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A SHORT

ACCOUNT

OF THE PEOPLE CALLED

QUAKERS;

Their RISE, RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES and
SETTLEMENT in AMERICA.

Mostly collected from different AUTHORS, for
the information of all serious INQUIRERS,
particularly FOREIGNERS.

THE THIRD EDITION.

BY ANTHONY BENEZET.

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PLATE 1

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PLATE 1

A Short ACCOUNT of the People called QUAKERS, their Rise, Religious Principles and Settlement in AMERICA, mostly collected from divers Authors, for the Information of all serious Enquirers, particularly Foreigners.

THESE people were first distinguished by the name of Quakers in England, about the middle of the last century. George Fox was the principal instrument of gathering them into a religious society. His outward employment while young, was chiefly in the care of sheep, and from his infancy being of a grave, solid, observing turn of mind, was early restrained from the follies incident to youth; solicitous, above all things, to obtain the favour of GOD, and to avoid every thing which either the scriptures or the inward principle of Divine Grace taught him to believe was offensive to him; though in so doing many corrupt practices, which custom had familiarized to the Professors of Christianity, presented themselves as obstacles in his way, which for a time occasioned him much anxiety, lest his own particular prospect should mislead him; but as he retained an inflexible integrity, he gained experience by the things that

that he suffered, and as his understanding was gradually illuminated, he received satisfaction in the many doubts he had long painfully laboured under. In the year 1647 and 23d of his age, he travelled through several counties of England, seeking out such as, in religious tenderness, were inquiring after the way of life and salvation: These he taught both by precept and example the benefit of retiring into silence, and instructed them to cease from all self-performances, to turn to the light of Christ in their own hearts, and wait to feel the instructions of his spirit there, that their knowledge, worship and religious services, might not stand in the will of man, but in “the power of an endless life.”

In this service of love he continued some years, and his labours were so blessed, that great numbers were convinced by his ministry and that of others who were gathered into the same inward divine principle, who at first were called Children of the Light, But the power and reverential awe attending them so affected their minds, and those of the piously disposed people to whom they ministered, as often to cause them to tremble before the Divine Majesty, under an
 abasing

abasing sense of their own unworthiness, whence they were in derision called Quakers; which name they have since been most generally known by in the world; tho' from their mutual love and patient suffering of injuries, which they held ought ever to mark the followers of Christ, they stiled themselves Friends, or the Friends of Truth. Thus it was, that a man without any worldly advantages of station or literature, merely by a continued attention to the guidance of that Divine Light, which he bore testimony to in the energy and power of his ministry the convincing plainness and clearness of his doctrine, and the correspondent sanctity of his life, became an instrument in the Lord's hand, to collect from all professions and most ranks, great numbers of piously disposed people, who were at length embodied into a religious society, governed by one of the best systems of Christian Discipline that history affords any account of.

These converts to the Light of Christ in the Soul of Man, were distinguishable for a grave, sedate deportment; singular uprightness in their dealings; punctuality in the performance of their promises; a sparing-

ness

ness in discourse; great temperance and frugality at their tables; and plainness and simplicity in their dress and behaviour. They declined servile and fantastical gestures, compliments and other customary forms of salutation, such as putting off the hat, scraping the foot, bending the knee, drinking healths, &c. esteeming them to be violations of that sincerity and seriousness which becomes Christians; yet considered it their duty to treat all men with gentleness and respect. Making use of the singular number (Thou) as most proper and consistent with Scripture and the most approved ancient writers, avoiding the customary use of the plural (You) when speaking to a single person, with such other flattering titles of address as serve to feed the pride of the human heart, accounting them both contrary to the simplicity of the gospel, and inconsistent with truth. They refused such names of the months or days of the week as were derived from the gods of the heathen, believing that under the gospel dispensation those prophecies were to be fulfilled, by which the Lord declared, “ he would so
 “ effectually take away the name of Baalim
 “ from his people, that they should no
 “ more

“ more be remembered by their names.”

Zech. xiii. 2. Hosea ii. 17.

They maintained that as the end of true Religion is to redeem the minds of mankind from the spirit of the world, and bring them to an inward communion with God, that therefore the pursuit of worldly fashions, all diversions, such as gaming, dancing, stage playing and other amusements of the same baneful tendency, are to be refrained from as evidently tending to raise the human mind which is prone to vanity, above the preserving fear of God, and to weaken its desires after those effusions of his love and goodness, wherewith it ought to seek daily to be leavened. For according to scripture testimony and the correspondent evidences of Gospel Light in their own hearts, they found that while men's affections are engrossed by the pleasures and delights of this world. they are dead to a sense of the Divine Life in them; the absolute necessity of regeneration and the power by which this great work is effected, are both included in that doctrine of the apostle, “ If ye live after
 “ the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through
 “ the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the
 “ body, ye shall live: For as many as are
 “ led

“ led by the Spirit of God they are the
 “ Sons of God.” Rom. viii. 13.

