whole earth? Many

of us can acknowledge it has been good for us to be here. Like a green spot in the desert, or a spring by the way-side, so is the meeting together of minds that desire that righteousness should cover the earth as the waters do the sea.

A number of precious friends from a distance have been in attendance with us, with whose spirits our own have vibrated in gospel love. Our meeting has been larger than last year.

With fraternal regard to all into whose hands this may fall, we are your friends.

Signed, &c.

To the Half-Year Meeting of Friends of the Congregational order, to be held in Dublin, Wayne County, Indiana.

DEAR FRIENDS.—Being assembled for the promotion of truth and righteousness in the earth, our souls have been refreshed, and while our hearts have glowed with grateful emotion to the Infinite Father, for the privileges we enjoy, our spirits have greeted in gospel fellowship those engaged, in other localities, for the advancement of the great principles of religious toleration, and the overthrow of existing evils, that curse our land and render us a hissing and a reproach among the heathen.

Few though we be, in comparison of those who should willingly run on missions of truth and love, we are not disheartened, but rather stimulated by the harmonious co-operation of the young with those who are ripening for an entrance on a higher life beyond the tomb. These have been afresh animated to devote their remaining energies to assist in "breaking every yoke," physical and mental, that "the oppressed may go free."

Partially awakened from the benumbing stupor into which some of us had well nigh sunk, and rejoicing in the more enlarged liberty we possess to carry out the holiest promptings of our nature, in lending our influence to promote humanitarian reforms, we would speak words of cheer to you. Falter not; but be faithful, through evil or good report, to Truth and Right. What though the Pharisaical spirit may denounce and affect to despise us,—nothing new has happened. Thus in every age have those been treated that advanced a step beyond the masses, or assailed any cherished sin. Let us remember, it was when Jesus was exercising love and compassion to man that he was termed "a blasphemer," and accused of possessing "a devil."

The monstrous evils of War, have been spread feelingly before us; Slavery with its untold horrors portrayed; and while one of its crushed victims stood up in our midst, speaking in artless language of its withering curse and blighted affections, our hearts were moved and our sympathies enlisted for renewed efforts for its final extinguishment.

The injurious position in which woman has been placed, in social, civil, and ecclesiastical relations, by *man-enacted laws*, and customs growing out of an unjust assumption of power; by which she has been regarded as little more than an appendage to man—

only to minister to his comfort and gratification—a subordinate, dependent on him, and only by favor PERMITTED to carry out the noblest aspirations of her nature; instead of being recognized as an intelligent moral agent, accountable to our common Father for the right occupancy of talents conferred alike on her, and fitting her to co-operate with man in the moral warfare, and to lend her aid in efforts to bless and humanize mankind.

Be encouraged, dear sisters, to investigate and thoroughly examine this deeply interesting subject, in which not only *your* best interests are involved, but a neglect of which cannot, in the nature of things, but prove detrimental to the highest good of our race. For

“Mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round earth’s electric circle, the swift flash of right and wrong.
Whether conscious or unconscious, humanity’s vast frame
Through its ocean sundered fibres, feels the gush of joy or shame;
In the gain or loss of one race, all the rest have equal claim.”

We are affectionately your friends.

Signed, &c.

To Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends.

DEAR FRIENDS,—Permitted to assemble again in annual meeting, we have been cheered and edified by Epistles from several Yearly Meetings of brethren and sisters. And although we have not had the gratification to receive one from you, we feel our hearts turned to you with affectionate greeting—convinced there are among you many whose minds are freed from the paralyzing influence of a sectarian spirit, and who are desirous to know and perform the work of their day.

Beloved friends! the period in which we live is fraught with deep interest. The work of the present age is important—the measure of responsibility great. Light, Divine light, is breaking in upon the human mind. Under its searching beams things are being revealed in their true character. The dignity of man’s nature, and the high and responsible relations he sustains—the value of practical righteousness over speculative opinions and ceremonial observances, are increasingly coming to be perceived. A merely traditional religion, will not answer the demands of truth and duty. Institutions and practices, long regarded as sacred, are losing their hold on the affections of mankind, as incapable to aid in the promotion of goodness, or at variance with man’s nature, and with that supreme law of immutable right, dispensed to him for his government and direction by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness.

How excellent and truthful the testimony of the beloved disciple, that “THE TRUE LIGHT lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And how worthy of all acceptance the exhortation of George Fox—“Mind the Light.” In this injunction are included the beginning and end of all true religion. And although in itself it is the light of “the perfect day,” unfolding all Divine truth; yet to us it is first the faint morning dawn, and, progressively, the shining forth of ray after ray, onward to the meridian

blaze. How important therefore it is, especially in the fainter dawn of truth, that we walk cautiously, minding the light in our stepping,—and yet, not hesitating where light sufficient is dispensed, and so becoming dilatory in our journey.

Thus shall we walk safely. The field of truth will widen, and evidences will present in their own resplendent beauty. And by the truth we will be made free and glorious in all the Divinely endowed properties of our being. Let us then be the humble and earnest votaries of Truth, and the God of truth will be with us in all the consolations of his love and goodness. And sweet will be our communion one with another. The past and the present will unite in one choral anthem of praise to the “King eternal, invisible, the only true God.”

Affectionately—farewell.

Signed, &c.

Memorials to Congress and to the Legislature of this State, were adopted as follows—viz:

To the Congress of the United States.

We respectfully request you to admit California into the Union; provide suitable governments for the Territories, excluding Slavery therefrom; abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia; abolish the slave-trade between the States, and go to the verge of your constitutional power for the abolition of Slavery in the several slave-holding States of the Union.

To the Senate and House of Assembly of the State of New York.

We respectfully request you, to take the necessary measures to secure to the colored people of this State the elective franchise, and to take such action as you constitutionally can to prevent the extension and secure the abolition of Slavery, and to protect the rights of fugitive slaves.

The following Address was adopted—viz:

From the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held in Waterloo, Seneca County, New York, by adjournments from the 3d to the 5th of the sixth month, inclusive, 1850—To the Peace Congress to convene in the city of Frankfort, in Germany.

FRIENDS AND BRETHREN.—This body having a deep solicitude in every effort made in behalf of Humanity, sincerely extend to you their sympathies, in the promotion of the objects contemplated by your Convention. Such are the fraternal tendencies of the doctrines of Peace, that, notwithstanding the distance of our position, we entertain but little embarrassment in presuming thus to address you. We know that the cordial support and the cheering words of the earnest few, who are unreservedly devoted to the establishment of “Peace on earth,” cannot fail to receive your recognition, and thereby contribute, in some humble degree, to the welfare of mankind.

The work of Peace, to which you are dedicated, is not the business merely of a day, of a year, or even of a century. Nor is it

confined to the limits of a country or a continent. It is a question for all time and for every place, requiring in its advocates indomitable energy, and a faith that knows no wavering. Its principles must be defended alike in defeat and success. Hope must be its guiding star, as well as, for a time, the guerdon of its advocacy. It involves the reformation of the entire human heart. It must check the appetites, regulate the desires, and eradicate the passions of men; and substitute therefor imperious and overpowering motives to moderation, to prudence, to justice, to kindness, and to that love which recognizes in every human being a friend and a brother. It must teach universally that the arbiter of human actions is not the strong arm, but Absolute Justice; that intrigue is base and pusillanimous; that the advantage gained by one being, at the expense of his fellow, is not only a trespass upon an individual's right, but upon the common weal, and that evil deeds as well as good possess a reflexive power. Governments, too, must learn that they are not exempt from the obligations attaching to individuals; that retributive justice is as certain to institutions as to men; that God's laws are impartial, and must not be contravened.

Such we deem to be essential in the achievement before you. The struggle itself is none other than that of the Principle of Good with the Principle of Evil, of God with Belial. An exposition of the reasons whereon we found our endeavors, would be but a recital of the inhumanities and horrors of War. These are traceable upon every page of the world's history and are familiar to its students. It is to evade these calamities of the past and reach a higher ideal of life, that we labor in the cause of Universal Peace, the offspring of Universal Love.

We therefore earnestly pray that your labors in Council may be crowned with satisfactory success, and that thereby an impulse may be given to Humanity's cause, which shall be felt to the ends of the earth. May the fruits of your coming together be the enlightenment of the nations; and may they learn that "mountains interposed" do not necessarily make them enemies; but that, as occupants of a common earth, enjoying the common heritage of air and sunlight, claiming for their Creator a Common Father, and tending to a common destiny, their first, highest, best interest is the practical recognition of a common Brotherhood.

Signed, &c.

An Address to the Women of New York, and a general Address, containing important Facts and Principles, were also approved.

A contribution was taken up to defray expenses of printing, &c., and Azaliah Schooley was appointed Treasurer.

The following were appointed a committee, to give to the various epistles and documents which have been adopted, a careful revision, and have a suitable number of them published for general distribution, viz :

Azaliah Schooley, Thos. M'Clintock, Elizabeth C. Stanton, Joseph C. Hathway, Charles L. Remond, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Ruth Dugdale, Harriet Longshore, Lydia Ann Jenkins Edmund Jenkins, Benjamin Fish, Reuben P. Mosher, Lewis Burtis, Eliab W. Capron.

The following were appointed a Committee of Correspondence, who are desired to assist in distributing the documents that shall be printed, and to have published in the public papers, wherever deemed useful, previously to the holding of our next yearly meeting, a suitable notice of the time at which this body will convene, viz:

Frederick Douglass, Elias De Garmo, Rochester; Susan R. Doty, Elias Doty, Farmington; Stephen Estes, Fairport, Chemung County; Griffith M. Cooper, Williamson, Wayne County; Elmer K. Hoag, Macedon Locks; Caroline Halsted, West Walworth; Oliver Mitchell, Alfred Mitchell, Lydia Mitchell, De Ruyter, Madison County; Webster Laing, Margaret Pryor, Edmund Jenkins, Waterloo; E. C. Stanton, Seneca Falls; Eliab W. Capron, Auburn; Thomas Rogers, Port Leyden, Lewis County; Elijah Sherman, Lyons; John Allen, Lavana, Cayuga County; Nicholas Hallock, Milton, Ulster County; Edward Hull, Harts' Village, Dutchess County; Jolly Longshore, Makefield, Bucks County, Penn.; Noah M. Stevens, Athens, Penn.; Charles Lenox Remond, Mass.

