

Synopsis of Doctrine
Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

Preparers: Committee on Sufferings

Undated hand-written document (created some time after 1877; probably in the early
20th century prior to 1920)

*Transcribed from the original document
by Nancy Osborn Johnsen, 3/10/2024*

Note: *This original 18-page hand-written document was made out in beautiful inked cursive script on standard-size lined paper and riveted together at the upper two corners. It had been tri-folded and kept in a repurposed business envelope on which the cancellation date was Dec. 10, 1920, posted in Chicago, Illinois and addressed to "Rev. Abner L. Newlin, Earlham, Iowa." Across one end of the exterior of the envelope had been typed: "This document was directed to be kept for future reference [sic] by the Meeting." Since that point in time apparently it has been stored in an iron safe within the Bear Creek Friends (Conservative) Meeting House north of Earlham, Iowa. The handwriting is likely that of Henry Standing (1857-1937), who had been a longtime member of the Bear Creek Monthly Meeting Friends Meeting (Conservative) until he moved in 1915 to West Branch, Iowa and became a member of the West Branch Monthly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) there. Abner L. Newlin (1851-1939) was a longtime member of the Bear Creek Monthly Meeting of Friends (Conservative). From the context of the writing in the document, it is surmised that it may have been generated in the years surrounding WWI.*

Those pages have been scanned and added to the end of this document.

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Written on the exterior of the document:

Synopsis of Doctrine

Prepared by a committee of Iowa Y.M. for sufferings.

This paper was prepared to present to a meeting of delegates from all the Yearly Meetings (Conservative) with a view to print something to present to the world showing our present position. It was not used in full but was thot to be of value & worthy to be preserved and was so directed by the Representaly [sic] Meeting.

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There being several bodies bearing the name of The Religious Society of Friends (also known as Quakers) we, as one of these, felt that it would be right to prepare a brief re-statement of our views respecting the religion we profess; believing they are in accord with the ancient principles of the Society as set forth by Fox, Penn, Barclay and others; which principles we believe are based on and in full accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his immediate followers as portrayed in their narrative of the Gospel and their early letters to the early Christian churches.

Our fundamental belief is in the existence of one supreme, spiritual, eternal and Almighty God, pure and holy in all his attributes, the creator of all things, who, though invisible to mortal eye is ever present upholding his creation.

We believe that man in his original and sinless state was created in the divine image that is, possessing an undefiled spiritual nature like unto the nature of his creator, and holding communion and having fellowship with him; hence knowing God's will; endowed with the power to obey or disobey. Had he not known the law nor had power to keep it he would not have fallen under condemnation or felt convicted of sin in transgressing the law.

Our first parents knowing the law, and being free agents, seduced by the tempter quickly fell away from their former state of innocence, transgressed the law and incurred the penalty of separation from God the source of all life (for separation from God is death) and so lost the divine image and suffered spiritual death; and we their offspring according to the flesh inherit our parents' nature and infirmities *[sic]* but not their sin, not guilt is imputed until we personally transgress the law.

Though by disobedience to their known sense of duty they had alienated themselves from God and deprived themselves of fellowship with him, they were not cast off by their maker, for in his infinite love and pity he still followed them, in that they experienced the pain and misery incident to and in consequence to their disobedience to the end they might seek for reconciliation *[sic]* with God.

This inward witness for God that convicts us of sin is compared to "a light shining in the darkness" which we apprehend to be The Holy Spirit of God, The Word of God, The Holy Ghost, The True Light, etc. and has always been a true witness for God "a light shining in the darkness" which as men gave heed to. The darkness was dispelled, reconciliation *[sic]* with God effected, and from being an accuser it becomes The Comforter; and will guide us into all truth. Through obedience to its teachings and by its light in their consciences men were enabled to come to a knowledge of God, and were used as instruments in his hand to spread this knowledge by bearing witness to the

measure of truth revealed to them and so arousing and directing the consciences of others to the same saving light.

Through the light holy men of old were enabled from time to time to make a record of God's dealings with men in what we acknowledge as the Holy Scriptures – The Sacred Writings. This compilation of writings we value above all other books preserving as it does besides a record of God's dealings with man, a narrative of man's transgression and fall, and consequent expulsion from Paradise; together with the promise, oft repeated, of the coming of the Savior. For though man through transgression was involved in darkness, the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures bear witness to the strivings of God's Spirit with man, preparing him by the discipline of affliction and the institution of the law through Moses, and the teachings of the prophets, for that wonderful manifestation of God's love for man, the outward coming of Jesus Christ.