It was about thirty years after the first appearance of the Quakers in England, that many of them settled in America. In the year 1681, the province of Pennsylvania being granted to William Penn, he removed thither with a considerable number of his friends, mostly of the people called Quakers. It is worthy of special notice, that most of the settlements in America were made with little regard to any prior title in the natives; but William Penn did not think his permission to colonize the tract of land granted to him by king Charles II. a sufficient title to the country; but assembled the Sachems or Princes, and obtain their consent to settle upon the extent of land that he wanted. When it became necessary to extend the settlement, new lands were purchased from the original possessors, which established so much love and confidence in them towards William Penn and the first settlers of Pennsylvania, that his and their names were, and still continue to be, revered amongst them.

Such a tolleration and liberty of conscience was established in Pennsylvania, as
 pro-

promoted and maintained a true sense of religion, which penal laws have ever failed of effecting; hypocrisy and profaneness were discouraged, and those Ecclesiastical Establishments which tend to deprive men of their religious and civil rights avoided. William Penn granted a general toleration to all who professed to believe in one Supreme Almighty Being; and allowed the different sects of Christians to hold offices, and to enjoy the highest posts in the state; as by the Charter of Privileges, dated 28th October 1701, is expressly provided, viz. “ Because
 “ no people can be truly happy though un-
 “ der the greatest enjoyment of Civil Li-
 “ berties, if abridged of the freedom
 “ of their Consciences, as to their religi-
 “ ous profession and worship; and Al-
 “ mighty God being the only Lord of con-
 “ science, Father of lights and spirits, and
 “ the author as well as object of all divine
 “ knowledge, faith and worship, who on-
 “ ly doth enlighten the minds and persuade
 “ and convince the understandings of peo-
 “ ple: I do hereby grant and declare that
 “ no person or persons inhabiting in this
 “ Province or Territories, who shall con-
 “ fess and acknowledge one almighty God,
 “ the creator, upholder and ruler of the
 “ world, and profess him or themselves

“ obliged to live quietly under the civil go-
 “ vernment, shall be in any case molested
 “ or prejudiced in his or their person or
 “ estate, because of his or their conscien-
 “ tious persuasion or practice; nor be com-
 “ pelled to frequent or maintain any reli-
 “ gious worship, place or ministry contra-
 “ ry to his or their mind; or to do, or suf-
 “ fer any other act or thing contrary to
 “ their religious persuasion. And that all
 “ persons who also profess to beleive in Je-
 “ sus Christ, the Saviour of the world, shall
 “ be capable (notwithstanding their other
 “ persuasions and practices in point of con-
 “ science and religion) to serve this govern-
 “ ment in any capacity, both legislatively
 “ and executively.”

And in order to guard, as much as was in
 his power against the instability of future
 human councils, William Penn provided,
 in the most solemn manner, in the last para-
 graph of his charter, that this most essential
 Liberty and Privilege should be preserved
 inviolate, in the following memorable con-
 clusion of it, viz. “ But because the happi-
 “ ness of mankind depends so much upon
 “ the enjoying of liberty of their conscien-
 “ ces as aforesaid, I do hereby solemnly de-
 “ clare, promise and grant for me, my heirs
 “ and assigns, that the first article of this
 “ charter

“ charter, relating to Liberty of Conscience
 “ and every part and clause therein, accor-
 “ ding to the true intent and meaning there-
 “ of, shall be kept and remain, without any
 “ alteration, inviolably forever. . And last-
 “ ly, I the said William Penn, proprietary
 “ and governor of the province of Pennsylv-
 “ vania and Territories thereunto belong-
 “ ing, for myself, my heirs and assigns have
 “ solemnly declared, granted and confirm-
 “ ed, and do hereby solemnly declare,
 “ grant and confirm, that neither I, my
 “ heirs or assigns shall, procure or do, any
 “ thing or things, whereby the liberties in
 “ this charter contained and expressed, nor
 “ any part thereof, shall be infringed or
 “ broken; and if any thing shall be pro-
 “ cured or done by any person or persons
 “ contrary to these presents it shall be held
 “ of no force or effect.”

This general Liberty of Conscience was
 the natural effect of the divine principle of
 light and truth professed by the Quakers,
 who hold none excluded from the favour
 of God on account of their different religi-
 ous persuasion, provided it be founded on
 the fear of God and love to mankind. A
 government established upon so liberal and
 extensive a plan, was an encouragement to
 great numbers of different persuasions to
 emigrate

emigrate from various countries, where many had suffered for their non conformity to ecclesiastical requisitions, to settle under a constitution, the basis of which was religious and civil liberty, to which wise provision the rapid settlement and improvement of the Province has, by the blessing of Providence, been principally owing. It is a situation of society beautiful in prospect and happy in the enjoyment, when men mutually give and receive liberty to live with equality and affection; if not as belonging to the same visible church, yet to the same fraternity of mankind; agreeable to our blessed Saviours doctrine, " One is your master and all ye are brethren. " Mat. xxiii. 8." The changes which for a number of years past have gradually prevailed in this once peaceful land, principally owing to the great accession of people of different dispositions from the first settlers, the views of many of whom having been to amass wealth and aggrandize themselves, has very much reversed the system of happiness so long and successfully pursued: Hence the friendly disposition of the Indians conspicuous for a long course of years in favour of the inhabitants, has been so changed that Pennsylvania, after enjoying an uninterrupted peace of more than

sixty

sixty years, has, in common with the other colonies, suffered severely from the incursions of the natives.

