

A FARTHER APPEAL
TO
MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

PART II.

I. 1. It is not my present design to touch on any particular opinions, whether they are right or wrong ; nor on any of those smaller points of practice, which are variously held by men of different persuasions ; but, First, to point out some things which, on common principles, are condemned by men of every denomination, and yet found in all ; and, Secondly, some wherein those of each denomination are more particularly inconsistent with their own principles.

And, First, it is my design, abstracting from opinions of every kind, as well as from disputable points of practice, to mention such of those things as occur to my mind, which are on common principles condemned, and notwithstanding found, more or less, among men of every denomination.

2. But before I enter on this displeasing task, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, by whatever love you bear to God, to your country, to your own souls, do not consider *who* speaks, but *what* is spoken. If it be possible, for one hour lay prejudice aside ; give what is advanced a fair hearing. Consider simply on each head, Is this true, or is it false ? Is it reasonable, or is it not ? If you ask, " But in whose judgment ? " I answer, In your own ; I appeal to the light of your own mind. Is there not a faithful witness in your own breast ? By this you must stand or fall. You cannot be judged by another man's conscience. Judge for yourself by the best light you have ; and the merciful God teach me and thee whatsoever we know not !

Now, as I speak chiefly to those who believe the Scriptures, the method I propose is this : First, to observe what account is given therein of the Jews, the ancient Church of God, inasmuch as all these things were written for our instruction, who say, We are now the visible Church of the God of Israel : Secondly, to appeal to all who profess to be members thereof, to every one who is called a Christian, how far, in each instance, the parallel holds ; and how much we are better than they.

3. First. I am to observe what account the Scriptures give of the Jews, the ancient Church of God. I mean, with regard to their moral character ; their tempers and outward behaviour.

No sooner were they brought out of Egypt, than we find them "murmuring against God ;" (Exod. xiv. 12 ;) again, when he had just brought them through the Red Sea "with a mighty hand and stretched out arm ;" (xv. 24 ;) and yet again, quickly after, in the wilderness of Zin : "Your murmurings," saith Moses, "are not against us, but against the Lord." (xvi. 8.) Nay, even while he was "giving them bread from heaven," they were still "murmuring and tempting God ;" (xvii. 2, 3 ;) and their amazing language at that very season was, "Is the Lord among us or not ?" (xvii. 7.)

The same spirit they showed, during the whole forty years that he "bore their manners in the wilderness : " A solemn testimony whereof, "Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel," when God was about to take him away from their head. "They have corrupted themselves," saith he ; "their spot was not of his children ; they are a perverse and crooked generation. The Lord led Jacob about ; he instructed him ; he kept him as the apple of his eye." (Deut. xxxii. 5, 10.) "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields ; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." (Verses 13, 15.)

In like manner God complains long after this : "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth ! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah i. 2-4.) "Can a maid forget

her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." (Jer. ii. 32.)

4. And "as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," so they had small regard to the ordinances of God: "Even from the days of your fathers," saith God by his Prophets, "ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them." (Mal. iii. 7.) "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?" (Verse 14.) "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel: Thou hast not brought me thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices." (Isaiah xliii. 22, 23.) And so the Prophet himself confesses: "Thou meetest those that remember thee in thy ways;—but there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." (Isaiah lxiv. 5, 7.)

5. But they called upon his name by vain oaths, by perjury and blasphemy. So Jeremiah: "Because of swearing the land mourneth." (xxiii. 10.) "And though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely." (v. 2.) So Hosea: "They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant." So Ezekiel: "They say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." So Isaiah: "Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory." (iii. 8.) "They say, Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh and come, that we may know it." (v. 19.) And so Malachi: "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words; ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" (ii. 17.)

6. And as they "despised his holy things," so they "profaned his Sabbaths." (Ezekiel xxii. 8.) Yea, when God sent unto them, saying, "Take heed unto yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers:— Yet they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction." (Jer xvii. 21–23.)

Neither did they honour their parents, or those whom God, from time to time, appointed to be rulers over them: "In thee" (in Jerusalem, saith the Prophet) "they have set light by father and mother." (Ezekiel xxii. 7.) And from the very day when

God brought them up out of the land of Egypt, their murmurings, chiding, rebellion, and disobedience, against those whom he had chosen to go before them, make the most considerable part of their history. So that had not Moses "stood in the gap," he had even then destroyed them from the face of the earth.

7. How much more did they afterwards provoke God, by drunkenness, sloth, and luxury! "They have erred through wine," saith the Prophet Isaiah, "and through strong drink they are out of the way:" (xxviii. 7 :) Which occasioned those vehement and repeated warnings against that reigning sin: "Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, them that are overcome with wine!" (Verse 1.) "The drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot." (Verse 3.) "Woe unto them that rise up early that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!—But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." (v. 11, 12.) "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink!" (Verse 22.) "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." (Amos vi. 1, 4-6.) "Behold," saith Ezekiel to Jerusalem, "this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters." (xvi. 49.)

8. From sloth and fulness of bread, lewdness naturally followed. It was even while Moses was with them, that "the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab." Yea, of the daughters of Zion Isaiah complains: "They walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes." (iii. 16.) And of his people in general God complains by Jeremiah: "When I had fed them to the full, they assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: Every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." (v. 7, 8.) "They be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men." (ix. 2.) "The land is full of adulterers." (xxiii. 10.)

Yea, and some of them were given up to unnatural lusts:

Thus we read : "The men of Gibeah beset the house," wherein the stranger was, "and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him." (Judges xix. 22.) "And there were also," long after, "Sodomites in the land," in the days of Rehoboam, and of the following kings : "The very show of whose countenance witnessed against them, and they declared their sin as Sodom, they hid it not." (Isaiah iii. 9.)

9. This was accompanied with injustice in all its forms. Thus all the Prophets testify against them : "The Lord looked for judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteousness, but behold a cry." (Isaiah v. 7.) "Thou hast taken usury and increase ; thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbour by extortion.—Behold, I have smitten my hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made." (Ezekiel xxii. 12, 13.) "The balances of deceit are in Jacob's hand ; he loveth to oppress." (Hosea xii. 7.) "Are there not yet the scant measure that is abominable, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights ?" (Micah vi. 10, 11.) "He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment." (Isaiah lix. 15.) "The wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag." (Hab. i. 13, 15.) "They covet fields, and take them by violence ; and houses, and take them away." (Micah ii. 2.) They "pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely." (Verse 8.) "They have dealt by oppression with the stranger ; they have vexed the fatherless and the widow." (Ezekiel xxii. 7.) "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy : Yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully." (Verse 29.) "Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands." (Isaiah lix. 6.) "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off ; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." (Verse 14.)

10. Truth indeed was fallen, as well as justice : "Every mouth," saith Isaiah, "speaketh folly." (ix. 17.) "This is a rebellious people, lying children." (xxx. 9.) Their "lips have spoken lies and muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth : They trust in vanity, and speak lies." (lix. 3, 4.) This occasioned that caution of Jeremiah : "Take

ve heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." (ix. 4, 5.)

11. And even those who abstained from these gross outward sins were still inwardly corrupt and abominable: "The whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint; yea, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isaiah i. 5, 6.) "All these nations," saith God, "are uncircumcised; and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart." (Jer. ix. 26.) "Their heart is divided." (Hosea x. 2.) "They have set up their idols in their heart; they are all estranged from me through their idols." (Ezekiel xiv. 3, 5.)

Their soul still "clave unto the dust." They "laid up treasures upon earth." "From the least of them," saith Jeremiah, "even unto the greatest, every one is given to covetousness." (vi. 13.) "They panted after the dust of the earth." (Amos ii. 7.) "They laded themselves with thick clay." (Hab. ii. 6.) "They joined house to house, and laid field to field, until there was no place." (Isaiah v. 8.) Yea, they "enlarged their desires as hell:" They were "as death, and could not be satisfied." (Hab. ii. 5.)

12. And not only for their covetousness, but for their pride of heart, were they an abomination to the Lord: "The pride of Israel," saith Hosea, "doth testify to his face." (vii. 10.) "Hear ye, give ear," saith Jeremiah, "be not proud.—Give glory to the Lord your God." (xiii. 15, 16.) But they would not be reproved; they were still "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight;" (Isaiah v. 21;) and continually saying to their neighbour, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou!" (Isaiah lxxv. 5.)

They added hypocrisy to their pride: "This people," saith God himself, "draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me." (Isai. xxix. 13.) "They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds." (Hosea vii. 14.) "They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow." (Verse 16.) "They did but flatter him with their mouth, and

dissemble with him in their tongue." (Psalm lxxviii. 36.) So that herein they only "profaned the holiness of the Lord." "And this have yedone again," saith Malachi, "covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, inso-much that he regardeth not the offering any more." (ii. 11, 13.)

13. This God continually declared to those formal worshippers, that their outside religion was but vain: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations: Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.—When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear." (Isaiah i. 11, 13, 15.) "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck." (lxvi. 3.) "When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer an oblation, I will not accept." (Jer. xiv. 12.) "Go ye, serve your idols, if ye will not hearken unto me; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts." (Ezekiel xx. 39.)

14. Yet all this time were they utterly careless and secure; nay, confident of being in the favour of God: They were at ease; they "put far away the evil day." (Amos vi. 1, 3.) Even when God had "poured his anger upon Israel, it set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." (Isaiah xlii. 25.) "A deceived heart had turned him aside, that he could not say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (xliv. 20.) So far from it, that at this very time they said, "We are innocent, we have not sinned." (Jer. ii. 35, 37.) "We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us." (viii. 8.) "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we." (vii. 4.)

