

diate notice; till by *an evil heart of unbelief*, we have been tempted also to *depart from the living God*. In such a state of mind we seek for principles which will correspond with the feelings of a backsliding heart. We take such a view of doctrinal truth as is favourable to our conduct, and *turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*.

Often has it struck the writer of these hints as a melancholy fact, that even on Lord's days, in religious families, public news occupies no small portion of time and conversation. How readily do we speak of the state of the times—how feelingly enter into the general calamities under which society groans! But alas! the name of the Redeemer, how seldom mentioned! Surely our meeting together *on that day*, both for divine worship and friendly conversation, should be in the fear of God, *to speak of the glories of his kingdom, and talk of his power*.

Our social visits are often conducted in a manner by no means favourable to the interests of the gospel of Christ. In some cases, those who maintain the warmest regard to some of their brethren, avail themselves of the absence of others to expose their faults. Instead of dwelling on their privileges as *citizens of the new Jerusalem*, or encouraging one another in the way of duty as *servants of the Lord Jesus*; if the subject be not scandal, how often is it of the most trivial import! All profess to love God, but his excellencies engross no attention! Such meetings are closed too often without even a word of prayer! The *savor of the name of Christ* is not made manifest, and while the sinner observes our neglect of what we profess to love supremely, and our habits of dwelling with such pleasure on subjects in which he can fully join with us, he concludes that we who know religion, think it of small moment. How often too,

among the enemies of the cross of Christ does our complaisance trample upon principle or duty! Our connexions are destitute of divine grace, and we insensibly slide into their manners and conduct.

Many of the contentions which tear asunder the church of Christ arise also from the want of more personal religion. Religion, lively religion, alone can unite the hearts of men in the ways of God. The gospel of Jesus, as it obtains the ascendancy in the heart, will teach that forbearance, gentleness, and meekness, which are essential to the peace of a Christian community. Those who in ancient times had most communion with our Lord Jesus, were also the most distinguished for brotherly love. Love to God will lead us to love most cordially *all who in every place call upon the name of the Redeemer*.

Before such a spirit, wrath, bitterness, and clamour, with all strife will give place, and *the unity of the Spirit will be preserved in the bond of peace*. The happy effect of this union in former times was, that THEY GREW AND MULTIPLIED.

The various contentions which take place in churches often respect things of very small importance, often, of no importance at all, and while we are thus contending, the cause of the Saviour is bleeding at our feet. Satan is pleased with strife; but the Spirit of God is the Spirit of peace, and where there is not peace, attended with lively religion in the heart, there cannot be permanent prosperity.

Ought we not with great seriousness to lay these things to heart? What say you, friends of our Lord Jesus? Let us examine ourselves, and each enquire carefully, and in the fear of God, into our own state. Whatever claims the world may have, it can have none of such importance as to excuse our prompt and perse-