They (the Scriptures) bear witness to the unchangeable nature of God and his law, but yet in his condescending mercy he has owned all approaches to him of his creature man. All changes in the relations between God and man are on the side of man. Man as he yields to the tempter sinks deeper and deeper in darkness, until by degrees his conscience becomes so corrupted, his spiritual ear so dulled that he can no longer distinguish the voice of God. This is degeneration; death.

On the other hand as man heeds the inspeaking Word of God which we are assured "hath appeared to all men" [Titus II,11, John I,9] and "by reason of use have their senses exercised" he will experience a growth and be endorsed with a more abundant life. This is regeneration; life.

This is an universal law which applies to the race or nation as well as to the individual as attested by the historical portions of the Scriptures. Obedience to light and law results in stability and growth, confirming the testimony of what is written "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

As to the truth or genuineness of the Holy Scriptures we do not call them in question, but accept the testimony of the apostle that they were written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They contain internal evidence of being so written whoever the several authors may have been. That the books comprising the sacred writings were all written by the men they are commonly ascribed to as being the authors we do not deem of sufficient importance to permit ourselves to be drawn into profitless disputes concerning them. We believe they contain the words of God, in other words, the will of God, as revealed to the prophets and saints of old; who testified

that the Word of God came to them; they being the human instruments through which it came and was proclaimed to others. Coming through a human agency the message is liable to be more or less stamped with the individuality [*sic*] of the messenger, and so share his defects. This the apostle Peter realized when he referred to the more sure word of prophecy as unto a lamp shining in a dark place.

[The Word of God] This more sure word of prophecy we believe to be the Word of God of which the Scriptures testify. We are careful not to apply the term Word of God to the Scriptures, or to look upon the Scriptures as the primary rule of faith and manners. That Word of God which came to the prophets and holy men of old we do acknowledge to be the primary rule of faith and manners. This we believe to be that Word of God which the apostle John testified "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. But as many as received him to them he gave power to become sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." (John I, 1-4, 9-14).

In his infinite love and compassion for man God sent his son into the world, born of a woman, touched with a feeling of all our infirmities "being tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin;" (see Hab. II,15) to give his life for us that we might be redeemed from all our iniquities, reconciled to God, and restored to fellowship with him.

[The Blood of Christ] To enjoy fellowship with God we must partake of his life; submit ourselves to the cleansing operation of his Holy Spirit which is likened to fire (see Luke III,16-17); that will consume all that is impure; also (more often perhaps) likened to blood, which is typical of life "for the blood is the life." In this sense "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." Our Savior himself likened it to good seed etc. and to "leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." So we believe that as we submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Light of Christ within the soul, it will reveal to us our sins; and as George Fox testified the light that reveals will save us from them if we are obedient. In this condition we are likened to new-born babes longing for "spiritual milk without guile that thee may grow thereby unto salvation." (Peter II,2)

We cannot fathom the mystery of natural life; how then can we expect to search out all the mystery of Spiritual Life? We experience the one and know that it proceeds from previous life, and as we grow we have communion and fellowship with our earthly parents; so it is with spiritual life, it proceeds from God the Father; and as we abide in him we experience spiritual life with a corresponding growth, communion, and fellowship with our Heavenly Father, becoming joint heirs with Christ; having been born again and experienced the forgiveness of our sins; and as we continue in obedience we shall experience a more abundant life, our nature will be changed, and we shall abhor our former manner of life that was at enmity with God. We need to keep continually on the watch lest the adversary beguile and through “fleshy lusts which war against the soul.” According as we watch unto prayer and are obedient to the revelations of Truth in our hearts, having in a good degree obtained the victory over sin, like the faithful servants with the talents we shall be entrusted with more. Yet as we attain to a maturer growth in our spiritual life we still have the adversary to contend with, even tho we have obtained a complete victory over what was at one time our besetting sin; for as we advance we are confronted with a new set of temptations suited to our changed condition.

