

the most profitable instruction. If we do not keep pace with advancing knowledge in our teachings we cannot expect to hold these pupils, as they advance to maturity, to our sectarian and peculiar method of accepting and teaching them for the truth.

When children are taught the facts, and truth, in such a way as to reach their minds as a demonstration, that cannot be controverted, such lessons are far more likely to bind them to a line of life according with, than lessons obscure, hypothetical, or empirical, that characterize so much of our present teaching.

Many Friends in the past, and not a few yet, have been averse to these schools that teach so much of the letter, as all such schools must, to interest the young who have not the capacity to comprehend the spirit that so many think they find in these lessons. Attaching so much importance to the letter, on the part of some, has divided the Friends into factions, that have dissipated much of their usefulness. This reverence for the letter is so strong now, with some, that it militates against the harmony, any united forward movement in the truth, and the light, which is a birth right, and should be the inspiring motive to a greater and more vigorous activity in holding up these leading principles as the only proper objects of human faith, and the only proper guide for human conduct.

Schools to teach the young the principles of our Society, and their application to daily life, should be encouraged, for we can be saved only by living up to correct principles. But in our eagerness to increase an interest in the Society, to counteract a tendency toward decline, if we fail to attach a proper importance to the spirit, and dwell so much on the letter, we may possibly keep up and increase our numbers, but lose the distinctive character, as advocates and representatives of a spiritual religion, a religion not built on forms, or faiths, or creeds,

trusting in the letter, the outward testimony, for its foundations.

George Fox saw this tendency even so early, as in the latter part of his life and his epistles and importunities to Friends, were to guard against the danger of that degeneracy.

It is true early Friends were well versed in the letter, but they were in self-defence forced to qualify themselves to meet their enemies with their own weapons, which they did effectually. But we now being exempt from such persecution, have but little use for the letter in that way.

What we need now is a greater familiarity with the principles and objects that animated the fathers, and to apply them more vigorously to correct the gross evils of society that are so afflicting us to-day.

The tendency of human nature when left unmolested and at ease, is to lapse to a state of quiescence into forms without the power, into the letter without the spirit, and often to so far lose sight of the spirit for the promotion of which these letters and forms were adopted and used, that to retain and reverence the latter, becomes the object and largely the end of our religious service and work. The sentiment of "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation," is just as essential to be regarded now as ever it was, and from its neglect we are experiencing the dearth and degeneracy that has long given rise to our lamentations for the loss of that zeal which characterized the fathers who dwelt so faithfully in the spirit instead of the letter, exposing them to sufferings we are unwilling to endure.

It is the lot of all who take advanced spiritual views to be misunderstood and disparaged and often persecuted, yet it is through the labors of this class only, that thoughts are started which lift our human nature upward and onward to higher degrees of development from the animal and sensual to the refined and spiritual.

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