

A WARNING TO ALL THE MERCHANTS IN LONDON, AND SUCH AS BUY AND SELL.

*With advice to them to lay aside their superfluity, and with it to
nourish the poor.*

—By George Fox

All should keep to yes and no to all people in their common occasions, for whatsoever is more than these, comes of evil. All take heed of deceitful merchandize, and deceiving, and cheating, and defrauding one another, and pretending one with another. All take heed of deceitful merchandize in all their buying and selling, and in all their exchange; away with all deceitful merchandize, for as a swift witness has the Lord come to plead with you, and against you that use deceitfulness in your merchandize, and use it in your buying and selling. Away with your flattering titles of "sir," and bowing the hat, and scraping the foot, and making the curtsy, and titles of master and mistress, with statements such as *at your service*, and forsooth [right you are] - this is your vain custom along with setting a price for some people that is often double the worth of the thing.* and under this complimenting way, and in it, lies the deceit and over-reaching, and lurks to cozen and cheat, telling a falsehood, a flattery; so by fair speaking and flattering words, often times the simple is deceived Therefore this is a charge from the living God to you all, be true, be faithful to God, be just, be innocent, and ask no more for the thing than you would have; be at a word, so say, and so do; when you ask more than you will have, or almost double, and say you will not take it except you have so much, and then send your boys after them, and so take it, you are not here at so say, and so do; and here are you judged with the law of liberty to be out of it, far off from the life of christians, like heathens in life and practice; therefore be at a word, and then you will be a good savor, for the Lord is come near to judgment among you; for while you are not at so say, and so do, you are not in the law of liberty, you are not in the prophets, you are not in the gospel, you are found out of them all.

*Before the honesty of the Quakers prevailed on the English nation, all prices in stores were negotiable; similar to the distasteful experience of buying a car with the games of offers and counteroffers. The Quakers followed the Golden Rule

and treated everyone as they would have others treat them - with a single price to all, whatever their dress, whatever their speech, etc. The honesty of the Quaker merchants soon fostered a loyalty of customers, so that when a stranger came to town, it was not uncommon for him to ask: "where is a Quaker shoemaker." Their honesty forced all shops to stop trying to cheat their customers with a high negotiated price; all stores reverted to single pricing. To this day, we owe the Quakers the thanks for sparing us the necessity of negotiating the price of food, clothing, etc.

Again, you merchants, great men and rich men, what a dishonor is it to you to go in your gold and silver, and gold chains about your necks, and your costly attire, and your poor, blind women and children, and cripples, crying and making a noise up and down your streets, a dishonor to your city, showing that you are not under the law, nor under the gospel; for under the law they had tithes and tenths to feed all the fatherless and strangers, for tithes were partly for that work and end. How can you go up and down in your superfluity, and abounding in your riches, and see the poor, blind, and cripples go about your streets? Above all others, the blind should be taken care of; therefore let these things be kept in mind and considered. Fear God and do that which may be an honor to you, and to christianity, and your city; and in all your shops, and warehouses, and exchanges, keep to your words, and so say, and so do, and that you may not cozen and cheat one another, nor any people. For some have a name and a bad report of deceitful merchandize, which deceives the country people that deal with you. O therefore blot it out, and do it no more; but judge one another in these things. Be a good savor and commend yourselves to the innocent and simple, so that a child may come among you and not be wronged; that will be pleasing to God that you do righteously, and to the just God, that you do justly. Then you will be a good savor to the righteous just God, and to the country people, when you are turned from the bad to the good, so that you may be trusted for faithfulness and honesty, for the contrary dealings, is dishonesty. You that scrape your foot, and pull off your caps, and courtesy, and say sir, and master, and mistress, and flatter one another with the deceitful titles, and ask more for more than your commodity is worth, and are not at a word, so say, and so do. But you tell people that you will not will not take their offer, and then have your boys and lasses to run after them to come back again; this is the way to make the simple fear you, and the innocent to avoid you, and to keep up a bad savor, and a bad name. Therefore **this is the word of the Lord God, and a charge to you in the presence of the Lord God, and to you all**, that you charge your servants not to deceive and cheat any, nor to ask more for your things than you will take, and to keep to yes and no in your common occasions,

and to keep to a word, and that will be pleasing to God, and a good savor to all sober people.

