

1839

Testimonies Concerning Deceased Ministers: 1839

London Yearly Meeting

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TESTIMONIES
CONCERNING
DECEASED MINISTERS.

PRESENTED TO
THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,
HELD IN LONDON, 1839.

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TESTIMONY

LONDON :

HARVEY AND DARTON, PRINTERS,
GRACECHURCH-STREET.

A TESTIMONY

From GRACECHURCH STREET MONTHLY MEETING, concerning JOHN BARCLAY, who died on the 11th of 5th Month, 1838, and his remains were interred at Winchmore Hill, on the 18th of the same.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL
SEE GOD.—Matt. v. 8.

THIS, our dear friend, was the son of Robert and Ann Barclay, and was born at Clapham, in Surrey, in the year 1797. His parents were members of our religious society. His mother died whilst he was very young. From his own memorandums we find that he was early visited with the convictions of divine grace; but becoming exposed to the influence of bad example at a public school, the sinful propensities of the natural mind were strengthened; yet the strivings of the Holy Spirit were graciously continued, and he was often brought into deep humiliation and sorrow on account of his transgressions; and his tears of repentance and his prayers for preservation were poured forth in secret places. In reference to the state of his mind at this time, he says, "As the evil tree cannot but bring forth evil fruit as long as it is suffered to live and thrive in the heart; so this being the case with me, the fruits did show themselves abundantly indeed. Oh! that all who have

been injured by my evil example could be shown a fiftieth part of the remorse and repentance, sorrow and trouble, which has been, through unutterable mercy, experienced by me." He was made willing to abide under the judgments of the Lord, and was favoured to know that these chastisements from his heavenly Father's hand were administered in love; in a sense of which his heart was often made to overflow with thankfulness, and he was brought into a state of submission to the Lord's will, and humble dedication to his requirings. Alluding, some years afterwards, to the circumstances of this eventful period of his life, he writes thus: "This I may say and leave upon record, that though many almost indescribable temptations and presentations of evil have been permitted to come about me, sometimes like a mighty flood, so that in hours of extreme weakness I have been many and many a time ready to give up the 'fight of faith;' yet to this day the Lord, strong and mighty, has been pleased in his abundant compassion, to encamp around me, and to give me songs of deliverance, songs of triumph and of praise. In his name will I set up my banner, who is a Rock of defence, and sure Refuge to my poor weary soul. Oh! young man or young woman, to whom this may come,—my friend, my brother, my sister, who art seeking the better country, and Him who is the Way and the Guide; oh! though thou art weary and heavy laden, take courage; there is a staff, a stay, and strength and succour with Him and in Him who hath gone before, and who leadeth on his little ones gently and sweetly, as they are able to follow. Take this as the counsel of one who writes from a sure and living experience, and who hath indubitably known His name (which is above every name) to be a strong tower indeed. He will be with *His* even to the end of the world."

His mind for several years after his Father's decease,

was brought under much concern on the subject of business; and he felt it to be his duty to give up an offer which was considered to be very advantageous. In a retrospective view of this step, he says, in a letter, "I know not that I have taken any measure, that now in seasons of calmness seems to afford the like peace to me." Alluding to this again, he adds, "The ground upon which I think it best for me to be not much engrossed with the things of this life is, that having experienced no small share of the forbearance and mercy of the Lord, having been delivered from the pit of destruction, having sincere, hearty, and very fervent desires for my own preservation and salvation, as well as for that of my poor fellow-creatures everywhere, I have inclined towards the belief, that the Lord will make use of me, if I am faithful to his requirings, in the way, time, and for the purposes which He sees best; under this impression it is, and not to encourage or give way to an apathy, or want of energy or exertion, that I believe it right for me to sit loose to this world and the anxieties thereof, lest I should be incapacitated for performing that service, which may be shown to be my duty. I believe it safest for me, if in any business, it should be one of moderate profit, and not involving much attention."

He believed himself required to observe much simplicity and economy in providing the needful accommodations of life; and in reference to this subject he says, "I am clearly of the belief, that it is my duty to live in such a humble, plain, homely, simple manner, as that neither in the furniture, food, or clothing used, any misapplication of the gifts of Divine Providence be admitted or encouraged."

About this time, which was in the twenty-second year of his age, he writes thus: "O the love that the Lord hath shed abroad in my heart!—O the divine joy, the unspeakable peace, the blessed presence of the Most High, how it seems to flow through me, making up for all trial,

and tears of disquietude and distress !—O may this feeble testimony speak out His adorable mercy, when this poor frail flesh shall be laid low in the dust ; may it induce others to fear Him that made the heavens and the earth, and to trust in Him for ever ! Praises to the Lamb that liveth, yet was slain.—Amen.”

