

should be to you like the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not—whatever interferes with your communion with God is not a lawful pleasure or occupation. The company into which you cannot ask your God to enter is not the company into which his follower should willingly go. God has given you a conscience. Let His witness, dwelling in your heart, speak on this point. When He demands of you “What doest thou here, Elijah?” if you cannot answer satisfactorily this question, come out of the cave, no matter how apparently safely you are dwelling, and depend upon it, the sacrifice you make to the demand of your God, will result in His vouchsafing to you the still small voice of His approval, in which He so graciously speaks to His people. Consider the great importance of that which we are now discussing. If balls, parties, theatres, billiards, gambling, horse-racing, and the like, increase your love for God’s Word, or foster within any a devotional spirit, I say to such an one by all means spend your life in such concerns. But do not answer that this is their effect until, as in the sight of God, you have asked and replied to the inquiry. If, on the other hand, in others, they beget a separation from the Saviour, coldness in prayer, a distaste to the Bible, in God’s name give them up at once, however dear to you, or seemingly innocent they may be.

This very imperfect sketch, too much prolonged I fear, would be deficient indeed, did I not point you to the means of filling out and giving life to the otherwise dry bones that form the skeleton, did I not pointedly refer to that true mainspring of a noble and earnest life. There is but the one foundation: “The fear of