

The manner of reinstating disowned persons & the rights of individuals in respect to Certificates of Removal: also how far Monthly Meetings are at liberty to reject Certificates of Removal which may be offered them. And further To which meeting an individual belongs who has obtained a Certificate of Removal & omits to give it to the Meeting to which it is directed?

New England & Ohio Yearly Meetings propose for consideration what additional guard if any can be suitably adopted in respect to the publication of Doctrinal & Historical works beyond the provisions of the present Discipline?

also what regulations can be suitably adopted to promote the republication & more general & easy circulation of Friends Books proposed by Ohio.

The subject of petitioning the General Government in regard to the abolition of slavery was proposed for consideration by the Yearly Meeting of New England & Virginia.

And lastly the necessity or propriety of fixing stated times for the meetings of Committees in General Conference from the several Yearly Meetings was proposed by Baltimore.

The subjects thus presented to our notice by the respective Yearly Meetings appear to claim our attention on the present occasion so far as to lead to an inquiry into some of the most prominent facts connected with them.

In regard to setting up Yearly Meetings we apprehend there has been in some respects a considerable diversity in the forms of proceeding which have taken place: we do not deem it necessary to institute an inquiry into the modes of proceeding which were followed in establishing the Old Yearly Meetings that were set up in the infancy of Society. In setting up the Yearly Meetings of Ohio & Indiana the proceedings were different in some important particulars. One was established with the concurrence of two neighbouring Yearly Meetings, the other was the act of the Parent Meeting alone.

Thus prevalent as respects the extent of Concurrence in the great Body of Society appears to be unsettled. And when we consider how widely the Society is now spread on this Continent & how rapidly its territorial limits are extending by Emigrations & other causes, new Meetings springing up in places once remote from the settlements of the Society we cannot doubt that proper provision will be made for the Establishment of new Yearly Meetings: And we have united in believing that it is desirable the Principle should be settled how far the Body of Society should be consulted on such occasions.

With respect to the measures to be pursued in discontinuing a Yearly Meeting? and what disposition should be made of its Records? we may briefly remark that we are not aware of any precedent or provision of

Discipline which applies particularly to Yearly Meetings. It should be borne in mind that one of the Meetings by which this subject is presented to our notice is so removed in numbers, so surrounded by various trials as not only to claim the attention but excite the sympathy of other portions of the Society.

A greater uniformity or more perfect agreement of the Discipline of the several Yearly Meetings on important points and especially as relates to our Religious Testimonies & the rights of Membership has long been regarded as a desideratum.

Nearly thirty Years have elapsed since one of the Yearly Meetings in its Preliminary Correspondence with others mentioned that "a Concern [had] received with increasing weight that as we profess to believe that the Churches of Christ are all under his immediate government nothing might exist in our different codes which would have a tendency to bring that position into question with tender inquiries after Truth; and that where any thing of this kind now, or hereafter may appear some means may be devised for avoiding the impropriety."

Whatever might have been the discrepancies when the foregoing paragraph was written we believe such diversities are more numerous at the present time. We do not apprehend that our Members generally are aware of the extent of these diversities.

They do not consist merely in the choice of language nor in the different degrees of copiousness with which admonition & advice have been administered on particular occasions nor are they confined to subjects of a local character.

There are not a few which relate to subjects requiring more or less of a course or correspondence between meetings of business & a number which affect the rights of Membership in the way of disowning. In respect to cases of the latter description it appears not only that individuals would be liable to disownment in one Yearly Meeting for practices in which they might freely indulge in another without coming under the Censure of the Discipline, but even a Minister might be set at liberty to travel within the limits of another Yearly Meeting while he was in practices not forbidden by the Discipline he was under, but for which he would be subject to be disowned if a member of the Meeting he was engaged in visiting. However this state of things might be explained to have arisen from the wide extent of the Society, & the separate Capacities of the Meetings by which the subjects have been acted upon, it is evident that a Concern has received with increasing weight not only to remove the inconveniences which have been experienced in the intercourse of Meetings & Members, but seriously to consider how far the Continuance of these discrepancies would be compatible with the profession we are making in regard to the Government of Christ in his Church and to the character of the Society as a Unitarian body actuated by one spirit of Wisdom & Judgment.