Their DOCTRINES.

The Universality of the Grace of GOD,
and its saving Effects.

THE Doctrine they principally hold is, that there is one God, almighty, holy, pure and eternal; who of his infinite love has offered salvation, through Jesus Christ his son, “ Who should taste death “ for every man.” Heb. ii. 9. “ Who “ will have all men to be saved and to come “ unto the knowledge of the truth:” 1 Tim. ii. 4. That a gift of saving Light and Grace “ hath appeared to all men; teaching us, “ that denying ungodliness, and worldly “ lusts, we should live soberly, righteous- “ ly and godly, in this present world.” Titus ii. 12. That this light is Christ, “ the true light which lighteth every man “ that cometh into the world.” John i. 9. The divine Principle of redeeming power which under the dispensation of the law was pointed to in types and ceremonies is by the gospel revealed to be “ Christ in you “ (saith the Apostle) the hope of glory,” Col. i. 27. that is agreeable to the promise made

made to the fathers, " that all shall know
 " him (i. e. the Lord) from the least of them
 " to the greatest." Jer. xxxi. 33. " I will
 " put my law in their inward parts, and
 " write it in their hearts, and will be their
 " God and they shall be my people."

The Quakers hold that this law of truth, this test of virtue and vice is not hid from any part of mankind; but that every man born into the world, is enlightned by it: The serious and well disposed Heathens, in different ages and nations, have, under various appellations, expressed their sensibility of the existence and efficacy of this Divine Principle, this law of God written in the heart, to deliver from that corruption, under which they laboured. Socrates, Plato, Seneca, Epictetus and several others of the philosophers called their disciples to an attention to its dictates. These doubtless were some of those virtuous Heathens commended in the scriptures, Rom. ii. 14. " Who
 " tho' they had not," instrumentally, been taught the law, yet from a conformity to this inward principle of divine intelligence, " do by nature the things contained in the
 " law, were a law unto themselves, which
 " (says the Apostle) shew the work of the
 " law written in their hearts,"* this they maintain to be a light of God's own nature;

" the

* Rom. ii. 14, 15.

“ the Life of him being the light of men. John i. 4. And therefore superior to and distinct from the mere light of our natural faculties, because it doth not properly appertain to men as fallen creatures; but is the gift of God, superadded to them, thro’ Jesus Christ, for their information and assistance, in pursuing after those things which relate to the favour of God and their eternal Salvation. Hence the Quakers hold it as a fundamental doctrine, that whosoever will carefully and seriously turn into himself, with a sincere desire to know and practice his duty, will not fail to find there a sufficient director, a ray from the fountain of light, illuminating his understanding and assisting him to distinguish good from evil. As saith the Prophet, ‘ He hath shewed the
 ‘ O man what is good, and what doth the
 ‘ Lord require of thee; but to do justly
 ‘ and to love mercy, and to walk humbly
 ‘ with thy God.’ Mich. vi. 8. They are persuaded that as many as resist not this light, in whatever part of the world they live, or of what mode of religious profession they may be, it produceth holiness, righteousness, purity and other fruits acceptable to God, agreeable to the declaration made by the Apostle Peter, after he had been at the house of Cornelius, ‘ of a
 ‘ truth

‘ truth I perceive that God is no respecter
 ‘ of persons; but in every nation, he that
 ‘ feareth him, and worketh righteousness,
 ‘ is accepted with him.’ Acts x. 34, 35.
 ‘ Yet shall not thy teachers be removed in-
 ‘ to a corner any more, but thine eyes shall
 ‘ see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear
 ‘ a word behind the saying, This is the way
 ‘ walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right
 ‘ hand, and when ye turn to the left.’
 Isaiah xxx. 20. 21.

They esteem the Scriptures of the old and
 new Testament above all other writings, be-
 lieving them to be given by Divine Inspira-
 tion, as a rule of faith and practice, in sub-
 ordination to the light and spirit of God,
 which is the primary rule---that much de-
 pends on the scriptures being judged of un-
 der the influence of the same Divine Spirit
 which gave them forth; that otherwise, in
 the hands of men actuated by their corrupt
 propensities, they may and have been used
 as a pretext for doing many things abhor-
 rent to the nature and spirit of the gospel.
 Witness those terrible persecutions which a
 false zeal, joined to a wrong construction of
 the scripture, have occasioned. They de-
 cline to call them the word of God, as be-
 ing a denomination properly attributed to
 Christ alone; and they are the more scrupu-
 lous

lous in this respect, because people are apt to be hereby led to think that if they have the scriptures, they have all that is necessary to salvation, and look for no further Word or Light.

