

A
Brief Statement
of the
Doctrines and Principles
As Ever Believed
by Friends

Issued by
North Carolina Yearly Meeting
of Friends, at Woodland,
North Carolina

1935

At North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, held at Cedar Grove, Woodland, North Carolina, by adjournments, from the 17th of Eighth Month to the 21st of the same, inclusive, 1935.

A Document reasserting the Principles and Doctrines as ever held by true Friends, prepared by a Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting last year, and forwarded to this meeting by the Representative Body, was read and approved, and it was referred to the Representative Body for publication and distribution.

Taken from the minutes, and signed on behalf of the meeting.

MAHLON NEWLIN,
GULIA O. WINSLOW,
Clerks.

**A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINES
AND PRINCIPLES AS EVER BELIEVED
AND PRACTICED BY FRIENDS.**

Though Friends, early in their history, in their earnest zeal for the promotion and defense of the truth, often gave forth statements of their religious beliefs, which are still on record; and later there have been other statements issued, yet these are not now available for distribution, so, for the information of our younger members, and the people in general, we issue the following statement of our principles and doctrines, which we wish to commend by consistent Christian living.

We would have people convinced of these principles, not by human authority, but from the conviction of the Holy Spirit, for we believe that it is by the Spirit of Christ only, that the true knowledge of God, and all things spiritual can be revealed, according to the declaration of the Scriptures, "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" and we believe that it is this Spirit alone that giveth life, and that can guide into all Truth.

While Friends have strongly emphasized the necessity of the inward work of Christ, by His light and spirit, as a fundamental principle, yet true Friends have always put a right, or high value upon His outward work for man's salvation, believing that without His outward work, the inward could not be, as well as without His inward work, none can partake of the benefit of the outward.

Friends, from their beginning, have most firmly believed, both in the Humanity, and in the Divinity of Christ, our Saviour; in His atoning sacrifice through His death; in His resurrection and ascension, and in His mediation and intercession, and we hereby assert our firm belief of the same, feeling that we could not consistently claim their name, nor to be their successors, if we believed differently.

George Fox makes Friends' belief in the Father and the Son very clear, in a letter written to the Governor and Council of Barbadoes, on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends, to clear them from some malicious misrepresentations.

He says, "We own and believe in the only, wise, Omnipotent and everlasting God, the Creator of all things in heaven and in earth, and the preserver of all that He hath made; who is God over all blessed forever, to Whom be all honor, glory, dominion, praise, and thanksgiving, both now and forevermore. And we own and believe in Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the express image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature; by Whom were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him.

"And we own and believe that He was made a sacrifice for sin, Who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; that He was crucified for us in the flesh, without the gates of Jerusalem; and that He was buried and rose again the third day, by the power of His Father, for our justification, and that He ascended up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God.

“This Jesus, Who was the foundation of the holy prophets and apostles, is our foundation; and we believe there is no other foundation to be laid, but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus, Who tasted death for every man, shed His blood for all men; is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world: according as John the Baptist testified of Him when he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.’

“We believe that He alone is our Redeemer and Saviour, the Captain of our Salvation, who saves us from sin, as well as from hell and the wrath to come, and destroys the devil and all his works; He is the seed of the woman, that bruises the serpent's head, *viz.*, Christ Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. He is, as the Scriptures of Truth say of Him, our wisdom, righteousness, justification, and redemption; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

“He alone is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls: He is our Prophet whom Moses long since testified of, saying, ‘A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you: and it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.’

“He is now come in Spirit, and hath given us an understanding that we know Him that is true. He rules in our hearts by His law of love and life, and makes us free from the law of sin and death. We have no life but by Him, for He is the quickening Spirit, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, by whose blood we are cleansed and our consciences sprinkled from dead works to serve the living God. He is our mediator, Who makes peace and reconciliation between God offended and us offending; He being the oath of God, the new covenant of light, life, grace and peace, the author and finisher of our faith. This Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Man, the Immanuel, God with us, we all own and believe in; He Whom the high-priest raged against, and said He had spoken blasphemy; Whom the priests and elders of the Jews took counsel together against, and put to death; the same Whom Judas betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, which the priests gave him as a reward for his treason; who also gave large money to the soldiers, to broach a horrible lie, namely, that His disciples came and stole Him away by night while they slept. After He was risen from the dead, the history of the acts of the Apostles sets forth how the chief priests and the elders persecuted the disciples of this Jesus, for preaching Christ and His resurrection. This we say is that Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we own to be our life and salvation.”

