

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

### WORDS TO LIVE BY: SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, BOOKS OF DISCIPLINE, 1704-1747

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In founding Pennsylvania, William Penn and his fellow members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) had a rare opportunity to codify their religious beliefs as part of the legal statutes of the colony. These efforts, despite their overall lack of success, reflected the Quaker belief that religious tenets should govern all aspects of their personal and public lives. Failing to shape morality for the colony, prominent Friends and various meetings strove to maintain traditional discipline within their religious community by creating codes published as Books of Discipline. Numerous historians, including Hugh Barbour, J. William Frost, Gary Nash, and Frederick Tolles, have employed these sources to examine how these tenets influenced Friends in various areas such as political and commercial activity, and raising children. Despite their accessibility at the Quaker collections of Haverford and Swarthmore colleges, the documents remain of limited availability to scholars outside of the Philadelphia region. Therefore, extracts from the three Books of Discipline published between 1704 and 1747 will

allow a larger audience to gain greater insight into basic Quaker beliefs and to understand more fully how Friends in the Philadelphia area responded to regional developments during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Although George Fox and other early Quaker leaders stressed personal revelation, prominent Friends quickly grew concerned about the moral welfare of their brethren. This trepidation motivated various meetings to remind their fellow Quakers to eschew immoral activities. Throughout the 1680s and the 1690s, the letters of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (representing Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, Delaware and parts of Maryland) repeatedly publicized fundamental tenets of their faith to the Quarterly and Monthly meetings. These efforts culminated in 1704 when the Yearly Meeting published the first Book of Discipline. Revised in 1719 and 1747, the Book of Discipline, which was read four times a year at the Quarterly and Monthly meetings, outlined sinful activities including marrying outside the faith, participating in games or sports, excessive eating and drinking, wearing gaudy clothing, swearing oaths, and eventually slave ownership.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, many Quakers perceived a decline in ethical conduct in Philadelphia and the surrounding regions, thus necessitating additional moral instruction. As early as the 1690s, many prominent Friends feared that "wickedness grows & Vice so much Raignes in the grocest manner to the sorrow and Reproach of gods people & is a stumbling block in the way of many."<sup>2</sup> In addition to divisions within the Quaker community because of the Keithian controversy, various developments presented additional challenges to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> As the city emerged as an important port in the American colonies, the transatlantic trade enriched many Quaker merchants, leading many to deviate from traditional morals by purchasing luxurious homes, extravagant clothing, fine food and wine, and even slaves.<sup>4</sup> Attracted by the promise of religious liberty and economic opportunities, thousands of immigrants including Anglicans, Scots-Irish, and Germans settled in Philadelphia and the surrounding countryside.<sup>5</sup> By 1755, Quakers composed only one-sixth of the colony's population. Institutions that contradicted the Quaker beliefs against idleness and entertainment proliferated throughout the eighteenth century. Edwin Bronner estimated that by 1752, Philadelphia had 120 licensed taverns in addition to a number of illegal outlets. Taverns not only dispensed alcohol, but they also hosted games and spectacles including billiards, bowling, dancing, animal exhibits, horse racing, cock fighting, and bull-baiting.<sup>6</sup> As early as 1723, a theater was constructed just outside the city on Society Hill.

Furthermore, in the 1730s, several dancing schools opened to teach "all sorts of fashionable English and French Dances." This spread of activities that Friends considered immoral prompted many Quaker children and teenagers to deviate from traditional beliefs. In 1715, the Yearly Meeting reprimanded young people for enjoying "customs and growing fashions, which have been so nobly denied and avoided by our Elders and Forefathers who stood their Ground in a faithfull Testimony against those things."<sup>7</sup> Compared with the austerity of their parents, the appeal of worldly pleasures surely tempted many Quakers. In addition, Friends increasingly married outside of the faith resulting in their expulsion from various meetings. Finally, more recent immigrants such as the Scots-Irish failed to share the Friends' pacifist beliefs. Consequently, the Quaker-dominated Assembly increasingly faced pressure to support the imperial wars that Great Britain fought against France (at least by providing funds) as well as to develop defenses against Native Americans.<sup>8</sup> This increasingly militant attitude of many of the colony's residents (including some Quakers) prompted the Yearly Meeting to remind its members to avoid all forms of war including owning ships that engaged in privateering.<sup>9</sup>

Because of these challenges, the Quakers constantly reiterated proper codes of conduct. As new obstacles continued to plague the meetings, subsequent revisions to the Disciplines sought to address the recurring societal ills that tempted the devout. Although many of the tenets found within their pages also appear in the minutes of the Yearly Meeting, the Disciplines provide a clear codification of Quaker expectations of behavior. Because the Disciplines were published much less frequently than the annual epistles, the revisions allow historians to understand which developments eighteenth-century Friends identified as the greatest threats to their faith and their "holy experiment."