ON WAR.

THE Quakers absolutely declare against being concerned in the destruction of their fellow men, who equally with themselves are the objects of saving grace; hence they can take no part in war, being persuaded that all wars stand in opposition to the intent and nature of the gospel: War being the sad effect of the fall of man; a fall from meekness, purity and love, into sensuality, pride revenge and wrath. The apostle James, Chap. 4th, hath stated the question with respect to the cause of war, so as to preclude all difficulty and doubt about it: “ From whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your lusts.” James iv. 1. The evident fruits of a spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ, opposite both in its nature and effects to the pure religion he hath called men to the practice of; wherefore they are convinced that the followers of the meek and peaceable Jesus, ought to take no part

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in war; but rather to labour in the ability received from the blessed Mediator, to reconcile men unto God and one unto another. “ Blessed (saith our merciful Saviour) are the meek for they shall inherit the earth: “ Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God,” Mat. v. 5. 9. They will enjoy that peace of God which passeth all human understanding. And the Apostle speaking of the believers adds, “ Tho’ we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” 2 Cor. x. 3. 4. They look upon the gospel of Jesus Christ to be an eminent display of divine benignity and love to mankind; that the son of God took upon him flesh and suffered, and died to destroy that enmity which thro’ sin had prevailed over the whole human race, and to restore unto fallen man the first life of purity and love; “ leaving us (saith the apostle) an example that ye should follow his steps. 1 Peter ii. 21. They believe the wars mentioned in the old Testament afford no argument for its continuance under the gospel, which is declared to be “ the bringing in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 19. a dispensation of peculiar love and mercy

mercy to mankind, which our Saviour himself distinguishes from the former dispensation, when he says: “ Ye have heard that
 “ it hath been said, An eye for an eye and
 “ a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you,
 “ That ye resist not evil; again Ye have
 “ heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt
 “ love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy:
 “ But I say unto you, Love your enemies,
 “ bless them that curse you, do good to
 “ them that hate you and pray for them
 “ which despitefully use you and persecute
 “ you, that ye may be the children of your
 “ father which is in heaven.” Mat. v. 38,
 39, 43, 44, 55.

Agreeable to this is the testimony of most if not all the antient fathers, Jus. Martyr, Tertu. Ambrose, Chrys. Hierom. Athan. Cyrill. Alex. &c. and faithful christians of the first three hundred years after Christ, as their writings clearly shew, wherein they declare that the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah: Isai. ii. 4. Mich. iv. 3. “ They
 “ shall beat their swords into plow-shares
 “ and their spears into pruning-hooks: Na-
 “ tion shall not lift up sword against nation-
 “ neither shall they learn war any more;” relating to the establishment of the peaceable reign of the Messiah, as well as the de-
 claration

claration made by the Angels at the birth of Christ, of “Peace on earth, good will towards men,” Luke ii. 14. were verified in the experience of the faithful in their days.

The inspired Apostle describes the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be “love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; Gal. v. 22, 23. so that these important truths experienced by holy men of early and latter ages, manifest that this doctrine and firm persuasion of the Quakers is not new; and it must be allowed, that essential service may arise from their holding up the efficacy of this divine principle, which leads to “overcome evil with good,” Rom. xii. 21. to a world distracted with wrath, covetousness and pride; nor should it appear strange that the doctrine of the cross of Christ is mysterious to the carnal wisdom of man, it was “to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, saith the Apostle, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” I Cor. i. 23, 24.

And however threatening the maintenance of this peaceable testimony may appear, of bringing deep suffering upon those who are faithful therein; yet they believe that Christ
the

the blessed Shepherd of his flock, will ever uphold those who faithfully follow him, in the meek, forgiving, suffering spirit. They cannot consider victories obtained by the destruction of men, as occasions of rejoicing; much less as subjects of thanksgiving to the creator of mankind; a God of love of peace and goodness, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." 1 John iv. 16. but regard them as occasions of lamentation, and mourning, both on account of those who, inflamed with rage, and defiled with blood, are precipitated into an awful eternity, and of those who are left to share and deplore the desolations of war; also in the consideration, that the understanding of any, who bear the christian name, should be so exceedingly blind to the nature of the gospel, as to imagine its Divine Author, who declares "He came not to destroy mens lives; but "to save them," Luke ix. 56. can look with favour on such addresses, as arise from a conduct totally repugnant to the great end of his coming.

OF WORSHIP.

THEY look upon Divine worship to be the most solemn act the mind of man

man is capable of being engaged in, and in consideration of the high and inconceivable Majesty of almighty God, think it their duty to approach him with the greatest reverence. They assert that the true worship of God is in Spirit and in Truth, not limited to any place or time, agreeable to our Lord's declaration to the woman of Samaria; "The hour cometh and now is, when
 " the true worshippers shall worship the
 " Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the
 " Father seeketh such to worship him." John iv 23. which is to be performed through the operation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord, who regards the prayer of the humble and contrite, that in sincerity seek him, and has declared, "where two or
 " three are gathered together in my name,
 " there am I in the midst of them;" Matt. xviii. 20. to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isaiah lvii. 15.

