

sociation of Genesee Yearly Meeting at Farmington, N.Y., in Sixth Mo., 1886. Owing to the length of the essay we publish only a part of it in this issue.

FORM.

Friends, more than those of most religious bodies, are opposed to "forms and ceremonies." Yet we may become formal in attempting to be informal. For one simple instance, a friend for reasons best known to himself, will always keep his head covered when entering the meeting-house, and until after taking his seat. The idea intended to be shown may be that which is opposed to the necessity which some people of other churches attach to this as a mark of reverential respect. As a rule it is considered only becoming to one entering either a house of worship or a dwelling. What there is of virtue in either way we shall not discuss. It is sufficient to note that whatever becomes a practice becomes a custom, and consequently a form or ceremony.

This leads us to observe that form of some kind is a necessity if any truth or idea is to be illustrated and promoted. And instead of it being a hindrance to true religion, it in guarded form may serve a very valuable part. "Order is the first Law of Heaven" has oft been repeated. We know that great achievements have been due largely, in the pursuit of every vocation, to form, order, system. This applied to our Society will scarcely have the opposite effect.

There are just two things to which I would call the attention of the reader in connection with this subject. *Attendance at meeting and manner of being seated.*

As to the former, there has been on the part of many parents perhaps a disposition to over-indulge their children by not requiring them to attend meetings regularly because they the children did not wish to attend. This feeling of the children indicates another fact, namely that the meeting does not enlist their sympathy, does not make an attendance attractive. I do not think it necessary either, that meetings must always be made attractive for the entertainment of those who are expected to attend. It may possess in fact some qualities of self-denial to advantage; but still a reasonable

amount of interest should attach to the years and conditions of the young. In the meantime I believe a parent's will should be asserted in a firm though gentle manner. A child has respect and even admiration for this kind of authority, and a parent gains every time instead of losing. Insisting upon attendance, habituates them to a practice they come to look upon as a duty, and as a matter of course. But a parent's duty does not stop here,—this is not all that is to be accomplished. A boy like anyone else would not like to be habitually sent to jail without knowing what he is to be sent for; and even though he knew, a bare contemplation of his situation would scarcely afford him very much relief. In the same way he would be as desolate, and not enjoy a social gathering were no one to show him any attention. Is it not too often the case that parents are slow to show their sympathy for the children, and only apparently interest themselves enough to know that the children are seated somewhere at the back while they are at the front? This simply indicates the gulph, and to my mind much of its origin, between the young and the old that so many have deplored. This is one reason, I think, why the Church did not at one time get that support from the young which the older members desired. Let parents adopt more generally than they do, the appearance of sympathy and interest in this particular, and I doubt not but that a good result will be acknowledged.

Has it not been the case that children have felt themselves of no value in a meeting, but there as on-lookers to see their parents engaged in a worship that they the children could not well comprehend? In speaking of interest in children, I am reminded of what a lady friend the other day said to me. "Do Friends take any interest in the religious welfare of their children?" "I have never," she said, "in my experience with Friends and those in their employ heard a father or mother explain or say anything touching their religious nature; never saw them in their homes read and explain anything in the Bible." To say nothing as to the difference of opinion on these matters, it may be too true that parents are distant and reserved when they should be free to talk about our Heavenly Father and our relation to