[The Bread of Life] This riper growth - likened to a full-grown man in Christ – is attained by conforming to the laws of health, in much the same way as we attain to our physical growth; which is not brought about by being anxious or taking thought in regard to it; but by assimilating wholesome food day by day, coupled with a due amount of exercise. So we believe that in like manner we have to seek for our spiritual bread day by day. This is the bread of life; of which our Savior said “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.” “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: And the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world.” (John VI,48-51) “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. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even shall he live by me.” (John VI, 56-57). We know he did not mean his outward flesh and blood (tho he gave that also for our sakes on the cross) for he said himself “it is the Spirit that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing. So at supper shortly before his crucifixion when he handed the bread to his disciples “saying this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.” Likewise the cup after supper saying “This cup is the new Testament in my blood which is shed for you” had a spiritual significance (Luke XXII,19-20).

[The Supper] The supper here alluded to we consider to have been the usual Passover supper and the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine the ordinary custom at that time; with this difference: this was the parting meal; and our Savior wished to impress on the disciples the necessity of continued dependence on him for daily spiritual food; and like as he brake and handed forth the bread at supper so he would spiritually. Therefore they were exhorted to remember him at the breaking of bread, not on special occasions only, but every time they broke bread. Taking this view of it we believe every meal has a religious significance; and agreeable thereto it is our universal custom at each meal to have a short period of silence, in order to give those about to partake in the breaking of bread an opportunity to remember the Savior; and to look to him for spiritual food; and to seek for a feeling of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for all that we receive at his hand.

That this bread and wine spoken of by our Savior at the last supper is spiritual is abundantly proved by Robert Barclay in his Apology wherein he says "So then as there was the outward visible body and temple of Jesus Christ, which took its origin from the Virgin Mary; there is also the spiritual body of Christ, by and through which He that was the "Word in the beginning with God," and was and is God, did reveal himself to the sons of men in all ages, and whereby men in all ages come to be made partakers of eternal life, and to have communion and fellowship with God and Christ. Of which body of Christ, and flesh and blood xxxx all the prophets and holy men of God, had not eaten. They had not had life in them; nor could their inward man have been nourished. Now as the outward body and temple was called Christ, so was also his spiritual body, no less properly, and that long before the outward body was in being. Hence the apostle saith (I Cor. X 3.4) that "the Fathers did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

[Prayer & Worship] The longing of the soul for spiritual food and the inward seeking for communion and fellowship with the Father is the essence of prayer and is intimately associated with worship. For every aspiration of the soul to God is prayer, and it is owned by him and prompted by him. Whenever we come to that condition that when we eat and drink or whatsoever we do we do all to the glory of God, every willing act of our lives is an evidence that we worship God. For in that case we so live that we honor God and acknowledge him as our lawgiver and it is our desire and happiness to yield loving obedience to his will, and be at one with him in our inmost being. This is worship, and as we believe it to be the highest and noblest engagement man is capable of, and that it is wholly a spiritual function; for our Savior told the woman of Samaria that "God is a spirit and them that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Like corresponds with like; spirit with spirit; flesh with flesh. So that

any form of worship or so-called religious ceremony or ritual set up by man apart from the spirit is not true worship; but is truly described as idolatry (from *eidos* e28os [?] a thing seen, something tangible to the senses.)

As before said every aspiration of the soul to God is prompted by and owned by him, and every approach to him however faltering it may be and encumbered by forms and ceremonies is accepted by him; and is an evidence of some measure of true life; which life is wholly pure in that it proceeds from and is engendered by the Holy Spirit; which if permitted to have free course will grow stronger and stronger, and will discover to the soul, overthrow and rise above these cumbering things. For however useful they may have been in time past to point to or typify the more excellent way of which they were but the shadow, if we fail to come to a knowledge of the substance through resting on the form, the outward sign, they do become cumbering things and even idols (things seen), even as the brazen serpent which Moses set up, which typified the Savior, became a snare to the Jews and because they burnt incense to it King Hezekiah destroyed it calling it a piece of brass (II Kings 18.4). We find it has been so all through the ages; man in his natural state craves something tangible to sense, if not in one form then in another.

As in time past under the law, the performance of worship involved the sacrifice of beasts and the shedding of blood, thus typifying the Savior; so we in our worship are called upon to sacrifice the beast in our nature; take up the daily cross; mortify the deeds of the body etc. All this is incidental to and goes with our daily worship, honoring God in our daily walk. This does not excuse us from the duty of public worship in our regular assemblies. In these also we are called upon to bear our testimony to the spiritual nature of the religion we profess; and the truth of the doctrine of the immediate and direct communication of God through the Holy Spirit with each individual soul without the mediation of a priest or pastor engaged for the purpose. This inspeaking voice, the inward light or Light of Christ within, must be sought for by the needy soul; for the movings of the Spirit are not at our command. Our attitude should therefore be one of quiet waiting, that our thoughts may be led away from outward things and centered on God and his will concerning us, with the humble assurance that they who seek shall find: for the Father's promise is that none shall seek his face in vain.