The Committee of Correspondence, or other friends in different localities, in conference with said committee, are recommended to call, in their neighborhoods or wherever openings may present, during the recess of this meeting, general meetings for the promotion of truth and goodness, and a free interchange of sentiments, and to give the needful notice of such appointments.

The following minute of advice adopted last year, is republished—viz:

We earnestly and affectionately recommend all our friends who desire the advancement of the great principles of practical righteousness, to associate in their little meetings upon a simple religious basis, avoiding extraneous, uncalled for church arrangements. Wherever practicable, let monthly meetings be instituted and records kept. Especially we desire that arrangements may be made for the accomplishment of marriages without resorting to the priest or minister of law.

Having, in our several sessions, been feelingly, and, we trust, profitably engaged in the consideration of various deeply important subjects having regard to the highest interests and welfare of the human family, the meeting adjourned, to meet again in this house, the second day (Monday,) after the first First-day in the Sixth month next, at 11 o'clock in the morning—meetings for social worship the day preceding.*

* That will be First day or Sunday, the 1st of Sixth month, (June,) 1851.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

WOMEN OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

FROM THE

Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends,

*Held at Waterloo, New York, by adjournments, from the 3d to
the 5th, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1850.*

WE invite your serious attention to a subject whose deep importance is beginning to be felt and acknowledged by candid and thoughtful minds. Among the many questions which are being asked in the increased light and desire for truth which characterize our age, none more vitally affects the whole human family than that which is technically termed "Woman's Rights." Every allusion to the degraded and inferior position occupied by woman all over the world, has generally been met by scorn and contempt. From the man of highest cultivation to the most degraded wretch who staggers through the streets, do we hear ridicule and abuse poured upon those who dare assert that woman stands by the side of man, his equal, placed here by her God, to enjoy with him the beautiful earth, which is her home as it is his, and endowed with equal capacity for enjoyment—having the same mental and moral constitution, and consequently the rights growing out of it; and looking to the same Being for support and guidance.

Ever has a weight been upon her, socially, intellectually and politically; and although at intervals a vigorous spirit has partially thrown it off—and shown what woman may and can do, yet so long has man exercised a tyranny over her, injurious to himself and benumbing to her faculties, that but few can nerve themselves against it. So long has the chain been about her, that, however galling it may be, she knows not there is a remedy. Every influence that could be used has been thrown around her to make her the willing instrument of her own degradation. The power of physical strength, the strong weight of habit and education, the limited cultivation of her intellect, the idea that God himself has ordained it, all have united to crush her; to bring her so low that the bright sky is shut out from her view, and she is not conscious that were she to throw from her the weight that

so crushes her, worlds of light and beauty would break upon her delighted vision.

As the nations of the earth emerge from barbarism, the sphere of woman gradually becomes wider, but not even under what is thought to be the full blaze of the sun of civilization, is it what God designs it to be. In every country and clime does man assume the responsibility of marking out the path for her to tread. From the Arabian Kerek, whose wife is obliged to steal to supply the necessities of life; from the Mohammedan, who forbids dogs, pigs, *women*, and other impure animals to enter a Mosque; from the German, who quietly smokes his meerschaum, while his wife, yoked with the ox, draws the plough through its furrow—from the delectable gentleman who thinks an inferior style of conversation adapted to woman, to the legislator who considers her incapable of saying what law shall govern her, is the same contempt for her welfare visible. In nothing is her *true* happiness consulted. Men like to call her an angel—to feed her with sweet food nourishing her vanity—to induce her to believe her organization is so much finer, more delicate than theirs, that she is not fitted to endure the tempests of public life, but needs their care and protection in the repose of home. Care and protection! such as the wolf gives the lamb—the eagle the dove he carries to his eyrie. Most cunningly he entraps her, and then takes from her all those rights which are dearer to him than life itself—rights that have been baptized in blood, and the maintenance of which has rocked to their foundations the kingdoms of the old world.

When we speak of the Rights of Woman, we speak of Human Rights; and take the ground that every human being has all the rights of any other human being—derived from the same source and equally sacred. Consult the writers upon natural law as to the derivation of Human Rights, and the most approved of these will state, that they emanated from the natural wants and emotions of mankind; and that their foundation is laid in the relations established by God himself, for the benefit and regulation of his children in the fulfilment of the objects for which they were created. These relations, or the laws growing out of these relations, are of impartial and universal application, affecting not a portion but the whole human family—restricted neither by country, clime, nor sex.

We wish to call your attention to this subject on the ground of immutable principles of right—principles inherent in the nature of man—the recognition and acknowledgment of which in each individual, is absolutely essential to the full development of all our faculties, and the right discharge of the duties and obligations imposed upon us by the very laws of our being. It is essential that the individuality of each be fully recognized and sustained. Is this the case with woman? Politically she is a nonentity—her entire individuality being merged and lost in the other sex. Religiously and socially she is the mere appendage of man. We

maintain *equality of rights* irrespective of sex. What *man* has a *right* to do, woman has a *right* to do, and *she herself* is to be the judge of the propriety and expediency of any given course of action. In no other way can she live out her highest idea of character and human responsibility. In no other way can she be true to the world, herself, or her God.

This is a question in which both sexes are equally interested. Possessing common natures, common rights, and a common destiny, society can never be harmoniously organized until the individuality and equality of each are practically recognized.

In addressing the Women of New York, it is our purpose not to conceal the ultimate objects in view. Firmly believing that the wrongs we enumerate are neither fictitious nor trifling, and that the rights, mutilated and obscured as they are, are yet worth rescuing from that oblivion to which all experience appears to have consigned them, we withhold nothing, however strange and paradoxical it may seem, or however harshly it may grate upon the delicate and perverted sensibilities of the public ear, which either presently or prospectively we mean to achieve. Among the objects to which our efforts are untiringly devoted, are the acknowledgment of, and the surrendering to woman equal privileges with man, in the formation of laws, in the acquisition of knowledge, and in the just compensation for services rendered, of whatever kind.

It is needless here, to enter into elaborate proof in confirmation of woman's ability to discharge the onerous duties of legislation, or to demonstrate, by an appeal to her intellectual history, her capacity to grasp alike the subtlest and sublimest mysteries of science. She is, even in her now contracted sphere, the acknowledged superior of man in original sagacity, in quick and deeply penetrating perception, and in the adapting of means to ends; qualities indispensable to the successful legislator, as well as speculative philosopher. While the names of De Stael, Martineau, Sommersville, Caroline Herschell, Mitchell, and a host of others that could readily be cited, abundantly vindicate her capability successfully to compete, under like circumstances, with the ablest writers and scientific investigators of the opposite sex.

Her right to the free and full exercise of the Elective Franchise with its duties and responsibilities, is based upon the principle of inseparability of representation from taxation, of governments deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. It grows out of her accountability to society and to God; which accountability she is prevented from answering by the conventional rules transmitted from the ages of violence and usurpation. Rigidly amenable to the laws, her voice is not heard in their formation. The equal and copartner of man in destiny, her name and her being, except as a subject, have scarcely a recognition upon the Statute Book, or the Historic Page, or any where, as the necessary helpmeet of man, in the great duties of life. Subject to the evils of bad legislation, her remedy is only

in the exercise of the humble virtue of patience, until her capricious master, shamed from his false position, grudgingly extends her a privilege; not as a right, but as a favor, and means of pacification.

Women of New York! this ought not to be, and it rests with you, together with such of the men as adequately appreciate your character, and who are not prevented by popular opinion from vindicating the just and the true, to effect the worthy objects proposed in this address—the security of which we confidently believe will not exalt woman at the cost of humiliating man, but promote equally the happiness of both. Linked together by indissoluble bonds of affection and interest, each being essential to the idea we recognize in the term SOCIAL UNITY, how opposed to all rational philosophy is it, that the one should attempt to control the will or guide the actions of the other. Yet such has been and we fear will continue to be the history of the race, unless woman, by emphatically demanding and maintaining her rights, shall prove she is worthy of them.

We urge the more earnestly upon your consideration the importance of securing the privileges of the ballot-box, for when these are obtained the others aimed at, will readily and necessarily follow. Your political consequence will bring in its train new views as to the importance and nature of your education, of your social influence, and of your, not sickly sentimental, but vigorous moral power. There will then be some show of reason for opening to your admission the hitherto barred doors of our High Schools and Colleges, which, in consequence of the absence of woman's influence, have come to be considered, more or less, the themes of obloquy and dens of dissipation and impurity.

New views will then prevail as to the kinds of education best adapted to the physical, intellectual and moral training both of boys and girls. Henceforth let the boy and the girl enjoy the same advantages for full muscular development. Whilst the girl is free to romp, climb, skate and swim—to go alone by day, by night, through snow, and sleet, and rain, let the boy add to these privileges, which have heretofore belonged exclusively to him, some of the softening, subduing employments of the girl. Let him knit, and sew—and do whatever else may be deemed useful for her.

Intellectually, too, let them pursue the same path. Let the girl be thoroughly educated in all those branches which are deemed important for boys. Let her have a knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics and languages; Let them together tread the halls of learning; alike fill the pulpit or professor's chair; plead at the bar of justice, or minister to the necessities of the sick. Morally, too, there must be a change. Instead of the false notions of purity and honor that obtain in our day, let the boy be taught that all resistance to violence is cowardly and ignoble; that true magnanimity would teach him to pity rather than repel those who are so debased and ignorant as to invade the sacredness of individual rights. Teach him that the same purity, delicacy and refinement, which he admires in the girl, should characterize him in all his

words and actions. Teach the girl to require the same degree of virtue in all those of either sex, who mingle freely in her social circle. If boys and girls were educated under the same moral code, one generation would drive from respectable places, all violence, licentiousness and excess. Instead of the vulgarity which now degrades our Congressional Halls, we would have dignity and christian courtesy. Instead of the selfishness found at the domestic hearth, we would have kind, conciliating companions. Our children might then have fathers as well as mothers, who, instead of passing their nights at club-houses and secret societies, would be found at their own domestic altars, educating and elevating the immortal minds there clustering about them.

