

peace on earth and good will to men. Under this influence they will be favoured with wisdom, prudently to determine the affairs of ~~the~~ society, and thereby be ^{the} more likely to prevent appeals from coming to the Yearly Meetings, which, besides tending to prolong it, sometimes occasion uneasiness to the body.

Arbitrations.

When differences arise between our members in regard to their property, they are to proceed in the following manner.

The party who thinks him or her self aggrieved, should in the first place, calmly and kindly, request the other to comply with the demand; and, if this be disputed, the complainant, or, if residing at too great a distance, some friend whom he or she may authorize, should take with him one or two of the overseers, or other discreet friends, and in their presence repeat the demand.

If this step also fail of the desired effect, the parties should be advised to choose a suitable number of friends as arbitrators, and mutually engage, by bond, or other written instrument adapted to the occasion, to abide by their determination.

Should this proposal be acceded to, and arbitrators accordingly chosen, they ought as speedily as circumstances will admit, to appoint a time and place, and attend to the business without unnecessary delay; giving the parties a full and fair hearing, in the presence of each other, but listening to neither of them apart, nor suffering their own sentiments to be known abroad, till they have fully digested the subject, and come to a clear decision; which they should be careful to do within the time agreed on.

But if either of the parties refuse to submit the matter in dispute, to arbitrators; or, when that is done, neglect to give his or her attendance when desired, without assigning a sufficient reason; or not abide by their award when imposed, in either of these cases, the person so offending, should be complained of to the Monthly Meeting of which he or she is a member; and if the brotherly endeavours and admonitions of society in this capacity, fail to produce a conformity to justice in the case, the said meeting should proceed to disannul the ~~award~~ of the arbitrators, unless such person make it evident to the satisfaction of the meeting,

that the award or proceedings have been erroneous or unjust. In which case, the matter in dispute may be referred to the same, or other arbitrators, as the meeting shall judge best; and their award shall be final. After which, if either of the parties at variance, prove so regardless of peace and unity, as not to acquiesce in such confirmed, or corrected determination, the monthly meeting to which he or she belongs, should proceed to issue a testimony against the person so refusing.

Where arbitrators are at a loss for want of legal knowledge, it will be proper for them, at the joint expence of the parties, to take the opinion of counsel learned in the law, in order to qualify them for giving a proper judgment in the matter referred to them. And that they may the better answer the end of their appointment, and be helpful in conciliating the minds of the parties, they ought not to consider themselves as advocates for those by whom they are chosen; but as men whose duty it is to judge righteously fearing the Lord. They should shun all previous information respecting the case; or, having heard any thing in regard to it, remain as much as possible unbiassed thereby. They should reject no evidence or witness proposed; nor receive any but in the presence of both parties; and in their award, they need not assign any reason for their determination.

And whereas there may be some circumstances even in disputed matters, wherein the foregoing equitable mode of proceeding cannot be complied with; such as, first, the party absconding, or leaving the country with design to defraud his or her creditors; or, second, a present danger of bankruptcy, or being overloaded with debts, and other creditors generally coming on, which would occasion manifest damage to the claimant, by the time it would take in pursuing the above method; or, third, where there may be danger of future damage, as in case of executors, administrators or trustees; it may therefore be necessary, and it is directed, that the monthly meetings where such cases happen, and on due enquiry appear truly so, do hold excused such as shall in the two first mentioned cases in this paragraph, appear to them really necessitated to proceed at law.