We fully agree with the statements in this letter, but will further refer to Christ as the light of the world, that lighteth all mankind. Friends often directed people to this light, knowing that it is only by walking therein that any can be cleansed from sin.

Penn referred to “The light of Christ within as God's gift for man's salvation,” as “The corner stone of their fabric,” and “their main distinguishing point,” and “the root of their goodly tree of doctrines,” and to this Divine principle “As the only blessed means appointed of God to quicken, convince, and sanctify man, and said they opened to the people what it would do for all those, whose minds are turned off from the vanity of the world, and its lifeless ways and teachers, and adhere to this blessed light in themselves, which discovers and condemns sin in all its appearances, and shows how to overcome it, if minded and obeyed in its holy manifestations and

convictions; giving power to such to avoid and resist those things that do not please God, and to grow strong in love, faith and good works.”

All who become changed from yielding themselves servants to obey the spirit of darkness, to live in obedience to the manifestations of the light of Christ, we believe are truly converted, and come to be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

We state the following as Friends' belief on the subjects mentioned.

FAITH.

In “A Concise Account of the Religious Society of Friends,” it is said, “In outward and natural things, we often rely upon probabilities and the testimony of others, but in matters which pertain to the salvation of the soul, there can be no effectual faith but that which is produced by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart, inclining and enabling us to believe what it reveals to us there, as well as those things which are recorded in the Scriptures of Truth. This faith is not an inherent principle or natural faculty of the human mind, which can be exercised when, and as a man pleases, though it will always be given to those who seek it in a humble and childlike spirit of Him who is the author and giver of it. ‘Whatsoever is born of God,’ saith the apostle, ‘overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’”

“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.’ This grace of God teaches us to deny all ungodliness and the world's lusts; and where it is received and obeyed, it gives faith to believe that we shall be strengthened and enabled by it to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Thus we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in Him; and as we continue to believe and follow Him to the end, we shall know Him to be the finisher, as well as the author of this living, victorious faith.”

WORSHIP.

We believe it is the duty of every individual, not only to seek help and strength from the Lord in private retirement before Him, and often to turn the mind to Him during the performance of our secular duties, but that public worship is a duty all owe to God which none can neglect without sustaining a loss. Any who often allow their business or pleasure to hinder this important duty, have, in some degree, lost a right sense of the true purpose of life, the glory of God and the eternal welfare of the soul, the interests of which as far exceeds the interests of these poor perishing bodies of ours as eternity exceeds time.

God being a spirit, He must be worshipped in spirit, and every thing that is not of His Spirit, or prompted by His Spirit must be avoided.

Worship is an individual waiting on, adoration of, and spiritual communion with the Lord, and to perform this highest act of which the human mind is capable, there must be a right condition,

preparation or qualification, even a gathering under the influence of the Divine Spirit and reverently waiting on the Lord for His life-giving presence and power. We believe that all who thus truly wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. The command is, "Keep silence before me, O Islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak." We are to be still and know that the Lord is God, and it is only as the human part is silenced that any are able to hear and know His voice, and that we are given a sense or discernment of that which is only human, of man's willing, planning and directing, which is more pleasing to the natural senses, but which tends to keep the mind outward, which hinders true spiritual worship. We believe music, though it pleases the human ear and stirs the human emotions, is rather a hindrance than a help in Worship.

In reference to worship, William Penn says, "True worship can only come from a heart prepared by the Lord. This preparation is by the sanctification of the Spirit; by which, if God's children are led in the general course of their lives (as Paul teaches), much more in their worship to their Creator and their Redeemer. And whatever prayer be made, or doctrine be uttered, and not from the preparation of the Holy Spirit, it is not acceptable with God; nor can it be the true evangelical worship, which is in spirit and truth, that is by the preparation and aid of the Spirit."