They acknowledge no priestly office to subsist under the gospel dispensation, in any other sense than as every sincere christian may be called a priest as he offers up to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, from a pure and contrite heart, in which respect the apostle calls all true christians a royal
 priesthood

priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices—a holy nation, a peculiar people. 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9.

They apprehend it their duty to be diligent in assembling themselves together for the public worship of almighty God, when such as are duly prepared by being gathered into a composed awful frame of mind, are enabled under the influence of divine grace to worship, in solemn silence, during the whole time of the meeting, or if moved thereto, to pray or preach (i. e. prophecy) as the spirit giveth them utterance; agreeable to the practice of the primitive church, without distinction of quality or sex; every one who is of a sober life and approved conversation, if divinely called or moved thereto, is permitted to speak in their assemblies, and as such persevere therein to the satisfaction of the congregation, they are recommended as gospel ministers. They say, that as well at meals as on all other occasions, a sense of gratitude should be lived in for the blessing, preservation and support we daily receive, particularly looking up to God and waiting to feel the motion of his Spirit to animate to mental prayer, without which all vocal expression is insufficient.

They think men ought to be very careful in their pretensions to the ministerial gifts,
it

it being very presumptuous and dangerous in any to take upon them that high office without being divinely called thereto, and that no man has a sufficient ground to think he is called to the ministry by the Holy-Ghost, without a clear putting forth of the Spirit in his heart, from a sense of duty to God, and a feeling, pressing, disinterested love to the brethren, to the satisfaction of the congregation or meeting he belongs to. This to them appears to comprehend the substance of the primitive ordination in the apostolic age. To settle salaries and pensions for the maintenance of the ordained preachers, who afterwards exact them as a debt, they look upon as a dishonour to the ministry of the gospel, degrading it to a worldly traffic: That agreeable to our Saviour's positive command, "Having freely received they ought freely to give." Matt. x. 8. The Apostle Paul declared, "That his own hands had ministered unto his necessities." Acts xx. 34.

As the Quakers hold it a fundamental doctrine, "That it is the Spirit that giveth life," 2 Cor. iii. 6. "That God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world," 1 Cor. i. 20. They cannot esteem human learning to be a necessary qualification to
the

the ministry, the Apostle declares to the believers, “ that not many wise men after the
 “ flesh, not many mighty, not many no-
 “ ble are called, but God hath chosen the
 “ foolish things and the weak things of the
 “ world to confound the things which are
 “ mighty; yea and things which are not,
 “ to bring to nought things that are, that
 “ no flesh should glory in his presence.
 “ And my speech and my preaching was
 “ not with enticing words of man’s wis-
 “ dom, but in demonstration of spirit and
 “ power; that your faith should not stand
 “ in the wisdom of men; but in the pow-
 “ er of God.” i Cor. i. 26.--ii. 4. 5.

For the same reason they utterly disclaim that divinity falsely so called, taught in the schools, and those degrees conferred in Academies; the nature of which, they look upon tends to puff up the vain mind in estimation of its own importance, to assume lordship and to seek honour one from another, in opposition to the advice of our Saviour to his disciples, “ Not to be called
 “ Rabbi;” but directs to a brotherly equality among his disciples, “ One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Matt. xxiii. 8. They also refuse to pay tythes or to contribute to the support of

a hireling ministry, looking upon the forcible demand of the clergy of all denominations who claim a maintenance by laws, to be an usurpation not in the least warranted by, but contrary to scripture, under the gospel, which they are in conscience obliged to withstand.

They assert that amongst the many mistaken practices which have been introduced and correspond not with the voice of Christ the only Shepherd of the Soul, none appears more opposed to the meek and humble, self-denying state of the gospel, than the practice of those “ Who teach for hire
 “ and divine for money,” Micah iii. 11. who are generally ready “ to prepare war
 “ against those who put not into their
 Mouths,” Cap. iii. 5. and arrogate to themselves, that they, by virtue of their several ordinations are the only guides and shepherds of all Christians, who are to receive the gospel from their lips, in contradiction to the promise made to the believers, “ That
 “ all should know the Lord from the least
 “ to the greatest. Heb. viii. 11.

Notwithstanding the testimony of the Quakers is against those preachers, among the different denominations, that labour in their own will, who preach for hire and di-
 vine

vine for money, yet they respect such among them who are men fearing God and hating covetousness, and have engaged in that weighty service from an apprehension of duty, nor do they deny that the spirit of Grace sometimes condescends to co-operate with the religious labours of such: Nevertheless they cannot direct the searchers after truth to the ministry of any man, but to the immediate teaching of “the word nigh
“in the heart,” even the Spirit of God, which is the only infallible teacher, the primary adequate rule of faith and practice, which will lead those who attend to its dictates into the knowledge of truth and righteousness.

