

Preaching Based on Experience, not Hope.

I knew a congregation of Quakers where at one time a Friend had been for a year or two "exercising his gift in the ministry." Among the Quakers, "ministers" are not made by colleges or by bishops, but after a man or woman has "exercised their gift" in the congregation for a sufficient length of time, the spiritually-minded in that congregation meet together and decide whether, in their judgment, their friend has really received from the Lord a "gift in the ministry"; and if their decision is favourable, that gift is then acknowledged, and that friend becomes an "acknowledged" or "recommended" minister. The case of the Friend I speak of had been laid before the spiritually-minded members of his Meeting several times for "acknowledgment," but a favourable decision could never be arrived at, because one man invariably declined to sanction it. The Friend in question finally asked this man the reason of his persistent opposition. After a little hesitation, the man replied it had been a great grief to him that he could not unite in acknowledgment of the Friend's gift; "but," said he, "I have listened to thy preaching very carefully, and I have heard thee very often express a 'humble hope' that at some future time the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life might be thy portion; but I have never heard thee express one single time the knowledge or belief that these blessings had really been bestowed upon thee; and I cannot feel that it is right to encourage any man to preach a gospel to others, about which he himself has so little knowledge." This reply left the Friend without excuse, and he inwardly resolved never again to open his mouth to tell others about eternal life in Christ until he could say with assurance that he knew that eternal life was his own. Ashamed of the uncertainty, which before he had cherished as a sign of humility, he went to the Word of God to see what was there taught. His faith laid hold of the announcement in 1 John v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," and he said, "I do believe that Jesus is the Christ with all my heart; and God says that if I do this I am born of Him; therefore, I know I must be His child," and he was able from that moment boldly to assert it in the face of every seeming to the contrary. S.

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"Quaker Grace."—I want us to remember that like our silent meetings, this may be a formal and lifeless observance or a very vital thing. Thomas Story, in his travels, tells of being engaged in vocal prayer at such times, and speaks of the fact as having dispelled in one place the impression "that Quakers receive the mercies of God as brutes, never craving a blessing, nor returning God thanks."—EDWARD G. RHOADS, at a Conference in Philadelphia, Tenth Month, 1909.