All you merchants whatsoever, and shop-keepers, take heed of deceiving and cheating of people with your dark back-windows; for truth is risen, that will keep out all deceit; therefore be sober, and take it patiently, and live in it, for truth will make you free; and if you wish to be made free by truth, give up your deceitful merchandize, and give up your many words, and keep to yes and no. [Mark,] you must be judged by the law. All your profession and crying up ordinances, and your notions and experiences, while you live in deceitful merchandize, and above yes and no in your common occasions; you are in the evil, and are not at so say, and so do. You are all judged by the law of liberty, who are deceitful in your merchandize, in your buying and selling, and deceiving and cheating poor country people in your merchandize; you are not to name the name of Christ, unless you depart from iniquity; and the truth has not made you free, who are found in the evil, judged by the law of liberty in all your deceitful merchandize. Therefore come to a word, come to yes and no, all you young and old whatsoever, so that you will be received by the Lord into his kingdom; for fear that you are turned out with the rich glutton, and the poor Lazarus taken into Abraham's bosom. Therefore take in the blind, halt and lame, and obey the things that Christ commands you, you who call him Lord; take in the blind and the cripples that cry up and down your streets, and invite them to your feasts; for the rich feast the rich, and not the poor that cannot feast them again. See now if you will take up the cross of Christ, and obey his commands, then you will become like unto them, when you obey Christ's command, and show that you have his spirit and mind in you, and are christians; for while you are not made free by truth, all your religion and profession of Christ and the apostles' words is vain, and your conduct is below in the earth, and not with Christ in heaven.

Again, all the while your poor, and blind, and lame cripples, and women, and children, are crying up and down your streets, and steeple-house-doors, and alleys, and corners, after you that call yourselves christians, and yet they are christians as well as you, and so members of the same body; so you may say, be clothed, be filled, be warmed, and be such a people the apostle speaks of, yet let them be crying up and down the streets not provided for. So this is to hang gold on one arm, and let the other go bare; or hang gold on the back, and let the leg go bare; for all are members of one body, the poor as well as the rich, and this declares that you are out of the law. For the Lord took the tithes and gave them to the strangers, and fatherless, and widows, and gave all enough, that there was not a beggar in Israel among them. Now judge yourselves, and see how short you come of them in life and practice, who say you are christians, and profess the gospel. These things are a grief to many sober people in the city, to

see that magistrates have no more feeling of these things, and yet so much profession of religion and preaching among them, and so much riches that men never knew want of. By this many come to be hardened, and one might think, if it were only to keep the honor of their city, they would not let above all things, blind men, and cripples, and lame people, and poor fatherless children make a noise up and down the streets, and steeple-house-doors; but out of their abundance they would lay a little aside, and have a place provided that all the poor, blind, lame cripples should be put into, and nurses set over them, and looked to, cherished, and seen unto that they do not want. Thus those who could work, to work; and this would be a good savor of the city, and of the magistrates, aldermen, and merchants of the city, and to the sober people, and to the Lord God, that there should not be seen a beggar walk up and down the streets, but that there might be a place where they might be maintained with a little out of their superfluity [their unneeded excess]. Yes, before there should be such a noise with the poor, the blind, the lame, and the fatherless, everyone lay by a little out of their abundance, and spare some off their backs in gold and silver lace, or their chains and rings; for who considers not the cry of the poor, but turns his ear from them, them their Maker will not regard. All who do not visit the fatherless, and the poor, and the sick, and feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and are of a profession of religion, and makes a talk of Christ's words, and the prophets', and Moses'; such are in the wisdom below, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, not preservers of the creation, not in the wisdom that is from above, which is gentle, easy to be entreated, by which the creation is to be preserved, by which it must be ordered again to the glory of God. You going in your gold and silver, yes in your very shoes laced [with gold], while the poor lack bread, lack stockings and shoes. You with your many dishes, changes of dishes, which you call novelties, while the poor cannot get bread. Spare one of your dishes, and let it be carried to the place for the poor, and do not make them to come begging for it either, but let them have a place where they may be kept, and that will be for your honor and renown. For consider what abundance of riches is in this city, and what good you might do with it, or how soon you may be taken from it, or it from you, by fire, or sea; and yet for all this you will not consider your poor brethren, which are made of the same blood and mould, to dwell upon the face of the earth. Therefore practice truth, which frees from deceit, and from all deceiving and pretending; this will bring you to a word in all your common occasions, and to so say, and so do, and to worship God in the truth, and to worship God in the spirit, that the devil is out of, and come to the pure religion, which is, to visit the fatherless, to visit the sick, and relieve the hungry, and clothe the naked, that brings you to practice and to do the will of God. Give up your living in words, and your hearts afar off, surfeiting in riches, iniquity and deceit; but come to honesty and plain dealing, and mercy, and take heed of pride, and loftiness, and wantonness, and haughtiness, and walk humbly before the Lord, that you may come to the life the saints, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles were in. For the mighty day of the Lord is coming, wherein

everyone of you must give account of his deeds done in the body, and every man's work must be tried by fire, and every man's work shall be brought to the light, and made manifest by it. So your day is not past, while you have time, prize it.