"It may be asked: How shall this preparation be obtained? I answer: By waiting patiently, yet watchfully and intently upon God: 'Lord' (says the Psalmist), 'thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. And (says wisdom), 'the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord.' Here it is thou must not think thy own thoughts, nor speak thy own words (which indeed is the silence of the holy Cross), but be sequestered from all the confused imaginations that are apt to throng and press upon the mind in those holy retirements."

True silence before the Lord is better abundantly than forward prayers or self-willed offers or any traditional and formal performances; for consider it is life eternal to know God. Now no man can know Him who has not heard His voice. And no man can hear His voice, who is not silent in himself, and waits not patiently for Him, that he may hear what God will speak to his soul, through Christ Jesus.

MINISTRY.

Though Friends hold their meetings on a basis of silence, they have always highly valued true ministry, a ministry Divinely authorized, which can only come through those who are called and qualified by the Spirit of the Lord. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Joel, declared: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." This true, spiritual Qualification, we believe, qualifies daughters as well as sons, there being no difference.

The ministry that is prompted by Christ, the life, is that alone that can bring people to, and settle them in the life.

Friends have always believed in a practical education, but they do not believe true ministry is dependent upon that, for it is not to be “With enticing words of man's wisdom,” nor “in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.”

Paul testified of his ministry that he received it not from man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

William Penn, in speaking of the ministers of his day says, “They could not run when they list, or pray or preach when they pleased, but as Christ, their Redeemer, prepared and moved them by His own blessed Spirit, for which they waited in their services and meetings, and spoke as that gave them utterance.” And, “They went not forth or preached in their own time or will but in the will of God; and spake not their own studied matter, but as they were opened and moved of His Spirit.” Also, “We affirm that none ought to preach in the name of the Lord, but such as are empowered by the immediate teachings and requirings of His Holy Spirit.”

Gospel ministry, being received from the Spirit free, should, or must be given to the people free, for why should any charge the people for the Lord speaking through them?

Ministers who depend upon the Spirit for their ministry, not having to spend their time in studying or preparing their sermons, are free to pursue their daily avocation for a living, as other people are, only when they are traveling in Truth's service, at which time, if they need help Friends are free to give it.

We believe in the efficacy of true prayer, and that “The Lord is nigh unto all who call upon Him; to all who call upon Him in truth.” We believe that He hears and answers the prayers that are of His own begetting; the breathings of the soul to Him in the name of Christ, His Son, through Whom alone we can acceptably offer up prayer or praise, or receive a gracious answer to our petitions, the Spirit itself “making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.”

Though “Men ought always to pray and not to faint,” we believe that public or vocal prayer requires a special impulse of the Holy Spirit, and should be performed with the greatest of reverence.

THE SCRIPTURES.

We believe the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, therefore they are to be believed, highly prized, and frequently read, not only individually, but we believe the daily reading of them in the family gathering is a duty which cannot be neglected without a loss in spiritual life.

We believe any doctrine, belief or practice that contradicts the Scriptures is not to be accepted, and that they are the most perfect outward rule of faith and practice, but not the primary rule, which we attribute to the Spirit that gave them forth, by which alone their meaning can be rightly understood, and we believe without this Spirit none should endeavor to study or teach them.

Friends speak of the Scriptures as the words of God, believing Christ to be the Word, which was in the beginning, which was with God and was God; that He is the engrafted word which is

able to save the soul, and that He is the word which all Christians must be born of, as is spoken of by the Apostle Peter, wherein he says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

To call the Scriptures the Word of God seems to place them upon an equality with Christ, which we believe is not proper, much as we esteem them, and believe them to be "Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness."

THE RESURRECTION.

Friends have ever believed it safe to accept what is plainly recorded in the Scriptures in regard to the resurrection without human speculation or unprofitable inquiry into the subject, the most important part being to know, and through obedience to accept Him Who is the resurrection and the life.