By this system of education, women would have bodies as well as souls—minds as well as hearts. They would not only know what it is to be and to feel, but they would enjoy the luxury of a vigorous organization and harmonious development of the whole being. There will then be no seeming impropriety in your ministering at the altar. Your moral nature will assert its dignity, while the sphere of your activity, thus enlarged, will confirm your intellectual equality with man, and provoke from him a respect for your entire nature, such as you have not hitherto enjoyed. Your proper place as an instructor in the halls of learning will not be regarded, as now, a subordinate one, and your compensation therefor will be commensurate with your services, and not your mere necessities. It is an unaccountable phenomenon that mothers are the proper instructors in the nursery, beyond which their lessons must not extend. This heresy we would destroy. We beseech mothers, as they value their own personality, and that of their daughters, to impress indelibly upon the minds of their children, the idea of the perfect equality of the sexes. They will thus do much to establish the true relations of man and woman.

To obtain the Rights so long denied, we must change the public mind and conscience. This can only be done by the "foolishness of preaching." Each of you can do something. You can talk with your neighbors and friends. You can call meetings and agitate the question. You can send petitions to the Legislature. You can importune the unjust portion of community until they shall restore your rights, because of your importunity, if not on account of the justice of your cause. You can write for the public press, and procure the insertion of useful articles calculated to rectify public opinion. You can labor with the tongue and pen.

"Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow."

A new era is dawning upon the world, when "old might to right must yield—the battle blade to clerkly pen;" when the millions, who have been kept under the foot of the tyrant, will assert their manhood; when woman, yielding to the voice of the spirit within her, will demand the recognition of her humanity; when her soul,

grown too large for her chains, will burst the "bands around her set," and come forth redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled. While the globe resounds with the tramping of legions, who, roused from their lethargy, are resolved to be free or perish; while old earth reels under the crashing of thrones, and the destruction of despotisms, hoary with age; while the flashing sunlight that breaks over us, makes dark so much that men have revered, and shows that to be good that had scarcely been dreamed of; while mind is investigating so much in politics, in science, in morals, will you be content to remain inactive or to move in a narrow and circumscribed sphere—a sphere which man shall assign you? Will you forget that God has given you the same powers and faculties that he has conferred on him, the same desires, the same hopes, the same promise of immortality—that you are responsible to Him alone, for the right cultivation of those powers and faculties, and that it is not for man to say, "Thus far shalt thou go."

Be not deterred from prudent conscientious action by the felt pressure of public sentiment around you; for it is against this we war. This is the lion in the way, that has frightened thousands who have perceived but have not dared to assert their rights. Nor allow insinuating flattery to persuade you into submissive inactivity. Not only are your own interests involved, but the interests of posterity, the interests of the race.

Signed by direction of the meeting.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK, } *Clerks,*
RHODA DE GARMO, }

FACTS AND PRINCIPLES

FOR THE SERIOUS AND DISPASSIONATE CONSIDER-
ATION OF ALL, BEING AN

Appeal to the Highest Principles of Man's Nature.

FROM THE YEARLY MEETING OF

CONGREGATIONAL FRIENDS,

*Held at Waterloo, N. Y., by adjournments, from the 3rd to the
5th of the sixth month, inclusive, 1850.*

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Convened in Annual Assembly, to ponder the great ends and duties of life, and to unite our sympathies and counsels in the inquiry, as to what means and efforts can be adopted to promote the progress of the race in knowledge, and virtue, and happiness—in all that can dignify man and bring him into harmony with the Infinite Father—the breath of Divine love has moved upon our spirits to present, with brevity and clearness, some GREAT FACTS AND PRINCIPLES, for the consideration of all, and as an appeal to the highest and Divinest principles of our common nature.

And, *first*. The fountain of all excellence is and must needs be God. The perfections of the Divine Nature are the treasury, the archetype of all that is beautiful and glorious in the universe, whether of mind or unconscious matter. Between the Infinite and all beings there exists an unbroken chain of communication, each in its order, or they must cease to be. As is the workman so is the work. No perfection can be in the latter that existed not in the former. Man, therefore, however less or more imperfect be the manifestations of the principles of his nature in the individuals of the race, is, in the inherent elements of his being, a limited transcript of the perfect Architect. Deep down in his soul, back of its imperfect movements, lies the image of God in which he is made. With the powers of his soul, thus bearing the impress of their Author, however marred by the violation of Divine laws, there exists still, in more or less brightness and strength, the pri-

mal chain of communication with the Infinite of Wisdom, Goodness, Power. Were it not so reform were hopeless, man's progress in truth and goodness an utter impossibility.

*Second.* All creatures illustrate less or more the perfections of God, according to their elevation in the scale of being. As a conscious intelligence of the highest order, man exhibits most, in the elements and possibilities of his nature, the Divinity of the Author, the consummate perfections of the workman. He stands nearest in dignity and glory to the unspeakable Holy One. The Infinite Fountain of Love pours its ocean tides of light and truth into his soul, giving him a perception of his dependence, of his accountability as a voluntary agent, of the high, and beautiful, and beneficent relations he bears to God and nature, and of the duties these relations demand. Thus is the law of God written in his soul, legible in all the constituents of his being.

*Third.* The existence of this communication between the finite and the Infinite, is, of all facts cognizable by man, first in magnitude and most absorbing in interest. It is the basis of his accountability, of his highest hopes, and holiest aspirations, and strongest confidence, and purest consolations, and Divinest characteristics. It is the well-spring of life, the source of every noble attainment. It is to intelligent man "THE GOSPEL of the blessed God," in the highest expression of the term—the most gladdening intelligence that can reach a conscious moral agent.

As obedience is yielded to the Divine law which comes to him by reason of this communication, written continually in his nature in characters of living light, his powers receive harmonious development, he rises in the scale of excellence, progressively approximating his high and unknown destiny.

*Fourth.* The law of God thus written all over the walls of his being, is the highest code of duty he can receive. It is above all Bibles, higher and holier and of paramount authority to all the records which have been or can be penned by men, or even angels. For it comes to him, not through inferior intelligence which may err, but by the immediate action of perfect laws, established and governed by the Infinite Intelligence which cannot err. Man indeed may mistake in understanding this code, for he is finite, born in ignorance, and has it all to learn. But the provident Father has not left his child to grope in error by any necessity of his nature. He has furnished him with powers precisely adapted to understand this law.

For his moral nature—involving his highest interests, undying, having to do with fellow intelligences and the Infinite Mind—provision is made even more ample and perfect than that which regards the knowledge of the laws of his physical being. He has conferred on him feelings, sympathies, affections, all beautiful and beneficent in their rightful action, but these need to be governed by superior principles. Hence, he has an indubitable perception given him of the great primary principles of all morals, JUSTICE, MERCY, BENEVOLENCE, VERACITY, CHASTITY. These,



except the last, are the glorious moral attributes of the Divine Nature itself, perfect and unchanging as the fountain whence they flow, and like the sun in the firmament, shine by their own light, reveal themselves by their own beams, lighting the pathway of man in all the relations of life. The beautiful principle last named, so essential to the dignity and happiness of human beings, though not, like the preceding, an element of the Divine nature, receives its beams from the Eternal Sun, and sheds on the human mind its clear and blessed light.

These GREAT PRINCIPLES are the gift of God, not to the few but to the race. They are dispensed to the children of an impartial Parent as the WAY-MARKS by which to walk, the unvarying standards of all right conduct. A conformity to them, in their application to the principles of man's nature, to his reason, his conscience, the religious sentiment and motive powers, constitutes man's righteousness, even as God's righteousness consists in the moral perfections mentioned, which make the Divine character an object of adoration and love.

*Fifth.* Whatever is in harmony with these great standards of righteousness, with Justice, Mercy, Benevolence, &c., is of God, and all actions not so harmonizing, whatever their professed sanctions, can never have proceeded from God. The Divine nature being infinitely perfect, is necessarily unchangeable, and being, as we have seen, the archetype of all moral or right action, righteousness and unrighteousness in one age must be righteousness and unrighteousness in every other age: for that which is in agreement or disagreement with the Divine perfections now, must have been so throughout all time past, and will be so throughout all time future.

This is a proposition of unspeakable moment. Deny these standards, and the fact of their *certain revelation* to man's spiritual nature, and there remains no criterion or test of morals—man is left to drift on the dreary ocean of conscious being, without helm or rudder, uncertain of all his powers, to be the victim of any imposture that may lead captive his already wronged and blighted intellect. The want of an intelligent and trustful recognition of the great truth embraced in this proposition, has filled earth with woe. Injustice, and cruelty, and “all the oppressions under the sun,” by which humanity has been degraded and outraged—its Divinest instincts and holiest aspirations crushed and mutilated—have, in consequence, passed for consistent morals. Practices adverse to every moral attribute of God, have been miscalled RELIGION, and a malignant enthusiasm, violating in its career every Divine perfection, and every generous sentiment and beneficent affection implanted in the human mind by its Author, has been hailed as a holy zeal, and claimed the authority of the Fountain of love and goodness.

*Sixth.* Man is a progressive being. Not only is he the conscious subject of law, but emphatically of the law of progress. Institutions formed by him must necessarily change

as he advances in perfection. As unreasonable is it that he should continue in the institutions erected and cherished by those who lived before him, when their unfitness is apparent, as that he should continue to occupy the caves and huts constructed by his forefathers, in their more rude and uncivilized state. Institutions are his servants, auxiliaries to his comfort and advancement, to be changed or modified in adaptation to the new wants of a progressively unfolded nature. Opinions, too, must conform to the increased light which dawns upon his mind, by which he surveys more accurately the field of truth. The area before him is boundless, comprehending the fulness of the illimitable Divine Mind, and the unfathomed capabilities of his own powers. And as these are unfolded by appropriate culture, his ability to understand more of the Divine perfections and his own relations and duties, will continuously augment. To go back, therefore, to barbarous, semi-barbarous, or the more enlightened ages or races of men who have passed before, to find the highest perceptions and most correct views of morals and religion, or the highest exemplifications of inspiration, were preposterous and most absurd. Reason teaches it is man's duty to look for, and his privilege to find them, now, and that every coming day, if he uses his powers aright, he may have truth in greater brightness, and inspiration from the unchanging Ocean in greater fulness.

*Seventh.* Divine gifts to man are all individual, personal, and not transferable—his accountability for their use personal and not transferable. This he knows, as he knows his own existence, as a fact of consciousness. And yet mankind need nothing more than a deep and pervading conviction of their individual responsibilities. The tendency has been, apparently throughout all ages, on the part of the leaders and chieftains among men to assume the responsibility of the masses, and on the part of the populace as inconsiderately to yield it to their keeping. This guilty surrender of responsibility, has been the source of an incalculable amount of earth's miseries. From this criminal dereliction have sprung into existence KING-CRAFT and PRIEST-CRAFT, with their attendant host of unutterable woes—the violation of rights, and of the most sacred relations, and of the holiest affections; human butcheries, Slavery, of mind and body, Ignorance, Superstition, Fanaticism—in a word, all that is despotic, imperious, cruel, subservient, mean, and degrading in human conduct.