Early in the year 1820, he believed it right for him to remove from the family circle, and to reside for a time at Poole in Dorsetshire, and about the end of the same year he was married to Georgiana Hill. Their union was short, for in less than three years his dear companion was taken from him by death, at Marazion, in Cornwall, whither they had removed for the benefit of her health.

His mind had for several years been impressed with an apprehension that he should be called to the work of the ministry ; and in the prospect of it he was preserved in a waiting dependent state ; and fervent was his concern to be entirely given up to serve the Lord in the way of His holy requirings. At the interment of his beloved wife, in the 6th month, 1823, he was engaged in vocal supplication ; and in the autumn of that year he spoke as a minister. In allusion to this solemn and important work, after describing the fear and caution with which he had entered upon it, he says, “The weight and sweetness that dwelt on my mind after this surrender, cannot be set forth. O how it rested on my spirit all the day in an unutterable manner ! and yet such freedom of spirit, so that nothing seemed a trial, or that to which I was unequal. I shall not easily forget how comfortable and at ease in my mind I felt. O ! it was a heavenly feeling, and nothing short of Him that is in heaven could give it.”

He was acknowledged as a minister by his Friends in Cornwall in 1825, and in the following year was married to Mary Moates, and removed to Alton. After a residence of three years at that place, he settled at Croydon, and in

1835 he removed to Stoke Newington, within the compass of this Monthly Meeting, where he resided during the remainder of his life. In the course of the before-mentioned period, he paid several religious visits, with the unity of his friends, and in one of these journeys he travelled into Scotland as far as Aberdeen.

He had been from his youth of a tender constitution, and for the last few years of his life he had suffered much from a disease in his knee, which rendered walking or other active exertion difficult to him. He was, however, very exemplary in his efforts to attend our religious meetings, in which the exercise of his dedicated spirit was strengthening to many. His engagements in the line of ministry amongst us were not frequent; but he was at times led to address his friends in a weighty and feeling manner, endeavouring to turn their attention from a dependence on man, and from all that is superficial in religion, to a single reliance on the great Head of the Church, "The minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Our dear Friend was remarkable for integrity and uprightness of heart; and in the private walks of life his conduct was strikingly circumspect, and his conversation, whilst innocently cheerful, was instructive, being seasoned with grace.

Notwithstanding he was, in the ordering of unerring wisdom, much confined at home from bodily infirmity, yet his concern for the prosperity of our Society remained unabated, and his mind was actively employed in endeavouring to promote the spiritual welfare of its members. With this object, his time was much occupied in editing a series of publications, selected from the writings of our honoured predecessors in religious profession.

In the 11th mo. of 1836, he paid an acceptable visit, in the love of the Gospel, to the families of Friends at Brighton; and in the 11th mo. 1837, he felt attracted by

the same precious influence, to a similar engagement in his own particular meeting of Stoke Newington. After going through nearly half the families, wherein his service was much to the comfort of his friends, finding his constitution increasingly enfeebled, he returned to the Monthly Meeting its minute granted him for that purpose, accompanying it with a letter, replete with the expression of religious concern, from which the following is extracted: "On proceeding in the weighty engagement before me, I may acknowledge that although no wonderful outpouring of Divine Power was my portion, I was mercifully favoured, during the few days that I entered upon the work, with such a sense that the Lord preserveth the simple and the upright, that it was as my meat and drink to be thus among my friends; hard things were made very easy, and bitter things full of sweetness; a gently flowing stream of heavenly goodness being extended in every hour of need, though in a way humiliating to the creature, and so as nothing of the flesh could glory."

His health continuing to decline, he went to Brighton; but there his indisposition increased, and on the 8th of the 5th month, he was, by medical advice, removed to Tunbridge Wells; after which he survived but a few days. On the evening of the 9th, when about to retire to rest, on rising from his chair, and leaning on the couch and on the arm of his beloved wife, he supplicated thus; "Oh, gracious Father! if it please Thee, spare us to each other a little longer, and make us more entirely devoted to Thee and thy precious cause of Truth in the earth: nevertheless not our will, O Lord! but Thine be done." On the next day, which was the one immediately preceding his decease, he uttered many weighty expressions, amongst which were the following: "The Truth shall prevail.—Truth shall reign over all.—None that trust in the Lord shall be confounded, but they shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot

be moved.—You all know my desire to be preserved near unto the Lord.—I only want to be strengthened and upheld by the Lord; to be found in him; this is the way of peace.—I trust we shall be strengthened and animated to go through our day's work; then we shall find mercy at the hands of the Lord.—Let us look to the Lord for strength, at all times, and under all circumstances.”

