

INTRODUCTION.

THE Apostles and Disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, found it necessary to meet together for the consolation and strength one of another; when, pursuant to the design of the Gospel, the nature of which is to produce peace on earth and good-will to men, a care arose for the edification of the church, and that all, being of one family, might be of one mind.

And as it hath pleased the great Head of the church, to inspire us with degrees of the same universal love and good-will, we are engaged, not only to meet together for the worship of God, but also for the affectionate exercise of a christian care over each other, answerable to the description which He, the ever blessed Shepherd, gave of his flock, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35.

For this important end, and as an exterior hedge of preservation to us against the many temptations and dangers to which we are exposed, the following rules, which have been occasionally adopted by the society, now form our Code of Discipline. In the exercise whereof, it is to be observed, that if any member be found in conduct subversive of its order, or repugnant to the testimonies with which we believe we are entrusted for the promotion of truth and righteousness, it becomes our indispensable duty to treat with such in christian meekness and brotherly compassion,

without unnecessary delay or improper exposure, according to the direction of our Lord. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Matt. chap. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

This is the extent of the censure of the society against irreclaimable offenders, and whilst we disown them from being members of our religious community, it is recommended to be done in such a disposition of mind, as may convince them, that we sincerely desire their recovery and restoration.

For the more regular and effectual support of the order of society, it will be observed, that besides the usual meetings for the purpose of divine worship, others, for the exercise of our Discipline, are instituted, subordinate to each other, all of which are either immediately or remotely, accountable to the Yearly Meeting. These meetings have distinct allotments of service, and experience has abundantly shewn, that when this service is attended to in uprightness and dedication of heart, with a single eye to the honour of our Holy Head, and the benefit and edification one of another, in the love wherewith he hath loved us, our assemblies are favoured with his aid and direction.

Whilst we earnestly recommend this work to the notice and regard of Friends, we are convinced that an acquaintance with the letter of our Discipline will be insufficient, unless, in the exercise thereof, we are careful to move and act under the immediate influence of the pure love of the Gospel.

May we, therefore, in our meetings for the exercise of the Discipline, humbly seek to be clothed with the spirit of wisdom and charity; this will divest the mind of a dependance

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on our own strength and abilities, endue us with patience and condescension towards each other, and being preserved in fellowship agreeably to the declaration of our Lord, "one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," a qualification will be experienced in our several stations and movements, to build up one another in that faith which works by love, to the purifying of the heart.

In conclusion, we desire in an especial manner, that our youth, of the present and succeeding generations, may be early and fully instructed in our religious principles, and in the nature and design of our Christian Discipline; and through divine assistance, be enabled to adorn our holy profession, by a conversation and conduct consistent with godliness and honesty, thereby avoiding the mournful consequences which many, through a defection in principle, or a degeneracy in practice, have brought upon themselves, to the reproach of the religious body of which they professed to be members.

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WHILST the Yearly Meeting, in granting the liberty of appeal, considers it as a just privilege, it is affectionately desired that all may be careful not to encourage persons to avail themselves of it, from improper motives.

If any be dissatisfied with or think themselves aggrieved by, the judgment of a Monthly Meeting, they may, after a copy of the testimony of disownment is delivered to them, notify the first or second Monthly Meeting following, (but no other,) of their intention of appealing to the ensuing Quarterly Meeting, which notification the Monthly Meeting should enter on its minutes, and appoint four, or more, Friends to attend the Quarterly Meeting with copies of the proceedings relative to the case, signed by the clerk, there to show the reasons whereon that judgment was founded. The Quarterly Meeting is then to refer the subject to a committee, (omitting the members of the Monthly Meeting appealed from,) who are carefully and deliberately to consider the case, and report their judgment respecting it, and the ly. Quarterly Meeting shall confirm or reverse the judgment of the Monthly Meeting, as on impartial

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deliberation, shall appear to be right; taking care to inform the party of the result. But in those cases where the judgment of a Monthly Meeting cannot be approved, because of informality in its proceedings, the Quarterly Meeting may remand the case to its further attention, and, if it shall be deemed advisable, appoint a committee to assist such Monthly Meeting in reconsidering and determining it.

An appellant, on being informed of the judgment of a Quarterly Meeting, if dissatisfied therewith, may notify either that or the next Quarter, (but not afterwards,) of an intention to apply to the Yearly Meeting for a further hearing. The said Quarterly Meeting, after recording such notification, is in like manner, to appoint at least three Friends to attend the Yearly Meeting with copies of the records of both Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in the case, signed by their clerks; here it is to be finally determined, and a copy of the determination is to be sent to the Quarterly Meeting from which the appeal came. Notices of appeals are to be forwarded from subordinate to superior meetings, in the regular reports of such meetings.

Appellants shall have a right to be present during the appointment of the committee in their cases, and all reasonable objections, which they may then make to persons nominated on the committee, are to be duly regarded.

When the appellant is a female, the women's meeting is also to appoint a committee to accompany the minutes in the case, from the Monthly to the Quarterly Meeting; and from the Quarterly to the Yearly Meeting, and the women's Quarterly and Yearly Meetings should appoint committees, to unite with the committees of the men's meetings, in the examination of the subject, and the report of the joint committee is to be made to the men's meeting, which is to decide on the appeal and inform the women's meeting of its decision; and a joint committee of men and women should be appointed to inform the appellant of the result.

ARBITRATIONS AND LAW.

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 herself 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 fair and full 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.

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But if either of the parties refuse to submit the matter in dispute to arbitrators, or when they shall have submitted it, neglect to give his or her attendance when desired, without assigning a sufficient reason, or not abide by their award when issued; 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 disown the offender, 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.

When arbitrators are at a loss for want of legal knowledge, it will be proper for them, at the joint expense 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. 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 not refuse to hear any evidence which may be offered, 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, secondly, apparent danger of bankruptcy, or being overloaded with debts, and other creditors generally so pressing their demands as to occasion manifest damage to the claimant, by the time which would be taken in pursuing the above method, or, thirdly, where there may be danger of future damage, as in case of executors, administrators, agents or trustees, it may therefore be necessary, and it is directed, that the Monthly Meetings where such cases happen, do hold executed, such as shall in the two first mentioned cases in this paragraph, proceed at law; and in the latter case, of executors, administrators, agents or trustees, where it shall appear to the meeting, that the matter is of importance, and that our friendly way would be unsafe, such may be permitted to have the matter tried at law, with this caution, that the parties on both sides behave towards each other in brotherly love, decency and moderation, without anger or animosity. But if any members of our religious society, disregarding the gospel order prescribed by our Discipline, shall arrest or sue at law, any other members, (not being under such necessity as before stated,) it shall be deemed a departure from the peaceable principles of which we make profession; and if on being treated with, by the Monthly Meetings to which they belong, they cannot be