

not have if we could, and there remains, therefore, only the church to be appropriated to this purpose. If, on general principles, we were to concede that it is not desirable or proper to hold such meetings in a church, we should still have to admit that necessity must over-ride expediency where there is no clear prohibition in the case. Every law, except the law of God, clearly expressed, must give way before necessity. What we must do in any given case, we can only do in the best *possible* way, not in the way abstractedly the best, but the best possible way to us. Shutting out of the question, then, the abstract right or wrong of holding these meetings in churches, we have simply no other place to hold them in; it is David's shew-bread over again.

We, however, allow that if, in their *essential* character, these meetings desecrate a church—that is, if their aim, their spirit and rule of management were necessarily inconsistent with the uses of a building set apart for the worship of God—we, for our part would drink no more tea in them “while the world stands.” But this is just the question on which, no doubt, good men will differ, on which they do differ, and on which we shall have to agree to differ. We can easily conceive that some meetings are essentially inconsistent with the designation of a house of God. Undeniably a meeting for a dance would be so, so would a political meeting, so, in a sense that would be shocking, would be a meeting of drunkards and profane persons, so would be a meeting of “money changers and of those who sold doves,” like those which our Saviour broke up in the temple. But we do not see that a social meeting, where tea and bread and butter are provided for the guests, and where the aim is to encourage a good feeling among brethren and neighbors, and perhaps to raise a little money for a good cause, is *essentially* a meeting inconsistent with a church. On the other hand, and all details being in keeping, we are rather inclined to think that, prayer and reading the Bible excepted, we are never more suitably employed on the ordinary days of the week than when we are devoting a portion of our leisure to this end—that is, greeting one another, sitting down at a common table, where the repast is of necessity inconsistent with gluttony and excess, singing hymns and spiritual songs together, hearing a speech from a brother, or a good book or part of a book read for our edification, and then going home, sober, cheerful, and better acquainted with each other, better informed than when we came; we cannot see but this is a religious meeting to all intents and purposes, that it generates and encourages a feeling in the human heart exceedingly in keeping with our Christian brotherhood and mutual responsibilities, and that it tends to refine and cheer and bless those who go. At all events, whatever others may have felt or whatever they may say, we have often felt such meetings to be sweet and profitable, and have been thankful to be there. It is true, we have, in a few instances, been disgusted with “low life below stairs” which we have witnessed, and have felt ashamed of the perpetrators, but these instances have been the exception, and not the rule. Generally our church socials and tea meetings are, and we are *sure* they can always be, so conducted as to be profitable to those who attend.

Great complaint is made about the conduct of young people at these meetings, and we admit there is sometimes too much levity. But have our brethren, especially our older brethren, ever asked themselves what we are to do with young people now-a-days? Temperance influences, and religious influences, and the progress of education, have very much changed the tastes of our young people. No young man of respectability goes to the tavern now; generally the young people of our christian families are very good sons