Hence our silent meetings, and the absence of a pre-arranged service, and all vocal and instrumental music; and the distinction between our members of clergy and laity, priest and people.

[Ministry] But tho our meetings are often held in silence throughout it is not always the case; for we own and welcome a truly annointed [*sic*] ministry. By a truly annointed [*sic*] minister we mean one who has been specially called to voice the message that has to him or her been revealed. Any one, regardless of sex, to whom the call comes to bear the message is by that fact alone authorized to deliver the same. It is a direct gift from God. Any of our members giving continued evidence of having been entrusted with this gift is duly acknowledged by us as a minister; and a record thereof is made; but they are never “ordained” or made such by any act of man. As before said they receive their commission and gift direct from God; and at each exercise thereof the true minister receives a fresh annointing [*sic*]. And moreover it is a free gift. “Freely ye have received, freely give” were the words of the Savior when sending his disciples forth to preach the gospel. We believe the same command is in force today; and we feel called upon to bear a distinct testimony for the freedom of the gospel ministry, and against any form of making merchandize of it. We realize the corrupting tendency of a paid ministry and the grave danger of the system working against the best interests of both minister and people.

[Baptism] Consistently with our views of the spiritual nature of religion we cannot accept as a religious duty, except as a matter of cleanliness, any form of water baptism. That rite we consider to be associated with the ceremonial law concerning which, John the Baptist testified when speaking of the Christ for the coming of whom he was preparing the way, “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” and again “he must increase but I must decrease.” (Luke 8.16). This clearly intimating that John’s baptism of water was but temporary; pointing to and typifying the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Outward washing can no more take away sin than can the blood of bulls and goats. (See Heb. x.4). For sin is the surrender of the will in desiring to indulge in what it knows to be wrong (see Matt. V.28); a yielding to evil thoughts. It is any form of spiritual rebellion against God. The outward act is but an index more or less true of the inward impulse or mandate of the will; the thought made manifest through the body. The body cannot sin more than can the beasts of the field; it like them shall perish; being of the same mortal nature. The soul of man sins when it yields to the animal nature; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. When we are baptized into the name of Jesus (which cannot be well understood otherwise than his Spirit) we are cleansed from all the defilement of sin. As we so continue we bring our body under, and mortify the deeds of it that are contrary to his name. In this comply with the conditions required by our Savior “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake the same shall save it.” (Luke IX 23.24).

[Oaths] Friends have always born a testimony against the practice of administering or taking any kind of an oath; agreeable to the express command of the Savior “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time. Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black, but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” (Matt. V.33.35.37). On the same subject the Apostle James says “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). A faithful Christian will always speak the truth, and will abhor all that savors of the contrary; realizing also that God is witness, and he knows he will fall under condemnation at any infraction of the truth without any oath. With him a solemn promise to perform public or any other duty is fully binding as the oath-bound contract.

Of the many pernicious consequences of the oath, perhaps the military oath, or the oath taken in connexion [*sic*] with joining secret societies and the like may be cited as examples. Here the oath binds whoever takes it to obey the orders of those in command without question; and they are led to take shelter behind the oath as tho by virtue of it they were absolved from the moral obligations they would otherwise be under. The soldier will kill his enemy, seize and destroy property etc. which, in private life he would shrink from in abhorrence. We cannot surrender our conscience to another and thus evade the responsibility of our own acts; consequently we are opposed to any of our members pledging themselves beforehand to obey unreservedly the mandate of any other mortal. We have no right to exact it of others therefore others have no right to exact it of us.

[War] The utter inconsistency of a disciple of The Prince of Peace to engage in carnal warfare has always been recognized by our society; and we regard war and preparation for war as one of the greatest national iniquities, and it behooves every member; as well as the society at large to bear a faithful testimony against the military system in all its phases, and to train up the youth with an abhorrence for it, and to discourage military games, speeches, school text books and the like, that have a tendency to incite or inflame a warlike spirit. This we realize will include much of a so-called patriotic nature; but we are persuaded that it is a false patriotism that would encourage war, or a spirit of hatred against any country. We are in no way against a true love for our country and in that love we grieve to see it committed to a warlike

policy in the building of war ships and fortifications, and the training of young men for the army and navy.

