

At a Meeting of the Midwives in Barbadoes 11.xii.1677

AT the said Meeting it was then propounded that in God's fear we stand over all Gifts in our places, excepting the Father & Mother of the Child, which they shall think us worthy of, & if poor not to take any thing, but rather help their necessity as the Lord shall enable us, & this was approved of by all then present.

And it was farther proposed, that if it shall please God to deliver any Woman by us, for we are but handmaids to do his work, & instruments in his hand, that then the Woman being well & the Child, we with those Women then present do sit down & waite upon the Lord, & if the Lord shall raise a word of prayer or praise it may be serviceable, & if not to wait upon him in the silence of our spirits, that so the Lord may have the praise of all, & a faithful testimony may be born, against the World and their ways, who as soon as the Woman is delivered, do run into eating and drinking & foolish talking & jesting to the grieving of God's spirit, instead of returning praise to God, who hath extended such a Mercy to us, as the deliverance of a woman, that so in God's fear we may give cause to the world to say, that we do fear God & are made willing to return the praise & Glory of all unto him that we take in hand, & that we take heed to letting in their spirits, or joining in their talk, but exhort the Woman to return praise to God for her deliverance, & that she may not forget his mercy, that remembered her in time of need, & not to let his mercy slip out of her mind, & that we bear our testimony against sprinkling of any that we are with, faithfully, & all women agreed.

And it was further agree'd that if we should be in any place & they should bring us laced linen to put upon the Child, that then we call for plain & if they have none, that then we put on the head cloaths & blanket, & what is necessary to keep it warm & bear a testimony against all superfluous ribbands & lace in Gods behalf, unto w^{ch} we did all consent.

9 mo. 4th 1678, It was taken into consideration, that if it should please God, that we should, any of us be with a

Woman, that should have such difficult labour, that we should need help, that in God's fear we do not go to the World for help, but take advice one of another, in God's fear & counsel we wait on him for his assistance & Wisdom in our distress, who is able to deliver in this our day, as in days past without our going to Egypt for help, & we did all agree to this.

11 mo. 13. 1678, At this Meeting as we were waiting upon the Lord it was laid before the Meeting, that in God's fear, we may take heed of speaking more than one at a time, but if the Lord shall raise a word of service in one, then the rest to wait in Gods fear & patience till that have had its service, & then the other to speak, as the Lord shall raise, that so our Meetings may be kept in the heavenly awe of God to his honour, & out of the disorderly manner of speaking, more than one at a time, thereby the Lord's service is hindered, & the comely order of our Meeting broken, & the Lords spirit grieved thereby, & our service hurt, that so our Meetings may do the service, for which they were given us, & God may have the Glory & the honour of all, then shall we have the comfort. Amen, said our Souls.

12 mo. 24. 1678. If any accident or distemper befall any woman, that we are with, or may be sent for to, that then we require the help one of another, in the fear of the Lord, for the speedy help of the woman, or any that we may be concerned with, but if near the Meeting, then to lay it before the Meeting, & after our waiting to God upon that first & to wait upon the Lord for counsel & advice, & what we do receive.

Also concerning Negroes, if any should send for any of us to the help of their Negroes, that we may have freedom to take what the Master or Mistress shall think us worthy of, for the labourer is worthy of his hire, but not to take any thing of the Negroes, but rather help the poor creatures, as the Lord shall enable us, & open our hearts thereunto.

2 mo. 7. 1679 If we shall be with any that shall stand in need of more help by reason of hard or difficult labour, 1st we are to advise for friends, but if they shall refuse, & desire the help of an Apostate, then in such case that we endeavour to perswade to the contrary, but if they will not be perswaded then we may clear ourselves to the Woman, & so be as one unconcerned, for we cannot joyn with them, yet it may be

convenient to stay & see the end of the work, for how do we know whether the Lord may put the delivery of the Woman into our hands.

Also concerning the people of the world, if the party concerned shall desire their help, that we may, so far as the truth may be answered in us, join with them for the help of the Woman.

The foregoing paper, received from Isabel Grubb, is taken from a very neat and clear copy in 18th century handwriting found among Munster Quarterly Meeting papers in 1938. There is another less perfect copy in the Historical Library of Dublin Yearly Meeting.