

is near at hand, and soon will come the gloaming, and then the night, wherein no work is done. My desire is for you and for myself, that we may see clearly the path that lies before us and hear spoken in no uncertain voice, "This is the way, walk thou in it."

JOHN BUNTING.

## FUNCTIONS OF OUR BUSINESS MEETINGS.

It is somewhat questionable whether a brief paper on the subject chosen, should embrace anything beyond a few thoughts as to what the functions of our Business Meetings actually are at the present time; or also to contain a slight review of the work of Business Meetings of the Society of Friends in the past, as well as suggestions as to what we might consider proper changes and consequent advancement in the future. Though the latter course might be of interest, yet I believe the subject should be considered in this paper mainly from the present standpoint, or the functions of the Business Meetings of to-day.

As I conceive it, the highest function of such Meetings is to aid in making the Society of Friends a better religious body by lending all possible encouragement to strengthen the members towards nobler, purer, more Christian-like lives, to live consistently with the high principles which we profess. The object of business meetings should not be merely to inquire after modes of living or character of the individuals composing the Meeting, but should aim to overcome the deficiencies which may be apparent.

A duty of these Meetings should be to inspire the members with a desire for more religious life. There is no doubt that many times these Meetings have been the means of nourishing the spiritual life in those who were wavering or might have fallen back, and that they have been the channel whereby many have been led and assisted in the growth of spiritual power until they

have become as beacon-lights in the midst of our Society.

Another important office of our Business Meetings is to foster the feeling of love and bond of sympathy, which should exist not merely between the members of our particular Monthly, Quarterly or Yearly Meeting, but draw us into closer union of thought and action with all who profess the same religious principles which we hold, and consider as fundamental truths.

There are, as probably all of the members of this Young Friends' Association are aware, Business Meetings of four distinct grades, held by the Society of Friends:

The Preparative Meeting is the one which should best represent each separate Meeting, at least its report as forwarded to its superior or higher Meeting, should more nearly reflect the actual state of the Society (so termed), the true life of the members of such particular Meeting from which the report proceeds than can be obtained from any other Business Meeting. It is the place for framing answers to the queries, and such answers cannot properly be changed by any of the higher Meetings. When answers to the queries state that a large portion of our membership do not attend the religious meetings inquiry should be quickly made as to the cause, and effort should be put forth to increase the interest in our Meetings, and consequently bring about a larger attendance.

If Friends are not consistent with our testimonies in relation to plainness of dress and moderation in living, the subject evidently should not rest right there without any effort on the part of the Meeting to call the attention of the delinquents to their shortcomings. All deficiencies which cause what are termed "lame answers" to our queries, should receive careful attention from the Meeting, which would take tangible form by treating with the offenders in the most friendly manner possible.

An important office of the Monthly Meeting is to consider requests for