

society and considers the unselfish labors of our ministers in the cause of truth as it appears to them, can doubt that they are doing noble duty, or can do aught but wish them God-speed in their work.

My belief is that such dissatisfaction as exists results from lack of hearty accord with certain doctrines taught by some Friends. That those doctrines are either false in themselves, or false developments of a true doctrine, and that as it is professed by some that our ministry is founded upon those doctrines or developments, and solely for the purpose of promulgating them, so is a truth mistaken and misunderstood. That this truth being bound with error does not reach the inmost recesses of the heart and compel acceptance by the spirit within which giveth understanding, but it meets doubt and distrust, or imperfect acquiescence and unrest.

From a certain truth cherished by the Society of Friends there has been gathered and formulated in the minds of some Friends, a doctrine that in every soul there is a divine supernatural spirit which speaks directly from God to each individual, tells him what to do and what to leave undone, and gives him with the knowledge the power to perform; that we have but to rest in the quiet, and listen, and divine intimations will come to our souls in a manner not to be taken for any operation of our intellects, and in fact that our intellects must be inactive during the exercise of the spirit. That in our meetings for worship we should endeavor to shut out all worldly ideas, all commotions of earth, to rid ourselves of our own natural will and strength, and listen in silence for the whisperings of the spirit of God; that the mind and the intellect must be abased and brought low, and that unto the mind thus prepared, will come a message from on high, even as though written on a black page, and that such a message if not intended for the

recipient alone, may be uttered for the edification of the assembly, and become a sermon, a sermon from God by the mouthpiece of a man. If that doctrine be true, and I have stated it largely by quotation from the writings and sayings of Friends, then everyone who criticises such an inspired message, or considers whether it be true or not, is guilty of a sacrilege, and yet I think no one would put such a value upon any sermon, nor would any minister claim to be willing that any of his sermons should be accepted as being under authority, or any further than it appeared to be true. I think there are some who will see in that doctrine a similarity to tenets of other religions. The devotee of India looks upon the negation of thought as a preparation for Nirvana, the place of perpetual rest and blessedness. Therefore he retires into the quiet, and recites a syllable, "Om," "Om, Om, Om," thousands of times, in order to blot out the crowding thoughts, and this he does until thought does cease, and oblivion to the world comes, from which oblivion he returns, saying that he has experienced unutterable things in his vacant mind. The monk in his cell and the hermit in his desert retirement would starve and beat his body to drive out thoughts of earth, and knelling before an image would recite prayer after prayer in numberless repetition, until the very image itself would appear to have more life than he; what wonder that he would have visions and see things.

But we do not in our hearts believe that doctrine, nor do our ministers act upon it, and it is because we do not accept it in any form howsoever diluted or modified, that we are saved from its logical result. If experience, sound reasoning and good judgment, if the God-given faculties of the mind and intellect did not, though unrecognized, inspire our ministers, their sermons would be only what we could expect from minds whose only conscious effort had been to be inactive prior to