

weight whatever, or is worthy of notice, than that the body of Friends might not be misrepresented by those who assumed to be its ministers—in doctrine* or matters of belief. The customs and practices in life which we term our Testimonies were to live, be kept alive by the 'Light within.'

We were to be friends and friendly with diversities of creed forming beliefs and opinions.

THE VICES TO BE CONDEMNED.

Jesus was probably the son of a Jewish Rabbi; was of the line of priests, but he sought no other acknowledgment than that he was called, or sent of the Father, and the acceptance of the truths he proclaimed.

These were the recognitions that he sought of man.

With Fox it was not much different. Neither of them seemed to be concerned about what form the 'doctrine' assumed so that it but took effect upon the minds and hearts of the people and formed in them the nucleus of a better life and a better people.

But this was established when our form and force was growing; when, though we were on the increase, we were chrystalizing that we might give weight to our idealisms and our individuality; 'twas when God had spoken by the mouth of His prophet, and prophets, and when the form of the deliverance should not be scattered till the world had felt the benefit of its substance. Probably the form assumed as perfect a character as was possible.

To-day we are not united as to matters of belief in 'doctrine.' We yield. The burden of our thought is subject to tendencies. Like the rest of mankind we have to conform to the

intelligence of our time—of the age. It has not been ours to divide over definitions; nor to quibble about how rites and ceremonials should be performed.

But at this time our body of Friends, which I would hardly denominate the Liberal or Unitarian could hardly be driven to declare itself Unitarian and remain in harmony with itself for the work it has in hand; to draw into a more perfect character of manhood, and of truly noble living. And yet he is hardly well informed who will not admit that the tendency is that way.

The character of the teaching and life work of Jesus and Fox to my mind bear a close resemblance, but this is what we have been teaching.

But I will press on more directly to the burden of my thought. Do we need now to recommend and enroll our ministers as we have done. Has not the conditions so changed, and the abuses so out-grown the uses that the time for it has ceased. Though I seriously doubt its wisdom and benefit ever, for when any turned from what gave life and character, true and noble, to teach doctrines of dead forms; or traditional symbols—their work for Christ measurably ceased and others were called.

There seems to be no general rule by which we can determine just where or when such services (public ministry) will begin or end. No need or use of it (the formal acknowledgment) while the person's services are confined to the limits of his or her own meeting, or quarterly meeting. The services must and will recommend and be acknowledged according to laws and conditions which need not be considered here, in this connection. For it is the ministry and the ministrations more than the minister that demand acceptance. Though a good instrument may be more acceptable than a poor one.

According to our understanding any member of our religious society may be 'called' to minister, even in the sense

*Doctrine, at best, is an institution of man, and therefore limited in its application, and tends to fetter the soul. Not so with righteousness; it is a divine revelation open to the inner life of the true Christian traveller.—Sunderland P. Gardner.

*And these 'ministers,' be it remembered, are not people leading a sheltered and separate life; but men and women engaged in the ordinary business of life, following trades and professions, and sharing in all the daily experiences of those to whom they minister.—('Quaker Strongholds,' by Caroline E. Stephen.)