

## Joseph John Gurney in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER, DATED PHILADELPHIA, 27TH  
OF 8TH MONTH, 1837.

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I have just returned from a meeting which it would have rejoiced thy heart to have attended, a meeting at which were present about 3,000 persons as we conjecture. The room in the Arch Street House comfortably accommodates 2,500, it was full & overflowing, benches brought into the aisles & many could nowhere obtain seats. It was appointed at the request of our truly wonderful friend Joseph John Gurney, for members & those in the practice of attending our meetings throughout the city. It was the first time of seeing him to many of his audience who evinced the deepest & most breathless interest in what he had to communicate—interest not unmingled with anxiety in the minds of some, from the reports of all sorts currently circulated of him. The words he commenced with, were, “The memory of the just is blessed, *it shall not decay.*” So was that of our Father Abraham who in Mount Moriah bound his son for a sacrifice—so was that of Moses who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt—so was that of the earliest Disciples of our Lord who left all to follow Him, resigning their homes and renouncing the comforts of this life to promulgate the everlasting Gospel in the midst of peril & suffering. And blessed indeed to us should be that of the worthy founders of our Society who so faithfully obeyed the Divine requirements & who however they might now be traduced were founded, if any people ever were, on the immutable Rock of Ages. Subjects strictly doctrinal followed in more beautiful order than I can give an idea of. On that of Baptism he said, there was in the Christian Dispensation but one needful, Do you know it my friends? Ask John the Baptist what it is, let him tell you. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but there cometh one after me mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost & with fire.

<sup>1</sup> From an anonymous manuscript in D. J. J. G. writes, under date given above, “A general meeting for Friends is appointed for this evening at Arch Street Meeting House.”

And with this baptism who shall say they our early friends were not baptized. And also of the Supper—our Lord said, “Behold I stand at the door & knock, if any man hear my voice & open the door, I will come into him & sup with him & he with me,” & of this blessed communion they doubtless were partakers. There were many of our Hicksites present, he was very severe on their doctrines without any reference to them. I boldly dare to say (these were his words) that if any pretend to the guidance of Heaven & deny the Crucified & Incarnate One he is a liar & there is no truth in him, repeating the following lines,

“ There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath the flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.”

He spoke near an hour & a quarter & appeared in supplication both in the morning & afternoon—the evening being very warm he appeared much exhausted—he has however as far as I have heard won golden opinions from Friends generally & I do not doubt many a heart has been filled with joy & thankfulness for the highly orthodox character of his sermons & the apparent humility of the man, whose fame, worth, & talents had led many to fear that humility would not be a conspicuous feature. Indeed I think no one could listen to him without admiring his spirit of meekness, piety, & zeal, or without feeling that he is an extraordinary man. The moment of his arriving at John Paul’s door from the vessel is said to be one of much interest. Stephen Grellett was amongst those who awaited his arrival, he leaped from the carriage exclaiming, “My dear friend Stephen Grellett!” when they embraced with much emotion & affection. On entering the house he fell on his knees sweetly returning thanks to the Almighty Power who had preserved him.

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The mere archæologist, the mere genealogist, the mere antiquary, are not the parasites of historical study, as they are too often regarded by men who find it easier to borrow than to estimate the results of their researches; they are working bees in the hive of historic knowledge.—

BR. STUBBS, quoted in *History of the Wilmer Family*.