

we of its number? And what is the central truth which it requires us to enforce?

We look with regret upon what is called the "Decline of Friends," and while we cannot determine its cause we find it to lie in the direction of a sort of paralysis of youthful energy. Do Friends suppose that their younger members will adhere to them if they are taught only to wait for manifestations of the Inner Light and are given no definite work to do? Young minds are ever looking forward to a time when they shall enter upon individual fields of labor, when they shall have some clearly defined line of work before them. Missions which are adapted to the older ones are not always congenial to the young. The reason why our young members decline to speak of our principles is because they can mention no work which is being forwarded by them alone. In past years, however, this state of feeling did not exist, because perhaps of the absorbing interest felt in great advances which Friends were making in important movements for the elevation of the race. At this point we will do well to see what our Society has had to do in these great works. Look at the emancipation of the slaves, the freeing of English prisoners, the restriction of criminal laws and the protest entered in the name of Christ against the iniquities of war. In all these do we not find Friends foremost in the grand works of reformation? Then we should take example from what has been done and not be discouraged because the world may say that our body is failing. The principles which George Fox taught are to be found gradually creeping into all religious denominations. These principles are daily building up the churches as they incorporate them into their doctrines, but we, who do not use the same means as do other denominations to tell the world what we believe, are making comparatively slow progress. For years Friends have tried to shun the question of their

apparent decline and to put it aside as a false charge, but at this day it comes up so strongly before their eyes that it has to be recognized. Numerous expedients have from time to time been proposed to mend these deficiencies but it still seems that the prime cause has not been attacked and until the root of the evil shall have been discovered and eradicated all through our fields of labor its shoots must keep coming up to obstruct the future of our Society.

But we have spoken only of deficiencies, we should now make our correction, if we have any to make. Our only secret to success as we can see it, is once more to hold up to the world that banner of the real presence of God in man, with all that this implies. The implications are of course two sided—spiritual and social. The true mission then is to deepen the conception of Spirituality in Religion throughout the world and this Spirituality of Religion is but another term for nearness of the human spirit to the Divine.

Some of our number, who are constantly on the watch for some outward excitement, say that our religion has not enough variety in its practises, but let us look at the more highly educated of other churches. Those who know anything of the thoughts passing in the minds of educated people especially, know that there is everywhere evidence of a profound and widespread dissatisfaction with the theology of church and chapel, and with the whole system of professional ministry.

So called religious indifference is too often attributable to dissatisfaction with narrow creeds and meaningless ceremonies. This is not an age of general indifference but of increasing interest in religion. What the world wants is a church that will teach it the plain truths of religion as they were taught by Christ himself a church which by practise and precept offers us a reasonable faith and a practical religion. Now what body is there more capable of this great work than