

ced a schismatic. But all as a body have fallen back. Who does not see that the Presbyterianism, Baptistism, and Methodism, in all their multitudinous forms, are as distant as the poles from their primitive position. What, if permitted to return to this state of being, would John Knox, John Wesley, and John Gill, say to the doctrine, practice; worldly and fashionable conformity to the corrupt practices of the age, of those who in word profess to honor their names! And, my brethren, what would Peter, John, and Paul, say to us, if they should visit our congregations and our families! They are with us in their doctrine—in the word which they penned by the direction of the Divine Spirit. do we in letter and spirit hear them? “He that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us,” says John, “by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

The above desultory remarks have been made, not so much from a feeling of discouragement, as of fear that those who have for the last twenty years been—as I believe—contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, will proclaim a truce with the world and the various sects and schisms. By this I would not be understood as encouraging the spirit of war against persons; by no means, nothing would give me greater joy than to see the whole human family fused into one nation—one people—one family! But while I would rejoice in such a glorious consummation, if it were accomplished by trampling under foot one injunction of the Divine Lord, I should look upon such a peace as purchased at too dear a rate: I should consider it rather a triumph of Satan than of the Lord Messiah. It is war against the *spirit* of the world. It is hostility to *every thing* not receiving the sanction of the Divine Word. I would ever distinguish between the man and his principles: while I would oppose the latter with all the ability I possessed, I would treat the former as a brother in Adam at least, and do all in my power to further his happiness.

But what has all this to do with reform? with the “present *Reformation*?” I answer: With great anxiety I see the brethren apparently satisfied with the reception and defence of the Gospel theory. We have labored long and zealously to explain, establish, and enforce correct views of Faith, Repentance, and Baptism, and the outward order of a New Testament Church: this is well, and these things should have still their share of attention in our meetings and in our publications, but not to the exclusion of those moral precepts, without the practice of which all our professions are as sounding brass, or a noisy cymbal. I have often found inattentive hearers when I have endeavored to enforce the necessity of secret prayer; the worship of God in families; more attention to social meetings for prayer, praise, and the study of God’s word; more conversation with friends and companions on practical godliness; and the necessity of an entire conformity to all the will of God. Discourses on themes like these have called forth no signs of approbation, while a sermon on some of our distinguishing peculiarities would have been listened to with the most profound attention. Brethren often appear quite surprised that the disobedient do not receive and obey the Gospel, while they can let days and weeks pass without spending an entire hour in the prayerful study of God’s word. They can find time to visit friends and brethren, to converse on all subjects and on all