## Editorial Method

These extracts appear in chronological order and focus on a wide range of topics, which allows readers to observe the development of Quaker beliefs over a half century. To minimize repetition, subjects are generally included only once. Although many of the admonishments listed in the queries found in the 1747 Discipline appeared in earlier texts, they have been included in their entirety because they reflect several of the most pressing issues confronting the Friends by the mid-eighteenth century. The following rules were applied:

1. All spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing have been retained; spacing and indentation have been standardized. If the original spelling did not allow the reader to determine its meaning, the modern spelling is provided in square brackets. If the modern spelling is the result of speculation, the bracket includes a question mark. Illegible words have been marked as [illegible]. If a word was legible, but its use raised questions, then it is followed with a question mark in square brackets.
2. All contractions, abbreviations, superscript letters, ampersands, and the thorn have been retained. Contractions marked by the tilde have been expanded.
3. Words and letters inserted by the copyist have been placed in the sentence in braces.

#### Common abbreviations:

Frds	friends	Xtian	Christian
Wch	which	Ye	the
Wth	with	Ym	them

#### 1704 Book of Discipline

From Our Yearly Meeting held at Burlington the 20<sup>th</sup> day of y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> month  
1704

A Generall Testimony against all Loosness & Vanity or what else may tend to y<sup>e</sup> Reproach of Truth And the hurt of y<sup>e</sup> Souls of the Youth or others.

With a Caution to all Quarterly & Monthly Meetings and all Masters and Mistresses of Families to Answer their Trust in those weighty Matters that y<sup>e</sup> Truth may not suffer reproach by any who profess y<sup>e</sup> same And that the Camp of y<sup>e</sup> Lord may be kept clean.

To be read among freinds from time to time as each quarterly Meeting may see Service and particularly that it be read in the Youth's Meeting:

Dear Freinds.

Wee at this meeting being tenderly concernd for y<sup>e</sup> honour of God and y<sup>e</sup> Prosperity of Truth & y<sup>e</sup> wellfare one of another everyway And being sensible of y<sup>e</sup> great danger & sore evils many of the Youth & some others are too apt to runn into to y<sup>e</sup> dishonour of God reproach of Truth and y<sup>e</sup> hurt if

not the ruin of their {Im}mortall Souls at last. It is in our hearts in good will & tenderness to recommend afew words of Caution & Advice to all Parents Masters Dames & Mistresses of Children, Servants and others who profess y<sup>e</sup> same everlasting pretious [precious] Truth w<sup>th</sup> us & would be accounted of us and marry among us that they walk in all things as becomes y<sup>e</sup> Truth that it may be well with them in this world & that which is to come. . . .

As Challenging each other to Fight; Wrestle, Runn races either on foot or on horseback Laying Wagers or Sporting themselves w<sup>th</sup> throwing Stones Quoits<sup>10</sup> Pitching barr<sup>11</sup> or to Use any Gaming or any other Sports or need-less Pastimes For it was a Sin in some of Old Israel for w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Lord was much displeased w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>m</sup> for that they Eat and Drank and rose up to play<sup>12</sup> and Surely to Pass away our time in Sports and plays is not to pass y<sup>e</sup> time of our Sojourning here in fear<sup>13</sup> Nor is it working out our Salvaccon w<sup>th</sup> Fear and trembling w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Apostle so Earnestly Exhorts to.<sup>14</sup>

And let none Use Testing Vain & Light discourses or riding or going from house to house to Drink rum or other Strong Liquors to Excess Or to use y<sup>e</sup> vain Custom of drinking one to another or to drink Healths<sup>15</sup> (as it is called) Or to use y<sup>e</sup> World's Corrupt and Unscripturall Language of YOU to a single person The originall of w<sup>ch</sup> came in thro' Pride and Flattery<sup>16</sup> Or to Accustom y<sup>m</sup>selves to Call y<sup>e</sup> week days or any of y<sup>e</sup> Months the Names given them by the Heathen in honour of their Idoll Gods<sup>17</sup> but to Call y<sup>m</sup> as they are called in Scripture For the Lord Commanded Israel saing [saying] Make no mention of y<sup>e</sup> Names of other Gods neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. . . .<sup>18</sup>

And see that not one<sup>19</sup> among us may be found to Swear to Curse to Steal or to Lye For it is written Swear not at all Bless are Curse not<sup>20</sup> Thou shalt not steal<sup>21</sup> Lye not one to another but speak the Truth<sup>22</sup> every man w<sup>th</sup> his Neighbour.<sup>23</sup>

And that none wear Periwiggs<sup>24</sup> unless really necessitated thereto And if necessity require any lett them be modest and as near as may be to y<sup>e</sup> Collour of their own and also Resembling a Sufficient Naturall head of hair without y<sup>e</sup> Vain fashion of having y<sup>m</sup> so long behind or mounting on the Brow.

