

Jacob and James, or Strength in Weakness

“ **W**HILE Jacob Ritter resided at Springfield, Pa., he accompanied James Simpson on a religious visit. On their return home, James appointed a meeting at Easton ; they put up at a public house and Jacob undertook to make arrangements for the meeting ; for this purpose the court house was obtained though not without opposition from one influential individual.

“ James, who was probably aware that there had been some difficulty about the meeting, and seeing the people assemble in crowds, became very much depressed. He sat for a while in the chimney corner, questioning the rectitude of his proceeding in appointing the meeting ; in this state of feeling, he ordered his horse to be put to the carriage, and, like the prophet Jonah, was going to flee from the word of the Lord.

“ At this critical juncture, Jacob arrived and inquired of the ostler, ‘ What does this mean ? ’ The reply was, ‘ The gentleman ordered his horse.’ ‘ Well, I order him back again,’ said Jacob. The horse was put away, and when Jacob walked in, he found James, who was under a great weight of exercise, preparing to go. He was very glad to see Jacob and wished him to take charge of the meeting.

“ Jacob said, ‘ That wont do, James, but thou must go to the meeting thou has appointed, and I will go with thee.’ James said, ‘ Thou must do the preaching then for I cannot.’ Jacob replied, ‘ Never mind about the preaching, nobody has asked thee to preach, but let us go to the meeting ; that is the first thing to be done.’

“ James went in great fear and trembling, and Jacob felt brotherly sympathy, with him. For some time James sat with his head bowed almost to his knees, but at length light sprang up and he was enabled to proclaim the truth in the demonstration of the Spirit and with great power and the meeting concluded under a solemn covering.

“ The individual who had thrown difficulty in the way of appointing the meeting was now so changed in his feelings that he gave the Friends a pressing invitation to dine with him, but Jacob said, ‘ No. Thee throwed cold water on this concern in the beginning and now we must go to the public house for our dinner.’ ”

“ After dinner they passed quietly away, ‘ rejoicing for the consolation ’ which they felt for this little act of dedication ; and when they had ascended an eminence out of sight of the people but within full view of the town, James stopped his carriage, and, looking back, exclaimed, ‘ Oh ! Easton, Easton, thou hast had a broadside to-day.’ Jacob replied, ‘ Ah ! thou can brag now but remember how it was a while ago in that chimney corner.’ ”

Jacob Ritter (1757-1841) was of Dutch extraction and born at Springfield, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He was a soldier in the War of Independence, was taken prisoner and released by intervention of a friend of the British general, Lord Howe. In 1778 he was married to Dorothy Smith ; they removed to Philadelphia, and attended the Lutheran church. But a while after he began to attend Friends’ meetings and was later joined by his wife. He felt it right to visit among the sufferers from the yellow fever of 1793 in Philadelphia, and one day as he was going along the street he saw a corpse brought to the Friends’ burying ground and only one Friend following. He joined and they stood one on each side of the grave while the corpse was buried. Each went his way home and both were taken ill with the fever. The other Friend, the eminent Minister, Daniel Offley, died.

After years of widowerhood, he married, in 1802, Ann Williams of Buckingham, and after settled at Plymouth, in Montgomery Co., Pa. He did not travel much in the ministry and was more conversant with Dutch than English. A little book of his *Memoirs* was edited by Joseph Foulke and published in Philadelphia in 1844 (copy in D).

James Simpson (1743-1811), of Philadelphia, was a prominent Minister, who travelled much in his own country. Robert Sutcliffe, in his *Travels in North America*, 1804-6, describes Simpson thus :

“ He follows the occupation of a broom-maker, and frequently comes down to Philadelphia in a handsome little carriage, loaded with his manufactures. Although a broom-maker, yet few pastors stand higher in the estimation of their flocks than he does.

“ In his external appearance, he is thin, and upwards of six feet high ; his visage is very long and nearly of an Indian complexion, with small, quick eyes corresponding. In the gallery he commonly wears a dark coloured cotton cap, fitting close to his head, and over his shoulders a long dark coloured cloak. He is not less remarkable in his manner

when exercised in the gallery. He uses considerable action and gesticulation, and his testimonies, in general, are almost a continual exposition of the Mosaic Law with references to the counterpart in the Gospel dispensation, which he explains with a volubility of expression and quickness of recollection that are astonishing to a stranger" (pp. 248, 250 and cp. p. 83—"J.S.").

A pen-picture of J. Simpson, in the *Fourth and Arch Streets Centennial*, 1904, p. 44, concludes with the words:

"Guiltless of writing rhymes, he was yet a poet and throngs of bright images, carrying forcible conviction and Christian instruction, flowed from his lips" (see also pp. 53 ff).

Rebecca Jones describes his death:

"After the short illness he made a peaceful and happy close. Lying down with his clothes on and requesting to be turned on the other side he said: 'It is done,' and ceased breathing." (*Memorials*, 1849, p. 339.)

Changed Letters, an Anecdote of Stanley Pumphrey (1771-1843)

JN the "Journal of William Robson" (see page 105) we read the following:

"8 mo. 24. 1817. Spent the evening in the company of Stanley Pumphrey, a friend from Worcester, a traveller in the glove line, an extraordinary account of whose late wife is given in the 10th Vol. of *Piety Promoted*. He appears to be a very agreeable friend. . . . He is very full of anecdote, one of which was rather a singular one:

"During the time he was a bachelor he had occasion to write to a woman friend at Liverpool on business. About the same time it appears a woman friend of Worcester wrote to the same female to request her to procure her a young woman for a servant. The Liverpool friend answered both the letters, but unfortunately directed the one addressed to Stanley Pumphrey to the female and that to the latter to S.P. What was Stanley's surprise on receiving a letter to this effect:

" 'Dear friend. I think I have found a young woman that will just suit thee. I have spoken to her parents respecting it. They consent, and the young woman herself is quite agreeable.

" 'I remain, etc., Thy friend.' "

"Joshua Dawson (the great quaker) was buried in a field, Dec. 29, 90, aged 73, has been a sp. court man before the warre "

OLIVER HEYWOOD, *Diaries*, ii. 157.