

**RULES OF DISCIPLINE OF  
THE YEARLY  
MEETING OF FRIENDS:  
HELD IN BALTIMORE**

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Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends: Held in Baltimore by Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

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*Examination of...*

## INTRODUCTION.

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1. 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.

2. 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, in accordance with the declaration 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.

*Left - 9 Line Amulet 4-17-42*

3. 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. xviii, 15, 16, 17.



4. 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.

5. 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 shown, that when this service is attended to, in uprightness and dedication of heart, with a single eye to the honor of our Holy Head, and the benefit and edification one of another, in the love wherewith He hath loved us, our assemblies are favored with His aid and direction.

6. Whilst we earnestly recommend this work to the notice and regard of Friends, we are con-

vinced 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.

7. 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 dependence 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.

8. 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 consist-

ent 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.