And as there is a general dispensation of Divine Grace, alike to male and female, who in scripture are declared to be all one in Christ, they admit that women have a like call to the ministry as the men, and are made equally partakers of the same enlargement of Spirit, peculiar to the gospel times; as was clearly prophesied by the prophet Joel and confirmed by the apostle Peter, at the time of pentecost, viz. “That God
“would pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh,
“and their sons and their daughters should
“prophecy---and on my servants and on
“my

“ my hand-maids will I pour out, in those
 “ days, of my Spirit, and they shall pro-
 “ phesy,” Acts ii. 17, 18. the apostle Paul,
 also, gives directions to both sexes, how they
 are to behave themselves in their publick
 praying, or prophesying, both which signify
 speaking unto men to exhortation and com-
 fort. Whence it may be safely concluded,
 that the prohibition that apostle lays on a
 woman’s speaking, of which such a handle
 is made to deprive the church of so great a
 benefit, was only intended as a check to the
 unwarrantable activity of some women, at
 that peculiar time, and by no means in con-
 tradiction to what himself had said in con-
 firmation of the fore-mentioned prophesy.

On BAPTISM and the SUPPER.

THE Quakers being convinced that no
 outward practice can give a possession
 in the kingdom of God, but it is solely the
 renovation of heart called in scripture the
 New Creature, that can justly entitle us to
 the appellation of Children of God, agree-
 able to the apostle’s doctrine, “ That the
 “ kingdom of God is not meat and drink;
 “ but righteousness, and peace and joy in
 “ the Holy Ghost,” Rom. xiv. 17, they
 see

see no necessity for continuing the use of water baptism, and the outward supper in the church, esteeming these to have been used only as figures pointing to the substance, and abstractedly considered of no greater avail than Washing the feet, circumcision or any Jewish rite to the renovation of mind we stand in need of; yet believe there are those who use these signs in uprightnes, and that the Lord, who respects the disposition of the mind more than any outward circumstance, condescends to favour such with the blessing of peace: They agree that some of the apostles used water-baptism, in the infant state of the church, while the Jewish part of the believers remained under some attachment to the preceeding shadowy dispensation of the law; but we may observe that Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, who was not under those prejudices says, “ that
 “ Christ sent him not to baptize, but to
 “ preach the Gospel,” 1 Cor. i. 17. and declares the baptizing power of the Holy Ghost to be an essential means of admission into the church of Christ, “ For, (says he)
 “ by one spirit are we all baptized into one
 “ body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles,
 “ whether we be bond or free; and have
 “ been all made to drink into one spirit.”

1 Cor. xii. 13. The same apostle expressly declares, “ That there is one Lord, one
 “ Faith, one Baptism.” Eph. iv. 5, And the apostle Peter, “ That the baptism which
 “ saveth, is not the putting away of the
 “ filth of the flesh, but the answer of a
 “ good conscience towards God, by the
 “ resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Now in this advanced age of the church when Christ is confessed by all denominations of christians to be the great Antitype, in whom all the figures and shadows of the law are fulfilled, for any to insist on the perpetuation of these forms, and place their dependance thereon for the accomplishment of that work of salvation which can only be wrought by his saving spirit and power, they apprehend is to derogate from his honour and tends to stop the seeking mind in a dangerous dependance on something short of the true object. Thus the water baptism of John was carefully distinguished by himself, from that of Christ, by which the purification of the soul is effected,
 “ I indeed (says he) baptize you with water
 “ unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I
 “ am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize
 “ you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire.

Matt.

Matt. iii. 11. Accordingly when in obedience to Christ's directions, the disciples were assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and then experienced the descent of this baptizing power upon them, it opened their mouths in testimony to its quickning influence; and when afterwards, under the same divine qualification, Peter began to preach to some at the house of Cornelius, he says, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as
 " on us at the beginning: Then remember-
 " ed I the word of the Lord, how that he
 " said, John indeed baptized with water;
 " but ye shall be baptized with the Holy
 Ghost." Acts xi. 15. 16.

The like spiritual acceptation the Quakers give to the Lord's supper, the outward practice of which they apprehend was only to continue until he came by his spiritual appearance, who is the antitype, fulfilled the law and put an end to all the Jewish rites; and that they who experience his coming a second time, without sin unto salvation, feel the force and propriety of the apostle's rebuke, and dare not return to the
 " beggarly elements," Gal. iv. 8 9. "When
 " ye knew not God ye did service unto them
 " which by nature are no Gods; but now
 " after that ye have known God, or rather
 " are

“ are known of God, how turn ye a-
 “ gain to the weak and beggarly elements,
 “ whereunto ye desire again, to be in
 “ bondage;” but desire to feed by faith;
 on him, who testified thus of himself,
 “ Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my
 “ blood hath eternal life, and I will raise
 “ him up at the last day; for my flesh is meat
 “ indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He
 “ that eateth my flesh and drinketh my
 “ blood, dwelleth in me and I in him,” John
 vi. 54, 55, 56. which declaration clearly
 points to the communication of his divine
 nature, alluded to where he is described as
 standing at a door, waiting for an entrance
 to bless the hungry soul with the enjoyment
 of it; “ Behold! I stand at the door and
 “ knock, if any man hear my voice and o-
 “ pen the door, I will come in to him and
 “ will sup with him and he with me.” Rev.
 iii. 20. This is the holy supper and blessed
 communion of saints, which the living
 members of the church experience and is
 still continued to the followers of Christ:
 So that though they reject the use of those
 outward ceremonies, yet they are advocates
 for the true spiritual baptism and the Lord’s
 supper, which are those inward and spiri-
 tual graces to which the figures point.

