

Discipline Beyond Sea, 1668

The following document is one of the collection of miscellaneous papers belonging to Southwark Monthly Meeting. The style shews the paper to be almost certainly the work of George Fox himself and its matter bears a close resemblance in parts to Letter No. 258, dated 1668, in his printed *Epistles*.¹ The instructions were evidently intended to be used in the first building up of the system of discipline to which Fox was at that time devoting himself. His better known document on discipline, sometimes found in Monthly Meeting records,² though similar in purpose and much more detailed, does not contain the interesting proposal for dealing with seafarers guilty of disorderly conduct beyond seas, with its formidable *ad hoc* committee of twenty-nine men and twenty-five women, drawn from various parts of London. The term "general meeting" is used in both these documents, the distinction being not yet clearly drawn between the work of monthly and quarterly meetings. Unfortunately the only London minutes early enough to help, those of Horslydown M.M., do not throw any light on its working, though there is a brief reference, apparently to this matter, in x mo. 1668.

1. Truth is y^t w^{ch} is pure & is y^t w^{ch} y^e serpent is out of, for ther is no serpent in Truth and admitts of no impurity and soe there is no serpent in y^e way, to bite & hurt any for y^e way being the Truth & is y^e same as it was in y^e beginning though many things hath risen ag^t it yett it remaines the same the pure truth & y^e holy way: soe if any have gon from it they are for condemnaçon and their workes

And when any thing is once condemned and judged, lett it not be raised up againe but keepe it in the grave, & raise not up the dead out of y^e grave any more, they living in y^e life & the light w^{ch} doth condemne & judge it. & all to live in y^e Love of God w^{ch} gives dominion over all & unites & ediffies all that abide in it.

2. If among freinds any reports or surmises be about any or any backbiteings or whisperings all such things must be stopt & searched out for thus saith y^e Lord thou shalt not raise a false Report among my People. And that some of the sober & faithfull freinds of every meeting whose sincerity is for the glory of God & his honour & his holy name into w^{ch} they are called may be chosen to search out such things & followe it till they find out ye Author of it, that it may not lye upon any nor in any, but that all may be cleered & taken

out of every mind : & all the Reporters stopt & the things that are for judgement Lett y^m be Judged & Condemned.

And furthermore that the same psons below written are to take notice of all such as goes to sea· seamen Marcht^s Mastr^s of shipp^s & passengers out & home y^t profes y^e truth that if they have any wayes dishonoured the Lord God & brought an evill report either in their tradeing or lives or conversations upon the Truth & good Land & dishonoured the Lord God & his name & truth & people that they may send for y^m & search into the bottom y^t soe if they have donne any thing worthy of Condemnation & Judgm^t lett it be past upon them without respect of psons & if y^e report be false lett their Innocency be manifest and the reporter be reprov^d & soe that all that professe truth may walk in the truth & the light of y^e Lord who are children of light who has their name after y^e liveing God.

And soe all to be scircumspect dilligent & carefull in all these things y^t in no wise god may be dishonored but in al things their lives & words may preach y^t p^ffess the Truth

Their names are as follows [the men and women are in separate columns].

Gerrard Roberts	John Oakly	Amy Gauntlett
John Bolton	John Rous	Jane Woodcocke
Amor Stoddart	John Grover	Mary Staunton
Sam. Newton ³	Richard Cannon	Mary Strutt
Tho. Dry	Thomas Hudson	Francis Limbrey
Tho. Coveny	Henry Hazlam	Agnes Poole
W ^m Shewen	Robert Bridges	Anne Merrick
Tho. Paddle	Henry Salter	Marg ^t ffullove
[Padley]	Edw. Mann	Patience Camfeild
Ezekiell Woolley	William Crouch	Mary ffoster
Gilbert Latie	Joseph Freeman	Susan Yoakly
W ^m Harwood	Rebecca Travers	Mary Woolley
Percivall Towle	Anne Greenewell	Marg ^t Rouse
Thomas Yoakly	Mary Elson	Mary Newton
Cotton Oades	Anne Travers	Sarah Cannon
John Elson	Sarah Shewen	Margett Cooke
James Braines	Anne Hudson	Elizabeth Etridge
Arthur Cooke	Eliz. Peacock	Martha Boyce
Gilbert Hutton		

21st 8th Mo. 1668.