The Apostle James queries “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? So that killing one another is but the climax of persistently yielding to lust, covetousness, jealousy, envy etc. If we are indeed children of our Father in Heaven our love for our fellow men will not be limited by any national boundary; for he is no respecter of persons; his love extends to and over all irrespective of race or color, and he sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust. We cannot therefore unite with or sanction any measure of our nation taken for the purpose of unjustly discriminating between man and man on account of race or color of skin.

The love of justice and judgement between peoples to the exclusion of hatred and jealousy would soon make wars to cease. We believe that day is surely coming as foretold by the prophets and announced by the heavenly host to the shepherds “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” And if we are faithful in letting our light shine we shall be instrumental in hastening its coming.

[Temperance] The apostle Paul tells us that temperance in connection with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness and gentleness is the fruit of the spirit. Temperance embraces much more than that of the meaning often attached to it of abstaining from two or three specified vices. It is self-control; the subjugation of our sensual nature to our spiritual. It is virtue; not innocence alone for virtue is more than that; virtue implies temptation, conflict and victory. By way of contrast intemperance is self-indulgence; a love for outward things to the exclusion of heavenly treasure. It is a form of idolatry, a love for things seen, and is manifested in many ways as covetousness, love of display in dress, furniture and personal equipments, eating and drinking, amusements, devoting the intellect to self-gratification in literature and the like. These are some of the manifestations or outward appearances of it; the fruit. /The real evil is hidden for all these are but the result of evil thoughts and desires that arise from our corrupt nature. “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” (Matt. VII.17.18).

Whatever we love is our treasure; so that if we center our affections on these outward things we shall be of those who lay up “treasure upon the earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.”

[Love] “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” are all fruits of the Spirit, but love is chief; for on love all the rest are based. How could there be joy without love? And so with peace and the rest. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son” who yielded up his life to redeem mankind., to win them to himself; that we might be like him and filled with his love. According as we grow like him our love will reach to all. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one toward another” (John XIII.35) and this is the measure of it. “even as I have loved you that ye also love one another.” (John XIII.34; John XV.12). Tho we may not fathom the depth of this love, yet as we taste it and become more like him our hearts will be made pure, and we shall come to see him, and know him as he is; and enjoy fellowship with him, become partakers with his sufferings and follow his steps even to the entire abnegation of self; counting not our lives dear to ourselves, being wholly devoted to him, ready even to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Synopsis of doctrine
prepared by a committee
of Iowa G. M. for suffering

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As to the truth or genuineness of the Holy Scriptures we do not call them in question, but accept the testimony of the apostle that they were written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They contain internal evidence of being so written, whoever the several authors may have been. That the books comprising the sacred writings were all written by the men they are commonly ascribed to as being the authors we do not deem of sufficient importance to permit ourselves to be drawn into profitless disputes concerning them. We believe they contain the words of God, in other words, the will of God, as revealed to the prophets and saints of old; who testified that the Word of God came to them; they being the human instruments through which it came and was proclaimed to others. Coming through a human agency the message is liable to be more or less stamped with the individuality of the messenger, and so share his defects. This the apostle Peter realized when he referred to the more sure word of prophecy as unto a lamp shining in a dark place. ~~This~~

[The Word of God] This more sure word of prophecy we believe to be the Word of God of which the Scriptures testify. We are careful not to apply

The term Word of God to the Scriptures, or to look upon the Scriptures as the primary rule of faith and manners. That Word of God which came to the prophets and holy men of old we do acknowledge to be the primary rule of faith and manners. This we believe to be that Word of God of which the apostle John testifies "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and Truth." John I 1-4; 9-14.

In his infinite love and compassion for man God sent his son into the world, born of a woman, touched with a feeling of ^{as Heb.} _{15.} all our infirmities, "being tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin"; to give his life for us that we might be redeemed from all our iniquities, reconciled to God, and restored to fellowship with him.

[The Blood of Christ]

To enjoy fellowship with God we must partake of his life; submit

See
Luke
III. 16, 17.