ON SWEARING.

THEY teach a strict regard to Truth without swearing, according to the injunction of our blessed Saviour, “ Swear not at all; but let your communication be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay---for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil,” Matt. v. 34, 37. and the exhortation of the apostle James; “ But above all things my brethren swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation,” James v. 12. apprehending that were the mind is under the tye and bond of truth, there can be no necessity for oaths and asseverations, which are evidently the least regarded by those who make the freest use of them: Yet willing to submit to any punishment for false affirming, which others are liable to for perjury. And in this there is reason to believe they follow the example of the fathers of the five first centuries, who according to Dr. Whitby (in his dissert. de script. interp. p. 154) and other authors agree, that oaths of all kinds were unlawful to christians in the first centuries of the church.

On S L A V E R Y.

TH E Slavery, which during a long course of years has subsisted in America, promoted by a cruel and criminal trade, carried on both from Europe and America, for the fixed purpose of purchasing the African Negroes, in order to subject them to a state of bondage, being one of the great evils now prevailing amongst the professors of christianity, when considered in its nature and effects, as well to the Negroes, as to their lordly oppressors and their unhappy offspring, hath particularly engaged the attention of this religious society, who have required all their members to avoid being, in any respect, concerned in the support of this infamous traffick; and have also enjoined all their members who have any of these oppressed people in possession, that they should, without delay, set them at liberty; and directed that such who refused to comply with this injunction, shall be considered as no longer in fellowship with them and to have renounced their right of membership. And having also observed the many disadvantages these afflicted people labour under in point of education and otherwise

wife

wife, a tender care has taken place to promote their instruction in school learning, and also their religious and temporal welfare, in order to qualify them for becoming reputable members of society.

Their DISCIPLINE and OECONOMY.

RELIGIOUS society in its simplest form, being an agreement of its members to watch over each other for good, as in this lapsed state of existence, we are subject to many weaknesses and stand in need of the care and counsel one of another; hence discipline, for the well government of such a society becomes necessary. Thus where a number of this people are settled in a neighbourhood and belong to one established meeting for worship, if any individual falls into indigent circumstances, when such case becomes known, relief is administered; or if any member walk disorderly, or a report is spread to his disadvantage, that person of the society who first observes or hears thereof, is enjoined privately to admonish him, carefully avoiding a disclosure of the matter to a third person, until repeated trials to reclaim him prove ineffectual. He is then to take a judicious person with him, and if
their

their united endeavours prove also fruitless, his case is made known to the overseers, of which there are generally one or more in each particular meeting; whose business it is to see that the order and rules of the society are observed, and who after visiting the offender and finding him irreclaimable, first apprize him of their intention and then lay his case before the elders, overseers and other members of the meeting he belongs to, where if none are inclined to visit him again, it is carried forward to the monthly meeting, which is a meeting generally made up of the members of several such particular meetings as lie contiguous to it; here a committee is commonly deputed to use further endeavours to convince and regain the offender; but if after repeatedly visiting and waiting upon him a proper time, no sign of amendment is reported, that meeting proceeds to testify its disapprobation of his conduct, and that he has thereby excluded himself from a right of membership in the society. This testification it is usual to deliver him a copy of, and inform him of his right of appeal from their judgment, to the quarterly meeting, which consists of the members who constitute the monthly meetings within each county; and from the quarterly meetings

meeting appeals also lie to the yearly meeting. which is a collection of all the quarterly meetings; here appeals are finally determined; rules for the government of the society are agreed on; with such advices as from time to time appear necessary.

The Quakers refusal to unite in any thing of a warlike nature, which proceeds from a conviction that every measure which tends to the destruction of mankind is inconsistent with the nature of the Gospel; their refusing to join in publick rejoicing for successes obtained in war; their denying to swear in any case; to pay tythes, or to contribute to the support of the national ministry; as well as their nonconformity to the common modes of address, &c. have subjected them to much obloquy and many grievous sufferings which nevertheless have been much mitigated by the indulgence different governments have extended to them, convinced by their patient sufferings, that their profession of conscientious scruples were sincere, and that nothing dangerous to civil society could be apprehended from a people who utterly disclaimed the use of arms, or of being in any wise concerned in fomenting divisions or civil commotions, and who think it their duty to contribute their endeavours

