

towards these people? It is to pray for them, that they may be brought to a better mind, that the labour they spend may be spent in a manner that will tend more to the glory of God, —that the zeal they exhibit may be so directed by knowledge, that, through God's blessing, it may be productive of good, unmingled with evil. And while we thus pray for them, it behoves us to abstain in every way from countenancing practices which we condemn. And can we do so, if we attend at the place where these things occur? When we enter a meeting of professed Christians, it is as much as to say that we approve of their practices; for if this be not the case, our conduct distinctly proves that, if we go there to serve God at all, we venture to serve Him in a way which our consciences condemn. We pray to God to deliver us from "error, heresy and schism;" our prayer must be a direct insult to the majesty of God, if we frequent places where any of these things are upheld.

Again, if we are convinced that these practices, on which I have touched this day, are wrong, we are only tempting the Lord our God, by so far yielding to curiosity, or the persuasion of others, as to witness them. It has been well remarked, that no man could well suppose that the best way of proving his regard for virtue was to venture into the haunts of vice: so no Christian should think of trying the steadiness of his principles, by frequenting places of worship among those whose principles or practices he condemns. His principles must be lax indeed before he could make so foolish a trial.— But there is still another very important light in which we should view this matter. We should certainly consider ourselves involved in the guilt of others, if that guilt were in any way owing to our example. All may not be equally well informed as we are on these subjects, nor may the principles of all be equally well established. If those who observe our conduct, or are in any way influenced by our example, have reason to suppose, from our practice, that it is a matter of no great importance to wander occasionally from the Church of God, and occasionally to encourage schism, we may be totally unconscious of the guilt which they contract on account of such lax notions, but I am far from sure that we should not have to answer for it. Wherefore, beloved, I must again exhort you, in the words of St. John, "Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world."