

at all. As Friends, nothing should be done to alienate or estrange.

From its incipency this has been the faith and feeling of the Church. Better be still than not move in harmony. Not "first pure, then peaceable," but peaceable first and pure afterwards, if ever. The interests and prosperity of the sect soon became paramount to "minding the Light," or minding the Light meant maintaining the sect. The principle was made secondary and subservient, and lost all its earlier significance and distinctiveness with the more conservative element of the Society. The less active and vital it was among the members the more easily they were kept in subjection to Church interests and the established order. It became the policy of the ruling element to encourage submission rather than independent faithfulness.

The subject of "reconstruction of religious thought and work" is agitating the highest circles and ablest exponents of what is called the Orthodox Church. They are admitting the present faith, and formulation of doctrines are the product of past ages, and as such are not adapted to, but are being repudiated by the more thoughtful and intelligent of this. To save the Church and the religion, a restatement and reconstruction is indispensable.

Friends held the advanced thought two centuries ago, and exercised the moral power it gave them then. Their prowess in the aggressive task of reconstruction of religious thought and work won for them their distinction as reformers and a spiritual minded people.

There has been much anxiety and speculation of late as to what can be done to arrest the present decline, and restore the life and growth of Friends. Mild and emollient remedies have been tried for many years, yet the declension continues. The sooner a new departure is made in the direction of "reconstruction of religious thought and work," will the Society put itself in a position to experience this rejuvenation. The terms, words and

names that were used by translators three centuries ago were such as were adapted to that period. Then intelligence and reason had but a small share of religious thought. It was not to understand, but to believe, that made the Christian. That period of faith has expired, and is vanishing to all thinking people.

Thought now more largely rules the world than ever before. Faith, in the ancient sense, is dead, and the religious thought and work of the past centuries now lingering on its remains is but a remnant, a fossil of what was once a vital force.

Till we are brought to realize this, and are prepared to leave these relics, and advance in reconstruction, there can be but little or no substantial progress. New wine can not be kept in old bottles is the teaching of long ago.

If we believe it, let us heed the lesson. The mental ferment of this age can not be restrained within the narrow boundaries of even two centuries back in the misty past. It demands and will have more "Light" and freedom than satisfied then.

The terms of our religion should be definite and expressive. Reconstruction even of the language of religion needs to be effected. We must know precisely what we mean, and there must be a fitness between our knowledge and the facts of life with which we have to deal. Speculation has lost its power and is out of the vocabulary. Even liberalism or heresy must define its terms, or receive no favor. The definition must not be addressed to the faith, but to the intelligence, the reason and consciousness. The standards must be high, the outline distinct, and the position invulnerable. All mysticism must go, and even the words that served it must be abandoned as worse than useless.

We must not be afraid of the Truth and the Light; let them lead us where they may, even if it should be to repudiating those errors of the past, how-