vours for the peace and welfare of every country where their lots are cast, and are willing chearfully to comply with every just requisition, for the support of the civil order of government, not inconsistent with what they apprehend is their duty to God. They are careful to minister to the necessities of those among them whose circumstances call for relief, not suffering any of their members to become a publick charge; they moreover chearfully pay their equal assessment with others, for the support of the general poor. Nor have any other people manifested a greater desire and willingness to promote the welfare of civil society, by their liberality in contributing to the relief of the poor, and in attention to the care of them; and in the management of those institutions which have been established for the benefit of the community at large: For a considerable number of years many of them were concerned with others in the legislative and executive part of civil government, wherein they manifested a firm attachment to the constitutional rights of the people; but as acting in these stations was attended with snares and temptations, it was the concern of their yearly-meeting to excite such to a watchful care against deviating from their christian, peaceable principles; and

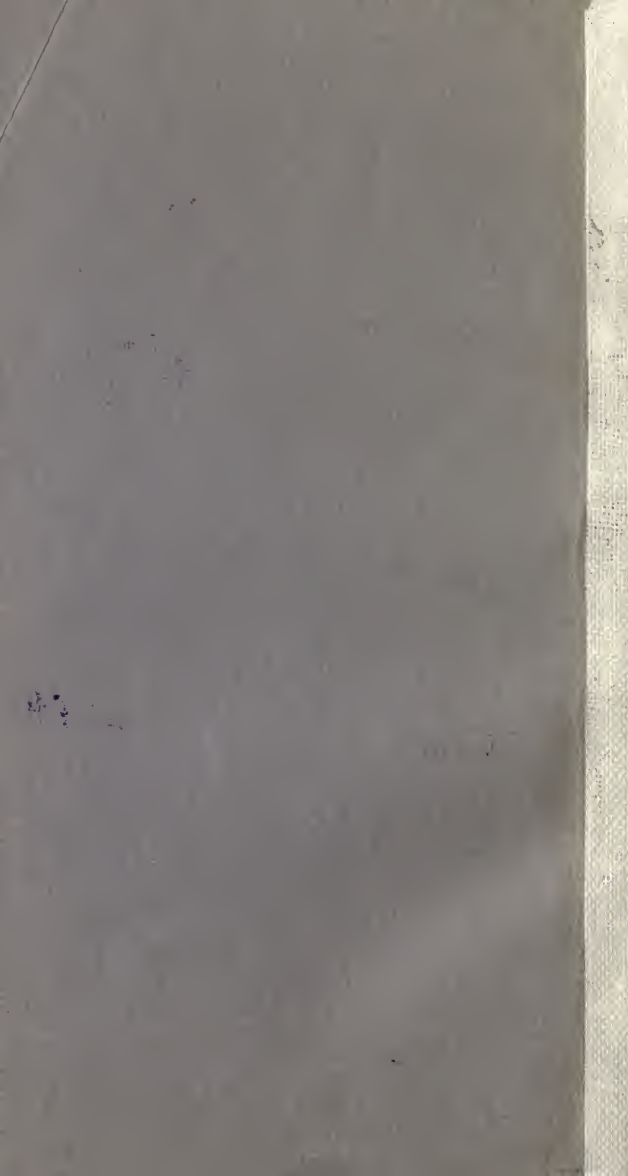
and at length as the inhabitants became numerous, by emigrations from Europe and otherwise, and the holding public offices was attended with greater difficulty, services being required which interfered more immediately with their religious principles, the yearly meeting advised their members to withdraw therefrom, perceiving that the seeking or accepting of offices in legislation or magistracy was dangerous and frequently injurious to the individuals in a religious sense; more especially when sought for and accepted for the sake of the profits, emoluments and worldly honours annexed to them, tending to debase the mind to the odious bondage of ambition and avarice.

If upon observing the conduct of many who profess themselves members of this religious society, any should be offended at the great deviation which appears in the practice of such from their principles as set forth in the foregoing account, they are desired to consider the frailty and corruption of the human heart in its fallen state; its natural bias and attachment to the world, to its delights, its friendship and honours, and remember how repugnant these propensities are to the precepts and self-denying example left us by our Lord; that the
 necessary

necessary change of heart which the gospel proposes, is not gained by birth, but must be purchased by submission to, and an humble abiding under the cross of Christ. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Matt. xvi. 24. When this is duly weighed, it will not appear strange if the instances of defection are many; it was early the case amongst the believers in the primitive ages of christianity, when they grew numerous and hath been the case in all religious societies since that time. Nevertheless it is great cause of encouragement to the upright enquirer, that a large number of those people are mercifully preserved, in an eminent degree faithful to their first principles and doctrine and upright in their life and conversation, who are living monuments of the efficacy and all sufficient grace of God as witnesses for him and for his truth and righteousness on earth.

They who are desirous of more full information respecting the doctrine and principles of this people, are referred to the writings of Robert Barclay, William Penn, George Whitehead and others by whom they are fully set forth as also of late times by Joseph Phipps.

THE END.



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