

must be the age, therefore, of unloosening, in order that the whole body politic may move on a little further. Well, brethren, as the age is doubting, it is wise for us to put our foot down and stand still where we are sure we have truth beneath us. Perhaps, if it were an age of bigotry, and men would not learn, we might be more inclined to listen to new teachers; but now ~~the~~ the Conservative side must be ours, or rather the Radical side, which is the truly Conservative side. We must go back to the radix, or root of truth, and stand sternly by that which God has revealed, and so meet the wavering of the age.

Moreover, after all, this is not an earnestly doubting age; we live among a careless, frivolous race. If the doubters were honest there would be more infidel places of concourse than there are; but infidelity as an organised community does not prosper. Infidelity in London, open and avowed, has come down to one old corrugated iron shed opposite St. Luke's. I believe that is the present position of it. "The Hall of Science," is it not called? Its literature was carried on for a long time in half a shop in Fleet Street, that was all it could manage to support, and I don't know whether even that half-shop is used now. It is a poor dotting, drivelling thing. In Tom Paine's time it bullied like a vigorous blasphemer, but it was outspoken, and in its own way, downright and earnest in its outspokenness. It commanded, in former days, some names which one might mention with a measure of respect; Hume, to wit, and Bolingbroke, and Voltaire were great in talent, if not in character. But where now will you find a Hobbes or a Gibbon? The doubters now are simply doubters because they do not care about truth at all. They are indifferent altogether. Modern scepticism is playing and toying with truth; and it takes to "modern thought" as an amusement, as ladies take to croquet or archery. This

is nothing less than an age of millinery and dolls and comedy. Even good people do not believe out and out as their fathers used to do. Some even among Nonconformists are shamefully lax in their convictions; they have few masterly convictions such as would lead them to the stake, or even to imprisonment. Molluses have taken the place of men, and men are turned to jelly-fishes. Far from us be the desire to imitate them.

We must be decided. What have Dissenters been doing to a great extent lately but trying to be fine? How many of our ministers are laboring to be grand orators or intellectual thinkers? That is not the thing. Our young ministers have been dazzled by that, and have gone off to bray like wild asses under the notion that they would then be reputed to have come from Jerusalem, or to have been reared in Germany. The world has found them out. There is nothing now I believe that genuine Christians despise more than the foolish affectation of intellectualism. You will hear a good old deacon say, "Mr. So-and-so, whom we had here, was a very clever man, and preached wonderful sermons, but the cause has gone down through it. We can hardly support the minister, and we mean next time to have one of the old fashioned ministers back again who believe in something and preach it. There will be no addition to our church else." Will you go out and tell people that you believe you can say something, but you hardly know what; you are not quite sure that what you preach is correct, but the trust-deed requires you to say it, and therefore you say it? Why, you may cause fools and idiots to be pleased with you, and you will be sure to propagate infidelity, but you cannot do more. When a prophet comes forward he must speak as from the Lord, and if he cannot do that, let him go back to his bed. It is quite certain, dear friends, that now or never we must be decided, because the age is