We rejoice in the evidences afforded that these abuses and impositions, are increasingly coming into *inquisition* under the action of the searching philanthropy of the age. Their correction presents an object worthy the best powers of all who desire to see "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and his anointed." And in order to this their cause must be removed. Men must place themselves in right relations—in the high and beautiful relations intended they should sustain to God and one another, in which every faculty, responsibility, right, will find unimpeded exercise. Then will communion be perfect with

God and nature. The prayer of Jesus will be consummated—"That they may be one as we are"—"as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Here will be the AT—ONE—MENT, the world's reconciliation.

This vigilant care to place ourselves in right relations, and to give no sanction to aught of an adverse character, we deem especially important in religious associations. The duties these associations are intended to aid in performing, are of the highest character—to receive, immediately from God and instrumentally from one another, truth, goodness, strength, by a mingling of sympathies and interchange of thoughts. Can any arrangement, then, be consistently adopted, that would confine the utterance of thought to one, or any selected number, in a congregation?—It was the beautiful order proposed by a servant in another age—"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge"—"Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted."

*Eighth.* All mankind are identical in the elements of their being. They possess inherently the same capabilities, the same responsibilities, the same wants, the same rights,—to use their powers, act out their responsibilities, supply their wants. They stand in the same relation to God, and are designed, by the identity of the social principles of their nature, to sustain the same relations one to another. Whatever of good for the intellect, for the moral and religious sentiments, and the body's welfare, they can receive from God, or one another, or dispense to each other, their rights are the same in respect to the former and duties in respect to the latter. In all, the Creator has established an equality in the human family, perfect and beautiful as it is beneficent, without limitation to sex, or complexion, or national peculiarities.

Hence are manifest the terrible injustice and cruelty of all laws and customs which exclude one half the human family—the female portion—from an equal participation in whatever social arrangements and means are deemed requisite to secure human interests, and from the exercise of the inherent rights and responsibilities of a common nature in proclaiming, in the assemblies of their equal fellow beings, the truths which they feel to be important to them. The injustice in this case, is only equalled in turpitude by that which excludes another portion of the human family from the exercise of natural and inalienable rights on account of their complexion—a complexion which has been given them by the same Divine hand whose wisdom and goodness, in having diversified creation with flowers of every tint, meets from the human mind a ready response.

*Ninth.* Man, though an individual, is not an isolated being.—He is bound up in destiny with the race of which he is a part. He is one of a vast fraternity. A brother's heart beats in his bosom, however perverted or misdirected his powers. One heart, indeed, the great heart of humanity—beats throughout the race. Feel-

ing, reason, more or less do their work, and turn his regards to his kind. One great law operates—neglected though it be, it is entwined with the fibers of his soul: *No sane and accountable human being can be perfectly happy and satisfied with himself while one other human being is miserable, and he possesses means, to any extent, to relieve the suffering, unless those means are applied.* So has our kind Father made us, that the ministries of humanity may be performed. And who is there that does not possess the qualification to participate in these ministries? Who is there that does not possess influence to exert, at least on one mind, and that mind on another, and so contribute to widen the circle of good?

What an appeal presents here to the reason, the conscience, the best affections of every member of the human family!—Look at the evils which afflict our race, the result of ignorance, vice, the misdirection of the voluntary powers! WAR, with its ponderous chariot wheels crushing out the life blood of countless myriads, drossolating homes, blighting the hearts tenderest and sweetest affections. SLAVERY, with its iron mail of despotism throw around millions of fellow beings, fettering limb and soul, disregarding every right, and every sacred relation, and priceless virtue—and plying its whips and thongs to turn the current of man's nature out of the channel God made for it. LICENTIOUSNESS, with its loathsome attendants of disease and shame, and sundered affections, and broken hearts, and degraded intellects. The wrongs of Woman, and the oppressed laborer, and the suffering and starving poor, in many parts of our common earth, placed by the false state of society, in circumstances that scarcely admit of amelioration by any effort of their own!

These are our brothers and sisters. Strong is their appeal to us; not perhaps by their own voice, for that is little heard and less heeded; but through the facts which reach us. There are minds sunk low in ignorance, to be raised into knowledge—those grovelling in vice, to be raised into virtue, adorned with the robes of righteousness. These need the ministry of a brother's hand.—There are the oppressors, the wrong-doers, to be won to the path of duty. MEN! PROFESSORS OF RELIGION! CHRISTIANS!—or by whatever name you would be distinguished—shall the appeal come to you in vain? Shall Humanity not sustain its own character as an attribute of man, by fresh and enlarged proofs of love and brotherly kindness? What is Religion worth if it be not practical?—if it prompt not to relieve suffering and reform vice—“to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction,” and to keep unspotted of the world's sins? What is Christianity but an empty name, if it be not the personification in human nature of “the spirit of the Lord,” “preaching glad tidings to the poor, healing the broken hearted, proclaiming deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty them that are bruised,” and thus “preaching the acceptable year of the Lord?”\*

*Tenth.* Potent though the influence be which one individual can wield for good or ill, it is only by *combined action* the greatest achievements can be accomplished. To this the social principles of man's constitution adapt him in every department of human effort. Associations—mercantile, scientific, political, and religious—grow at once out of the wants and tendencies of his nature. These tendencies, necessary and right in themselves, like all our constitutional powers, are constantly liable to perversion and abuse. In default of an ever-growing philanthropy and feeling of brotherhood, the zeal to accomplish a good by associated action degenerates into SECTARIANISM—the SPIRIT OF PARTY.

This is peculiarly the case in political and religious associations, especially the latter, and is probably attributable to the fact that in these departments of human concern the interests involved are higher and wider than in any others, affecting, immediately or remotely, the whole race. In the case of religious societies, misapprehension of the character and duties of religion, and intolerance of opinions differing from our own, are no doubt also fruitful causes of the party feeling and exclusiveness, which have so unhappily distinguished the professors of religion.

Now here is an evil which demands the earnest attention of all who desire the elevation and happiness of the human family. This perverted action of the human mind we regard as among the mightiest obstacles to man's progress in truth and goodness. To accelerate this progress and unfold harmoniously the Divinely beautiful principles of man's nature, we need UNION OF EFFORT. The removal of the vices, the crimes, the wrongs, which afflict suffering humanity, calls for the co-operation, the combined energies of the good of every name. The current of those benevolent sympathies and affections which the Creator has implanted in our nature, should flow unobstructed to all who need a brother's aid. Sectarianism freezes the current of these sympathies and affections by restricting them to a particular society, or church, or nation; or poisons them at their source by engendering jealousies and dislikes, against those who transgress its party lines in doctrine or practice.

Now, this sectarian or party feeling, as before intimated, comes of the irregular and not the normal action of man's nature. It is, like all other vices, the perversion and abuse of principles necessary and good in themselves. Nor does it come of Religion, but the want of it. The work of religion is not to separate, but to unite men, to unite them in love to God and love to one another. As little is religion chargeable for its existence, as for hypocrisy, cruelty, superstition, or fanaticism, all of which are abuses of man's nature, resulting from the misdirection of the voluntary powers. It is an evil for which, consequently, there exists, in the provisions of Infinite Wisdom, an ample remedy.

WHAT THEN IS THE REMEDY?—is the important inquiry which it becomes every moral agent intelligently to dispose of. The aphorism will here forcibly apply, A knowledge of the remedy,



is half the cure. We ask the attention of the reader to some views which we deem of great moment in the solution of this question.

First we will state a few maxims, which we think will commend themselves as little less than self-evident truths, and may serve as tests by which to try ourselves.

1. Let truth and humanity ever be paramount to sect.
2. Let association be regarded as a means, and not an end. The end of all right association, is the advancement of the race in intelligence and the practice of righteousness.

3. Let a constant watch be maintained not to be less disposed to recognize a vice because it appears in an association or body with which we are identified, nor less disposed to recognize a virtue, because it appears in a body, with many of whose principles and practices we may be unable to sympathize. The last, let it be remembered, inevitably adds to the sum of human happiness, the first subtracts from it.

4. Above all, keep constantly in mind, as an ever living consciousness, *the brotherhood of man*. A common Paternity, a common nature, wants and interests in common. The only object, therefore, in both individual and combined action, should be to promote these interests by the best possible means, by means which, while they secure them to the whole, shall not infringe the rights and interests of a single individual. The magnitude of the interests in any department of human concern, should only increase a vigilant care that the interests of each be the more sedulously guarded. The attainment of these objects, requires the united wisdom and the kindest interchange of sentiments and feelings, and must be frustrated in precise ratio to the amount of sectarian feeling that exists.

We proceed now to the consideration of principles, the recognition of which we regard as essential to the removal of this evil.

There is a form of sectarianism, which consists in an attachment to an association, merely because it is *our party*, and leads us to discountenance others, not on account of their moral defects, or because they are not engaged in works of righteousness, but simply because they "follow not with us." This, though pernicious, is probably the least reprehensible form of the vice. It was exemplified in some of the disciples of Jesus, and received a mild but cogent rebuke from that great Teacher. But the spirit of party, in its most pestiferous working, goes deeper—it plants its strong roots in *difference of doctrine and practice*. And here it must be met; here the remedy must be applied; for doctrine and practice make up the whole of responsible human action.

NOW, THERE IS NO SECT IN TRUTH. It is one and unchangeable, because God's arrangement—the principles and relations of things which He has made inherent to them. Moral and religious truth are the facts relating to God, man, the relations sustained by each, man's duties and destiny. The universe of matter and the universe of mind, comprehending all of physical truth,

and all of spiritual truth, which man can know, and by which he can be rendered beautiful, glorious, happy, lie open to his senses and his soul, God's gift to the race. All sustain similar relations to each department of nature, and to the Infinite Divine Mind. These relations require of each similar duties; and, as we have before shown, God has not left man deficient in regard to a knowledge of these duties. He has written his law legibly on the "living tablet of the mind." And man's error is, that instead of applying himself to the knowledge of this law, he has ever been assuming to be "wise above what is thus written." Man's inventions have taken the place of God's truth. Doctrines and practices have been inculcated, clothed with all imaginable terrors on the one hand, and hopes of happiness on the other, of which the law of God written in man's nature knows nothing; which have no connection with human relations and duties, nor power to bring man into harmony with himself, with God, or his brother. They are arbitrary things, a basis for which cannot be found either in the properties of the human or the Divine nature. Thus there has been a "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," and the necessary result has been SECTARIANISM, with its malignant brood of vices—Bigotry, Intolerance, Superstition, Fanaticism—poisoning those sweet fountains, which the Creator has caused every where to well up throughout human society, that his children might drink together and be happy.