And wee tenderly Advise all to keep out of all needless and wasteful fashions in Apparrel in Generall for wee being but as Stewards of y<sup>e</sup> manifold mercies and Blessings w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Lord our God bestows upon us Lett us not therefore willfully wast [waste] any of them to Trim or deck our bodies or to please a vain Fantastick or a proud min<sup>d</sup> Or because wee would be Conform'd to this world w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> holy Apostle<sup>25</sup> expressly forbids and expressly charges y<sup>t</sup> women adorn y<sup>m</sup>selves in modest apparrell &c<sup>a</sup>.<sup>26</sup>

And wee may see that y<sup>e</sup> Lord by his Prophet Zepheniah Threatned to punish not only y<sup>e</sup> princes and y<sup>e</sup> king's children but also all such as are Clothed with Strange Apparrell.<sup>27</sup> Therefore lett all be in this matter and also see that none be like the haughty daughters of Zion who walk with Stretched forth necks and Wanton Eyes Walking and mincing<sup>28</sup> as they go<sup>29</sup> for on such y<sup>e</sup> Prophett saith there shall be Burning in stead of Beauty. . . .

First. It is very unbecoming those that profess y<sup>e</sup> Truth to go from one Woman to anoth. and keep Company and sitt together unseasonably Especially in y<sup>e</sup> night Spending their precious time in sole [?] discourses and Drawing out y<sup>e</sup> affections one toward another and possibly sometimes without reality Indeed such doings seems more like Sodom y<sup>n</sup> Saints wee exhort all to be Carefull in this weighty matter And that both Male and Female be clear of one before they be concernd with another and first take y<sup>e</sup> Advice of Parens or Gardians for Disobedience to Parents was death by God's Law. . . .<sup>30</sup>

That great care be taken ab<sup>t</sup> Marriages for y<sup>e</sup> Consent of Parents and orderly publication y<sup>r</sup>of [thereof] and Solemnizing y<sup>m</sup> in a meeting appointed for y<sup>t</sup> purpose w<sup>ch</sup> Method is convenient and commendable as it hath lately been made to appear in y<sup>e</sup> Eye of y<sup>e</sup> Governm<sup>t</sup> & well resentd And say they that Friends be reminded of this meetings form<sup>d</sup> [?] advice ag<sup>t</sup> Marriage w<sup>th</sup> near kindred ag<sup>t</sup> Marriage by priests and with persons of y<sup>e</sup> world unequally yoking w<sup>th</sup> Unbelievers<sup>31</sup> and ag<sup>t</sup> too early and unsavoury proceedings in second marriages after y<sup>e</sup> death of Husband or wife contrary to y<sup>e</sup> due method and pract{i}ce of faithfull freinds of Truth and tending to y<sup>e</sup> dishonour and reproach {y<sup>r</sup>} of thus farr that Epistle. . . .

And Let all vain and loose Company keeping be avoided as much as is possible both at fairs marketts Courts Drinking houses or any other places either by Night or by day amongst who y<sup>e</sup> Time is too much spent by some in wanton and vain discourses Evill Communication drinking to Excess and a great forgetfullness of God and their Duty to him and where any have been Ac{c}ustomed to such like Evills We intreate y<sup>m</sup> to Suffer a word of Exhoraccon [Exhortation] according to y<sup>e</sup> holy Apostles of our Lord who say we then as workers together<sup>32</sup> w<sup>th</sup> him beseech you also that yee Receive not y<sup>e</sup> Grace of God in vain And Lett y<sup>e</sup> time past be Sufficent to have wrought y<sup>e</sup> will of y<sup>e</sup> Gentiles when wee walked in Lassiviousness Lusts Excess of Wine Revellings Banquetings. . . .<sup>33</sup>

And Lett all be watchfull ag<sup>t</sup>. immoderate and undecent Smoaking Tobacco in all places and Especially in publick houses where y<sup>e</sup> Temptacon

too tha [?] as also to y<sup>e</sup> excess in drinking seems most to be All therefore ought for y<sup>e</sup> Truth's sake and their poor sowle's [soul's] sake to be exceeding watchfull at such and all other places and be Carefull that they do not forgett y<sup>m</sup>selves thro' much needless Discourse or otherwise so as to Sitt Smoaking Tippling<sup>34</sup> and drinking to Excess whereby they dishonour their Christian profession make an ill use of y<sup>e</sup> blessings of God Disorder their own body's Hurt if not destroy their own Lord's and bring a Grief and Exercise on their Brethren when they {illegible} hear of such things. . . .