15. Thus it was that they hardened themselves in their wickedness: "They are impudent children," saith God, "and stiff-hearted." (Ezekiel ii. 4.) "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." (Jer. vi. 15.) "I have spread out my hand all the day to a rebellious people, that provoketh me to anger continually to my face." (Isai. lxxv. 2, 3.) "They will not hearken unto me, saith the Lord; for all the house of Israel are

impudent and hard-hearted." (Ezekiel iii. 7.) "Since the day that their fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants the Prophets, rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worse than their fathers." (Jer. vii. 25, 26.)

They were equally hardened against mercies and judgments: When He "gave them rain, both the former and the latter in his season;" when "He reserved unto them the appointed weeks of the harvest," filling their hearts with food and gladness, still none of this "revolting and rebellious people said, Let us now fear the Lord our God;" (Jer. v. 23, 24;) nor yet did "they turn unto him when he smote them." (Isaiah ix. 13.) "In that day did the Lord call to weeping and to mourning: And behold joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." (Isaiah xxii. 12, 13.) Although "he consumed them, yet they refused to receive instruction; they made their faces harder than a rock.—Nonrepented him, but every one turned to his course, as a horse rusheth into the battle." (Jer. v. 3; viii. 6.) "I have given you want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have also withholden the rain from you when there were yet three months unto the harvest. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: Your gardens and your vineyards, the palmer worm devoured. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt; your young men have I slain with the sword. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." (Amos iv. 6-11.)

16. In consequence of their resolution not to return, they would not endure sound doctrine, or those that spake it: They "said to the Seers, See not; and to the Prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isaiah xxx. 10, 11.) "But they hated him that rebuked in the gate, and they abhorred him that spake uprightly." (Amos v. 10.) Accordingly, "Thy people," saith God to Ezekiel, "still are talking against thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses." (xxxiii. 30.) "And Amaziah the Priest sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against

thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, Go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." (Amos vii. 10, 12, 13.) From the same spirit it was that they said of Jeremiah, "Come, and let us devise devices against him.—Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." (Jer. xviii. 18.) Hence it was that he was constrained to cry out, "O Lord, I am in derision daily; every one mocketh me. Since I spake, the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily: For I heard the defaming of many: Fear on every side: Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting; saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him." (xx. 7, 8, 10.) And elsewhere, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me." (xv. 10.)

17. But "if a man walking in the spirit of falsehood do lie," saith the Prophet Micah, "saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people." (ii. 11.) And God gave them Pastors after their own hearts; such were those sons of Eli, "sons of Belial, who knew not the Lord;" (1 Sam. ii. 12;) rapacious, covetous, violent men; (verses 14–16;) by reason of whom "men abhorred the offering of the Lord;" (verse 17;) who not only "made themselves vile," (iii. 13,) but also "made the Lord's people to transgress," (ii. 24,) while they "made themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel." (Verse 29.) Such were those of whom Isaiah says, "The Priest and the Prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine." (xxviii. 7.) "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." (lvi. 12.) Therefore, saith he, "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: The Prophets and the Seers hath he covered; and the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." (xxix. 10, 11.) Such also were those of whom he saith, "His watchmen are blind, they are all igno-

rant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand. They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (lvi. 10, 11.)

Little better were those of whom the Prophets that followed have left us so dreadful an account: "Both Prophet and Priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. And from the Prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land." (Jer. xxiii. 11, 15.) "Her Priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: They have put no difference between the holy and the profane, and I am profaned among them." (Ezekiel xxii. 26.) "If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O Priests, that despise my name!" (Malachi i. 6.)

Yea, some of them were fallen into the grossest sins: "The company of Priests," saith Hosea, "commit lewdness: There is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled." (vi. 9, 10.) "I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem," saith God by Jeremiah, "an horrible thing: They commit adultery, and walk in lies." (xxiii. 14.)

18. And those who were clear of this, were deeply covetous; "Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi i. 10.) "The Priests of Zion teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?" (Micah iii. 11.) "Thus saith the Lord, The Prophets bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him." (iii. 5.) Therefore, "the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, and say, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were

scattered, because there was no shepherd ; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them." (Ezekiel xxxiv. 1-6.)

19. To the same effect do the other Prophets declare : " Ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble : Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people." (Malachi ii. 8, 9.) " From the Prophet even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is no peace." (Jer. vi. 13, 14.) " They prophesy lies in my name." (xiv. 14.) " They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord had said, Ye shall have peace ; and they say unto every man that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." (xxiii. 17.) " The Prophets of Jerusalem strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness." (Verse 14.) " They have seduced my people ; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar." (Ezekiel xiii. 10.) " With lies they have made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad ; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he shall not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." (Verse 22.) " Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard ; they have trodden my portion under foot ; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." (Jer. xii. 10.) " There is a conspiracy of her Prophets in the midst of her, like a roaring lion ravening the prey ; they have devoured souls." (Ezekiel xxii. 25.) " Thus saith the Lord, Feed the flock of the slaughter ; whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty : And they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord ; for I am rich : And their own shepherds pity them not." (Zechariah xi. 4, 5.)

II. 1. Such is the general account which the Scriptures give of the Jews, the ancient Church of God. And since all these things were " written for our instruction," who are now the visible Church of the God of Israel, I shall, in the next place, appeal to all who profess this, to every one who calls himself a Christian, how far in each instance the parallel holds, and how much we are better than they.

And, first, Were they discontented ? Did they repine at the providence of God ? Did they say, " Is the Lord among us or

not?" when they were in imminent danger, or pressing want, and saw no way to escape. And which of us can say, "I am clear from this sin: I have washed my hands and my heart in innocency?" Have not we who "judge others, done the same things;" murmured and repined times without number; yea, and that when we were not in pressing want, nor distressed with imminent danger? Are we not in general, (our own writers being the judges,) have we not ever been from the earliest ages, a "repining, murmuring, discontented people;" never long satisfied either with God or man? Surely in this we have great need to humble ourselves before God; for we are in nowise better than they.

But "Jeshurun forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." And did not England too? Ask ye of the generations of old, inquire from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, whether there was ever a people called by his name, which had less of "God in all their thoughts;" who, in the whole tenor of their behaviour, showed so light an "esteem for the Rock of their salvation."

Could there ever be stronger cause for God to cry out, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!" For hath he not "nourished and brought us up" as his children? And yet, how have we "rebelled against" him! If Israel of old "did not know God," if his ancient people "did not consider," was this peculiar to them? Are not we also under the very same condemnation? Do we, as a people, know God? Do we consider him as God? Do we tremble at the presence of his power? Do we revere his excellent majesty? Do we remember, at all times, "God is here! He is now reading my heart; He spieth out all my ways; there is not a word in my tongue but He knoweth it altogether?" Is this the character of us English Christians; the mark whereby we are known from the Heathen? Do we thus know God; thus consider his power, his love, his all-seeing eye? Rather, are we not likewise a "sinful nation, who have forgotten him days without number; a people laden with iniquity, continually forsaking the Lord, and provoking the Holy One of Israel?"

2. There is indeed a wide difference in this respect between the Jews and us: They happened (if I may so speak) to forget God, because other things came in their way; but we design to forget him; we do it of set purpose, because we do not like to

remember him. From the accounts given by Jeremiah, we have reason to believe that when that people were most deeply corrupted, yet the greatest men in the nation, the Ministers of State, the Nobles and Princes of Judah, talked of God sometimes; perhaps, as frequently as upon any other subject. But is it so among us? Rather, is it not a point of good-breeding to put God far away, out of our sight? Is he talked of at all among the great,—the Nobles or Ministers of State in England? among any persons of rank or figure in the world? Do they allow God any place in their conversation? From day to day, from year to year, do you discourse one hour of the wonders He doeth for the children of men? If one at a Gentleman or a Nobleman's table was to begin a discourse of the wisdom, greatness, or power of God, would it not occasion, at least, as much astonishment, as if he had begun to talk blasphemy? And if the unbred man persisted therein, would it not put all the company in confusion? And what do you sincerely believe the more favourable part would say of him when he was gone, but that, "He is a little touched in his head!" or, "Poor man! he has not seen the world?"

You know this is the naked truth. But how terrible is the thought to every serious mind! Into what a state is this Christian nation fallen! nay, the men of eminence, of fortune, of education! Would not a thinking foreigner, who should be present at such an interview, be apt to conclude, that the men of quality in England were Atheists? that they did not believe there was any God at all; or, at best, but an Epicurean god, who sat at ease upon the circle of the heavens, and did not concern himself about us worms of the earth? Nay, but He understands every thought now rising in your heart. And how long can you put him out of your sight? Only till this veil of flesh is rent in sunder; for your pomp will not then follow you. Will not your body be mingled with common dust, and your soul stand naked before God? O that you would now "acquaint yourself with God," that you may then be clothed with glory and immortality!

3. Did God complain of the Jews, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them?" And how justly may He make the same complaint of us; for how exceeding small a proportion do we find of those in any place who call themselves Christians, that make a

conscience of attending them ! Does one-third of the inhabitants in any one parish throughout this great city constantly attend public prayer, and the ministry of his word, as of conscience towards God ? Does one-tenth of those who acknowledge it is an institution of Christ duly attend the Lord's supper ? Does a fiftieth part of the nominal members of the Church of England observe the fasts of the Church, or so much as the forty days of Lent, and all Fridays in the year ? Who of these, then, can cast the first stone at the Jews for neglecting the ordinances of God ?

Nay, how many thousands are found among us who have never partook of the supper of the Lord ! How many thousands are there that live and die in this unrepented disobedience ! What multitudes, even in this Christian city, do not attend any public worship at all ; no, nor spend a single hour from one year to another, in privately pouring out their hearts before God ! Whether God "meeteth him that remembereth him in his ways," or not, is no concern of theirs : So the man eats and drinks, and "dies as a beast dieth :"

Drops into the dark, and disappears.