We have said that sectarianism is the necessary result of a dereliction of truth, as written by Omnipresent God in man's conscious nature. Let us look further at this statement. If truth be one, and God's arrangement, and all stand in the same relation to truth—as they must needs do if it be God's gift to the race—then obviously, Truth is the only basis of unity. For out of it there cannot exist, in the laws of mind or matter, any common ground on which men can meet and recognize each other. Divisions, sects, alienations, must be the inevitable consequence.

Again. God's arrangements must be absolutely perfect; they can admit neither of addition nor diminution. There can consequently be nothing ARBITRARY in any of the Divine requirements, in religion or morals; all must be beautiful, harmonious, a part of a perfect economy. Man's duties must belong necessarily to his relations, and be inseparable from his perfection and happiness. It were absurd and derogatory to suppose that God can do something for nothing. Strictly, therefore, there can be nothing *non-essential* in religion or morals, the fulfilment of every obligation which belongs to the relations man sustains being essential to human welfare, individually and socially.

Furthermore. All the principles of religion and morals, as parts of the law God has inscribed in man's nature, are universal in their character, revealed, as facts of consciousness, to the universal human mind. Such are—a sense of Deity, and of our dependence and obligations, and the primary elements of all morals

—Justice, Mercy, Benevolence, Veracity, &c., to which we before adverted. These, as they become the governing principles, unite men to God and one another, exclude necessarily all partial and party feeling, and are adequate for the union of the world. and of all worlds, in one happy brotherhood.

It remains that we call the attention of the serious inquirer briefly to a class of opinions and practices, the natural tendency of which is to promote sectarianism, and which therefore may properly be called *sectarian principles*. Of this character we regard all doctrines and ritual observances, held as tenets of religion, which rest merely on external authority—as Trinity, Vicarious atonement, Transubstantiation, Water Baptism, The Eucharist or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, (so called,) Extreme Unction, The observance of days and times as Divine ordinances, as Sabbaths, Easter, &c., and a long list of dogmas enjoined both by Catholic and Protestant churches. These, not being cognizable as requirements of the Divine law written immediately in the human mind, are necessarily partial, limited, exclusive, and, in so far as they become principles or motives of action—and if sincerely embraced they must become such—they naturally engender disaffection and party spirit. And the record of the past attests this fact. The page of ecclesiastical history is dyed red with the feuds and persecutions to which they have given rise. Even the spotless Jesus was the victim of the action of these principles—"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day."

Of doctrines of this class, there is one, not yet noticed, which deserves special attention, as at once the most fatal of errors, and more emphatically sectarian in character than any that have been mentioned. And here we would entreat our readers, to bring to the consideration of this point a candid and manly temper and an unflinching love of truth. The doctrine to which we allude is that which asserts, that the Bible—a collection of Tracts written by various individuals in different ages of the world—is the highest and the authoritative Rule of faith and practice—the word of God—his revelation to men.

Here the standard adopted is itself limited, partial. It is not co-extensive with the human mind. It is accessible to a part only of mankind. It is limited as to the truth it contains, by the attainments and perceptions of those who wrote it, and the precarious fancies of those who in distant ages compiled and digested what they found in detached fragments, and of those who have since revised and given us the present version of it. And not a truth it contains can, after all, be known to be such but by recurrence to principles which exist, and evidences furnished to the human mind, independently of these and all other writings. But more than this: it is not a unitary whole, such as it might be expected to be were it the production of even one finite mind. In one part it is Jewish, in another part Christian, and in other parts mixed. In one part doctrines and practices are enjoined, as, of

Divine command, in positive conflict with those enjoined in other parts, and such as would now consign to infamy those who should adopt them. In short, in the volume there is a mingling of great and beautiful truths with great and pernicious errors.

We ask, how, while cause and effect exist, can the adoption of such a standard be other than productive of sectarianism? But we are not left to hypothesis or inference. The multiplicity of sects all recognizing this same standard, demonstrate the fact. The result is legitimate of the principle assumed; and so long as this fundamental error holds its place in the human mind, feuds, and divisions, and party spirit, with all their attendant evils, must continue, and the brotherhood of the race, as a practical fact, be postponed.

We would here guard against misapprehension. Because Truth is the only possible basis of unity, it by no means follows, that exemption from sectarianism requires an entire agreement of sentiment and views, any more than a perception of *all* truth—both of which are impossible. While the primary and essential principles of religion and morals are plain and obvious, and universally revealed, “all the space between the finite and the infinite,” as has been beautifully said, “is doubtless full of truths waiting man’s recognition,” and the diversity in which the common elements of the human mind exist in the individuals of the race, and the different points from which facts are viewed, must ever produce a difference in perception, both as to amount and shade of truth.—But, while each is honestly engaged to live according to that ‘eternal, constant, and universal law’\* dispensed to man by the one

\* The ancient Hebrew and Apostolic Scriptures, and indeed the writings of all nations, which have come to us, abound with recognitions of this universal, Divine law. But none perhaps have described it more lucidly and beautifully than Cicero, in his work, *De Republica*. The following, which we give in the original and a translation, is his noble testimony: “Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat; quæ tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest. Nec vero, aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus. Neque est quærendus explicator aut interpret ejus alius. Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister, et imperator omnium Deus ille, legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator; cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturum hominus aspernabitur, atque hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiam si cætera supplicia quæ putantur effugerit.”

“There is indeed a true law, a right reason, agreeing with nature, diffused among all men, constant, eternal; which calls to duty by commanding, and deters from wrong by forbidding; which, nevertheless, while it does not in vain command or forbid the good, does not compel the bad by commanding or forbidding. To this law it is not right to add anything, nor is it permitted to take anything from it; nor can it be wholly abolished. Nor can we, either by the Senate or the people, be released from this law. Nor is an expounder or interpreter of this law needed. It will not be one law at Rome, and another at Athens, one law at this time, and another at another time; but among all nations and in all time it will remain one law, eternal and immortal; and God himself, as supreme and ruler of all, will be the one Author, dispenser, and expositor of the law; which if any one will not obey he must fly from himself, and do violence to his own nature; and by this will suffer the greatest penalties, even if he should escape other things which are considered punishments.”

only Infallible Lawgiver, this difference will not be such as to disturb social harmony, or impair sound morals and pure religion—comprehended in love to man, love to God. On the contrary it will actually promote human welfare and augment enjoyment, precluding satiety and stagnation by comparison of views and interchange of the rich stores of thought. So beneficent is the Divine disposition of things. Moreover, as we have elsewhere said, it furnishes occasion for a most profitable exercise of some of the finest feelings and affections of our nature—tenderness, kindness, tolerance. Virtues which, from the individuality of man's nature and responsibilities, are reciprocally obligatory on all. Hence also results the right of each to perfect liberty of conscience, with the only admissible restriction, that under pretext of conscience there be no invasion of the equal rights of others, nor violation of the unchangeable principles of moral obligation. And the practical recognition of this great principle of the sacred right of conscience, will be an effectual security against sectarianism. For sectarianism is essentially intolerant. It lays its impious prohibition on the exercise of conscience, however beautiful and christian the spirit or Divine the life, because of difference of opinion or practice in regard to some of the dogmas or rituals of its church.

Again. Because we have spoken of religious doctrines and practices, not cognizable by the law inscribed in man's nature by its Divine Author, as naturally sectarian, let it not be inferred we would imply that all who entertain such views are necessarily sectarians. We speak of the natural tendency, and the general not the universal result. We know there are lovely examples to the contrary. But where these exist, it is because an appreciation of great and vital Truth has an ascendancy in the mind over speculative error. It is truth that forms the bond of union and fellowship. We regard the doctrine of vicarious atonement, including the ideas of imputed righteousness of another and salvation by faith alone, not only as sectarian, but as *decidedly immoral tendency*. Yet these dogmas are held by many, perhaps the majority, in association with pure morals. The great principles of moral rectitude which the Creator has implanted in all minds, do their beautiful work in despite of false theology.

We have dwelt at some length on this subject. It seemed needful to present it in its principles and their results, that the remedy may be adequately perceived, and applied. The removal of this evil seems to be, in an emphatic sense, among the benevolent missions of the present age. The progress of light demands it. We rejoice that the minds of the free and the good, are awaking to its consideration; that conventions are being held for its special examination. These efforts, governed by the spirit of Christian philanthropy, cannot fail to be productive of important results in the extinction of a vice, which cannot live in the pure atmosphere of truth and love. We tender to those engaged in these labors, our cordial greeting and God-speed.



Before closing we will advert briefly to the injurious misapprehension that exists in regard to the Divine administration, as indicated in the popular idea of "Word of God," and "Revelation."

One error naturally leads to another, and in proportion to the greatness of the error with which we start, is generally the divergence from truth. Men feel instinctively that they need instruction from God, that they need a revelation from the Infinite of wisdom and goodness, and having erroneously decided the Bible to be the standard of truth and duty, the conclusion follows, it must also be "the Word of God," and "God's Revelation." In this there is more than a simple misnomer. The proposition assumed contains a principle most pernicious in its practical tendencies. It leads from God, his actual word and revelation, to the works of erring men. It obscures, by the prepossession of a falsehood, the perception of the greatest of all truths—that GOD'S WORD IS, STILL UTTERED AS EVER, AND REVELATION UNDIMINISHED.

The truth is, God's word never was spoken by any creature; God only can speak his own word; and neither his word nor revelation can be had at second hand, any more than the reported word of a dead man can be a living word now, or that things revealed by the sun's light to one in India can be a revelation of those things to one in America. The record or statement of the first party is to the second party, not a revelation of facts, but simply and philosophically *a revelation of human testimony*, which *professes* to declare facts. It must be liable to all the uncertainty which attends human testimony, and must be subjected to the scrutiny of the same principles by which the credibility of human testimony is legitimately tried. If men doubt of the origin of a stream, and desire to know the truth, they go to the source. So with the contents of the Bible, the Koran, the Shaster, or any other books. They can at most be but a history or declaration of what claim to be revelations made to others, and must be brought to the test of those unchanging principles of truth and right which God speaks ever to the conscious soul, and reveals in all the characteristics of their eternal excellency. Our kind and provident Father has not exposed us to the dangerous necessity of taking the great things which concern the immortal spirit's welfare at second hand.

