

stitute crime, where would be an innocent one in the human family? And if it were so either the nature of eternal things must be changed and a man though criminal be blessed, or else the words of Christ uttered on that occasion were not true. If to charge be to make criminal, and if a criminal be miserable, how can they be blessed against whom so many say evil falsely?

Here is a proposition that stands on independent, certain ground. And to this I could wish the minds of my beloved friends to turn their attention,--to the ground of individual judgment within themselves. Do not let us be provoked to anything like passion or recrimination, but with that calm, sustained and noble dignity which is inseparable from the truth, let us give our sense calmly and not be disturbed. If this be the case, I scarcely conceive it possible we can come to a wrong judgment.

Thomas Wetherald.

I fully accord with the views of my friends. I think I can say I feel particularly desirous that the remarks of our friend Edward Stabler be individually attended to. They are of individual application, my friends, but I thought before we entered upon the consideration of the subject proposed there was one that ought to be laid before the meeting in priority. We ought to stand on clear ground and to feel that we ourselves are justified in the course we have pursued and are pursuing.

These Epistles, it will be recollected, were referred to the Representatives. The subject came before us and as it appeared to be a matter of awful magnitude we were not willing to come to a hasty conclusion. We found among these epistles much hardness [of feeling], direct charges & those of a very high character--charges which amount if not to Infidelity, to Deism. And against whom are these charges made? They are insinuated at us & charged upon our friends. We found also a spirit of domination in these Epistles. The Yearly Meetings which have written them tell us "if you do not submit to do as we say is right we will have no correspondence with you you must * * * or affianced to us, you must obey our mandates & if you do not our connexion with you will be broken." We found also among these documents a profession of love. A mixture of greater incongruities I never met with & to judge on anything so incongruous is not an easy matter. Now I would ask my friends & that individually if we are willing to be affianced to any body upon earth on these terms. I am not for my part. We are independent. But if we suffer ourselves to be affianced, even if we bring ourselves into a situation to receive certificates from them through the medium which they may appoint and send ours to them through the same channel we have every reason to believe that it will lead us into incalculable difficulties. It will be an acknowledgement of their supremacy and their power to define the manner in which we must act. For it is an assumed power that never was delegated under the influence of any righteous principle. The assumption that they have a right to dictate to this meeting is in its very nature despotic and it is a disposition which will grow by cultivation & if once submitted to will never stop. Some may think the opposition to these insinuations and charges is very severe and harsh. I desire to keep clear of the spirit of domination. I have no desire to be severe, far different from this--there is not the least squinting at individuals here. I am looking at these documents.

We have received these Epistles [from Philad^a, New York & Indiana] which though they complain of the severity of their treatment yet we evidently hear in them the effusions of brotherly affection to us. These complaints are made against those who are endeavoring to assume over us the spirit of power and domination. Those [who thus complain] are our brethren in suffering and doctrine and in the fellowship of the everlasting truth and are equally with us alluded to in the false declarations which one of these

epistles contains-- for they are false and uncharitable assertions. We have not denied the Scriptures, we have not denied the divinity of Christ, we have not denied the fundamental principles of our Society. We are willing to suffer for them. I am willing to suffer for them to the laying down of my natural life, but I am not willing to commute the independence of this Y.M. nor to crouch to any associations of men. If we can live in these principles-- well---and if we cannot, let us die for them--and coming upon this ground my friends which I apprehend is the only true ground upon which principle can be maintained let us keep a single eye individually to the appearances and circumstances of the times and we shall find that they are awful. For if this Y.M. gives life to that which destroys things [if it gives up] to be swayed by the flatteries of a part or is awed by its threats, where is our independence? We become subject to a hierarchy more despotic perhaps than was ever experienced in the Church of Rome. The very institution of the Inquisition was raised upon a foundation as slight as this. The Inquisition was instituted by one of the Roman Bishops of that church, and what was the extent of its powers? A party of Dominican Friars were ordered to go through the churches because there was some appearances of unsoundness of faith manifest in them. It is a historical fact my friends that this was the extent of their powers. They were to counsel and reprove where it was necessary. Here was the origin! a little speck, an innocent appearance. But as now they insisted upon gaining a little power to punish by fine and this was afterwards increased to the power to punish by fine and imprisonment, and at last this institution proceeded from step to step until it had in its hands the government not only of religious concerns but the whole civil power of Europe. Here truly friends was an origin as small as that of the power about to be assumed over us. There was not intended so much of the spirit of domination in its character as in this. I want us to be on our guard against these things, as smooth and plausible as they really are, for really friends (the stenographic signs will stand for really I am afraid) if we join in with them we may sow the seeds for the destruction of thousands. It is necessary considering the situation in which we stand, for the eyes of the world are anxiously looking upon us, it is necessary for every step we take to be founded on immutable truth, having no eye upon consequences, giving no aid to the slanderer--and I want us not to be moved by these slanders for the accusations as I said are many of them false. And under a conviction of the importance of this view of the subject I thought it necessary my friends that it should be adverted to before we go any further, and in order to let friends see the ground upon which the document read yesterday was produced. We were unwilling to throw all this mass of inconsistency before this Y.M.. I was unwilling to have my own feelings wounded and those of my friends differing in sentiment from us, by a public exposure of it, but seeing the confusion that was brought over the meeting and that there was not a prospect of success in withholding from the world, the folly and disgrace, not to say the wickedness of these productions, we were willing openly and unequivocally to meet the storm, let it be what it might, and declare the truth. And here [let me say] had the measure which we proposed been adopted, much of this might have been avoided, for these things would not have been so public. I have no doubt many of those styled orthodox knew what they contained and rejoiced in them. And I apprehend this view of the subject is sufficient in the minds of the well-disposed to justify us.