

tioning in connection with weddings, that proposals of marriage must be submitted to the Meeting for approval at least a month before the ceremony can take place under the Meeting's care. Insistence upon this, and the appointment of committees to inquire into the "clearness from other like engagements" of those about to marry, though often a mere formality, serve as a check upon ill-considered matches. Unsuitable unions and divorces among Friends are extremely rare.

To the Friend there is no virtue in the mere attendance of meeting. The purpose of assembling for worship is to gather strength for the work of right living. It is true, this strength may come to one seated by oneself at home; the duty of attending meeting arises from the probability of mutual helpfulness when several are similarly engaged.

In a Friends' Meeting, rich and poor, cultured and unlettered come together as equals to get and to give, not intellectual entertainment, but spiritual uplift. The seats in Friends' meeting houses are always absolutely free, and rich and poor, cultured and unlettered, sit side by side and share alike all privileges and duties. For convenience those who are recognized as ministers, and are more likely to speak, generally sit facing the body of the Meeting, as do the Elders. But wealth, social standing, and education are not the qualifications for the ministry or the eldership. Spirituality and lives consistent with the professions of Christians are the things that count.

The recognition as ministers, by the Meeting, of those who speak acceptably and are considered competent to represent the Society and teach its principles, was, in the beginning, a necessary precaution against misrepresentation. It is a question whether an officially recognized ministry is necessary or even desirable at the present time. The Elders, on the other hand, whose chief duty it is to advise, encourage or caution those who speak in Meeting,

have and will always have much important work to do. They are appointed by the Meeting and are largely responsible for its condition.

The method of transacting business in the Meeting for Discipline is peculiar.

No vote is ever taken, and no motion made; but it is the privilege and duty of every member present to express his approval or disapproval of the proposition under consideration. When all who desire to speak have been heard, the Clerk makes and reads a minute stating what he believes to be the prevailing sentiment of the Meeting. The minute is adopted if approved or acquiesced in by all. If objected to, it is not recorded, since unity is essential to action. To accomplish anything by this method the Meeting must be ruled by a spirit of love and mutual concession. It sometimes happens that a few, from a sense of duty, hold out against the many, and we are subjected to a negative minority rule. But it is seldom that the few refuse to accept the judgment of the majority, and when they do they are quite as likely to be right as wrong. Almost always the few are able to hold out, only because some of the many do not do their duty in the matter of speaking. Moreover, it is often better to concede than to carry a point, and when both sides are sure they are right and cannot conscientiously give up, it is safer to defer action than to act. No question is finally settled until it is settled right, and the right can afford to wait. The gain in love and forbearance is greater than the loss of time. Mutual concession and a desire for unity are better than despatch, unless our business and our religion have nothing to do with each other. Freedom from wire-pulling and from parliamentary wrangling and trickery is worth something.

The true Friend who takes "Truth for authority, not authority for truth,"—to use the words so often quoted by Lucretia Mott—believes what he be-