In conclusion, we commend the foregoing propositions and views to the reason and conscience of our brothers and sisters of the human family every where. And we would say, if the highest principles of your minds respond to them as God's truth, then embrace them and endeavor to live them out. If they carry not this evidence to your minds, then we entreat you from a consciousness of the responsibility that rests upon you, use your kind and earnest efforts to show us "a better way"—more certain principles of truth and holiness.

Signed by direction of the meeting,

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| THOMAS M'CLINTOCK | } Clerks. |
| RHODA DE GARMO,   |           |

## APPENDIX.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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During the past year, a number of interesting communications have been received from various and distant places, relative to our religious movement. The following correspondence, it was apprehended might be usefully presented to the public, as illustrating some important principles and objects of the association.

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WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., 3d of 8th mo., 1849.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK—

*Respected Friend:* Though personally unknown to thee, thou wilt see in the following lines a sufficient apology for the liberty I take in addressing them to thee.

Having just finished the perusal, in which I was much interested, of a notice in the "National Era," copied from the "Tribune," of a new organization of Friends, I feel a strong desire to know more of their principles than I can obtain from the notice referred to, and the "Address" appended to it. For some years past my own mind has been strongly tinctured with thoughts of "progress," accompanied with a serious fear that the Society of Friends, in which I was raised, had too much settled down into "a frigid indifference or unyielding hostility to the reforms of the age." In relation to the particular subjects of reform named in the Address, I need further information upon only one or two of them, but in relation to some not named therein, I will ask thy kindness.

First, then, wilt thou inform me more particularly what is meant in the Address by "a despotic and mercenary priesthood?" Does this refer to all ministers, of whatever religious society, who exercise any ecclesiastical authority, whether delegated by the mem-

bership, or entailed by a previously recognized authority, and who receive for their services and support any amount, however small, or however contributed, of pecuniary compensation? I am not ignorant that the Society of Friends has, from its foundation, regarded these with strong disapprobation, and has denounced them in terms not wanting in severity, but whether the Congregational Friends hold the same sentiments, and whether the new crusade is to embrace these among the evils demanding its attention, I am not informed. In the second place, I should be glad to have more information in relation to "the adjustment of the whole penal code to the Christian law of forgiveness," which is named in the Address as one of the objects sought to be accomplished by the new organization. Is it meant by this, that the offender shall suffer *no* penalty whatever, but that every offence against the peace and good order of society shall be at once forgiven?

Many of the religious societies of the present day hold in very high estimation, and act with corresponding zeal in furthering the objects of, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Missionary Societies, &c., and a large majority of them hold in equally high regard, and are equally zealous in promoting, a strict observance and sanctification of the Sabbath. They regard this as a much needed reform, and those as objects worthy of, and demanding the most persevering Christian effort. The Society of Friends are well known to have taken no part in furthering the objects of the Bible, Tract, Missionary and Sabbath Associations, holy and sacred as they are regarded by those who are conscientiously engaged in their behalf. Do the Congregational Friends propose to occupy the same ground in relation to these, or upon the broad ground taken in the Address, do they propose to admit to their fellowship, the zealous and conscientious laborers in all these fields? In the published Address I observe an allusion which indicates rather an unfriendly position in respect to the latter.—Can this position be maintained without jeopardizing the unity so desirable among those who are laboring in a good cause?

I read in the notice referred to, that you are to retain "the *essential principles* of Quakerism," and as one of these has been to cherish the highest and "holiest impulses of our nature, which are ever prompting us to deeds of charity and benevolence, and to manifestations of sympathy for all who are sincerely concerned for the welfare of man;" and as all the various associations referred to, profess to be prompted by the same "impulses," and to be engaged in the same "manifestations of sympathy," according to their

views of duty and utility in the various departments of the great work to which they are severally called, I feel a deep interest in knowing whether the "common platform" which you have adopted, is sufficiently broad to accommodate all associations, as well as all individuals, who profess to be laboring, according to the talents conferred, in *the common vineyard*. Do you take the broad, and as I believe, the scriptural and rational ground, that whatever an individual *sincerely believes* to be right for him to do, *is* right for *him*? If you take this ground and faithfully act upon it, then, indeed, there may be a well grounded hope of unity indulged; but without this just and tranquilizing principle, the naturally discordant elements must speedily and certainly cause an effervescence, which will end in purgings, expulsions, dissensions, and dissolution. But if the Congregational Friends, and all who may become associated with them, will indeed "break every yoke and let the oppressed go free;" if they shall justly appreciate the sacredness of conscience, and "tender a hearty God-speed" to its developments in themselves and in all others, then, indeed, may they celebrate a jubilee more glorious than the world has witnessed since the Reformation; for then there will be a practical application of an advanced Christian philosophy, which, if it do not secure the embrace, will at least command the admiration of every rational mind.

Allow me to tax thy kindness for an answer to the foregoing as full as thy convenience will allow, and the favor will be duly appreciated by

Thy friend,

PHINEAS J. STEER.

—  
WATERLOO, 8th mo. 16th, 1849.

PHINEAS J. STEER—

*Respected Friend:* Thine of the 3d, making some inquiry respecting the "new organization of Friends" recently formed in this vicinity, is received, and has been read with interest. Thy information of the movement appears to have been derived, and perhaps wholly, from a notice in the *National Era*, taken from the *New York Tribune*, and the "Address to Reformers" appended. Hadst thou read all the proceedings of that body, and their "Basis of Association," published by direction of the Yearly Meeting, it is possible thou might have deemed some of the inquiries contained in thy letter superfluous. I send thee two pamphlets, the one containing those documents, and the other the two Addresses



issued by the meeting, published separately—and in addition, I will notice with pleasure the points embraced in thy letter, so far as my time, which is pretty thoroughly engrossed, will admit.

Thou first wishes to be informed, “what is meant in the Address [to Reformers] by a despotic and mercenary priesthood?” and asks, “Does this refer to all ministers, of whatever religious society, who exercise any ecclesiastical authority, whether delegated by the membership or entailed by a previously recognized authority, and who receive for their services and support any amount, however small or however contributed, of pecuniary compensation?” The terms used in the Address are in themselves of pretty obvious meaning, and I suppose, to find application for them we need not go so far as the Church of Rome, (which sustains within her bosom the largest number of the class of persons referred to,) to find priests or professional ministers of religion who are in the exercise of an arbitrary and tyrannical power; and it is of small consequence, I apprehend, whether that power be conferred by civil or ecclesiastical law, or conceded to the possessors merely by a vicious popular sentiment. In either case it is an evil demanding reform. The question is not, therefore, “By what means have the priesthood come into possession of ecclesiastical authority?” but—Are they in the exercise of an authority which infringes the natural rights of any portion of the community? And if so, the exercise of such authority is none the less an evil, though it be voluntarily recognized by the ignorance of those on whom it operates. As regards the application of the term “mercenary” in the Address, it would be fairly referable, I conceive, to those to whom “pecuniary compensation” is so far the object that they will not preach without it. And *take away the STIPEND*, and I presume not one in a hundred of those engaged in the vocation, would continue to labor in the ministry.

But would all come within the designation “who receive for their services and support, however small, or however contributed, of pecuniary compensation?” I think not. Individuals may be rightly engaged in preaching the gospel of truth and goodness, or, which is equivalent, in labors to remove evils which exist, and it may be right for those who sympathise with them in their labors, to extend to them such pecuniary aid as may be necessary to sustain them, and their families, (if they have any,) so long as they deem their services worthy of such aid; and consequently right for those so engaged to receive what is needful

and reasonable. This is substantially the ground taken by Robert Barclay, and, I think, all the early writers among Friends.

There is a position occupied by some men of most enlightened and benevolent minds, who are laboriously engaged in preaching and writing, are doing a great work for the race, and who, without stipulating for any given amount, are liberally sustained by those to whom they minister. These certainly are not mercenaries, nor even hirelings. And although, in my view, occupying an equivocal position, since, to some extent, they are practically giving countenance to a system which I regard as greatly prejudicial to human welfare; yet I am not sure but that in the present false state of society, and of a false public sentiment which sustains it, the position they occupy enables them to exert an influence, in some directions, in the removal of false and injurious views of religion and morals, more potent than they could exert in any other circumstances in which they could place themselves. While, therefore, I find it my place, theoretically and practically, to advocate what I deem "a more excellent way,"—I find myself in possession of no authority to judge such, as not in *their places*. Nor, indeed, in all cases could I so judge, though they receive a stipulated amount as "pecuniary compensation for their labors."

But, in my estimation, the true testimony is not so much against the matter of pecuniary compensation to ministers, as against making the ministry *a profession*, by which they are to be exempted from the common and necessary labors of society, and from which they are to derive their livelihood. This state of things is replete, I apprehend, with almost innumerable evils, to the individuals occupying the position, and to society at large.—The false relation it introduces, incompatible with individual responsibility, is adverted to in our "Basis."

Relative to "the adjustment of the whole penal code to the christian law of forgiveness,"—thou asks: "Is it meant by this that the offender shall suffer *no* penalty whatever, but that every offence against the peace and good order of society shall be at once forgiven?" Not having myself written the Address to Reformers, I cannot say positively what was the idea in the mind of the writer; but, by "the Christian laws of forgiveness," I presume he intended the principle embraced in such declarations as these: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses,"—If thy brother offend against thee, and repent, thou shalt forgive him—"I say

not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." And as inconsistent with this great principle should be regarded, doubtless, not only capital punishment—which had just been specified—but all penalties of a vindictive character, and which have not in view the reformation of the criminal.

To the remainder of thy letter thou wilt find an answer, I think, and I hope a satisfactory one, in our "Basis of Association." In it the sacred rights of conscience are, I apprehend, perfectly and clearly recognized, with the only admissible restriction, that they invade not in their exercise "the equal rights of others, nor any of the unchangeable principles of moral obligation." It admits of no barrier to religious fellowship, on the part of any, whatever their speculative opinions or religious practices, "but the violation of the immutable principles of morals—Reverence of God, Justice, Mercy, Enevolence, Veracity, Chastity, &c., nothing but what is plainly incompatible with *love to God* and *love to man*."