1 Peter
II. 2.

ourselves to the cleansing operation of his Holy Spirit which is likened to fire; that will consume all that is impure; also (more often perhaps) likened to blood, which is typical of life "for the blood is the life" In this sense "the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin". Our Saviour himself likened it to good seed &c. and to leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." So we believe that as we submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Light of Christ within the soul, it will reveal to us our sins; and as George Fox testified the light that reveals will save us from them if we are obedient. In this condition we are likened to new-born babes longing for "spiritual milk without guile that ye may grow thereby unto salvation."

Rom.
VIII. 17.

We cannot fathom the mystery of natural life; how then can we expect to search out all the mystery of Spiritual Life? We experience the one and know that it proceeds from previous life; and as we grow we have communion and fellowship with our earthly parents; so it is with spiritual life; it proceeds from God the Father; and as we abide in him we experience spiritual life with a corresponding growth, communion and fellowship with our Heavenly Father; becoming joint heirs with Christ; having been born again and experienced the forgiveness of our sins; and as we continue in obedience we shall experience a more abundant life, our nature will be changed, and we shall abhor our former manner of life that was at enmity with God. We need to keep continually on the watch lest the adversary beguile us through

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"fleshly lusts which war against the soul". According as we watch unto prayer and are obedient to the revelation of Truth in our hearts, having in a good degree obtained the victory over sin, like the faithful servants with the Talents we shall be entrusted with more. Yet as we attain to a maturer growth in our spiritual life we still have the adversary to contend with, even tho we have obtained a complete victory over what was at one time our besetting sin; for as we advance we are confronted with a new set of temptations suited to our changed condition.

[The Bread of Life]

This ripper growth - likened to a full-grown man in Christ - is attained by conforming to the laws of health, in much the same way as we attain to our physical growth; which is not brought about by being anxious or taking thought in regard to it; but by assimilating wholesome food day by day, coupled with a due amount of exercise.

So we believe that in like manner we have to seek for our spiritual ~~food~~ bread day by day. This is the bread of life; of which our Savior said "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and

John
VI 33

giveth life unto the world." "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."

John
VI 48, 51

If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: And the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world." "Who so eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,

John
VI 52, 57

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. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

We know he did not mean his outward flesh and blood (tho he gave that also for our sakes on the cross) for he said himself "it is the Spirit that giveth life the flesh profiteth nothing. So at supper shortly before his crucifixion when he handed the bread to his disciples saying this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new Testament in my blood which is shed for you had a spiritual significance.

[The Supper]

The supper here alluded to we consider to have been the usual passover supper and the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine the ordinary custom at that time; with this difference; this was the parting meal; and our Savior wished to impress on the disciples the necessity of continual dependence on him for daily spiritual food; and like as he ~~handed~~ brake and handed forth the bread at supper so he would spiritually. Therefore they were exhorted to remember him at the breaking of bread; not on special occasions only, but every time they brake bread. Taking this view of it we believe every meal has a religious significance; and agreeable thereto it is our universal custom at each meal to have a short period of silence, in order to give those about to partake in the breaking of bread an opportunity to remember the Savior; and to look to him for spiritual food; and to seek for a

feeling of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for all that we receive at his hand.

That this bread and wine spoken of by our Savior at the last supper is spiritual is abundantly proved by Robert Barclay in his Apology wherein he says "So then as there was the outward visible body and temple of Jesus Christ, which took its origin from the Virgin Mary; there is also the spiritual body of Christ, by and through which He that was the Word in the beginning with God, and was and is God, did reveal himself to the sons of men in all ages, and whereby men in all ages come to be ^{made} partakers of eternal life, and to have communion and fellowship with God and Christ. Of which body of Christ, and flesh and blood, ~~xxx~~ all the prophets and holy men of God, had not eaten, they had not had life in them; nor could their inward man have been nourished. Now as the outward body and temple was called Christ, so was also his spiritual body, no less properly, and that long before the outward body was in being. Hence the apostle saith 1 Cor. x 3, 4. that the Fathers did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

Prayer &
Worship.