And it greatly behoveth Parents Masters Dames or Mistresses to be good Examples in their families and watch over their Children and Serv<sup>ts</sup> for their good and Instruct them and bring them up in y<sup>e</sup> nurture and Admonition of y<sup>e</sup> Lord and see that they be not Vain Light or wanton in their Conversaccons which by degrees may occasion y<sup>m</sup> more and more to corrupt y<sup>m</sup>selves and be a bad Example to others and also tends to y<sup>e</sup> great forgettfullness of God their maker. . . .<sup>35</sup>

And lett both old and young have a great Care y<sup>t</sup> they give no just occasion of Trouble to y<sup>e</sup> Governm<sup>t</sup> under w<sup>ch</sup> they live nor by w<sup>ch</sup> the just Laws y<sup>o</sup>f may take hold of y<sup>m</sup> for as the Apostle saith {its better} if y<sup>e</sup> Will of God be so that wee Suffer for well doing then for Evill doing<sup>36</sup> And lett none use their Liberty by abusing of it either by Contention Faction or Sedition or by refusing to render to y<sup>e</sup> Governm<sup>t</sup> its lawfull demands of Tributes or Assessments for according to scripture Wee are to be subject to every ord{i)nance of man for the Lord's sake.<sup>37</sup>

And here according to y<sup>e</sup> advice of y<sup>e</sup> Apostle wee shall be subject to y<sup>e</sup> higher pow<sup>rs</sup> not only for wrath but also for Conscience sake for saith he They are God's Ministers attending continually upon this very thing Therefore (saith he) Render to all men their due Tribute to whom Tribute is due Custom to whom Custom honour to whom honour Fear to whom Fear Owe no man any thing but to Love one another.<sup>38</sup>

And Lett all among us be {very Carefull to be} honest and just in all our Callings Trades and dealings and lett not one seek to defraud another therein and that not either by sea or land Town or Country Trade or Buy beyond their Abillities and when any contract Debts That they observe honestly to Pay y<sup>m</sup> according to agreem<sup>t</sup>. or Time allow'd so that none may suffer thro' y<sup>e</sup> Neglect of any in y<sup>t</sup> respect for y<sup>t</sup> not only brings a Reproach upon our Xtian Profession But is also a Transgression of y<sup>e</sup> Express rule laid down by our blessed L<sup>d</sup> of Doing to all men as wee would have all men do unto us. . . .<sup>39</sup>

To Dear Freinds let these faithfull and true sayings take deep root in your minds and lett y<sup>m</sup> be improved {by all} to y<sup>e</sup> Honour of God and to y<sup>e</sup> Comfort and Benefit of every one of your souls. And keep your Meetings in y<sup>e</sup> Authority Wisdom and Power of God and in y<sup>e</sup> unity of his blessed spiritt and endeavour to keep out all Contentions Heats<sup>40</sup> and Passions and let all be done in meekness and y<sup>e</sup> God of Peace be with you.

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### 1719 Book of Discipline

From Our Yearly Meeting held at Philadelphia for Pennsylvania & the Jerseys by adjournment from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of the Seventh Month 1719.

To the several Quarterly & Monthly Meetings thereunto belonging

Dear Friends. . . .

This is called our Discipline in the exercise whereof Perswasion & gentle dealing is & ought to be our practice & when any (after all our Christian Endeavours) thro' perversness & Stubborness cannot be reclaimed y<sup>e</sup> extent of our Judgment is Censure or Disowning such to be of our Communion & as this Authority & Practice is Christian so is it Laudable and reasonable in Society for the good & Reputation of the whole Body ought to Claim our greatest regard & Subordinately that of every Member

Hence arises a Care & Concern for Decency & Comely Order in all our Meetings of Worship & Business as well as orderly walking Honesty & plainness in the particular members of our Society much more might be said as to the necessity Righteousness & Beauty of Church Discipline but as this is chiefly to Friends & Elders establish'd in their Judgment concerning the same it is the intent & endeavour of this Meeting to be as Concise as is possible both here & in the following particulars recommended for general use & practice and as may be with Clearness. . . .

. . . And now it may be proper to let you understand that several or most of the Quarterly Meetings having represented to our last Yearly Meeting that the former Advice & Direction of the Yearly Meeting in the Year 1704 commonly called the Book of Discipline did seem upon Experience & Practice to want a revisal the same was taken into Consideration & hath been according revised & as much as may be Contracted & what follows is y<sup>e</sup> same so Revised Contracted & amended & is accordingly recommended in place of the former for general use & practice. . . .<sup>41</sup>

Let each Monthly Meeting choose Two or more Sober & Judicious Men Fr<sup>ds</sup>: as also Two or more Women Friends from time to time as they may see fit to Change them for the Ease & Experience of the Members to be Overseers within the Limits of the respective Meeting; Which Overseers sought to render Account of their Services & Duties to the Monthly Meeting whensoever thereunto required. . . .

And altho' it is a Duty incumbent upon Meetings & every faithful Member where any Disorders or unbecoming practices come to their knowledge to Advise Admonish or Deal with such as are guilty of them yet that the same may not be overlook'd or neglected is ought to be more particularly & directly the business & Service of the Overseers.