Nevertheless, we associate for a distinctive and definite object—the promotion of the great realities of religion, of truth and goodness, both as respects doctrine and practice. We regard as fundamental in religion and morals, the fact that the Divine law is written on the conscious powers of the soul; that man "stands in such contiguity to Omnipresent God as to have immediately revealed to him God's will regarding him;" that all certain knowledge of truth and duty flows from this source; that this Fountain is as accessible now as it has been at any period of human history; that, truth being eternal and unchangeable, there is nothing of religion or duty which is not such by reason of the perfect arrangements of Deity, who established human relations—nothing, consequently, which is not essential—forever the same—in harmony with the inherent principles of man's nature, with his perfection and highest happiness.

If, therefore, these propositions are true—and to me they seem axioms—our testimony is and must be against the exaltation of any thing as a standard of truth and duty, above God's intuitions in the mind; against all creeds which have not their counterpart in indispensable practice; against all ritual observances which have no power to make men wiser or better;—in short, against every thing as a part of religion, which is not a necessary part of the duties which, in the perfect economy of God, belong to the relations human beings have been created to sustain, or which, in the natural and rightful action of the principles of man's nature, grow out of those relations.

Our testimony must consequently be against all *Bibliolatry*, with which Christendom every where teems. We cannot therefore, while this morbid state of society exists, give our sympathy or aid to Bible societies, nor to Tract and Missionary societies, (conducted in agreement with the prevalent theology,) the main action of which goes to sustain and further this hurtful idolatry, and the falsehood that underlies it. Nor can we do other than bear our testimony—in all kindness to those who think and practice differently—against the superstitious and injurious idea, that actions right and innocent when done on one day of the week, are not equally right and innocent when done on any other day of the week.

And yet our platform is broad enough to receive all, provided they recognize “the principles of fundamental morality,” who, notwithstanding difference of view and practice in these respects, find points of coincidence and sympathy sufficient to induce them to co-operate with us. And there is still before us the whole field of humanity and of humanitarian reforms, embracing the application of the acknowledged principles of justice, mercy, and practical goodness. And so far we shall be laboring “in the common vineyard.” But in antagonistic principles and practices, there can be no common ground.

But further than this. We recognize the right of all, however differing from us, who are concerned for our welfare, or deem they have important truth to put against what they may deem our errors, freely to disclose their feelings and present to us their views in our assemblies. And we will hear them kindly, and consider carefully what they present; for we are far from claiming infallibility, or to have attained the ultimatum of truth. And all we shall ask is, that they hear us with equal kindness and patience in return, should our conviction of duty and desire for their welfare prompt us to proffer to them a similar office of love. With the condition, that there be no infringement of “fundamental morality,” I am prepared, too, with thee, to “take the broad ground that, whatever an individual *sincerely believes* to be right for him to do, *is* right for *him*.” For fidelity to conscience is the *initiatory step* to all progress in truth and goodness. But, as what “an individual sincerely believes to be right for him to do,” may be wrong, and injurious to himself and others, while I “appreciate the sacredness of conscience” in him, fidelity to conscience on my part may make it obligatory on me to endeavor to convince him of his error and bring him to the truth. And, as “conscience

follows the judgment, does not inform it," as Robert Barclay truly observes, his understanding being enlightened to behold the truth, the awards of his conscience will then be in favor of truth and not of error. And thus the principles of his nature being harmonized and at unity with themselves, he will be qualified the more efficiently to promote unity among his fellow beings.

Can there be, my friend, a more perfect and catholic platform than this?—I am aware that many will be disposed to say, If these liberties are granted, your religious meetings will be scenes of confusion and embittered conflict—and not, as they should be, opportunities for spiritual edification. But my confidence in the uniformly beneficent results of the practice of right principles, and a little experience in the matter, lead me to altogether different conclusions. Besides that nothing less can, in my estimation, constitute a perfect recognition of the rights of conscience, it will be found, of all instrumentalities the most efficient to promote unity and love. It is by the perception and practice of truth we are to be spiritually edified, and only by coming into the truth can unity be effectually and permanently established. And a kind and free interchange of feelings and sentiments must of all human means be most conducive to these ends, and is what is greatly needed among professors of religion and others. I would, therefore, with delight, welcome to the exercise of this freedom in our assemblies, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, or Hindoo. If they have any truth to give us, we want it. If we have any truth for them, by unfolding to us their sentiments and feelings they place themselves in the best possible position for us to impart it to them.

In conformity with these views, it has impressively opened to my mind, that one of the instrumentalities for the promotion of truth and goodness, which it would be right for our "new organization" to use, will be the holding of special meetings, open to all, for the free expression and comparison of sentiments on great subjects involving human welfare. And I feel sure that all that is needed to secure harmonious and pleasant action in these meetings, is, a pre-understanding on the part of those concerned, that they are to be governed, in all their conduct toward each other, by the LAW OF KINDNESS. The rule is simple but omnipotent in the case. And should any unguardedly depart from it, or through a wrong disposition purposely neglect it, if those who have at heart the promotion of truth, regardless of sectarian predilections, keep their places by a uniform observance of the rule, those who have



diverged from it will either kindly return to its observance, or, self-mortified, soon leave the field altogether.

I have no fear, therefore, of the happy working of this application of the principle of perfect liberty of conscience, nor doubt of the mighty results for human welfare which would attend such application. But I do fear that too few will be found sufficiently liberated from a narrow sectarianism and religious bigotry, to reduce it to the test of practice.

Certain it is that great truths, having their foundation in the unchanging elements of the Divine and human natures, are waiting to be recognized, and what is more—as Theodore Parker would say—are “waiting to be organized” in practice, and to bless mankind by supplanting the errors which every where abound. A preparation of mind for their consideration exists, I apprehend, at the present beyond any former period. Men are inquiring, more than formerly, not—What did this or that man at this or that period, think or practice? but—What is true?—What is right?—Wilt thou not, my friend, enter with us into this field and labor? I know not but thou mayst be regarded as already there. For, although an entire stranger to me, except what I learn from thy letter, I can scarcely refrain from saying to thee emphatically, “Thou art called to be an apostle of these truths.” We want a platform constructed of Divine principles—and none other: for these are all universal, adapted to universal human nature. And if constructed of these, there can be nothing sectarian in it—it will be a “common platform,” on which the whole world of mankind may come, and be free in the truth, and receive, without obstruction, the harmonious and perfect development of all the Divinely implanted principles of their nature.

Thy friend,

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK.

It will be gratifying to those interested in the movement to learn, that the principles of the Basis on which we have associated, are receiving the approval of the friends of truth and progress and of Christian freedom, in different sections of the country. Besides the Annual Meeting of Friends, held at Green Plain, in Ohio, as early as the 10th month, 1848, on analogous principles, and Goshen Half-year meeting, held in Logan county, in the same state, and a Half-yearly meeting established in Wayne county, Indiana, an organization is in progress on the principles of our Basis, most-

ly among persons who have been connected with the United Brethren, or Moravians, residing in Fountain, Warren, Vermillion and Vigo counties, Indiana, and Edgar county, Illinois—and who first became acquainted with our movement and its character through the National Era. Interesting letters have since been received from several of the brethren. A conference has been already held in Vigo county, at which it was concluded to adopt the “Basis,” and at some future time meet and more fully organize. Simon Brown, of Portland, for a number of years an ordained elder or preacher in the Society, writes: “There are several young ministers who are with me in the principles of reform.” And a letter from David Wright, of Independence, speaking of the Conference, says, “We found many minds that were well convinced of the correctness of the “Basis,” as set forth in the pamphlet—many also who were tired of living under tyranny and oppression, but they were not acquainted with the Basis. We circulated the pamphlets we had to the best advantage we could, and could not supply the calls. We want more of those pamphlets which contain the Basis.” A letter, received subsequently to our last yearly meeting, from an intelligent and worthy friend in Newark, New Jersey, requesting a supply of our publications, states, that there are from one to two hundred persons in that city and neighborhood, who have in contemplation very shortly to form an association on similar principles. A large proportion of the Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends, (held in the eastern part of the State,) it is expected, will also shortly organize on the Congregational plan. These are pleasant indications, which we would rejoice to see abundantly multiplied.—Nothing, we think, has had a more powerful influence in trammeling the human mind, and retarding the progress of truth and humanity, than extended church organizations, in which exists a recognition of “authority of larger bodies over smaller, terminating in a Head, or Supreme Controlling Power.” It is *priest-craft* in its direst form—in its combined and collective force. Nothing is more foreign to the spirit of Christianity. Such bodies have generally grown in precise ratio to the decrease of that spirit.—To this point, the following extract from Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History is interesting. Speaking of the primitive churches, he says: “The churches in those early times, were entirely independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rules and its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles, had this particular

deference shown them, that they were consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no sort of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive churches; nor does there appear, in this first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches from which *councils* and *metropolitans* derive their origin. It was only in the second century that the custom of holding councils commenced in Greece, from whence it soon spread through the other provinces." Volume 1, page 105.

For the satisfaction of those who may wish to refer to it, we here subjoin the Basis of Association spoken of.

# BASIS OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION,

ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE

HELD AT FARMINGTON, IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

On the Sixth and Seventh of Tenth month,

1848.

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*To all to whom these may come.*

BELoved BRETHREN AND SISTERS :—Having, pursuant to adjournment in the 6th month last, again met, to consider what measures it will be right to adopt, that the blessings of Religious Society may be placed within the reach of all, our minds have been led into an examination of religious association in general. In looking at this subject, melancholy evidences present on every hand, that societies or church organizations, ostensibly for the promotion of religion, have been among the greatest impediments to its progress, and the most fruitful sources of tyranny and oppression. But, while we feel that these facts should lead to the utmost care in regard to the principles permitted to enter into their structure, we are abundantly assured that these results are their abuse, not their necessary attendants—the consequence of the admission into them of elements hostile to man's nature, his duties, and inalienable rights.

Religious association has manifestly its foundation in the religious and social elements of the human mind—principles powerful and constant in our nature, and most beneficent in their legitimate action. We are made pre-eminently social beings. From the exercise of the social principles of our nature, flow all the reciprocal benefits, all the countless offices of love and kindness which strew with blessings the path of life. Not only in the physical, but especially in the higher departments of man's nature—the moral and religious—we behold the working of this beautiful and beneficent economy ; in the mingling of sympathies and affections ; in imparting to each other the treasures of the intellect, the conscience, the religious feelings ; in united aspirations to, and reverence and adoration of, the Supreme Being.