It was not, therefore, of the children of Israel alone that the messenger of God might say, "There is none" (comparatively) "that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth himself up to take hold of thee."

4. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, "Because of swearing, the land mourneth." But if this might be said of the land of Canaan, how much more of this land ! In what city or town, in what market or exchange, in what street or place of public resort, is not the holy "name whereby we are called" taken in vain, day by day ? From the noble to the peasant, who fails to call upon God, in this, if in no other, way ? Whither can you turn, where can you go, without hearing some praying to God for damnation, either on his neighbour or himself ? cursing those, without either fear or remorse, whom Christ hath bought to inherit a blessing !

Are you one of these stupid, senseless, shameless wretches, that call so earnestly for damnation on your own soul ? What, if God should take you at your word ? Are you "able to dwell with everlasting burnings ?" If you are, yet why should you be in haste to be in the "lake of fire burning with brimstone ?"

God help you! or you will be there soon enough, and long enough; for that "fire is not quenched!" But the "smoke thereof ascendeth up, day and night, for ever and ever."

And what is that important affair, concerning which you was but now appealing to God? Was you "calling God to record upon your soul," touching your everlasting salvation? No; but touching the beauty of your horse, the swiftness of your dog, or the goodness of your drink. How is this? What notion have you of God? What do you take him to be?—

*Idcirco stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam
Jupiter?**

What stupidity, what infatuation is this! thus without either pleasure, or profit, or praise, to set at nought Him that hath "all power both in heaven and earth!" wantonly to "provoke the eyes of his glory!"

Are you a man of letters who are sunk so low? I will not then send you to the inspired writers, (so called;—perhaps you disdain to receive instruction by them,) but the old, blind Heathen. Could you only fix in your mind the idea he had of God, (though it is not strictly just, unless we refer it to God made man,) you would never thus affront him more:—

Η, και κνανεησιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων'
Αμβροσισι δ' αρα χαιται επεβρωσαντο ανακτος
Κρατος απ' αθανατοιου· μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ολυμπον· †

Shall not the very Heathen then "rise up in judgment against this generation, and condemn it?" Yea, and not only the learned Heathens of Greece and Rome, but the savages of America; for I never remember to have heard a wild Indian name the name of *Sootaleicatee*, (Him that sitteth in heaven,) without either laying his hand upon his breast, or casting his eyes down to the ground. And you are a Christian! O how do you cause the very name of Christianity to be blasphemed among the Heathen!

5. But is it light swearing only, (inexcusable as that is,) because of which our "land mourneth?" May it not also be said of us, "Though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they

* Thinkest thou that God is mocked?

† Jove spake, and nodded with his sable brow,
And huge Olympus to his centre shook.

swear falsely?" yea, to such a degree, that there is hardly the like in any nation under heaven; that almost every corner of the land is filled with wilful, deliberate perjury.

I speak not now of the perjuries which every common swearer cannot but run into day by day: (And indeed common swearing notoriously contributes to the growth of perjury; for oaths are little minded when common use has sullied them, and every minute's repetition has made them cheap and vulgar:*) Nor of those which are continually committed and often detected in our open Courts of Justice. Only with regard to the latter I must remark, that they are a natural consequence of that monstrous, shocking manner wherein oaths are usually administered therein; without any decency or seriousness at all; much less with that awful solemnity which a rational Heathen would expect in an immediate appeal to the great God of heaven.

I had once designed to consider all the oaths which are customarily taken by any set of men among us. But I soon found this was a work too weighty for me; so almost *in infinitum* are oaths multiplied in England: I suppose, to a degree which is not known in any other nation in Europe.

What I now propose is, to instance only in a few, (but those not of small importance,) and to show how amazingly little regard is had to what is solemnly promised or affirmed before God.

6. This is done in part to my hands by a late author. So far as he goes, I shall little more than transcribe his words:—

“When a Justice of Peace is sworn into the commission, he makes oath,—‘that he shall do equal right to the poor and to the rich, after his cunning, wit, and power, and after the laws and customs of the realm and statutes thereof made, in all articles in the King’s commission to him directed.’ What those articles are, you will find in the first Assignavimus of the commission: ‘We have assigned you and every one of you, jointly and severally, to keep, and cause to be kept, all ordinances and statutes made for the quiet rule and government of our people, in all and every the articles thereof, according to the force, form, and effect of the same, and to chastise and punish all persons offending against any of them, according to the form of those statutes and ordinances.’ So that he is solemnly sworn to the execution of all such statutes as the legislative power of the nation has thought fit to throw upon his care. Such are all those (among others) made against drunkenness, tippling, pro-

fane swearing, blasphemy, lewd and disorderly practices, and profanation of the Lord's day. And it is hard to imagine how a Justice of Peace can think himself more concerned to suppress riots or private quarrels, than he is to levy twelve-pence on a profane swearer, five shillings on a drunkard, ten shillings on the public-house that suffers tipping, or any other penalty which the law exacts on vice and immorality. The same oath binds him both to one and the other, laying an equal obligation on his conscience. How a Magistrate who neglects to punish excess, profaneness, and impiety, can excuse himself from the guilt of perjury, I do not pretend to know. If he reasons fairly, he will find himself as much forsworn, as an evidence who being upon his oath to declare the whole truth, nevertheless conceals the most considerable part of it. And his perjury is so much the more infamous, as the ill example and effects of it will be mischievous." (*Mr. Disney's First Essay*, Page 30.)

7. The same author (in the preface to his Second Essay) goes on :—

“ You, gentlemen of the Grand Juries, take a solemn oath, that ‘ you will diligently inquire, and true presentment make, of all such articles, matters, and things as shall be given you in charge : As also, that you will (not only present no person for envy, hatred, or malice, but) not leave any unpresented, for fear, favour, or affection.’ Now, are not the laws against immorality and profaneness given you in charge, as well as those against riots, felony, and treason ? Are not presentment and indictment one method expressly appointed by the statutes, for the punishment of drunkenness and tipping ? Are not houses of bawdry and gaming punishable in the same courts, and, consequently, presentable by you ? Is not the proclamation for the punishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality always read before you as soon as you are sworn ? And does not the Judge of Assize, or Chairman of the Bench, in the charge given immediately after the reading it, either recite to you the particular laws against such offences, or refer you for them to that proclamation ? It is plain from all this, that you are bound upon your oaths to present all vice and immorality, as well as other crimes, that fall within your knowledge, because they are expressly given you in charge. And this you are to do, not only when evidence is offered before you by the information of others, but with regard to all such offences as you or any of you are able, of your own

personal knowledge, to present; all which you have sworn to do impartially, without fear, favour, or affection."

I leave it now with all reasonable men to consider, how few Grand Jurors perform this; and, consequently, what multitudes of them, throughout the nation, fall under the guilt of wilful perjury!

8. The author proceeds: "I shall next address myself to you that are Constables. And to you I must needs say, that if you know your duty, it is no thanks to us that are Justices. For the oath we usually give you is so short, and in such general terms, that it leaves with you no manner of instruction in the particulars of the office to which you are sworn. But that which ought to be given you, recites part of your duty in the following words:—

"You shall do your best endeavour, that rogues, vagabonds, and night-walkers be apprehended; and that the statutes made for their punishment be duly put in execution. You shall have a watchful eye to such as shall keep any house or place where any unlawful game is used; as also to such as shall frequent such places, or shall use any unlawful game there or elsewhere. You shall present all and every the offences contrary to the statutes made to restrain the tippling in inns, alehouses, and other victualling houses, and for repressing of drunkenness. You shall once in the year, during your office, present all Popish recusants. You shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. And you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a Constable, so long as you shall continue therein.' (Page 8.)

"Upon this, I would observe, first, that actors of plays are expressed by name within the statute, to be taken up for vagabonds, and punished accordingly; and that though a statute of Queen Elizabeth's excepts such companies as have a license under the hand and seal of a Nobleman, yet a later statute in the reign of King James the First has taken away that protection from them, by declaring, that 'from thenceforth no authority to be given by any Peer of the realm shall be available to free or discharge them from the pains and punishments of that former statute.' Every Constable, therefore, in those parishes where any of these strolling players come, is bound by his oath, to seize upon, correct, and send them packing without delay.

"The next part of your oath obliges you to keep a watchful

eye on such houses as keep, and such persons as use, unlawful gaming. The statute directs you weekly, or at least monthly, to search within your liberties all houses or places suspected of this offence, and, upon discovering, to bring them to punishment. Upon this article, I would observe, (1.) That the law makes some allowance for artificers, husbandmen, apprentices, labourers, and servants, to play in Christmas, but at no other time of the year; and, (2.) That all sports and pastimes whatsoever are made unlawful upon the Lord's day, by a statute of King Charles II. You are therefore bound upon oath, to bring to punishment such as are guilty of profaning that day by any sports or pastimes whatsoever.

“The following parts of your oath are, (1.) That you shall present all and every the offences of tipping and drunkenness that come to your knowledge. (2.) That you shall once in the year present all Popish recusants; nay, and by the statute on which your oath is grounded, you are obliged once a year to present in Session all those within your parishes who (not being Dissenters) come not once in a month, at least, to church. And, (3.) That you shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. I believe no Constable will pretend to be ignorant of this. How is it then, that when we send out warrants, to levy on offenders for swearing, drunkenness, and the like, those warrants are so ill obeyed? Are you not sworn to execute these as well as any other, and that duly too, according to the tenor of your precept? Your precept tells you, You shall demand such a sum; and if the offender will not pay, you shall levy it by distress of his goods; and if no distress can be taken, you are then only to set him in the stocks; otherwise you have no authority so to do; nor is the setting him in the stocks, when you might have distrained, any execution of your precept.