For their Ease therefore & that according to that according to the Apostles Advice we may all walk by the same Rule it is thought necessary that some particulars which occur to this Meeting or have been the Constant Care of Friends to prevent may be set down And it is the Advice of this Meeting that in Speaking to or dealing with any it be done in a Christian Spirit of Love and Tenderness labouring in Meekness by laying the Evil before them to bring such persons to a Sense of it in themselves that they may be restored if possible; And altho' such as transgress or lose their hold of Truth are apt to oppose or be Testy while they are in that Condition yet we ought patiently & Meekly to Instruct & advise them so that we may not only have a Testimony of Peace in our Selves but that it may also so affect the Spirit of the Friend spoke to, as that he or She may be Sensible we have performed a truly Christian Duty & Office of Brotherly Love towards them: After which tender dealing, if any reject the Admonition Counsel or Advice given them; the Overseers or such as do deal with them are to acquaint the next Monthly Meeting thereof that farther Care may be taken with such according to the established Rule among Friends. . . .

It is the Business of the Overseers or other weighty Fr<sup>ds</sup>. to speak to & deal with such as are given to excess of Drinking, Swearing, Cursing, Lying, Unlawful or Unseemly keeping Company with Women or any other Scandalous practices.

Such as are at Difference or Strife one with another either about their Interest in Worldly Affairs or other Resentments or Provocations advising them to agree it between themselves & be speedily reconciled & to avoid if possible bringing any trouble some Business to Meetings w<sup>ch</sup>: can be otherways ended: But if they can not so do then that they take the method hereafter set down for proceeding in this Case.

Such as frequently Neglect & do not in due time attend Meetings those on the Week days as well as on the First Days but stay away on Light Trivial or Ordinary Occasions & stir them up to more Diligence; a Constant or frequent Neglect thereof being a mark of Declension & when it becomes remarkable such ought to be admonish'd & dealt with more earnestly; also if any (Old or Young) when come to Meeting do fall asleep go out & in frequently or other-ways disturb y<sup>e</sup> Meeting let them be rebuked & Cautioned first privately. . . .

Such as are guilty of Tattling, Tale bearing Reproaching Backbiting<sup>42</sup> or Speaking Evil of their Brethren or Neighbours or busily meddling where not Concern'd with Affairs of other Folks the Tendency of all which being to raise Strife & Discord or cause disesteem among Brethren & Neighbours.

Such as Write Print or Publish any Books or Writing tending to raise Contention or Occasion breach of Unity among Brethren or that have not first had the perusal & approbation of the Friends appointed by the Yearly Meeting for that purpose.<sup>43</sup> Such as accustom themselves to Smoaking Tobacco indecently & too publickly as in Streets high Roads or other publick places of General or promiscuous resort.

Such as Sell Barter or Exchange directly or indirectly to the Indians, Rum, Brandy or any {other} strong Liquors it being Contrary to the Care Fr<sup>ds</sup>: have always had since the Settlement of these Countrys that they might not Contribute to the Abuse & Hurt those poor People receive by Drinking thereof being generally incapable of using Moderation therein;<sup>44</sup> & to avoid giving them occasion of Discontent it is desired that Fr<sup>ds</sup>: do not Buy or Sell Indian Slaves; Also that none among us be Concerned in the fetching or importing Negro Slaves from their own Country or elsewhere;<sup>45</sup> And it is the Advice of this Meeting that all Friends who have any of them do treat them w<sup>th</sup>: humanity & in a Christian manner & as much as in them lies make them acquainted with the Principles of Truth & inculcate Morality in them. . . .

Where any Differences happen or arise between any Fr<sup>ds</sup>: about their Interests Claim or Properties in Worldly Affairs it is the Sense of this Meeting according to the Advice of the Holy Apostle & the Ancient, Comely, & Christian Practice That at no time Brother go to Law with Brother before he be disowned or upon apparent & urgent necessity as is hereafter limited & expressed shall be permitted by the Monthly Meeting so to do: But if any professing Truth shall Arrest Sue or Implead & Law any other person making the same profession before he hath proceeded in the method herein after mentioned or is so permitted by the Meeting Such ought to be dealt with as other Disorderly persons & to give Satisfaction to the

Meeting by Condemning his or her so doing & in Case of refusal after deliberate dealing & waiting with such they are to be disowned by the Meeting whereto he or She doth belong. . . .

Where any professing Truth are guilty of any Gross or Notorious Crimes or such other disorderly and indecent practices as Shall give or occasion publick Scandal such after dealing with by the Overseers or other Friends as above advised & directed if they are brought to a Sense thereof either by such dealing or by Compunction or true Sight in themselves (which is more commendable) ought to appear as soon as possible at the Monthly Meeting whereunto he or She belongs & to the end that the Scandal may be removed & our holy profession Cleared, as much as in them lies there to Acknowledge the Offence & Condemn the same in Writing under his or her Hand to the Satisfaction of the said Meeting & let such Acknowledgment & Condemnation be published by the said Meeting in such manner as that it may probably reach as far & become as publick as the Offence hath been & where any such Offender refuseth so to Acknowledge & Condemn the fault then the s<sup>d</sup>. Monthly Meeting ought Speedily to testify upon Record against him or her & the fault & publish such Testimony so far as shall appear requisite for the Clearing of Truth & although where such Offenders do Condemn their own Scandalous Actions to the Satisfaction of the Meeting there is no Reason to disown them yet such persons are not to be accounted immediately as Members in full Unity but it is fit that some time pass for the Trial of their Sincerity until Fr<sup>ds</sup>: may become sensible of their real Contrition. . . .

