

due reparation. But upon his being brought to see his sin and to express regret for it, and seeking to be reconciled to us, we should hold out the hand of reconciliation to him frankly and sincerely. The deep resentments, the long-lasting grudge, the desire for retaliation, the eye for eye and tooth for tooth feeling, that are so universal in the world, should have no place in the church. But as the apostle said to the Ephesians, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

3. In the third place, if we love the brethren, *this should appear by our choosing them as our private friends, and cultivating Christian fellowship with them.*

To enter into relations of close and familiar friendship with men who are strangers to vital godliness, is about as grievous an error as a professing Christian can commit. He can hardly avoid, in frequenting the society of such persons, being often tempted into a measure of conformity to their sinful practices. He must feel, so long as his conscience retains any degree of tenderness, that he is altogether out of place among them; and the effect of his familiarity with them must be to exercise a general deadening influence upon his soul. They may be persons of good outward moral character, who would lead him into nothing obviously and grossly vicious; but it will be here, as in the freezing of water. Observe the surface of a pool on a winter evening, when the frost first comes on. It does not pass, by an immediate and rapid transition, from the liquid to the solid state; but insensibly a sluggishness seems to creep over it; a thin, uncertain film succeeds; and presently it is sheeted with a crust, growing every moment thicker and stronger. So, if a professed disciple of the Lord Jesus makes unconverted men his familiar friends, and the chief associates of his leisure hours; though they may not lead him, by any one great palpable step, into