

THE CONSIDERATION OF THE EIGHTH QUERY.

"When members violate any of our vital testimonies, or so act as to morally injure themselves, is due watchfulness observed to extend to them patient and Christian care, for their restoration to correct living and unity of fellowship in society?"

There seems to be first of all an analysis necessary, or perhaps that is what is intended by these papers. When do we as members violate our vital testimonies? I am aware that there are various thoughts on this subject, but there is another consideration that we must take some cognizance of before we proceed further. We may all agree that there is but one great principle, and on this all our religious testimonies are built. By this vital life-giving principle all our actions must be directed if we be members of Christ's church, which church is the only true one. Then, if we each fully realize the responsibility that devolves on us by our membership in a Religious Society, and by this we wield a power over our companions, associates, especially the youth, we surely would watch our every word, act, and thought—for thought is mother of action—before we do many things that we now do, and which detract from the high position of our Society membership. If we could disabuse our minds of the idea, held by some that we are distinct, separately acting human beings, not responsible in any way to each other, we would have made a great step toward the betterment of ourselves and our brother, and thus our joint relationship in religious fellowship. I believe that every word and action is of vital importance to us in every station of life, but vastly more when we voluntarily take upon us the responsibility of a Religious Society membership; though some will say they did not voluntarily become members. Granted this is true in one sense, then

I would ask, why do we continue to attend meeting after our majority, and allow our names to be used in the business interests of the organization? Why do we not voluntarily withdraw? Thus by remaining we become responsible to the Society, and to each other, and it is of vital importance that we do not violate any of the essential rules of the organization which comport with dignity, good order, and the holy solemnity, that should ever characterize the worshippers of God. Some may ask us, in what way can we morally injure ourselves? We will all agree that in the use of profane language, in the taking of that which does not belong to us, to speak falsely, to be drunken and licentious; any or all of them will morally injure us. But there are certain (that we may call) little inconsistencies of conduct, which we console ourselves do not come under the ban of this query. Thus, if we are unjust, dishonest in word or deed, go contrary to our conscience, inconsistent with rectitude, all these, according to the proper definition, bring us under condemnation of the law of truth and right. Hence we see the necessity of a better understanding of the law, and we will thus gain a higher plane; for the Christ life reaches down to every detail of our existence, and if by this criterion we are judged, and we labor to attain it; we are sure we will not morally injure ourselves. But if from any cause we fall away from the standard, then it is that a due watchfulness should be observed to reform the individual to unity and fellowship. A due watchfulness thus is brought about by the spirit which loves our neighbor as ourself, when we mourn with a godly sorrow the condition that makes it necessary to have to extend a care. But let us remember that this care is not conferred only by being an officer of the Meeting. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is good for us even now, for, "the end of the commandment is charity, and of a pure heart, and of a