. . . Friends are desired therefore to have a great Care herein & use all Endeavours every where more & more to break from & avoid that offensive & unsuitable Custom of large provision of Strong Drink, Cakes &c: & the formal & repeated Servings & Offers thereof this indecent & indiscreet Custom & practice has run to such Excess that invitations being made to great Numbers that their own or Neighbours Houses cannot contain the very Streets & open places are made use of for the handing about Burnt Wine<sup>46</sup> & other Strong Liquors &c: And besides the indecencies above mentioned the Custom of waiting for the last that will please to come (though never so unseasonable) the formality of repeated Servings to each breaks in upon an other decent order among Fr<sup>ds</sup>: of keeping to & observing the time appointed. . . .

The Care of which we therefore recommend to Faithful Fr<sup>ds</sup>: in their respective Meetings duly to put in practice & observe, to the end that all

who profess the Truth may be more & more cautioned & stirred up to live answerable to that holy profession & the same kept Clear from Scandal or reproach That God through all may have Praise Worship & Honour & in the end the Professors of his Way & Truth may thro' his Mercy & the Merits of our Dear Saviour receive the reward of well done good & faithful Servants

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Printed document, unsigned. Quaker Collection, Magill Library, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.

### 1747 Book of Discipline<sup>47</sup>

At a Yearly Meeting held at Philadelphia in the seventh Month 1747 the following Rules were order'd to be Admitted by the Clark [Clerk], to the several Meetings, within the Verge of the said Yearly Meeting. . . .

When any Professing to be of our Society join in Marriage with those of another Perswasion, or Contrary to the Rules Approved {of} & settled among us, having been first precautioned against it, by the Overseers, or any other Friend, and where any first Cousins, shall join in Ma{r}riage; such should be Testified against without further dealing, unless they Voluntarily Condemn their proceedings, to the Satisfaction of the Monthly Meeting to which they belong; and in such Cases the offenders ought to Attend to the Meeting, to which they offer their papers of Condemnation,<sup>48</sup> where it is Practicable, in order that Fr<sup>ds</sup> may be more Capable of Judging of their Sincerity; as it is apparent that some sinister: Views, & sins, are mostly the inducements to such Marriages; & the same motives too often prevail in the Offering such papers; therefore it is incumbent on Friends, in their several monthly Meetings, to wait some time, for the Probation of such, that they are truly penitent, and sensible of their out goings, before they are receiv'd into near Communion, or employ'd in the affairs of the Church.

And it was agree'd in the Year 1734,<sup>49</sup> that no Marriages ought to be allow'd of amongst us, between any Man and his Wifes first Cousin, & so of other Relations by affinity, equally near, or nearer of Kin; and as it's not thought safe, or very comely, for second Cousins to intermarry; it is Advised that Fr<sup>ds</sup> & Relations do not Encourage such Mariages; but that they Endeavour to Perswade against them, when such proposals may be made. . . .

That the Overseers of the Respective Monthly Meetings, or other weighty Friends, be Careful to deal with such as Engage in Lotteries<sup>50</sup> of any kind. such as are Concern'd in the importation of Negroes, or in buying them after they are Imported. . . .

Such of our Profession, who being Clerks of Courts, or Magistrates, are Guilty of our Antient [Ancient] Discipline, in Administring of Oaths. and such as being Justices of the Peace mary people by Licences; this being inconsistent with our Principles, and not any Part of their Duty as Magistrates.

Such under our Profession, as carying Guns for Defending Ships, Persons, or goods, or are Concern'd in Privateering, or as owners of Ships going with letters of Mark [Marque].<sup>51</sup> And that the Monthly Meetings be timely informed, by their Respective Overseers, of such who cannot be reclaimed from these Practices mentioned in the Three last Paragraphs, in Order that they may be Publickly Disown'd, and Testify'd against.<sup>52</sup>

And it is the unanimous sense of Fr<sup>ds</sup>, that all professing with us be Cautioned, and earnestly Admonished against purchasing any kind of Prize Goods, knowing them to be such this Practice, being altogether inconsistent with our Principles, and that Friends be vigilant, and keep up to the Peaceable Principles Profess'd by us {as} a People. and that they avoid joining with such, as may be making War like preparations, Offensive, or Defensive; but that upon all Occasions, by Demeaning ourselves in a Christian; and a Peaceable Manner; we Demonstrate to the World, that our Practices when we are put to the Tryal do Corespond with our Principles. . . .<sup>53</sup>