In the latter part of this day his voice, though feeble, appeared to be making a sound of constant melody; during which those around him distinguished the words “O Lord—dear Lord—come.—I bless the Lord.—I am the Lord’s—for ever.—Cleave to Him—O—cleave to Him—love Him with all your heart.” The name of Jesus was often to be heard, and the word Hallelujah was frequently repeated.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of the 11th of 5th month, 1838, he peacefully passed away, aged forty-one years, a minister about fifteen years; and is, we reverently trust, united to the redeemed before the throne, who sing the new song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Given forth by our Monthly Meeting, held at White Hart Court, the 10th of 10th month, 1838, and signed by

[Here follow the signatures of men and women Friends.]

Read and approved in our Quarterly Meeting for London and Middlesex, held in London this 25th day of the 12th month, 1838, and in and on behalf thereof signed by

GEORGE STACEY, *Clerk.*

Signed in and on behalf of the Women's Quarterly Meeting, by

MARY FORSTER, *Clerk.*

A TESTIMONY

Of FRENCHAY MONTHLY MEETING, respecting HANNAH FISHER, deceased 27th 2nd month, 1839.

OUR late dear and valued Friend, Hannah Fisher, of Hillside, near Bristol, widow of the late George Fisher, of Bristol, and daughter of William and Hannah Jepson, of Lancaster, died on the 20th day of the 6th month, 1838, whilst on a visit to her son-in-law at Harrow, in the seventy-third year of her age, and was interred in Friends' burial-ground at Winchmore Hill, on the 27th of the same. She had been an acknowledged minister in our Society about twenty-two years, and a member of this meeting nearly fourteen years.

Although the attack which proved fatal was sudden, it appears not to have been unexpected, as she had previously sustained a very similar, but slighter seizure, on recovering from which she remarked to some of her family, that it was a gentle warning. In conversation on the subject of death, she frequently remarked of how little importance it appeared to *her* in what way it came, so that a preparation for it had been realized. That this had long been her own favoured experience, many very interesting and valuable private memoranda indicate, at the same time clearly recording a humbling sense of her own unworthiness, and of her whole reliance upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. In writing to a friend respecting the bereavements which some others had then recently sustained, she says, "I think if we viewed death as Christians should do, we should con-

sider it a gate opened to set the captive free, and as a passage to *life*, and *liberty*, and *joy*."

Her communications as a minister were neither frequent nor in many words, yet they were acceptable and instructive, and evidenced a mind deeply exercised for the spiritual advancement of those around her. It was the lot of this valued friend, after the decease of her husband, to experience great and varied trials, through all of which her character, as a sincerely humble and practical disciple of our Lord and Saviour, was instructively shown. Her whole deportment was dignified, securing respect from all, and the love of those who knew her. She possessed a remarkably clear and sound judgment, which was acceptably exercised in the disciplinary proceedings of our Society, as well as in the concerns of private life.

Under a sense of the loss we have sustained by her removal, and in the hope that it may stimulate others to follow her, as we believe she was concerned to follow Christ, we think it right to record this brief tribute of our esteem and love.

Signed in Frenchay Monthly Meeting, held at Frenchay the 27th of the 2nd month, 1839.

[*Here follow the signatures of men and women Friends.*]

Read and approved in the Quarterly Meeting of Gloucester and Wilts, held at Melksham the 26th of 3rd mo. 1839, and signed in and on its behalf by

JOHN FOWLER,
REBECCA FOWLER. } *Clerks.*

A TESTIMONY

*From the MONTHLY MEETING for the EAST DIVISION of
DEVONSHIRE, on behalf of JOHN DYMOND, deceased.*

OUR late valued friend, John Dymond, was born in the 9th month, 1761. He died on the 31st of the 5th mo., and was buried at Exeter on the 6th of 6th mo., 1838, a minister about forty years.

He was the eldest son of George and Ann Dymond, of Exeter, both honourable elders of that meeting, from whom he received a guarded and religious education. Their pious efforts being accompanied by fervent aspirations to the Father of mercies for His blessing, and enforced by their own exemplary conduct, were a means of producing a permanently beneficial influence on his character.