The longing of the soul for spiritual food and the inward seeking for communion and fellowship with the Father is the essence of prayer and is intimately associated with

worship. For every aspiration of the soul to God is prayer, and is owned by him and prompted by him. Whenever we come to that condition that when we eat and drink or whatsoever we do we do all to the glory of God, every willing act of our lives is an evidence that we worship God. For in that case we so live that we honor God and acknowledge him as our lawgiver; and it is our desire and happiness to yield loving obedience to his will, and be at one with him in our inmost being. This is worship, and as we believe it to be the highest and noblest engagement man is capable of, and that it is wholly a spiritual function; for our Savior told the woman of Samaria that "God is a spirit and them that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Like corresponds with like; spirit with spirit; flesh with flesh. So that any form of worship or so-called religious ceremony or ritual set up by man apart from the spirit is not true worship; but is truly described as idolatry (from *eidos eidos* a thing seen, something tangible to the senses.)

As before said every aspiration of the soul to God is prompted by and owned by him, and every approach to him however faltering it may be and encumbered by forms and ceremonies is accepted by him; and is an evidence of some measure of true life; which life is wholly pure in that it proceeds from and is engendered by the Holy Spirit, which if permitted to have free course will grow stronger and stronger, and will discover to the soul, overthrow and rise above these cumbering

things. For however useful they may have been in time past to point to or typify the more excellent way of which they were but the shadow, if we fail to come to a knowledge of the substance through resting on the form, the outward sign, they do become cumbering things and even idols (things seen), even as the brazen serpent which Moses set up, which typified the Savior, became a snare to the Jews and because they burnt incense to it King Hezekiah destroyed it calling it a piece of brass. II Kings 18. 4.

We find it has been so all through the ages; man in his natural state craves something tangible to sense, if not in one form then in another.

As in time past under the law, the performance of worship involved the sacrifice of beasts and the shedding of blood, thus typifying the Savior; so we in our worship are called upon to sacrifice the beast in our nature; take up the daily cross, mortify the deeds of the body &c. All this is incidental to and goes with our daily worship, honoring God in our daily walk. This does not excuse us from the duty of public worship in our regular assemblies. In these also we are called upon to bear our testimony to the spiritual nature of the religion we profess; and the truth of the doctrine of the immediate and direct communication of God through the Holy Spirit with each individual soul without the mediation of a priest or pastor engaged for the purpose. This inspeaking voice, the inward light or Light of Christ within, must be sought for by the needy soul; for the movings of the Spirit are not at our command. Our attitude should therefore be

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one of quiet waiting, that our thoughts may be led away from outward things and centered on God and his will concerning us, with the humble assurance that they who seek shall find; for the Father's promise is that none shall seek his face in vain.

Hence our silent meetings, and the absence of a pre-arranged service, and all vocal and instrumental music; and the distinction between our members of clergy and laity, priest and people.

(Ministry)

But tho our meetings are often held in silence throughout it is not always the case; for we own and welcome a truly anointed ministry. By a truly anointed minister we mean one who has been specially called to voice the message that has to him or her been revealed. Any one, regardless of sex, to whom the call comes to bear the message is by that fact alone authorized to deliver the same. It is a direct gift from God. Any of our members giving continued evidence of having been entrusted with this gift is duly acknowledged by us as a minister; and a record thereof is made; but they are never "ordained" or made such by any act of man. As before said they receive their commission and gift direct from God; and at each exercise thereof the true minister receives a fresh anointing. And moreover it is a free gift. "Freely ye have received, freely give" were the words of the Saviour when sending his disciples forth to preach the gospel. We believe the same command is in force today; and we feel called upon to bear a distinct testimony for the freedom of

the gospel ministry, and against any form of making merchandise of it. We realize the corrupting tendency of a paid ministry and the grave danger of the system working against the best interests of both minister and people.

[Baptism]

Consistently with our views of the spiritual nature of religion we cannot accept as a religious duty, except as a matter of cleanliness any form of water baptism. That rite we consider to be associated with the ceremonial law concerning which, John the Baptist testified when speaking of the Christ for the coming of whom he was preparing the way, "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and again "he must increase but I must decrease." Thus clearly intimating that John's baptism of water was but temporary; pointing to and typifying the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Outward washing can no more take away sin than can the blood of bulls and goats. For sin is the surrender of the will in desiring to indulge in what it knows to be wrong; a yielding to evil thoughts. It is any form of spiritual rebellion against God. The outward act is but an index more or less true of the inward impulse or mandate of the will; the thought made manifest through the body. The body cannot sin more than can the beasts of the field; it like them shall perish; being of the same mortal nature. The soul of man sins when it yields to the animal nature;

Luke
3:16

See
Heb.
X. 4

See
Matt.
X. 28.

yea and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation"
A faithful christian will always speak the truth, and will
abhor all that savors of the contrary: realizing also that God
is witness; and he knows he will fall under condemnation
at any infraction of the truth without any oath. With him a
solemn promise to perform a public or any other duty is fully as
binding as the oath-bound contract.