We believe, after death, the body returns to the dust from whence it came, as the Scriptures declare, and the spirit to God Who gave it, to be judged and to be rewarded according to the deeds done whilst in the body, whether they be good or evil.

We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, but that it is not our natural bodies that are raised, but that, as Paul asserts, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

OATHS.

Friends, from their rise, have borne a clear and faithful testimony against oaths, and their refusal to disobey the plain command of the Saviour, "Swear not at all, ... but let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," caused them much suffering, but by their faithfulness they brought about the right of affirmation.

The apostle James enjoins: "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." Disobedience to Christ brings condemnation, and we are not able to see how any professing Christian can disobey the plain command of Christ, swear not; and in taking an oath, kiss the book in which swearing is entirely prohibited.

To swear is to disobey Christ, and to disobey Christ is to ally ourselves on the side of the evil one who was a liar from the beginning, and such are very liable to tell an untruth even with an oath, while good people will always tell the truth without an oath.

THE SUPPER, OR COMMUNION.

Respecting the communion of the body and blood of Christ, we believe it is inward and spiritual, a partaking of the Divine nature, a feeding on and being spiritually nourished by Him Who is the Bread of Life, the Bread from Heaven, which if a man eat, and continues to feed upon, he shall live forever.

We do not believe this was to be a perpetual ordinance, but as often as the Jews did it they showed the death of Christ till He come.

Christ is come to every individual, for He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This, we believe is the true and perpetual supper of the Lord, and that it is sufficient, being the substance, which has no need for the shadow, or outward bread and wine.

BAPTISM.

We believe, as the Scriptures declare, that there is "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism," and that the baptism that saves is Christ's baptism, that of the Holy Spirit, of which John's baptism was a type, which was to decrease, the substance being sufficient and complete without the shadow.

Though the Jews practiced water baptism for a time, as they did circumcision and other ordinances of the old dispensation, we believe that water baptism was not a command of the Saviour as a standing ordinance, or the apostle Paul would not have thanked God that he baptised only so many, and said he was not sent to baptise but to preach the Gospel. We believe when Christ told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," the term water was typical, and not outward water, as the term fire in Christ's baptism was typical and not outward fire, both being purifying in their nature.

Christ commanded His disciples to go teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as the old version has it, but in the revised version it is, baptising them into the name, which Robert Barclay says it should be, he being a Greek scholar.

True ministry, under the power of the Holy Spirit, has a baptising effect, bringing people into the name, nature or spirit of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The apostle says, "Know ye not, that so many as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And, "For as many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ."

PEACE.

At this time, when there is so much rivalry among the nations in the increase of armaments, which denotes jealousies and threatens war, and when war would mean more than ever before in the destruction of lives and property, and the bankrupting of nations, one of the greatest needs of the world is the general acceptance of the principles of peace, which Friends have always so faithfully maintained, even through suffering. To be true, we must continue to maintain these principles, for peace is a fruit of the Spirit of Christ, the Prince of Peace, Who declared that His kingdom is not of this world, else His followers would fight.

The apostle James queried, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" And Paul in writing to the Galatians enumerates the works of the flesh as hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, etc., and says, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Then he adds, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." So all who are in Him are out of that which occasions war, and this is the only foundation upon which the principles of peace can be maintained.

Many will talk peace in time of peace, but when war comes they do not stand, because the spirit is still in them from which war proceeds. Jonathan Dymond, one of the most convincing writers on the subject of war, says, "Christianity directed herself to the reformation of the heart, knowing that all other reformation would follow." War, we believe, is a curse upon the people that comes through their disobedience to the Commands of Christ, and will continue while the cause remains, so the effort should be to remove the cause.

Christ, in His sermon on the mount, said, "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." And also, Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, 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." This would preclude all war, and obedience to these commands of the Saviour, we believe, is the only way to be a Christian. Christ said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Let none believe that because Rulers make war that if they join in it, or submit to fight, the responsibility is on the Ruler, and not on themselves, for no one is justified in giving up their conscience under any circumstance, and this a soldier must do.

