

understanding, if they are so fortunate as to be honest and intelligent, they will be *compelled* to doubt. The way to avoid it is easy and simple—*teach as truth only such things as are known without doubt to be truth.*

A child is taught that the Earth is a sphere as he advances in life, every experience and every fact that he becomes acquainted with conforms to that truth. On the other hand, a child is impressively taught that the Bible is the Word of God, and is to be implicitly believed to secure salvation; and to admit any doubt concerning it would be a dire calamity. The child grows up and reads, and thinks, and what is the result? Does every fact conform to the teaching that the Bible is the Word of God? But that is not the worst of it; there is naturally a legitimate inclination in the child to question and to investigate on the one hand, and on the other a demoralizing fear of the threatened penalties of doubt and unbelief, which fills the mind with trouble and distress. Of course this does not apply to Friends, and Friends' children, as much as to other denominations; but yet Friends are so apt to make use of the language and expression of the churches, that their children are led into somewhat the same confused state of mind. Therefore the great need of plainer language and more correct expressions among our ministers and others, so that the children especially may not be misled.

But I believe the subject of doubt has a further interest for Friends. Why is it that so many of our young people, on growing up, leave the Society? On passing through this season of doubt, they succeed in smothering it, and then join the church, or they go to the other extreme and discountenance religion generally, with the impression that there is little or no difference between Friends and others. Is this not because Friends have failed to teach the children the difference between their views and the views of the churches? Is it not because Friends have failed in two things;

first, to give the children a definite idea of the why and the wherefore of the right and the reasonableness of our principles; and second, to teach the why and wherefore of the unreasonableness of the church doctrines which we oppose, and the positive wrong of a mere belief in them as able to confer salvation. In saying this I am aware that some Friends hold that it is not necessary to point out the wrongs, if we only teach the rights. But how can our young people be expected to resist successfully the proselyting efforts of the churches, if they are not equipped with a knowledge of church fallacies, and the arguments to overcome them? This does not imply "going into the darkness to drive away the darkness with its own spirit; it means putting a light on a candlestick to dispel the darkness with the spirit of *Light.*"

I take the liberty of expressing these views in opposition to older ones, because I think they are beginning to forget the experiences of their younger years.

Teach the children our principles, and how to support them with reasons and arguments both in and out of the Bible. Show them the injury of binding creeds, and the right and the benefit of fearless thought. Show them how beautifully our principles accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ, but how inconsistent with his teachings are some of the dogmas of the church that bears his name. Teach them the omnipotence of pure thoughts and kind acts. In short, where we are right teach it, and the *reason of it*; and where the Church is wrong, "*teach that and the reason of it.*"

To return, then, to the present question—"How can we decide between the profitable and the unprofitable?"

"*Teach as truth only that which is known without doubt to be truth.*"

How much religion would that leave? All the *religion* there is now, the Light Within, and obedience to it.

I am fully aware that this *seems* like wholesale destruction of sacred things, but it is only laying aside those notions