“The last part of your oath is in general terms: That you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a Constable. I shall instance in some things which certainly belong to your office, because you, and none else, can do them. (1.) A Constable may, without a warrant, apprehend any persons, and carry them before a Justice, who are driving carts, horses, or cattle on the Lord's day. (2.) Such as he shall find at sports and pastimes on that day. (3.) Such as he shall find

tippling in public houses. (4.) Shopkeepers selling, or exposing goods to sale, on the Lord's day. And, Lastly, such as he shall find drunk or blaspheming, or profanely swearing or cursing.

"Thus I have shown you, in part, what belongs to your office: It is well, if, according to the tenor of your oath, you duly, according to your knowledge and ability, do and execute all these things. But remember, that, if you do not, if you neglect any of them, you are forsworn."

Now let all men judge, how many Constables in England are clear of wilful perjury!

9. "I will now," he goes on, "address myself to Churchwardens. Your oath is, 'that you shall well and truly execute the office of a Churchwarden, for the ensuing year; and, to the best of your skill and knowledge, present such persons and things as are presentable by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm.' I shall set down only a few of these.

"The statute of King James I. obliges you to present, once a year, all monthly absenters from church.

"The ninetieth Canon enjoins you, first to admonish, and then, if they reform not, to present, all your parishioners who do not duly resort to church on Sundays, and there continue the whole time of divine service. On this article observe, (1.) That a person's being absent from church, is ground sufficient for you to proceed. (2.) That you are not only to present those who do not come to church, but also those that behave irreverently or indecently there, either walking about or talking; all who do not abide there, orderly and soberly, the whole time of service and sermon, and all that loiter away any part of that time in the churchyard or in the fields.

"The one hundred and twelfth Canon enjoins you, within forty days after Easter, to exhibit to the Bishop, or his Chancellor, the names of all above the age of sixteen, within your parish, that did not receive the communion.

"Other statutes oblige you to present drunkenness, tippling, and public houses suffering persons to tipple in them.

"And the one hundred and ninth Canon binds you to present all manner of vice, profaneness, and debauchery, requiring you faithfully to present all and every the offenders in adultery, whoredom, drunkenness, profane swearing, or any other uncleanness and wickedness of life. It is therefore a part of that office to which you are solemnly sworn, to present, not only

all drunkenness and tipping, but profane swearing, lewdness, and whatsoever else is contrary to Christian piety. So that if you know any of your parishioners, be his quality or circumstances what they will, that is guilty of any of these, you are obliged to present him at the next visitation, or you are yourselves guilty of perjury. And the twenty-sixth Canon expresses such an abhorrence of a Churchwarden's neglect in this matter, that it forbids the Minister, in any wise, to admit you to the holy communion, 'who,' as the words of the Canon are, 'having taken your oaths to present all such offences in your several parishes, shall, notwithstanding your said oaths, either in neglecting or refusing to present, wittingly and willingly, desperately and irreligiously, incur the horrid guilt of perjury.'"

And who is clear? I appeal to every Minister of a parish, from one end of England to the other, how many Churchwardens have you known, in twenty, thirty, forty years, who did not thus "desperately and irreligiously incur the horrid guilt of perjury?"

10. I proceed to perjuries of another kind. The oath taken by all Captains of ships, every time they return from a trading voyage, runs in these terms:—

"I do swear, that the entry above written, now tendered and subscribed by me, is a just report of the name of my ship, its burden, bulk, property, number and country of mariners, the present Master and voyage; and that it doth farther contain a true account of my lading, with the particular marks, numbers, quantity, quality, and consignment of all the goods and merchandises in my said ship, to the best of my knowledge; and that I have not broke bulk, or delivered any goods out of my said ship, since her loading in. So help me God."

These words are so clear, express, and unambiguous, that they require no explanation. But who takes this plain oath, without being *knowingly and deliberately forsworn*? Does one Captain in fifty? Does one in five hundred? May we not go farther yet? Are there five Captains of vessels now in London, who have not, at one time or another, by this very oath, which they knew to be false when they took it, incurred the guilt of wilful perjury?

11. The oath which all Officers of His Majesty's Customs take, at their admission into the office, runs thus:—

“I do swear to be true and faithful in the execution, to the best of my knowledge and power, of the trust committed to my charge and inspection, in the service of His Majesty’s Customs; and that I will not take or receive any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than my salary, or what is or shall be allowed me from the Crown, or the regular fees established by law, for any service done or to be done in the execution of my employment in the Customs, on any account whatsoever. So help me God.”

On this it may be observed, (1.) That there are regular fees, “established by law,” for some of these officers: (2.) That the rest do hereby engage not to take or receive “any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly,” other than their salary or allowance from the Crown, “on any account whatsoever.”

How do the former keep this solemn engagement? they whose fees are “established by law?” Do they take those established fees, and no more? Do they not “receive any farther gratuity,” not “on any account whatsoever?” If they do, they are undeniably guilty of wilful perjury.

And do the latter take no fees at all? Do they receive “no reward or gratuity, for any service done, or to be done, in the execution of their employment?” Do they not take any money, “directly or indirectly, on any account whatsoever?” Every time they do receive either more or less, they also are flatly forsworn.

Yet who scruples either the one or the other? either the taking a larger fee than the law appoints; or the taking any fee, large or small, which is offered, even where the law appoints none at all?

What innumerable perjuries, then, are here committed, over and over, day by day! and without any remorse; without any shame; without any fear either of God or man!

12. I will produce but one instance more. The oath of one who votes for a Member of Parliament is this:—

“I do swear, I have not received or had, by myself, or of any person whatsoever in trust for me, or for my use and benefit, directly or indirectly, any sum or sums of money, office, place, or employment, gift, or reward, or any promise or security for any money, office, employment, or gift, in order to give my vote at this election, and that I have not before been polled at this election. So help me God.”

We may observe here, (1.) That this oath is taken once in seven years (if required) by all the freeholders, in every county throughout England and Wales, as well as by all the freemen in every city and borough-town: And, (2.) That hereby every voter swears, in words liable to no evasion, that he has not received, directly or indirectly, any gift or reward, or promise of any.

But, to pass over those godless and shameless wretches who frequently vote twice at one election, how few are there who can take this oath with a conscience void of offence! who have not received, directly or indirectly, any gift, or promise of any! No! have not *you*? If you have received nothing else, have not you received meat or drink? And did you pay for the meat or drink you received? If not, that was a gift; and, consequently, you are as really perjured as the man that has received an hundred pounds.

What a melancholy prospect is then before us! Here are almost all the common people of any substance throughout the land, both in the city and country, calling God to record to a known, wilful falsehood!

13. I shall conclude this head in the weighty words of the author before cited:—

“Most of these, I am afraid, look upon their oaths as things of course, and little to be regarded. But can there be anything in the world more sacred than an oath? Is it not a solemn appeal to God for your sincerity? And is not that very appeal an acknowledgment, that he will surely punish falsehood? Nay, farther, is it not a calling down the vengeance of God upon yourselves, if you are false? Do you not, by laying your hand upon the Gospel, declare that you hope for no salvation by Christ, if you perform not what you then promise, or if what you then affirm is not true? And do not the words, ‘So help me God,’ sufficiently prove, that the intention of your oath is so; and that if you swear false, you are to expect no mercy from God, either in this world or the next? And do you not personally and expressly give your consent to this heavy curse, by kissing the book? How, then, dare any of you to venture to play with so awful an engagement? Is it that you think the oath of a Grand-Juryman or parish-officer” (of a Captain, an Officer of the Customs, or a voter in elections) “is not as sacred and binding as that of an evidence at the bar? What is it can

make the difference? Both of them are equally appeals to God, and imprecations of his vengeance upon wilful perjury."

14. If there be, then, a God that is not mocked, what a weight of sin lies on this nation! and sin of no common dye; for perjury has always been accounted one of the deepest stain. And how will any one attempt to excuse this? by adding blasphemy thereto? So indeed some have done; saying, like those of old, "Tush, thou God carest not for it. The Lord seeth" (that is, regardeth) "us not. The Lord hath forsaken the earth." He has left second causes to take their course, and man "in the hand of his own counsel."

How many are they who now speak thus! according to whose minute philosophy the particular providence of God is utterly exploded; the hairs of our head are no longer numbered; and not only a sparrow, but a city, an empire, may fall to the ground, without the will or care of our heavenly Father. You allow, then, only a general Providence. I do not understand the term. Be so kind as to let me know what you mean by a "general Providence, contradistinguished from a particular one." I doubt you are at a loss for an answer; unless you mean some huge, unwieldy thing, (I suppose, resembling the *primum mobile* in the Ptolemaic system,) which continually whirls the whole universe round, without affecting one thing more than another. I doubt this hypothesis will demand more proof than you are at present able to produce; beside that, it is attended with a thousand difficulties, such as you cannot readily solve. It may be, therefore, your wisest way for once to think with the vulgar, to acquiesce in the plain scriptural account. This informs us, that although God dwelleth in heaven, yet he still "ruleth over all;" that his providence extends to every individual in the whole system of beings which he hath made; that all natural causes of every kind depend wholly upon his will; and he increases, lessens, suspends, or destroys their efficacy, according to his own good pleasure; that he uses preternatural causes at his will,—the ministry of good or of evil angels; and that he hath never yet precluded himself from exerting his own immediate power, from speaking life or death into any of his creatures, from looking a world into being or into nothing.

"Thinkest thou then, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of" this great God? O, no longer "treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath!" Thou canst not recal

what is past; but now "keep thyself pure," even were it at the price of all that thou hast; and acknowledge the goodness of God, in that he did not long since cut thee off, and send thee to thy own place.