To attain these social religious benefits in the highest degree, assemblies are needed ; these require arrangement, time, manner, as well as object ; in short, organization, or understood modes of action. We need only that these be wise and right—not conflicting with man's prerogatives, nor God's.

The object of religious association may be defined in brief to be, the promotion of righteousness—of practical goodness—love to God and man—on the part of

every member composing the association and in the world at large. So far as it is instrumental to this end, it is Christian, a blessing to the community in which it exists. So far as it is not thus instrumental, its non-existence were desirable. To promote this object there must be a practical conformity to the Divine laws—the principles of the association must be in harmony with the principles of the Divine government. For righteousness is none other than the result of these laws—the exemplification of these principles in the actions of moral agents.

Man is made to sustain a relation of an intelligent and accountable agent under the Supreme Intelligence; has the law of God written on the conscious powers of his soul: stands in such contiguity to Omnipresent God as to have immediately revealed to him God's will regarding him. **THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT IN RELIGION**; that which constitutes man a subject of God's moral government; the foundation of his hopes, of his accountability. This revelation of God's will to him he feels and knows to be personal—his accountability personal and not transferable, though connecting him in obligation, and binding him by kindred ties with the whole family of man. Yet, as absolutely personal and individual as though he and God were alone in the Universe. Hence his conscience must be kept sacred in its devotion and allegiance to God, from whom the law comes.—No laws nor institutions of men, should restrict this individual exercise of conscience, of responsibility. The only restriction that can be Christian or lawful in this momentous matter, in the terms of association, is the admission of the obvious principle, that no pretext of conscience can be valid which violates the equal rights of others, or any of the unchangeable principles of moral obligation, which are primary to conscience, and by which, in the Divine order, it is to be governed.

Liberty of conscience, then—the recognition of the right of every member to act in obedience to the evidence of Divine Light, in its present and progressive unfolding of truth and duty to the mind, must be a fundamental principle in every right organization. That this perfect liberty of conscience is the right of every sane and accountable human being, appears from several other considerations.—Mankind partake of the variety which every where marks the Creator's works. Though identical in the elements of their being, these elements exist in the race in infinitely diversified proportions. Hence their individuality, their peculiarities of character. Again: they are each subject to influences as diversified as their mental and physical peculiarities, all which affect their character, their views, their actions. This diversity furnishes occasion for a most profitable exercise of some of the finest feelings and affections of our nature—tenderness, kindness, tolerance. From the universality of the facts in the case, the practice of these virtues is obligatory on all, and no institution can be Christian—can exemplify love to God and man—(the substance of Christianity)—that is deficient in these virtues. "Christianity," says an enlightened writer, "respects this diversity in men—aiming not to undo but further God's will; not fashioning all men after one pattern—to think alike, act alike, be alike, even look alike. It is something far other than Christianity which demands that. A Christian church, then, should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass in church or state—church or state becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend. The greater the varieties of individualities in church or state, the better is it—so long as all are really manly, humane and accordant. A Church must needs be partial, not catholic, where all men think alike—narrow and little." It has been the want of this broad and Christian ground of toleration that has been the bane of every church, Catholic and Protestant. In proportion to its ab-



nence despotic and oppressive measures have marred the harmony and painfully defeated the objects of religious society.

Another cause of the exercise of despotic power in professed Christian churches, has been the establishment of an ascending scale of authority of larger bodies over smaller, terminating in a Head or Supreme Controlling Power. This, we are persuaded, has been a prominent cause of the difficulties which have been experienced in the Society of Friends, at different periods of its history, and especially of the divisions which have occurred within the last quarter of a century.

In the establishment of Preparative, Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings, it was, doubtless, not contemplated, in the early periods of the Society, that any despotic authority should be exercised by larger meetings over smaller. The only power intended to be exercised appears to have been that of persuasion and love. But the history of the Society shows how easy it is to abuse power, when men have incautiously been vested with it, by the expressed or implied rules of a written code. And the experience of the past admonishes us to recur to original fundamental ground, in regard to the design of religious association, and remove from it an element demonstrably evil in its tendency and results—the *subordination of meetings*, or the vesting of larger meetings with authority over smaller. As in a right organization the man cannot be sacrificed to the mass, the individual conscience to an assemblage of consciences; so neither can a number of individual consciences in a congregation rightfully be sacrificed to a larger assembly, or any assumed or established head. The order of independent congregations therefore, has opened, with great unanimity and clearness, as most in harmony with man's nature and rights, and least liable to abuse.

Each congregation or meeting, will consequently attend to its own internal or disciplinary concerns. Larger meetings—Quarterly or Yearly—will be for *counsel and advice*, and for the consideration and promotion of the great interests of humanity—every thing that concerns man at large—including of consequence the removal of the existing evils of the day, War, Slavery, Intemperance, Licentiousness, or in whatever form cruelty, injustice, and other perverted principles may operate. Yearly meetings may suggest rules or regulations for the government of particular meetings or congregations, but shall have no power to enforce.

Another fruitful cause of difficulty and disaffection, has been the institution of Meetings of Ministers and Elders. Of these we propose the discontinuance, as also of the practice of recommending or ordaining ministers. Every meeting or congregation will attend to the regulation of the ministry among themselves: and if any one proposing to travel to a distance, wishes a certificate of moral character; it can be granted for the time being.

Not only will the equality of woman be recognized, but so perfectly, that in our meetings, larger and smaller, men and women will meet together and transact business jointly.

These principles, simply carried out, will, we apprehend, effectually prevent the abuses and evils of ecclesiastical organizations. And should they at any time fail to be exemplified in the practice of a meeting toward any of its members, the evil would be limited, and not very oppressive, as any member affected by it, would be at liberty to join another congregation, and still participate in the privileges of the general association.

Two evils, at least, if not wholly excluded, would find but scanty soil to grow in—*Tyranny* and *Sectarianism*. And these will be the more effectually prevented by the recognition of the great principle, already adverted to, of perfect liberty of conscience—which in our view, forbids the establishing of any thing as a barrier to religious fellowship, either as regards individuals or the inter-communication

of congregations, but the violation of the great unchangeable principles of morals, revealed, as facts of consciousness, to the universal human mind—Reverence of God, Justice, Mercy, Benevolence, Veracity, Chastity, &c. In other words, nothing but what is plainly incompatible with *love to God*, and *love to man*—leaving each to the test. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” independently of abstract opinions. Thus a brother or sister might hold the doctrine of the Trinity, or of a Vicarious Atonement—might practice Water Baptism, the ceremony of Bread and Wine, and kindred rituals, or he might believe none of these, and his right should be recognized to preach his conscientious convictions of these matters in any of our meetings—each, in either case, conceding the right of every other brother and sister, who may deem that error has been promulgated, to endeavor in the pure spirit of love and kindness, to make it apparent, either before the same congregation, or in any of our meetings where they apprehend themselves called upon to do so. Thus, by the recognition of equal rights, and the sacredness of conscience, and of the duty of reciprocal kindness, a narrow sectarianism and party feeling would vanish before the light of truth, and the minds of the sincere and pious be more and more united. Nothing would be found so potent to promote unanimity of sentiment and brotherly love, as action based on these Divine principles. Under their influence a censorious and contentious spirit would find no place, the governing desire would be the attainment of truth. And thus would be verified the words of the excellent Isaac Penington—“It is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging one another because of differing practices.”

We may advert to yet another great evil, which, in the church order we have defined, must receive an effectual check. We mean *Priestcraft*. This naturally grows out of a dependence on our fellow beings, as possessing superior means of Divine knowledge. In this dependence, individual talents are neglected, and individual responsibility is sought to be transferred to the person or persons on whom the dependence rests. And this dependence gives POWER to those on whom it is placed, and makes those who place it easy subjects for its exercise. In this way a large proportion of the professors of religion become, to a greater or less extent, the dupes of priestcraft. The same effect takes place, to a certain extent, among Friends, as the consequence of *recommending ministers*, as it is called; that is, setting them apart, by a particular process, as ministers of the society. By this practice, which is a virtual ordination—the idea naturally obtains, that those thus distinguished have nearer access to the Divine mind—superior means of Divine knowledge than others. This leads to an improper dependence on them, and as consequent neglect on the part of the other members of their own spiritual gifts. Here great injury is sustained, both by the preachers and those who thus defer to them: and by the non-employment of individual gifts, in the inculcation of moral and religious truth, the body and community at large suffer incalculable loss.

Intimately connected with the right use of the gifts of every member, is the mode of conducting assemblies for spiritual edification and improvement—of which we will here say a word. Agreeably to the facts before stated, and the objects of religious association, every accountable human being stands in such a relation to the Divine Mind, as to be privileged to receive from the Fountain of Wisdom and Goodness, immediate instruction relative to all the duties of life, personal and social. The responsibility in respect to these duties being personal, and not transferable, no one can appoint another to act for him in their fulfilment. Fidelity to God can be maintained only by individual obedience to divine requiring. No society arrangement can be right which admits not of this obedience. No man has a right to absolve himself from it. In view of these important truths, we


deem that a true church organization does not admit of placing one or more persons over a congregation as the stated spiritual teacher, or teachers. Consistently with individual rights and responsibilities, all must meet together as brethren, recognizing one Divine Teacher, and leaving the mind of each free, to speak or be silent, according to his highest perceptions of duty, and in agreement with a just estimate of each other's equal rights. Thus may the gifts of all be exercised in the promotion of truth and goodness, and while they are improved "by reason of use," the body will "edify itself in love."

Associating on these principles, we have concluded to hold a Yearly meeting, in Friends' Meeting-house, known as Junius (now Waterloo,) Seneca County, New-York, commencing on Second day, the 4th of 6th month next, 1849, at 11 o'clock in the morning: and we recommend that Friends, in their different meetings, who may be prepared for the measure, appoint representatives accordingly. And we further invite all, of whatever name, or wherever scattered, who unite in the principles of the foregoing basis of association, to be present and participate with us in the objects contemplated—to promote truth, piety, righteousness, and peace in the earth. That all may find in the endearments of Religious Society A HOME for their spirits, and that, by a union of effort, virtue and happiness may be diffused in the human family, and God be glorified, who is over all, blessed forever.

Signed on behalf of the Conference.

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK, } Clerks  
RHODA DE GARMO, }

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 For the time of holding our next Yearly Meeting, see page 12.]