He was preserved from uniting in most of the follies incident to youth; and exhibited a steady and consistent example to the younger members of the family. Early desires were raised in his heart, to endeavour unreservedly to follow his Heavenly Guide; and as he ripened in age, we believe he was increasingly favoured to feel the precious visitations of redeeming love. He was thus gradually prepared for further discoveries of the Divine will concerning him; and he came forth in the important work of the ministry about the thirty-sixth year of his age. His early communications were expressed in few words, in great humility, and under deep exercise of mind. His

gift becoming gradually enlarged, and being attended by the baptizing power of the Holy Spirit, he became an instrument of strength and edification to those of his own Quarterly Meeting, beyond the compass of which his labours for many years seldom extended. At subsequent periods of his life, with the full unity of his friends, he visited the meetings of Friends in London and Middlesex, Yorkshire, and many other of the English counties; also in Scotland and Ireland. In the course of these weighty services, he was frequently engaged in visiting families; also in appointing meetings for those of other religious societies; and there is reason to believe that his labours were very acceptable, and have left a sweet and lasting impression on the minds of many.

Our dear friend was zealous in promoting the abolition of the slave-trade and slavery; objects, which for a long series of years, obtained his earnest and persevering attention.

Highly appreciating the value of the Holy Scriptures, and being himself a diligent reader of them, he rejoiced in the establishment of the Bible Society, and became, in the place of his residence, one of its earliest, and continued, to a very late period of his life, one of its most efficient supporters. He also actively co-operated with his fellow-citizens in various measures of public utility, and objects of benevolence: and in these pursuits he evinced a soundness of judgment, and an integrity of purpose, which secured to him their confidence and attachment.

In the year 1828, three of his children, who had arrived at mature age, and who were a comfort and stay to him in his declining years, were removed by death within the short space of two months. Deeply afflictive was this bereavement, yet he was enabled to bow in Christian submission to the will of his Heavenly Father, exemplifying in a remarkable manner the truth of that declaration of

the prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

His ministry was sound, weighty, and instructive. He was concerned to preach "Christ crucified," as the great propitiatory offering made "once for all," as well as to inculcate attention to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit, and unreserved submission to the Divine will manifested in the soul. He mourned the late divisions within the borders of our Society; but he had faith to believe, to adopt his own words when writing to a friend, that "the foundation upon which our early worthies built, will stand the test of the most rigid examination, and still be held dear by many." And again, at a subsequent date, "The longer I live, the more firmly is the conviction fixed upon my mind, that if ever our Society fills that station in the Christian church, which I believe our Heavenly Father calls us to, we must walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing, which our early friends were led into. It was, I believe, in their assemblies (often) when no words were spoken, that they were brought to a deep sense of the need in which they stood, of redeeming love and power, and that they were instructed in things pertaining to life and salvation."

During an illness of many months, he was preserved in much patience and cheerfulness. On the 24th of 4th mo. he remarked to his daughter-in-law, "I have been for some weeks in a precarious situation. I have not been able to feel anxious about it; I hope it is not apathy, but it seems as if I could not be uneasy." She remarked that she believed there was *no cause* for uneasiness, and that all was ordered in best wisdom. He rejoined, "I trust so. I have often thought of what a friend in the ministry said to me not long since, '*Thy sacrifices have been accepted,*' and oh! *it deeply humbled me.* They have been little and imperfect; yet this I trust I can say, I have en-

deavoured to be faithful." After a pause, "My day's work is done, but I have nothing to trust to but the mercy and goodness of the Almighty. I may not be able to express much more, yet may say that I have a quiet hope."

As our dear friend's bodily strength declined, and the last solemn event drew near, it was evident to those about him, that under an humble hope in divine acceptance, "His heart was fixed, trusting in God." Thus he departed in peace, and his memory is precious.

While we mourn the loss which ourselves and the Church have sustained, we are consoled by the belief, that through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, he has exchanged this probationary state for one of unsullied and endless joy; and that his purified spirit is united to the just of all generations.

Signed in the Monthly Meeting aforesaid, held at Exeter, the 5th of 12th mo. 1838, by

[Here follow the signatures of men and women Friends.]

Read and approved in the Quarterly Meeting for Devonshire, held at Plymouth the 26th of 12th month, 1838, and signed by direction and on behalf of the Meeting, by

JOHN DYMOND, *Clerk.*

Signed in and on behalf of the Women's Quarterly Meeting for Devonshire, by

SARAH JOHN DYMOND.