15. The Jews of old were charged by God with profaning his Sabbath also. And do we Christians come behind them herein? (I speak of those who acknowledge the obligation.) Do we call "the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honourable; not doing our own ways, not finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words?" Do our "man-servant and maid-servant" rest thereon, and "the stranger that is within our gates?" Is no business, but what is really necessary, done within our house? You know in your own conscience, and God knoweth, that the very reverse of this is true.

But setting aside these things, which are done, as it were, by stealth, whether by mean or honourable men; how many are they, in every city, as well as in this, who profane the Sabbath with a high hand? How many in this, that openly defy both God and the King, that break the laws, both divine and human, by working at their trade, delivering their goods, receiving their pay, or following their ordinary business, in one branch or another, and "wiping their mouths and saying, I do no evil." How many buy and sell on the day of the Lord, even in the open streets of this city? How many open or (with some modesty) half open their shops? even when they have not the pretence of perishable goods; without any pretence at all; money is their god, and gain their godliness. But what are all these droves in the skirts of the town, that well-nigh cover the face of the earth? till they drop one after another into the numerous receptacles prepared for them in every corner. What are these to gain by profaning the day of the Lord? Nothing at all. They "drink in iniquity like water." Nay, many of them pay for their sin; perhaps great part of what should sustain their family the ensuing week. I know not what is "finding our own pleasure, or doing our own ways," if this is not. What then shall we plead in your excuse? that "many others do it as well as you?" Nay, number is so far from extenuating your fault, that it aggravates it above measure. For this is open war against God. And a whole army of you joins together, and with one consent, in the face of the sun, "runs upon the thick bosses of his buckler."

16. It is once mentioned in the Prophets, "In thee" (Jeru-

salem) "they have set light by father and mother." But frequent mention is made of their setting light by their civil parents, of their murmurings and rebellions against their governors. Yet surely our boasting against them is excluded, even in this respect. For do not all our histories witness such a series of mutinies, seditions, factions, and rebellions, as are scarce to be paralleled in any other kingdom since the world began? And has not the wild, turbulent, ungovernable spirit of our countrymen been continually acknowledged and lamented (as abundance of their writings testify to this day) by the cool, rational part of the nation? Terrible effects whereof have been seen and felt, more or less, in every generation.

But did this spirit exist only in times past? Blessed be God, it is now restrained, it does not break out; but the traces thereof are still easy to be found. For, whence springs this continual "speaking evil of dignities?" of all who are at the helm of public affairs? Whence this "speaking evil of the ruler of our people," so common among all orders of men? I do not include those whose province it is to inspect all the public administrations. But is not almost every private gentleman in the land, every Clergyman, every tradesman, yea, every man or woman that has a tongue, a politician, a settler of the state? Is not every carman and porter abundantly more knowing than the King, Lords, and Commons together? able to tell you all their foibles, to point out their faults and mistakes, and how they ought to proceed, if they will save the nation? Now all this has a natural, undeniable tendency to mutiny and rebellion. O what need have we, above any nation upon earth, of His continual care and protection, who alone is able to "rule the raging of the sea, and still the madness of the people!"

17. But to proceed: Were there "drunkards in Ephraim, mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink?" And are there not in England? Are they not the growth of every county, city, and town therein? These do not indeed, or not often, "rise up early, that they may follow strong drink;" and so "continue till night, till wine inflame them." They have found a readier way; namely, to begin at night, and continue following their wine or strong drink till the morning. And what numbers are there of these throughout the land! lost to reason and humanity, as well as

to religion ; so that no wonder " they regard not the works of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands."

Nor indeed have our drunkards need to continue from morning " to night, until wine inflame them ;" seeing they have found a far more compendious method of casting aside all sense and reason, and disencumbering themselves of all remains either of conscience or understanding So that whatever work of darkness is speedily to be done, and that without any danger of being interrupted, either by fear, compassion, or remorse, they may be in a few moments, by one draught, as effectually qualified for it, as if they could swallow a legion of devils. Or, (if that be all their concern,) they may, at a moderate expense, destroy their own body as well as soul, and plunge through this liquid fire into that " prepared for the devil and his angels."

Friend ! stop. You have the form of a man still ; and perhaps some remains of understanding. O may the merciful God lay hold of that ! Unto him all things are possible. Think a little for once. What is it you are doing ? Why should you destroy yourself ? I could not use the worst enemy I have in the world as you use yourself. Why should you murder yourself inch by inch ? Why should you burn yourself alive ? O spare your own body at least, if you have no pity for your soul ! But have you a soul then ? Do you really believe it ? What, a soul that must live for ever ! O spare thy soul ! Do not destroy thy own soul with an everlasting destruction ! It was made for God. Do not give it into the hands of that old murderer of men ! Thou canst not stupify it long. When it leaves the body, it will awake and sleep no more. Yet a little while, and it launches out into the great deep, to live, and think, and feel for ever. And what will cheer thy spirit there, if thou hast not a drop of water to cool thy tongue ? But the die is not yet cast : Now cry to God, and iniquity shall not be thy ruin.

18. Of old time there were also those that " were at ease in Zion, that lay upon beds of ivory, and stretched themselves upon their couches, that ate the lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall." But how inelegant were these ancient epicures ! " Lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall !" Were these the best dainties they could procure ? How have we improved since Jeroboam's time ! Who can number the varieties of our tables ? or the arts we have " to enlarge the pleasure of tasting ?" And what are their couches, or beds

of ivory, to the furniture of our apartments? or their "chains, and bracelets, and mantles, and changeable suits of apparel," to the ornaments of our persons? What comparison is there between their diversions and ours? Look at Solomon in all his glory, and yet may we not question, whether he was not an utter stranger to the pleasures of the chase? And, notwithstanding his forty thousand horses, did he ever see a race in his life? He "made gardens, and orchards, and pools of water; he planted vineyards, and built houses;" but had he one theatre among them all? No. This is the glory of later times. Or had he any conception of a ball, an assembly, a masquerade, or a ridotto? And who imagines that all his instruments of music, put together, were any more to be compared to ours, than his or his father's rumbling Hebrew verses,

To the soft sing-song of Italian lays.

In all these points, our pre-eminence over the Jews is much every way.

Yea, and over our own ancestors, as well as theirs. But is this our glory, or our shame? Were Edward III. or Henry V. to come among us now, what would they think of the change in their people? Would they applaud the elegant variety at the old Baron's table? or the costly delicacy of his furniture and apparel? Would they listen to these instruments of music, or find pleasure in those diversions? Would they rejoice to see the Nobles and Gentry of the land lying "at ease, stretching themselves on beds" of down? too delicate to use their own limbs, even in the streets of the city; to bear the touch of the people, the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun! O how would their hearts burn within them! What indignation, sorrow, shame must they feel, to see the ancient hardiness lost, the British temperance, patience, and scorn of superfluities, the rough, indefatigable industry, exchanged for softness, "idleness, and fulness of bread!" Well for them, that they were gathered unto their fathers before this exchange was made!

19. To prove at large, that the luxury and sensuality, the sloth and indolence, the softness and idleness, the effeminacy and false delicacy of our nation are without a parallel, would be but lost labour. I fear, we may say, the lewdness too; for if the Jews, as the Prophet speaks, "assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses," so do the English, and much more abundantly. Indeed, where is male chastity to be

found? among the Nobility, among the Gentry, among the tradesmen, or among the common people of England? How few lay any claim to it at all! How few desire so much as the reputation of it! Would you yourself account it an honour or a reproach, to be ranked among those of whom it is said, "These are they which are not defiled with women: For they are virgins?" And how numerous are they now, even among such as are accounted men of honour and probity, "who are as fed horses, every one neighing after his neighbour's wife!"

But as if this were not enough, is not the sin of Sodom, too, more common among us than ever it was in Jerusalem? Are not our streets beset with those monsters of uncleanness, who "burn in their lust one toward another," whom God hath "given up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient?" O Lord, thy compassions fail not: Therefore we are not consumed.

20. Neither do we yield to them in injustice, any more than uncleanness. How frequent are open robberies among us! Is not "the act of violence" even "in our streets?" And what laws are sufficient to prevent it? Does not theft of various kinds abound in all parts of the land, even though death be the punishment of it? And are there not among us, who "take usury and increase," who "greedily gain of their neighbour by extortion?" yea, whole trades which subsist by such extortion as was not named either among the Jews or Heathens? "Is there not" yet "the scant measure, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" beside the thousand nameless ways of over-reaching and defrauding, the craft and mystery of every trade and profession. It were an endless task to descend to particulars, to point out in every circumstance, how not only sharpers and gamsters, (those public nuisances, those scandals to the English nation,) but high and low, rich and poor, men of character, and men of none, in every station of public or private life, "have corrupted themselves," and generally applaud themselves, and count it policy and wisdom so to do; so that if gain be at hand, they care not though "justice stand afar off;" so that "he which departeth from evil," which cometh not into their secret, still "maketh himself a prey;" and "the wicked" still "devoureth the man that is more righteous than he."

And what redress? Suppose a great man to oppress the needy; suppose the rich grinds the face of the poor; what

remedy against such oppression can he find in this Christian country? If the one is rich and the other poor, doth not justice stand afar off? And is not the poor under the utmost improbability (if not impossibility) of obtaining it? Perhaps the hazard is greater among us, than either among Jews, Turks, or Heathens.

