

our fellow men; and that our coming together in a religious capacity must be to increase and give strength to the disposition to know and do a higher, better and worthier service, however lowly and unimportant it may sometimes seem to us; and that to do that service most acceptably to what we understand to be the Divine mind, we need not so much think of how it will lift us into favor of our own conceit, or that of our friends as to what the duty required of us as fully appears. Hence the great thing of it is to know when one is 'called' from the simplest and commonest duties of life to the 'higher' ones, and to know whether the voice 'calling' is to and for the one 'called,' or whether it is to be given as service for another.

But of this I will speak somewhat hereafter.

For I want to say in this connection what I feel very much impelled to say; and it comes to me not all through hearing and observation, that there is too much of hindrance to our lifting up and better progress, in the manner of bringing to public notice our speaking and speech-making Friends.

For it seems to me to have very serious faults which I think might and ought to be corrected. My present purpose, however, is not so much to encourage, or to discourage talk, as to try to help, if possible, to arrange that the public acknowledgement of our ministers may be more in accordance with our high standard of profession. To illustrate: I had personal knowledge of an instance where a Friend of fair intelligence and moderate ability, of respectable standing in community and fair standing in the Society, was moved as it seemed by a worthy impulse, and, as far as I was able to judge, a proper motive, and was enabled by the guiding Hand to aim, and 'shoot,' and hit the mark—to use not a very allowable phrase—then for a long time to 'shoot' at random as regards the understanding and religious feeling and

thought, teaching that which was far below the line of intelligence and needs of those who were his hearers; yet his claim to the ministry was forced through select meeting by the tears and importunities of a sister, and the matter was brought before the monthly meeting in his presence, in such a way that to oppose or ask for consideration would seem to offer a personal insult. But, by the care of the 'faithful,' far less than the hard knocks and criticisms which seemed almost severe sometimes of those 'called' but not 'chosen' and enrolled, brought the Friend to a sense of his position and condition, and led him somewhat more fully to realize that his usefulness, his successful and acceptable services, depended not upon that he *was* 'called,' but that he *is* 'called.' And so the danger.

I am aware of other instances of abuse or misuse of the present system, if the system is right, that seem to urge strongly against its continuation. Where good and worthy Friends as any to be found had been speaking acceptably for a number of years, yet not enrolled as ministers, while many think strangely, simply on account of some prejudice of some influential member of the faithful. So that for these and other reasons which might be given, I feel quite opposed to the present custom of recommending and recording ministers, making them professionally such.

Friends must not conclude that these are personal thrusts of unkind feeling. I would assure them that I am not thus actuated any more than was Jesus when he pointed out the faults of his people, the Jews. I only hope to show in part, by the abuse of a custom, the wrong of a principle and practice. I would raise your minds to higher ideals, fuller purposes, and better results.

Perhaps I may as well refer to what was thought to be the need of acknowledging and recording ministers.

I know of none other that has any