That any Persons comeing Forth, or offering themselves in the Ministry, be approved of {by}the Monthly Meeting to which he or she belongs, and by them Be recommended, before they are permitted to sit in Meetings of Ministers and Elders; or to Travel abroad in the Ministry . . . and it is agreed, that Solid Women Fr<sup>ds</sup>: should be appointed to sit in the Meetings of Ministers and Elders as well as Men, Also Fr<sup>ds</sup>: are desired, to beware of receiving Traveling Friends without Certificates.<sup>54</sup>

In order to excite a Care & Concern, in the overseers and other Fr<sup>ds</sup>: of the Respective Monthly Meetings, to maintain and put in Practice our Christian Discipline; it was agreed that, at least once in Each Quarter of the Year the following Queries<sup>55</sup> be read, in the Monthly & preparative Meetings, to which the Overseers, or other weighty Fr<sup>ds</sup>: may make such Answers, as they may be able to do; and as the Respective Circumstances of the Meeting may require; that all may hereby be remitted of their Duty to wit.

- 1 Are Friends careful to attend their Meetings of Worship, both on first Days, & other Days of the Week appointed for that Service. And are they Carefull to meet at the Hour appointed? Do they refrain Sleeping in

- Meetings, or do they accustom themselves to Snuffing or Chewing Tobacco in Meetings.
- 2 Do Friends keep clear of Excess, either in Drinking Drams, or other Strong Drink: And do Friends keep out of Superfluity in meat, & Drink at Marriages, Burials, and all other Times.
  - 3 Are there any that keep Company in order for Marriage, with those that are not of us, or with any others without Consent of Parents or Guardians.
  - 4 Do Friends keep Clear from Tatling, Talebearing, Whispering, Backbiting, and meddling with Matters they are not concern'd in.
  - 5 Are there any Friends that Frequent Musick Houses,<sup>56</sup> or go to dancing, or Gaming.
  - 6 Are Friends Carefull to train up their Children in the Nurture and Fear of the Lord, and to restrain them from Vice and Evil Company, and to keep them to plainness of speech and Apparel.
  - 7 Are the Poor taken Care of, and their {Children} put to School, and Apprenticed out (after Sufficiently Learn'd) to Fr<sup>ds</sup>:. And do Friends put their own Children out to Fr<sup>ds</sup> as much as may be.
  - 8 Are there any Fr<sup>ds</sup>: that Launch with Business beyond what they are able to manage and so break their promises, in not paying their just Debts in due time and where Differences happen; are Endeavours used to have them speedily Ended.
  - 9<sup>thly</sup> Are there any belonging to this Meeting, that are removed without a Certificate; or are there any come from any other parts, appearing as Friends, and have not produc'd Certificates.
  - 10 Are Friends Clear from Depriving the King of his Duties
  - 11 Do Friends Observe the Advice of our former Yearly Meeting, not to Encourage the Importation of Negroes, nor buy them after Imported
  - 12 Are Friends Careful to settle their affairs, and make their Wills in time of health. . . .

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Handwritten document, unsigned. Quaker Collection, Magill Library, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.

## NOTES

1. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 77, 108–9.
2. Robert Turner to William Penn, 9 December 1697, in *The Papers of William Penn*, ed. Richard Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981–87), 3:533.

3. Gary B. Nash, *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 144-60.
4. Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1662-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 109-43; Nash, *Quaker and Politics*, 323-24.
5. Alan Tully, *William Penn's Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in Provincial Pennsylvania, 1726-1755* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 54-55.
6. Edwin B. Bronner, "Village into Town, 1701-1746," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 53-55.
7. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 18 July-22 July 1715, Collection 976, Quaker Collection, Magill Library, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.
8. J. William Frost, *A Perfect Freedom: Religious Liberty in Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 29-43.
9. Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39-54.
10. A game, similar to horseshoes, played with a flat, iron ring (quoit), which players attempt to throw around a iron pin (hob), which is placed anywhere from fifteen to thirty yards away. Stonehenge [John Henry Walsh], *Rural Sports; Comprising Shooting, Hunting, Coursing, Fishing, Hawking, Racing, Boating and Pedestrianism with all Rural Games and Amusements*, 15th ed. (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1882), 711.
11. A contest of strength, in which participants attempt to hurl a thick rod of iron or wood the farthest. The distance was measured in the length of the bar. *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, 2d ed., s.v. "Bar."
12. Exod. 32:6. "They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offering and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel."
13. 1 Pet. 1:17. "If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of our exile."
14. Phil. 2:12. "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."
15. A toast drunk in someone's honor. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Health."
16. The Quaker emphasis on simplicity and plain language also stressed social equality. Therefore, they opposed the use of titles and instead used "thee" and "thou" to avoid creating artificial distinctions within society. Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith: An Historical and Comparative Study of Quaker Beliefs*, 2d ed. (Richmond, IN.: Friends United Press, 2001), 138-39.
17. Friends rejected the use of pagan titles for the days of the week and months. For example, the month of March had its name derived from Mars, the Roman god of war, thus denoting pagan violence. Instead, they numbered the days and months. For example, Sunday was the First Day and March was the First Month until the calendar reform of 1752. Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 42.
18. Although the note in the margin appears to say Exod. 13:13, the correct citation is Exod. 23:13.
19. Matt. 5:3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
20. Rom. 12:14. "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."
21. Exod. 20:15.
22. Col. 3:9. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