For example: Suppose a great man, with or without form of law, does wrong to his poor neighbour. What will he do? sue his lordship at common law? have the cause tried at the next Sessions or Assizes? Alas! your own neighbours, those who know the whole case, will tell you, "You are out of your senses." "But twelve good men and true will do me justice." Very well; but where will you find them;—men unbiassed, incapable of corruption, superior both to fear and favour, to every view, whether of gain or loss? But this is not all; they must not only be good and true, but wise and understanding men. Else how easy is it for a skilful Pleader to throw a mist before their eyes? even supposing too the Judge to be quite impartial, and proof against all corruption. And should all these circumstances concur, (of which I fear there are not many precedents,) supposing a verdict is given in your favour, still you have gained nothing. The suit is removed into a higher court, and you have all your work to begin again. Here you have to struggle with all the same difficulties as before, and perhaps many new ones too. However, if you have money enough, you may succeed; but if that fails, your cause is gone. Without money, you can have no more law; poverty alone utterly shuts out justice.

But "cannot an honest Attorney procure me justice?" An *honest* Attorney! Where will you find one? Of those who are called exceeding honest Attorneys, who is there that makes any scruple,—

(1.) To promote and encourage needless suits, if not unjust ones too:

(2.) To defend a bad cause, knowing it so to be,—

By making a demur, and then withdrawing it;

By pleading some false plea, to the plaintiff's declaration;

By putting in an evasive answer to his bill;

By protracting the suit, if possible, till the plaintiff is ruined:

(3.) To carry a cause not amounting to ten shillings into Westminster-Hall, by laying it in his declaration as above forty:

(4.) To delay his own client's suit knowingly and wilfully, in order to gain more thereby :

(5.) To draw himself the pleadings or conveyances of his client, instead of giving them to be drawn by able Counsel :

(6.) To charge his client with the fees which should have been given to such Counsel, although they were not given :

(7.) To charge for drawing fair copies, where none were drawn :

(8.) To charge fees for expedition given to clerks, when not one farthing has been given them :

(9.) To send his clerk a journey (longer or shorter) to do business with or for different persons ; and to charge the horse-hire and expense of that journey to every person severally :

(10.) To send his clerk to Westminster, on the business of ten (it may be) or twenty persons, and to charge each of these twenty for his attendance, as if he had been sent on account of one only :

(11.) To charge his own attendance in like manner : And,

(12.) To fill up his bill with attendances, fees, and term-fees, though his client is no whit forwarder in his cause ?

This is he that is called an *honest* Attorney ! How much honest is a pickpocket !

But there is a Magistrate whose peculiar office it is to redress the injured and oppressed. Go, then, and make trial of this remedy ; go, and tell your case to the Lord Chancellor. Hold ; you must go on regularly ; you must tell him your case in form of law, or not at all. You must therefore file a bill in Chancery, and retain a Lawyer belonging to that court. " But you have already spent all you have ; you have no money." Then I fear you will have no justice. You stumble at the threshold. If you have either lost or spent all, your cause is nought ; it will not even come to a hearing. So, if the oppressor has secured all that you had, he is as safe as if you was under the earth.

1. Now, what an amazing thing is this ! The very greatness of the villany makes it beyond redress ! But suppose he that is oppressed has some substance left, and can go through all the Courts of Justice, what parallel can we find among Jews, Turks, or Heathens, for either the delays or the expense attending it ? With regard to the former, how monstrous is it, that in a suit relating to that inheritance which is to furnish you and your family with food and raiment, you must wait month after

month, perhaps year after year, before it is determined whether it be yours or not ! And what are you to eat or to wear in the mean time ? Of that the Court takes no cognizance ! Is not this very delay (suppose there were no other grievance attending the English course of law) wrong beyond all expression ? contrary to all sense, reason, justice, and equity ? A capital cause is tried in one day, and finally decided at once. And " is the life less than meat ; or the body of less concern than raiment ? " What a shameless mockery of justice, then, is this putting off pecuniary causes from term to term, yea, from year to year !

With regard to the latter : A man has wronged me of a hundred pounds. I appeal to a Judge for the recovery of it. How astonishing is it that this Judge himself cannot give me what is my right, and what evidently appears so to be, unless I first give, perhaps, one half of the sum to men I never saw before in my life !

22. I have hitherto supposed that all causes, when they are decided, are decided according to justice and equity. But is it so ? Ye learned in the law, is no unjust sentence given in your Courts ? Have not the same causes been decided quite opposite ways ? one way this term, just the contrary the next ? Perhaps one way in the morning, (this I remember an instance of,) and another way in the afternoon. How is this ? Is there no justice left on earth ; no regard for right or wrong ? Or have causes been puzzled so long, that you know not now what is either wrong or right ; what is agreeable to law, or contrary to it ? I have heard some of you frankly declare, that it is in many cases next to impossible to know what is law, and what is not. So are your folios of law multiplied upon you, that no human brain is able to contain them ; no, nor any consistent scheme or abstract of them all.

But is it really owing to ignorance of the law (this is the most favourable supposition) that so few of you scruple taking fees on either side of almost any cause that can be conceived ; and that you generally plead in the manner you do on any side of any cause ; rambling to and fro in a way so abhorrent from common sense, and so utterly foreign to the question ? I have been amazed at hearing the pleadings of some eminent Counsel ; and when it has fallen out that the Pleader on the other side understood only the common rules of logic, he has made those eminent men appear either such egregious knaves, if they could help it, or such egregious blockheads, if they could not,

that one would have believed they would show their face there no more. Meantime, if there be a God that judgeth righteously, what horrid insults upon him are these! "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

23. There is one instance more of (I know not what to term it) injustice, oppression, sacrilege, which hath long cried aloud in the ears of God. For among men, who doth hear? I mean the management of many of those who are entrusted with our public charities. By the pious munificence of our forefathers we have abundance of these of various kinds: But is it not glaringly true, (to touch only on a few generals,) that the managers of many of them either (1.) do not apply the benefaction to that use for which it was designed by the benefactor; or (2.) do not apply it with such care and frugality as in such a case are indispensably required; or (3.) do not apply the whole of the benefaction to any charitable use at all; but secrete part thereof, from time to time, for the use of themselves and their families; or, lastly by plain barefaced oppression, exclude those from having any part in such benefaction, who dare (though with all possible tenderness and respect) set before them the things that they have done?

Yet Brutus is an honourable man:
So are they all: All honourable men!

And some of them had in esteem for religion; accounted patterns both of honesty and piety! But God "seeth not as man seeth." He "shall repay them to their face;" perhaps even in the present world. For that scripture is often still fulfilled: "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief," (such he is, and no better, in the eyes of God, no whit honest than a highwayman,) "and it shall remain in the midst of the house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof."

24. And is not truth, as well as "justice, fallen in our streets?" For who "speaketh the truth from his heart?" Who is there that makes a conscience of speaking the thing as it is, whenever he speaks at all? Who scruples the telling of officious lies? the varying from truth, in order to do good? How strange does that saying of the ancient fathers sound in modern

ears! "I would not tell a lie, no, not to save the souls of the whole world." Yet is this strictly agreeable to the word of God; to that of St. Paul in particular, If any say, "Let us do evil that good may come, their damnation is just."

But how many of us do this evil without ever considering whether good will come or no; speaking what we do not mean, merely out of custom, because it is fashionable so to do! What an immense quantity of falsehood does this ungodly fashion occasion day by day! for hath it not overrun every part of the nation? How is all our language swoln with compliment; so that a well-bred person is not expected to speak as he thinks; we do not look for it at his hands! Nay, who would thank him for it? how few would suffer it! It was said of old, even by a warrior and a King, "He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight:" But are we not of another mind? Do not we rather say, "He that telleth not lies shall not tarry in my sight?" Indeed the trial seldom comes; for both speakers and hearers are agreed that form and ceremony, flattery and compliment, should take place, and truth be banished from all that know the world.

And if the rich and great have so small regard to truth, as to lie even for lying sake, what wonder can it be that men of lower rank will do the same thing for gain? what wonder that it should obtain, as by common consent, in all kinds of buying and selling? Is it not an adjudged case, that it is no harm to tell lies in the way of trade; to say that is the lowest price which is not the lowest; or that you will not take what you do take immediately? Insomuch that it is a proverb even among the Turks, when asked to abate of their price, "What! do you take me to be a Christian?" So that never was that caution more seasonable than it is at this day: "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: For every brother will utterly supplant, and they will deceive every one his neighbour."

25. And as for those few who abstain from outward sins, is their heart right with God? May he not say of us also, as of the Jews, "This people is uncircumcised in heart?" Are not you? Do you then "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength?" Is he your God and your all, the desire of your eyes, the joy of your very heart? Rather, do you not "set up your idols in your heart?" Is not

your belly your God, or your diversion, or your fair reputation, or your friend, or wife, or child? That is, plainly, do not you delight in some of these earthly goods, more than in the God of heaven? Nay, perhaps you are one of those groveling souls that "pant after the dust of the earth!" Indeed, who does not? Who does not get as much as he can? Who of those that are not accounted covetous, yet does not gather all the money he can fairly, and perhaps much more? For are they those only whom the world rank among misers that use every art to increase their fortune; toiling early and late, spending all their strength in "loading themselves with thick clay?" How long? Until the very hour when God calleth them; when he saith unto each of them, "Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee! And whose shall those things be which thou hast prepared?"

