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APPEAL FROM BRITISH 'FRIENDS.'

Although more than a year has elapsed since the following epistle was issued by the meeting of Friends in London, and nearly that time must have elapsed since its receipt by the several meetings for sufferings in America, of which we are informed there are seven— one for each Yearly Meeting of Friends in the United States— yet we are not able to learn whether any thing has been done to revive and promulgate the testimony of the Society against slavery, founded on love and mercy, peace on earth, and good will to men. Has the pure spirit which actuated Fox, Penn, Woolman and Benezet departed from among those who profess the same principles? We trust not. The Friends in Great Britain have done much in aiding the abolition of slavery in the British Colonies, and we believe the Friends in America will be faithful laborers in the great work of Abolition in America. We hope we shall soon hear from them, as 'faith without works is dead,' and their active, unwearied exertion is necessary for the support of their testimony, and the advancement of the great cause of abolition.

The meetings for sufferings are composed of a large number of the active and most influential members of each Yearly Meeting, and are chosen by each particular Yearly Meeting: and each meeting for suffering has a general superintendence and oversight of the body or societies composing the Yearly Meeting for which they are chosen. They correspond with other meetings, issue testimonies and advice, examine manuscripts of books and other writings submitted by any of the members of the society, and assent to and aid in the publication of such as they approve and deem expedient to publish.

The name, Meeting for Sufferings, originated in England, soon after the rise of the society, and was so called, because the members were then subjected to the payment of tithes, church rates, and military demands; and the distrains of property and the imprisonment of the members were reported to this meeting, whose duty it was to collect the information, and report the same to the Yearly Meeting. The principles and doctrines of the society forbidding them to pay demands of such nature, much suffering attended the refusal to pay them. Hence the name— Meeting for Sufferings.

[Original Letter March 7 1834]

To the several Meetings for Sufferings in America.

DEAR FRIENDS— In the recollection of the long and deep interest which has prevailed in our religious society, both in this country and in America, on the subject of the abolition of the slave-trade and of slavery, we have felt a warm desire that our dear friends on your side of the Atlantic may be encouraged to consider at the present eventful period the course which it may be right for them to pursue, on behalf of the long injured sons of Africa and their descendants.

The striking combination of circumstances which hastened the final measures of our government for the abolition of British Colonial Slavery, has been very instructive; they were circumstances which could not be brought bear as they did upon the subject by the wisdom and contrivance of man. We believe, at the same time, that a blessing has rested upon the Christian efforts which have been employed for the utter termination of slavery within the dominions of Great Britain; and hence we are led to encourage you in your desires to act faithfully, yet wisely, at the present important crisis.

We are well aware, dear brethren, that there are difficulties in America, to which we never have been subjected. It is much easier to raise the voice of compassion and justice on behalf of our fellow subjects in distant colonies, than when brought so immediately into contact with the slave or the free people of color, as is the case with you. Still the principle is the same, invariable in its character, that we are all, whatever be our color, the children of one gracious heavenly Father— the purchase of one merciful Saviour— all alike the objects of that blessed redemption which comes by Jesus Christ. These considerations have powerfully prevailed in hastening the termination of British Colonial Slavery. May it be so in America.

In the warmth and freedom of brotherly love, we intreat you fearlessly to avow those sentiments— to take your stand upon the uncompromising righteousness of the law of Christ— to suffer no consideration of expediency, purpose no apprehension of commercial or political difficulties, to divert you from your purpose— to assert that freedom, political and religious liberty, to their full extent, are the inalienable rights of slaves and of free people of color, equal with the white men— and that they have an undoubted right to enjoy their freedom in the place where Providence has given them birth.

We apprehend that great, and, on some points, independent power is vested in the Legislatures of your respective States. You may, therefore, see it right to make a renewed and full avowal to them, as well as to the Federal Government, of the unchanging principles of equity and justice with which the continuance of these evils is incompatible; and in those states where slavery still exists, to ask for its speedy and utter extermination, under wise and just regulations.

We do not forget that the circumstances of our dear Friends, in the several yearly meetings, are widely different. In some, slavery is abolished; in others, it exists in all its enormities. We feel much for those who live amongst the slaves, and desire that they may continue to look unto God, and to trust in Him in the midst of difficulties.

To those who are exempt from this calamity, we would submit, whether they are not called upon to plead the undoubted right of the free people of color to all the privileges of citizens of the state— to being treated as equal in civil and religious society? To admit and act upon those views in the free states, appears to us likely to contribute to the abolition of slavery in those parts of the Union where it still exists.

Much has been done in this country, by improving the tone of public feeling on the subject of slavery, and by the general diffusion of correct christian sentiments amongst the people at large. We mention these things in love, without attempting to suggest to you any specific course of conduct.

To avow and to advocate to the full extent, in all parts of the United States, the sentiments which we have advanced, may by some be thought to be endangering the public peace; the evil may be considered of such a magnitude, that human efforts cannot remove it. But, dear brethren, as the love of justice and equity which christianity teaches, is honestly upheld and followed in the spirit which becomes the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, we have abundant cause to believe that He who ruleth over all, will bless the efforts of those who are thus engaged. As they move in reliance upon his goodness and mercy, and withhold not that which their hands find to do, they may humbly, yet confidently commit their cause to His all-controlling power, whilst delay, or the adoption of a lower course of proceeding, may hasten those very troubles which even now might be averted. Under any circumstances, accept our warm encouragement to seek for strength and to do right, and boldly to plead the cause of the oppressed, and to urge the total removal of this guilt from a nation where civil liberty is so fully partaken of, and so highly prized by those who enjoy its blessings.

In conclusion, we would further add, that in thus freely communicating our views, we write in much christian sympathy. We offer them to your serious attention, being well assured of the deep and lively interest which our dear brethren and sisters in America have long felt in the termination of slavery. May the Lord be pleased to guide your deliberations by His counsel, and to qualify you to act to the honor of his great and ever blessed name.

In the love of the gospel, we are your affectionate friends and brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of our meeting for sufferings, held in London, the 7th of the 3d month, 1834, by

GEORGE STACY, Clerk.

P.S. It will be very acceptable to us to receive any information connected with the foregoing epistle, which you may incline to transmit to us.