

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY.

A LETTER

*From London Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight, 1899,
to the Congregations and Individual Members of the
Society of Friends.*

DEAR FRIENDS,—A strong desire for the fuller life and usefulness of our Meetings for Worship has taken hold of our meeting this year. The subject is of unique importance, and we have concluded to embody the feeling of the meeting in the present Letter, to which we ask your earnest attention.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUE WORSHIP.

The meeting for worship is the central feature of our Church-life,—our chief means alike of uttering our message to the world and of nourishing the life of our own membership. Here, under the headship of Christ, without priest or ceremony or pre-arranged service, we meet with one another and with God, and may experience living spiritual communion. Such a meeting is both the loftiest and truest form of congregational worship, and we are thankful to believe is increasingly experienced among us; but our meetings too often fall far below our ideal, and dishonour the nobility of the truth which we profess. Where this is the case, the lack cannot be on God's side: the fault must lie with ourselves. Have we not often forgotten that our spiritual freedom is a heritage for free men,—for men of conviction and energy, who will rise to their responsibilities;—unfree spirits will come under the tyrannies of indifference, pre-occupation, routine, and the like, which beset a Friends' meeting?

True worship is intensely active. It consists in offering ourselves to God,—body, mind, and soul,—for the doing of His will. We have a gift to bring to Him, and not only a grace to receive. If we have not individually brought this gift, we need seek no