26. And yet doth not our pride, even the pride of those whose soul "cleaves to the dust, testify against us?" Are they not "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit?" Have not writers of our own remarked, that there is not upon earth a more self-conceited nation than the English; more opiated both of their own national and personal wisdom, and courage, and strength? And indeed, if we may judge by the inhabitants of London, this is evident to a demonstration; for are not the very meanest of them able to instruct both the King and all his Counsellors? What cobbler in London is not wiser than the principal Secretary of State? What coffee-house disputer is not an abler Divine than his Grace of Canterbury? And how deep a contempt of others is joined with this high opinion of ourselves! I know not whether the people of all other nations are greater masters of dissimulation; but there does not appear in any nation whatever such a proneness to despise their neighbour; to despise, not foreigners only, (near two thousand years ago they remarked, *Britannos hospitibus feros*,*) but their own countrymen; and that very often for such surprising reasons as nothing but undeniable fact could make credible. How often does the gentleman in his coach despise those dirty fellows that go a-foot; and these, on the other hand, despise full as much those lazy fellows that loll in their coaches! No wonder then that those who have "the form of godliness" should despise them that have

* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Francis:—
 — "Britons of inhospitable strain."—EDIT.

it not ; that the saint of the world so frequently says to the gross sinner, in effect, if not in terms, "Stand by thyself; come not near unto me; for I am holier than thou!"

27. Yet what kind of holiness is this? May not God justly declare of us also, "This people draw near me with their mouth, but they have removed their hearts far from me: They do but flatter me with their mouth, and dissemble with me in their tongue?" Is it not so with you? When you speak to God, do your lips and your heart go together? Do you not often utter words by which you mean just nothing? Do not you say and unsay; or say one thing to God, and another to man? For instance, you say to God, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep me this day without sin:" But you say to man, "This cannot be done; it is all folly and madness to expect it." You ask of God that you "may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name:" But you tell man, "There is no perfect love upon earth; it is only a madman's dream." You pray God to "cleanse the thoughts of your heart, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit:" But you assure your neighbour there is no such thing as inspiration now, and that none pretend to it but enthusiasts. What gross hypocrisy is this! Surely you think there is no "knowledge in the Most High. O be not deceived! God is not mocked. But whatsoever ye sow, that also shall ye reap!"

28. Such at present is the religion of this Christian nation! So do we honour Him by whose name we are called! And yet was there ever a nation more careless and secure, more unapprehensive of the wrath of God? How can a man more effectually expose himself to the ridicule of those who are esteemed men of understanding, than by showing any concern, as if the judgments of God were hanging over our heads? Surely then, "a deceived heart hath turned us aside, that we cannot say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Surely this our confidence is not of God; it is rather a judicial infatuation, a stupid insensibility, a deep sleep, the forerunner of heavy vengeance.

Ruin behind it stalks, and empty desolation.

Surely never was any people more fitted for destruction! "Impudent children are they, and stiff-hearted. Are they ashamed when they have committed abomination;" when they have openly profaned the day of the Lord; when they have committed lewdness; or when they have uttered such curses

and blasphemies as are not heard of among the Heathens? Nay, "they are not at all ashamed, neither can they blush." And though God send unto them all his servants, rising up early and sending them, yet "will they not hear; they harden their neck; they do worse than their fathers."

What, then, can "God do more for his vineyard which he hath not done?" He hath long tried us with mercies, "giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling us with the flour of wheat." But still "this revolting and rebellious people say not, Let us now fear the Lord our God." Nay, they gave him no thanks for all his mercies; they did not even acknowledge them to be his gift. They did not see the hand of God in any of these things; they could account for them another way. O ye unwise, when will ye understand? Know ye not yet, there is a God that ruleth the world? What did ye see with your eyes? Was the "race to the swift, or the battle to the strong?" Have ye forgotten Dettingen already? Does not England know that God was there? Or suppose your continuance in peace, or success in war, be the mere result of your own wisdom and strength; do ye command the sun and the clouds also? Can ye pour out or "stay the bottles of heaven?" But let it all be nature, chance, anything,—so God may have no hand in governing the earth!

29. Will his judgments bring us to a better mind? Do we "hear the rod, and Him that has appointed it?" Let us observe: What fruit do we find in those who are "even consumed by means of his heavy hand?" Let any one that desires to be clearly satisfied herein visit the hospitals of this city. Let him judge for himself how the patients there receive God's fatherly visitation; especially there, because mercy also is mixed with judgment; so that it is evident "the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth." Go then into any ward, either of men or women; look narrowly from one end to the other: Are they humbling themselves under the hand of God? Are they trembling under a sense of his anger? Are they praising him for his love? Are they exhorting one another not to faint when they are rebuked of him? How do nine in ten of them spend the time, that important time, from morning to evening? Why, in such a manner, that you would not easily learn, from thence, whether they were Christians, Pagans, or Mahometans.

Is there any deeper distress than this to be found? Is there

a greater affliction than the loss of health? Perhaps there is, —the loss of liberty, especially as it is sometimes circumstanced. You may easily be convinced of this, by going into either Ludgate or Newgate. What a scene appears as soon as you enter! The very place strikes horror into your soul. How dark and dreary! How unhealthy and unclean! How void of all that might minister comfort! But this is little, compared to the circumstances that attend the being confined in this shadow of death. See that poor wretch, who was formerly in want of nothing, and encompassed with friends and acquaintance, now cut off, perhaps, by an unexpected stroke, from all the cheerful ways of men; ruined, forsaken of all, and delivered into the hands of such masters, and such companions! I know not, if, to one of a thinking, sensible turn of mind, there could be any thing like it on this side hell.

What effect then has this heavy visitation of God on those who lie under it for any time? There is perhaps an exception here and there; but, in general, they are abandoned to all wickedness, utterly divested of all fear of God, and all reverence to man; insomuch, that they commonly go out of that school completely fitted for any kind or degree of villany, perfectly brutal and devilish, thoroughly furnished for every evil word and work.

30. Are our countrymen more effectually reclaimed when danger and distress are joined? If so, the army, especially in time of war, must be the most religious part of the nation. But is it so indeed? Do the soldiery walk as those who see themselves on the brink of eternity? redeeming every opportunity of glorifying God, and doing good to men, because they know not the hour in which their Lord will require their souls of them? So far from it, that a soldier's religion is a by-word, even with those who have no religion at all; that vice and profaneness in every shape reign among them without control; and that the whole tenor of their behaviour speaks, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Have those who are exposed to still more danger, the English sea-forces, more religion than those at land? It is said they were once remarkable for this; and it is certain Sir Francis Drake feared God, as did most of his Commanders, and, we have reason to believe, his mariners and sailors too. But what shall we say of the navy that now is, more particu-

larly of the ships of war? Is religion there,—either the power or the form? Is not almost every single man-of-war a mere floating hell? Where is there to be found more consummate wickedness, a more full, daring contempt of God, and all his laws,—except in the bottomless pit? But here description fails; and the goodness of God endureth yet daily! But “shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” O that the prospect of national judgments may suffice! that we may remember ourselves, and turn unto the Lord our God, before his long-suffering mercy is at an end, and he pours out the vials of his wrath upon us!

But how small ground have we as yet to hope for this! for, who will now “suffer the word of exhortation?” How few will “endure sound doctrine,” and the honest, close application of it! Do they not “say unto the Seers, See not; and unto the Prophets, Prophecy smooth things?” And if a man will do thus, if he will “sew pillows to all arm-holes,” and “cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them, if he will prophesy of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people.”

31. I am sensible how nice a subject this is, and how extremely difficult it is so to speak, as neither to say too little nor too much, neither more nor less than the cause of God requires. I know also, that it is absolutely impossible so to speak as not to give offence. But whosoever is offended, I dare not to be silent; neither may I refrain from plainness of speech; only I will endeavour to use all the tenderness I can consistently with that plainness.

In tender love then I ask, Are there none among us, (I speak to you, my brethren, who are Priests and Prophets of the Lord, set apart to “minister in holy things, and to declare the word of the Lord,”)—Are there none among us who commit lewdness, as did those by whom “Israel was defiled?” Hath not the Lord seen an horrible thing in some of the Prophets of this land also, even, that “they commit adultery, and” (to conceal it) “walk in lies!” God forbid that I should affirm this! I only propose (not maintain) the question. If there be such a wretch, I pray God to strike him to the heart, and to say, “Thou art the man!”

Are there none of you, like them, “mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink?” Yea, are there none

that "err through strong drink, that are swallowed up of wine?" Are there not found those who say, "I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant?"

Alas, my brother, is this the voice of a "Minister of Christ, a steward of the mysteries of God?" Suppose you find at any time trouble and heaviness, "is there no help for you in your God?" Is not the God whom you serve able to deliver you from any plague or trouble? Is the being "drunk with wine" a better relief than the being "filled with his Spirit?" Do you not understand this? Do you "not know the Lord?" Take heed you do not destroy both your own soul and them that hear you! O beware! If you know not his love, fear his power! Make haste to flee from the wrath to come, lest he smite you with a curse great as your sin, and sweep you away from the face of the earth.

32. Can such as you be said to honour or fear God, any more than those spoken of by Malachi? May not God complain, "These priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things?" yea, whensoever you presume with those unhallowed hands to touch the mysteries of God; whensoever you utter his name or his word with those unhallowed lips! But is it on this account only that God may say, "Both Prophet and Priest are profane?" May he not add, "They have put no difference between the holy and profane; therefore I am profaned among them?" For is it not so? Do you put a difference between the holy and profane; him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not? Do you put an effectual difference between them, even in the most solemn office of our religion? At the table of the Lord, do you take care to "separate the precious from the vile?" to "receive all those who" (as you may reasonably believe) "draw near with penitent hearts and lively faith," and utterly to reject those who testify against themselves, that they are without hope and without God in the world?

Nay, who dares repel one of the greatest men in his parish from the Lord's table; even though he be a drunkard or a common swearer; yea, though he openly deny the Lord that bought him? Mr. Stonehouse *did* this once. But what was the event? The gentleman brought an action against him, for the terror of all such insolent fellows in succeeding times.

33. O my brethren, is it not for want of your making this

difference, as well as for many other abominations, that, with regard to some among us, (how many God knoweth,) that scripture is now also fulfilled: "His watchmen are blind, they are ignorant, they are shepherds that cannot understand:—The Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed their eyes; the Prophets and the Seers hath he covered: and the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed?"