23. Eph. 4:25. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."
24. Fashionable wigs worn by men and women during this period. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Periwig."
25. Rom. 12:2. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God."
26. 1 Tim. 2:9. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamed-facedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."
27. Zeph. 1:8. "And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel."
28. Speaking or acting in an elegant or dainty manner. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Mincing."
29. Isa. 3:16.
30. 1 Sam. 3:13. "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."
31. Both the Old and New Testaments forbade Jews and Christians from marrying unbelievers. Although this originally referred to Muslims and pagans, various denominations applied it to other Christian faiths after the Reformation. Moreover, marriage with a non-Quaker would involve a priest, which violated another tenet of the faith. J. William Frost, *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 158–59.
32. 1 Cor. 6:1. "If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?"
33. 1 Pet. 4:3. "For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry."
34. The drinking of alcohol usually in small quantities. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Tippling."
35. Prov. 1:22–23.
36. 1 Pet. 3:17.
37. 1 Pet. 2:13. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme."
38. Rom. 13:5–8.
39. Luke 6:31. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."
40. To excite the emotions or fill with rage, *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Heat."
41. In 1718, Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting called for a revision of the Book of Discipline.
42. To slander an absent person, *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. "Backbiting."
43. This possibly refers to the legacy of the Keithian controversy during the 1690s when George Keith's opponents rejected a printer's offer to publish arguments from both sides. Instead, most Friends preferred to resolve the conflict internally. However, the minutes of the Yearly Meeting do not reveal any similar tensions within the Quaker community in the years prior to 1719. Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 79–81.
44. The Yearly Meeting had advised Friends as early as 1685 to avoid selling alcohol to Native Americans. Colonists had several reasons to fear the effects of alcohol on Native communities. Not only did it have dire economic and health consequences for the Native Americans, but it also increased the threat of violence against the colonists. Peter C. Mancall, "'The Bewitching Tyranny of Custom': The Social Costs of Indian Drinking in Colonial America," in *American Encounters*:

*Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 195–205.

45. Although the Yearly Meeting discouraged Friends from importing slaves as early as 1696, Quakers embraced abolitionism slowly. Despite regular denunciations by prominent Friends such as William Southeby, the Yearly Meeting remained largely ambivalent on slave ownership until 1743 when the Queries requested that Quakers refrain from purchasing slaves. Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 18–26.
46. Brandy, *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. “Brandy.”
47. This serves as an appendix to the 1719 Book of Discipline, which was copied in its entirety.
48. To repent, a sinner would write a paper of self-condemnation. Serious offenses such as marital violations required the clerk to read the paper at the Monthly Meeting while the sinner stood silently. If the individual refused to acknowledge the sin, the meeting could then expel him or her. Frost, *Quaker Family in Colonial America*, 54–55.
49. This refers to the epistle to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings from the 1734 Yearly Meeting.
50. By mid-century, lotteries had become a popular fundraiser in colonial America as even religious institutions ran lotteries to finance a variety of projects. This prohibition may have been in response to the efforts of Christ Church in Philadelphia, which held a lottery to build their steeple. Deborah Mathias Gough, *Christ Church, Philadelphia: The Nation's Church in a Changing City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 48–49.
51. License granted by a sovereign to a subject authorizing him to make reprisals against citizens of a hostile state. Eventually, it authorized privateering. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. “Letter of marque.”
52. This denunciation of Quaker participation in armed combat reveals a shift from their earliest views against war. Despite their pacifist beliefs, prominent Quakers initially envisioned opposition to violence as an individual decision based on their knowledge of Scripture. However, because of the near constant warfare in the eighteenth century, Quaker leaders soon voiced explicit bans against martial activities. In 1693 and 1744, London Yearly Meeting issued epistles that criticized Quakers for participating in privateering. Because of King George's War (1740–48) and non-Quaker demands for increased colonial defense, Pennsylvania Friends felt compelled to reiterate the instructions of the London Yearly Meeting. Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace*, 39–54.
53. These provisions probably responded to the mobilization of colonists during King George's War. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the Quakers in the Assembly opposed attempts to create a militia or to provide funding for defense because it contradicted their pacifist beliefs. However, their views created friction with the growing numbers of Scots-Irish by mid-century. Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 123–25.
54. The certificates determined if a traveling minister had received approval from his or her home meeting. The clerks of the visited meetings signed the certificate, which ensured the minister of their hospitality. Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 103.
55. The Yearly Meeting first authorized the Queries in 1743. Barbour and Frost, *Quakers*, 109.
56. A public hall or saloon for musical performances. *OED*, 2d ed., s.v. “Music hall.”