The only Christian way is to refuse to serve.

MUSIC.

As to the subject of music, Robert Barclay, in his Apology, says: "But as to their artificial music, either by organs or other instruments or voice, we have neither example or precept for it in the New Testament." God is not worshipped by instruments of men's hands. "God is a Spirit and

they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.” George Fox said he was moved to cry against all forms of music, and the Bible says: “Woe unto them who invent instruments of music, who chant to the sound of the viol, these will be the first to go into captivity.” Hence we believe there is nothing in the form of our present day music, that could be termed Sacred music.

RECREATIONS OR AMUSEMENTS.

As our time passes swiftly away, and our delight ought to be in the law of the Lord, we believe it to be incompatible with the self-denial which is enjoined upon the disciples of Christ, to attend at places of amusements, or engage in diversions which are demoralizing, or even frivolous, that tends to divert the mind from the fear of the Lord, and the desire to glorify Him, whether it be the attendance at moving pictures, theatres, card parties, or whatever it may be, for we must give an account of how we spend our time, as well as for every idle word we speak.

Barclay says, “Seeing the chief end of all religion is to redeem men from the spirit and vain conversation of this world, and to lead into inward communion with God, before whom if we fear always we are accounted happy; therefore all the vain customs and habits thereof, both in word and deed, are to be rejected and forsaken by those who come to this fear; such as . . . unprofitable plays, frivolous recreations, sportings and gamings, which are invented to pass away the precious time, and divert the mind from the witness of God in the heart, and from the living sense of His fear, and from the evangelical spirit wherewith Christians ought to be leavened and which leads into sobriety, gravity and Godly fear; in which as we abide, the blessings of the Lord is felt to attend us.”

In this statement we do not wish to give the inference that we believe Friends have a monopoly on the truth, for we realize that all, of every Age and Nation who have found the Saviour, have found the truth, and that all, of every name, who have lived in obedience to His Spirit, have been saved by Him, yet we believe it is our duty, individually, to faithfully maintain the spiritual way we have been led into, that there may be a revival of primitive zeal, life and power.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Friends, for many years after their rise, was their testimony against worldliness in all its forms, for they believed pure and undefiled religion to be, in part, to keep unspotted from the world. They believed the Scripture admonitions, “Be ye not conformed to this world,” and “Love not the world, neither the things of the world,” are still to be obeyed.

Barclay, in his Apology, Proposition XV, says that it is not lawful to give to man flattering titles, nor to use those flattering words, commonly called compliments. That it is not lawful for Christians to kneel, or prostrate themselves to any man, or to bow the body, or to uncover the head to them. That it is not lawful for a Christian to use superfluities in apparel, as are of no use save for ornament and vanity.

In reference to adornment Paul says, “I will therefore in like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety, and not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good

works.” And Peter wrote, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plating the hair and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Along this line is the following conclusion of “A Concise Account of the Religious Society of Friends,” published by The Tract Association of Friends. “In conformity with the precepts and examples of the Apostles and primitive believers, the Society enjoins upon its members a simple and unostentatious mode of living, free from needless care and expense; moderation in the pursuit of business; and that they discountenance lotteries of every kind, music, dancing, stage plays, horse races, and all other vain and unprofitable amusements; as well as the changeable fashions and manners of the world, in dress, language, or the furniture of their houses; that daily living in the fear of God and under the power of the cross of Christ, which crucifies to the world and all its lust, they may show forth a conduct and conversation becoming their Christian profession, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

Those who have faithfully maintained these principles through life have, at the approach of death, been favored with a happy assurance of a glorious immortality, and many testified that they had not been following cunningly devised fables.

We conclude with these words from a paper issued by London Yearly Meeting in 1829.

We desire that, as the mere profession of sound Christian doctrine will not avail to the salvation of the soul, all may attain to a living, efficacious faith, which, through the power of the Holy Ghost, bringeth forth fruit unto holiness; the end whereof is everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord.