

BIRTHS AND BURIALS.

prevailed with to withdraw the suit, and pay the costs thereof, they should be disowned.

As it may sometimes occur that a member, either for want of a clear understanding of the business, or through an improper influence, may present a complaint against another member, wherein the overseers, after fully hearing both parties, shall be decidedly of opinion that the case does not require a reference, they are to advise a speedy settlement thereof; which being ineffectual, and the complainant remaining dissatisfied therewith, may have liberty to inform the Preparative Meeting, where the other party is a member, (without mentioning any name) that having a matter in dispute with one of their members, their assistance is desired, in order to a settlement thereof. The said meeting is then to appoint a committee to inquire into the propriety of leaving the matter to arbitration, if they should judge that the complaint ought to be referred, they are to advise that it be submitted accordingly; but if the said committee concur in judgment with the overseers, the complaint is to be dismissed.

It is directed that Friends in the ministry be excused from serving as arbitrators.

BIRTHS AND BURIALS.

In order that meetings may not be held upon occasion of the decease of our members in a formal way, or as a customary circumstance, the proposal for holding any such meeting should be previously submitted to the consideration of the elders and overseers, where it is proposed to hold such meeting.

That burials may be accomplished in an orderly manner, Monthly Meetings are directed to appoint a committee or committees to be taken out of their several branches as occasion may require, to attend those of our society, and the burials of those not in membership with us, who are interred in our ground; permission for the interment of the latter is to be obtained from this committee; which is to see that they are conducted in a manner becoming the occasion, and agreeably to the directions before expressed. This committee are also to take care that our burial grounds be properly enclosed, and kept in decent order.

It is further desired, as becoming the solemnity of the occasion, that at all interments, time be allowed for a pause, both before and after the corpse is put into the ground, in order that the impressive influence of an occasion so awful, may have its proper effect upon the minds of those who are present.

Friends are also enjoined to maintain our testimony against affixing improper monuments to graves, for the purpose of distinction, in any of our burying grounds; and that they avoid the imitation of the custom of wearing, or giving, mourning habits on account of the interment of the dead.

As great inconvenience may arise from a want of due attention to keeping a regular record of births, deaths and burials, it is enjoined upon each Monthly Meeting to appoint a careful friend, whose duty it shall be to keep such a record, in a book provided at the expense of the Monthly Meeting for the purpose. And in order to engage the attention of Monthly Meetings more closely to this subject, it is further enjoined that committees be appointed at least once in three years to examine and correct the records.

BOOKS.

The following forms of the records are proposed being both simple and explicit.

BIRTHS.

Names of the children.	When born.	Names of the parents.	Their residence.	Occasional Notes.

BURIALS.

Names of the deceased.	When dec'd.	Age.	Where buried.	Last residence.	Occasional Notes.

BOOKS.

It being a business assigned to the meeting for sufferings to take the oversight of all writings, proposed to be printed, which relate to our religious principles or testimonies, our members, who may have it in prospect to publish any such writings, are to lay them before the said meeting, for its advice and concurrence. And if any of our members shall print or publish any writing, against the advice of said meeting, or which shall have a tendency to excite disunity, such persons should be complained of to the Monthly Meeting to which they belong, and if they cannot be prevailed upon to condemn their conduct, to the satisfaction of said meeting, they should be testified against, as opposed to the peace and good order of society.

It is considered incumbent on parents and heads of families to prevent as much as possible, all those under their direction, from perusing those pernicious publications, which are written for the purpose of weakening the authority of the Christian religion, or exciting doubts concerning the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, and those saving truths declared in them; lest the immature and feeble minds of such be poisoned thereby, and a foundation laid for the greatest evils. It is also enjoined on all the members of our religious society, that they discourage and suppress the reading of plays, romances and novels, which have a tendency to awaken and invigorate those impure propensities "which war against the soul," and which it is the duty and interest of every Christian mind to keep in a state of suppression.

CERTIFICATES.

QUARTERLY and Monthly Meetings are to take care, that all certificates or minutes which may be given to any Friends travelling in the service of the ministry, be recorded, and, upon the return of such Friend, seasonably delivered back to the meeting; and that all certificates of removal brought by any Friends intending to become residents, shall be lodged in the Monthly Meeting, where the same are accepted; and also, that every meeting keep a record of all certificates issued by it.

It having been observed, that the dissolving of old, and forming of new connexions have, in some instances, been attended with effects prejudicial to a growth in the truth, both in the elder and younger branches of families, it is affectionately desired that both young and old give close attention to the pointings of Divine Wisdom; and also

CERTIFICATES.

timely to consult experienced Friends, previously to their determining to change their residence.

When certificates of removal from one Monthly Meeting to another are received, they shall be accepted, and the persons recommended shall be considered members of the meeting to which such certificates are directed; provided they are known to reside within its limits. But no Friend who is under such circumstances as to require the aid of the meeting, shall be removed to another Monthly Meeting, by certificate, without the consent of such meeting.

All members removing beyond the limits of their Monthly Meetings are to apply to their respective meetings for certificates, directed to those within the limits of which they propose to sojourn or settle. But if any shall remove without so applying, the overseers of the Monthly Meeting of which they are members, shall report the case to the meeting, which after making the usual inquiry, and finding no obstruction, should, without improper delay, send certificates for them, to the Monthly Meetings within the limits of which they have removed; but if their previous conduct require that they be dealt with, and the distance be such as to render it inconvenient for the meetings they removed from, the Monthly Meetings within the verge of which they have settled, should be requested to treat with them, and report the effect of their care; on which, if it prove satisfactory, certificates of removal may be directed, but if otherwise, and testimonies of disunion be issued, the meeting where they reside should be furnished with copies thereof, to be delivered to the parties, with information of their right of appeal.

If the persons removed, or about to remove, be females, the women's Monthly Meeting is to appoint two or more of their members to make the necessary inquiry, and prepare a certificate accordingly, which, after being considered in the women's, is to be laid before the men's meeting, and when there approved and signed, returned to the women's meeting for their signature. But if the certificate is intended to include one or more males, then the women are to report the result of their inquiry to the Friends named on the like inquiry by the men's meeting, in which the certificate being approved and signed, is to be sent to the women's meeting for their concurrence and signature; and all certificates received for women friends are to be laid before the men's meeting, before they can be fully accepted by the women's meeting.

Where minors are under the necessity of going from one place to another, their parents, or those who have had the care of them, should apply for certificates for them, recommending them to the care and oversight of the Monthly Meetings whereunto they have been removed.

If any persons appearing as Friends, come within the compass of any Monthly Meeting, not being recommended by certificates, and be of disorderly conduct, the overseers, or other concerned Friends, should inquire whether or not they are members of our society, and if they prove so to be, admonish them, or, if the occasion require it, report the case to the Preparative, and from thence to the Monthly Meeting, which should thereupon inform the Monthly Meetings of which they are members, of the circumstances, and take the direction of said meeting for dealing further with them, agreeably to our rules in cases of that nature.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Monthly Meetings are to take due care that certificates of removal be seasonably forwarded, direct to the Monthly Meetings to which they are addressed, they being the exclusive property of such meetings.

CHARITY AND UNITY.

Where there is any appearance of dissension, or of resentment and shyness amongst our members, the parties should be timely and tenderly apprised of the danger to which they expose both themselves and others, and earnestly exhorted to mutual condescension and forgiveness, becoming the followers of Christ; and if any, notwithstanding such endeavours for their welfare, continue to manifest an implacable enmity to others, the overseers of the Preparative or Monthly Meeting to which they belong, should be informed thereof, who are to labour further with them, when, if they still prove inflexible, they ought to be complained of to the Monthly Meeting, which after labouring with them without the desired effect, ought to testify against them, as out of the unity of the body, the primary object of which is to promote peace on earth and good-will amongst men.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

LIBERTY of conscience being the common right of all men, and particularly essential to the well-being of religious societies, we hold it to be incumbent upon us, to maintain it inviolate amongst ourselves; and therefore exhort all in profession with us, to decline accepting any office or station in civil government, the duties of which are inconsistent with our religious principles, or in the exercise of which they may be, or apprehend themselves to be under the necessity of exacting from others any compliances against which they are conscientiously scrupulous.

If any persons in membership with us, notwithstanding the preceding admonition, shall persist in a conduct so repugnant to our principles, it is the sense of the Yearly Meeting, that they be treated with, as in other cases of offence, and if they cannot be brought to see and acknowledge their error, the Monthly Meetings to which they belong should proceed to testify against them.

It is also our judgment, that Friends ought not in any wise to be active or accessory in electing, or promoting to be elected, their brethren or others to offices or stations in civil government, the execution whereof tends to lay waste our Christian testimony, or subject their brethren or others to sufferings on account of their conscientious scruples. The principle of truth calls us out of contention, it even seeks not its own ends by means productive of animosity, much less therefore should its professors indulge themselves in strife for objects of a perishing nature.

CONDUCT AND CONVERSATION.

Such are to be treated with, who are concerned in lotteries, wagering, or any kind of gaming, or who are guilty of lying, drunkenness, swearing, cursing, or any other scandalous or immoral practices; and if they be brought to a sense of the iniquity thereof, such offenders are, without improper delay, to remove the scandal, and clear, as much as possible, our holy profession therefrom, by acknowledging and condemning the offence in writing, under their hands, to the satisfaction of