Of the many pernicious consequences of the oath, perhaps the
military oath, or the oath taken in connexion with joining secret
societies and the like may be cited as examples. Here the oath
binds whoever takes it to obey the orders of those in command
without question; and they are led to take shelter behind the
oath as tho. by virtue of it they were absolved from the moral
obligations they would otherwise be under. The soldier will
kill his enemy, seize and destroy property &c. which, in private
life he would shrink from in abhorrence. We cannot surrender
our conscience to another and thus evade the responsibility of
our own acts; consequently we are opposed to any of our
members pledging themselves beforehand to obey unreservedly
the mandate of any other mortal. We have no right to exact
it of others therefore others have no right to require it of us.

[War]

The utter inconsistency of a disciple of "The Prince of Peace" to engage
in carnal warfare has always been recognized by our society; and
we regard war and preparation for war as one of the greatest national
iniquities, and it behooves every member, as well as the society

at large to bear a faithful testimony against the military system in all its phases; and to train up the youth with an abhorrence for it, and to discourage military games, speeches, school text books and the like, that have a tendency to incite or inflame a warlike spirit. This we realize will include much of a so-called patriotic nature; but we are persuaded that it is a false patriotism that would encourage war, or a spirit of hatred against any country. We are in no way against a true love for our country, and in that love we grieve to see it committed to a warlike policy in the building of war ships and fortifications, and the training of young men for the army and navy.

The Apostle James queries "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" So that killing one another is but the climax of persistently yielding to lust, covetousness, jealousy, envy &c. If we are indeed children of our Father in Heaven our love for our fellow men will not be limited by any national boundary; for he is no respecter of persons; his love extends to and over all irrespective of race or color, and he sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust. We cannot therefore unite with or sanction any measure of our nation taken for the purpose of unjustly discriminating between man and man on account of race or color of skin.

The love of justice and judgement between peoples to the exclusion of hatred and jealousy would soon make wars to cease. We believe that day is surely coming as foretold by the prophets and announced by the heavenly host to the shepherds "Glory to
13-

God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.¹¹
And if we are faithful in letting our light shine we shall be
instrumental in hastening its coming.

[Temperance]

The apostle Paul tells us that temperance in connection with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness and gentleness is the fruit of the spirit. Temperance embraces much more than that of the meaning often attached to it of abstaining from two or three specified vices. It is self-control; the subjugation of our sensual nature to our spiritual. It is virtue; not innocence alone, for virtue is more than that; virtue implies temptation, conflict and victory. By way of contrast intemperance is self-indulgence, a love for outward things to the exclusion of heavenly treasure. It is a form of idolatry a love for things seen, and is manifested in many ways as covetousness, love of display in dress, furniture and personal equipments, eating and drinking, amusements, devoting the intellect to self-gratification in literature and the like. These are some of the manifestations or outward appearances of it; the fruit. The real evil is hidden for all these are but the result of evil thoughts and desires that arise from our corrupt nature. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; ^{Mat VII} _{17-18,} but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

Whatever we love is our treasure; so that if we center our affections on these outward things we shall be of those who lay up treasure upon

the earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where
thieves break through and steal."

(Love)

"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
meekness, temperance" are all fruits of the Spirit; but love is
chief; for on love all the rest are based. How could there be joy
without love? and so with peace and the rest. "God so loved the
the world that he gave his only begotten son" who yielded up his
life to redeem mankind, to win them to himself; that we
might be like him and filled with his love. According as
we grow like him our love will reach to all. "By this shall all
men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one towards
another" and this is the measure of it. "even as I have loved you that
ye also love one another". Tho we may not fathom the depth of
this love, yet as we taste it and become more like him our hearts
will be made pure, and we shall come to see him, and know
him as he is; and enjoy fellowship with him, become partakers
with his sufferings and follow his steps even to the entire aban-
dation of self; counting not our lives dear to ourselves, being
wholly devoted to him, ready even to lay down our lives for the
brethren.

John
VII. 35

John
III. 34
IV. 12