

in regard to the "professional" ministry of Friends, I have much unity with, and think that such a plan as he suggests would be a distinct improvement upon the system now in use, which has always been, according to my observations, productive of more or less friction in its operation. To use plain language, which it is our profession so to do, there has been too much of the "big I and little U" quality about the meeting of "ministers and elders," "select meeting," or any other term by which they may be designated.

Such a spirit, and such a department in the Society of Friends, was so incongruous with its underlying principle, that the system was productive of but one result—failure. It is useless to deny these facts, and equally useless to dwell upon them and cite individual instances that have come under my observation, of the many inconsistencies that have been the outgrowth of this system of "separate enrollment" as a class, for it was only the effect of a cause, and it was not so much the individual as the system that was at fault. Ministers and elders are human, and are swayed by the same emotions and passions that move the common people, and it is only as they keep near the foundation of Divine Goodness, and are constantly on the watch, that they are enabled to give light to others. Through inattention, or in some other words, "big I" gets in the way, the light goes out, and spiritual darkness reigns. But that does not affect his or her standing in select meeting, for "once a select member always a select member" has practically been the rule, (unless they did something that in the light of the discipline was unpardonable) until these dark lights have grown to be an incubus upon the Society's body, threatening its very existence as an organization. Many members of this "separate class" realize the inefficiency of the system, and have expressed themselves

in favor of its dissolution—only for the discipline—so that from following the Light within we are bound to an outward form.

Consistency goes a long ways in the eyes of the world, and it is very hard for them to reconcile the meek and lowly spirit of our profession with the proud and patronizing one of some of its devotees. This proud spirit has become the parent of another evil, viz.: Exclusiveness. At least one instance has come under my observation, in which a member of this "separate class" expressed the thought that it did not want strangers to come to our meetings—presumably, because it was ashamed of the smallness of the meetings, evidently forgetting the injunction: "Where the two or three are gathered in My name, etc.," and that the strength of a meeting does not always consist in numbers.

Bad as this "separate enrollment" is, it is not entirely responsible for our decline. Among other things, the changed condition of our times has much to do with it. What called the Society into existence? Was it not the spiritual darkness that enshrouded the world at that time, the intolerance of the so-called religious world, with its empty forms and ceremonies, eschewing liberty of conscience and forcing its subjects into spiritual slavery? George Fox, with his strong character, was among the first to break away from the established order of things, and was one of the efficient instruments in the cause of religious and civil liberty. He spoke plainly to the people, in fact he let the truth hit where it might, and what was the result? It was found that there were a great many that were of the same mind as George Fox. The people flocked to his standard; they were bound together by a mighty sympathy; all felt as one body, brothers and sisters in the truth. Their numbers increased rapidly; their zeal for the truth enabled them to suffer innumerable hard-