These freinds to meet the 18th day of the ninth Month 1668
at Devonshire house at y^e 10th houre

And all y^m y^t has gon from England & dishonored God beyonnd sea that the p^{ersons} above said to write over sea to search out & know y^e ground of y^e matter y^t all obstructions y^t has hindred y^e glory of God & y^e spreading his truth y^t all may bee taken away that the Lords name may not be dishonoured nor his way & truth evill spoken of & so all reports being searcht into in all the Plantations concerning freinds there that if any one hath donne any thing to dishonor truth beyonnd sea lett y^m come to Judgment & Condemnation & give forth pap^{ers} of y^e same, that the papers may be sent to y^e world if y^e world know it so y^t their transgressions may be fetcht out of the mouthes & teeth of y^m & answer the wittnes of God in y^m throu their Repentance & soe y^e wittnes of God in all answered, & if they will not write their owne condemnations then freinds must write & deny them & take it out of y^e Mouthes of y^e World

[A fresh handwriting here]

And alsoe all them that have dishonored god & his truth and people, and ffriends have been to admonish them 4 or 5 times and they still goe on in their wickednes and not repent, ffriends may draw up a paper, if they bee clear of them against them and their disorderly walkeing and unruly spiritts and loosenes in generall words, not mentioning y^e p^{articul}ers, except they bee notoriously known to y^e world, and ffriends to doe this wth speed, and to bring it to y^e generall meeting, And if a man bee knowne to bee an open offender to y^e world, That then their may bee an open Testimony against him in y^e p^{articul}er, how y^t wee have not unity nor ffellowshipp wth such workes of darkenes, and how y^t they cast out themselves ffrom amongst us, beeing gon ffrom y^e life and power of god in w^{ch} our fellowship is

And y^e coppies of y^e papers may bee read in y^e co^mon meetings, And allso a cobby therof sent to y^e mens meetings in the country wher he lives

Let these bee read in your meeting entered into your (standing) booke and care taken accordingly

[Endorsed] 21.8mo.1668. Persons Apoynted to take care of Disorderly Walking of Ship Masters & Seamen & Merchants beyond Sea

Concering reports ect to bee entered Southwark

¹ In support of this A. Neave Brayshaw writes that "out of" as used in the first sentence is typical of Fox and occurs frequently in his Epistles, e.g. : pp. 73, 87, 126, 141, 151, 153 bis, 200, 204, 213, 224, 248, 269, 350.

² Printed, W. Beck : *London Friends Meetings*, 47-52, and quoted, W. C. Braithwaite : *Second Period of Qu.*, 257-258. Sometimes termed : "Canons and Institutions," beginning : "Friends Fellowship" (*Camb. Jnl.*, ii. 416).

³ John Pennyman in his *Life*, p. 56, states that Samuel Newton "cheated many of several hundred pounds and then fled beyond Sea," and we know that in 1685 there was one of the name who had to be dealt with (*Jnl. F.H.S.*, v) in Virginia. The editor of Fox's *Journal* omits the name (compare *Camb. Jnl.* ii. 167 with the bi-cent. ed. ii. 132), and the name was struck out in several places in the Haistwell Diary (*Jnl. Supp.* 370). It appears to be a case of the biter bitten.

The need for discipline beyond seas appears in vol. v. pp. 97ff, vol. xi. 28ff.

Marriage and Ministry

"John and Sarah Grubb are, I expect, by this time either at or near their home. I heard the meeting was large. Sally, like a notable woman, went into the gallery after the ceremony, and was largely engaged to the people, many not Friends being present; she then took her seat beside John again, and was afterwards engaged in supplication. In a sitting at the house she was again exercised, I think more than once. Is not this 'marrying as though she married not'?"

Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley, letter to Lucy Alexander, aft. Maw, 21 ix. 1803, when twenty-four years old. Jonathan Grubb, of happy memory, was a child of J. and S. Grubb—there are interesting reminiscences of and comments on the religious labours of Jonathan Grubb, in *F.Q.E.* lxii. 1928.

In Sherman's *Memoir of William Allen, F.R.S.*, 1851, we read :

"I gave Jonathan Middleton and Thomas Smith (two of the young men at Plough-court) leave to go to the marriage of John Grubb and Sarah Lynes at Brentford. They were returning by Kew and Richmond, and at the latter place poor Jonathan was drowned" (p. 40).