If you ask, what those other abominations are; I will speak in love, and in the spirit of meekness. There are found among us covetous men, men who "mind earthly things," who "seek themselves," and not Christ crucified, who "love the world, and the things of the world;" men in whom these words are still fulfilled: "Who is there among you that would shut the door for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts." Yea, are there not those, at this day, (O that I might be found to fear where no fear is!) who "make themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel?" Are there not those who now "enlarge their desire as hell; who are as death, and cannot be satisfied?" who, though they want neither food to eat nor raiment to put on, yet seek more and more preferment? who are continually studying to "join house to house, and to lay field to field;" to grow rich in the service of that Master who himself "had not where to lay his head?" Is it not to these that those dreadful words belong, enough to cause the ears of him that heareth to tingle: "They are greedy dogs, which never can have enough; they all look to their own way," (not the way of their Lord,) "every one for his gain, from his quarter?"

Is it strange, if among these there should be some who are cruel, oppressive men; inasmuch as covetousness knows no mercy, nor can a lover of money be a lover of his neighbour? Have not some been known even to "grind the face of the poor?" to strip, rather than clothe, the naked? some, who, while they cried out, "as the horse-leech, Give, give," would take, if it was not given; like those of old, who said, "Thou shalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force;" or those spoken of by Micah, "The Prophets bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they

even prepare war against him." Very great is the sin of these men before the Lord. If there be ten such now in the land, may God smite them this day with terror and astonishment, that they may have no rest in their bones till their sin is done away!

34. Are *you* as watchful and zealous to gain souls, as those are to gain the gold that perisheth? Do you know by experience what that meaneth, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?" Or are you one of those watchmen who do not watch at all, who neither know nor care when the sword cometh? of whom the Prophet saith, "They are dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber?"

Can it be supposed that such shepherds will "feed the flock?" will "give to every one his portion of meat in due season?" Will these "warn every man, and exhort every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus?" Will they take care to "know all their flock by name, not forgetting the men-servants and women-servants?" Will they inquire into the state of every soul committed to their charge; and watch over each with all tenderness and longsuffering, "as they that must give account?" marking how they either fall or rise; how these wax "weary and faint in their mind;" and those "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" Who can do this, unless his whole heart be in the work; unless he desire nothing but to "spend and be spent for them; and count not his life dear unto himself, so he may present them blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus?"

Can any shepherd do this, (and if he do not, he will never "give an account with joy,") who imagines he has little more to do than to preach once or twice a week; that this is the main point, the chief part of the office, which he hath taken upon himself before God? What gross ignorance is this! What a total mistake of the truth! What a miserable blunder touching the whole nature of his office! It is, indeed, a very great thing to speak in the name of God; it might make him that is the stoutest of heart tremble, if he considered that every time he speaks to others, his own soul is at stake. But great, inexpressibly great, as this is, it is perhaps the least part of our work. To "seek and save that which is lost;" to bring souls from Satan to God; to instruct the ignorant; to reclaim the wicked; to convince the gainsayer; to direct their feet into the way of

peace, and then keep them therein; to follow them step by step, lest they turn out of the way, and advise them in their doubts and temptations; to lift up them that fall; to refresh them that are faint; and to comfort the weak-hearted; to administer various helps, as the variety of occasions require, according to their several necessities: These are parts of our office; all this we have undertaken at the peril of our own soul. A sense of this made that holy man of old cry out, "I marvel if any ruler in the Church shall be saved;" and a greater than him say, in the fulness of his heart, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

35. But who is not sufficient for these things, for the taking care of a parish, though it contain twenty thousand souls, if this implies no more than the taking care to preach there once or twice a week; and to procure one to read *Prayers* on the other days, and do what is called *the parish duty*? Is any trade in the nation so easy as this? Is not any man sufficient for it, without any more talents, either of nature or grace, than a small degree of common understanding? But O! what manner of shepherds are those who look no farther into the nature of their office, who sink no deeper into the importance of it, than this! Were they not such as these concerning whom "the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Wo be to the shepherds that feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.—And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."

I conjure you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who hath bought them and us with his own blood, apply this each to his own soul. Let every man look unto God, and say, "Lord, is it I? Am I one of these idle, careless, indolent shepherds, that feed myself, not the flock? Am I one that cannot bark, slothful, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber? one of those who have not strengthened that which was diseased, neither healed that which was sick? 'Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins

and my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

36. "Have I not, at least, 'healed the hurt of thy people slightly?' Have I not said, 'Peace, peace, when there was no peace?'"—How many are they also that do this? who do not study to speak what is true, especially to the rich and great, so much as what is pleasing? who flatter honourable sinners, instead of telling them plain, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" O, what an account have *you* to make, if there be a God that judgeth the earth? Will he not require at *your* hands the blood of all these souls, of whom "ye are the betrayers and murderers?" Well spake the Prophets of your fathers, in whose steps ye now tread: "They have seduced my people; and one built up a wall, and another daubed it with untempered mortar. They strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. They prophesy lies in my name, saith the Lord. They say unto them that despise me, Ye shall have peace; and unto them that walk after the imagination of their own heart, No evil shall come upon you."

How great will your damnation be, who destroy souls, instead of saving them! Where will you appear, or how will you stand, "in that great and terrible day of the Lord?" How will ye lift up your head, when the Lord "descends from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his adversaries;" more especially on those who have so betrayed his cause, and done Satan's work under the banner of Christ? With what voice wilt thou say, "Behold me, Lord, and the sheep whom thou hadst given me, whom I gave to the devil, and told them they were in the way to heaven, till they dropped into hell!"

Were they not just such shepherds of souls as you are, concerning whom God spake by Jeremiah,—“Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard; they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness?” by Ezekiel,—“There is a conspiracy of her Prophets; like a roaring lion ravening the prey, they have devoured souls?” and by Zechariah,—“Thus saith the Lord, Feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not?”

37. Is not this the real ground, the principal reason, of the present contempt of the Clergy? And long since was it assigned

as such by Him who cannot lie. The same men of old, who "made the Lord's people to transgress," thereby "made themselves vile." They were despised, both as the natural effect, and the judicial punishment, of their wickedness. And the same cause the Prophet observes to have produced the same effect, many hundred years after this: "Ye are departed out of the way, saith the Lord; ye have caused many to stumble; therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people."

I have now, brethren, "delivered mine own soul;" and in so doing, I have (as I proposed at first) "used great plainness of speech," as not studying "to please men, but the Lord." The event I leave to Him in whose name I have spoken, and who hath the hearts of all men in his hand.

I "have brought you heavy tidings this day," and yet I cannot but be persuaded, that some of you will not "count me your enemy, because I tell you the truth." O that all of us may taste the good word which we declare! may receive that knowledge of salvation which we are commanded to preach unto every creature, through the remission of sins! My heart's desire is, that all of us to whom "is committed the ministry of reconciliation" may ourselves be reconciled to God, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; that he may be henceforth unto us a God, and we may be unto him a people; that we may all know, as well as preach, the Lord, "from the least unto the greatest;" even by that token, "I am merciful to thy unrighteousness; thy sins I remember no more!"

III. 1. I have hitherto spoken more immediately to those who profess themselves members of the Church of England. But inasmuch as I am a debtor also to those who do not, my design is now, to apply to them also; and briefly to show, wherein (I fear) they are severally inconsistent with their own principles.

I begin with those who are at the smallest distance from us, whether they are termed Presbyterians or Independents: Of whom in general I cannot but have a widely different opinion, from that I entertained some years ago; as having since then conversed with many among them, "in whom the root of the matter is" undeniably found; and who labour "to keep a conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward men." I cannot, therefore, doubt, but every serious man, of either

one or the other denomination, does utterly condemn all that inward as well as outward unholiness which has been above described.

But do you, as a people, avoid what you condemn? Are no whoremongers or adulterers found among you; no children disobedient to their parents; no servants that are slothful or careless, that answer again, that do not "honour their masters as is meet in the Lord?" Are there none among you that censure or "speak evil of the ruler of their people?" Are there no drunkards, no gluttons, no luxurious men, no regular epicures, none "whose belly is their God," who, as their fortune permits, "fare sumptuously every day?" Have you no dishonest dealers, no unfair traders, no usurers, or extortioners? Have you no liars, either for gain, or for good manners, so called? Are you clear of ceremony and compliment? Alas, you are sensible, in most (if not all) these respects, you have now small pre-eminence over us.

How much more sensible must you be of this, if you do not rest on the surface, but inquire into the bottom of religion, the religion of the heart! For, what inward unholiness, what evil tempers, are among us, which have not a place among you also? You likewise bewail that ignorance of God, that want of faith and of the love of God and man, that inward idolatry of various kinds, that pride, ambition, and vanity, which rule in the hearts even of those who still have "the form of godliness." You lament before God the deep covetousness that "eats so many souls as doth a gangrene;" and perhaps are sometimes ready to cry out, "Help, Lord, for there is scarce one godly man left!" Lay to thine hand; "for the faithful are minished from the children of men!"

2. And yet you retain "the truth that is after godliness," at least as to the substance of it. You own what is laid down in Scripture, both touching the nature and condition of justification and salvation. And with regard to the author of faith and salvation, you have always avowed, even in the face of your enemies, that "it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;" that it is his Spirit alone who "teacheth us all things," all we know of "the deep things of God;" that every true believer has "an unction from the Holy One to lead him into all" necessary "truth;" that, "because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son

into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father ;” and that “ this Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

How is it then, my brethren ; (so I can call you now, although I could not have done it heretofore ;) how is it, that the generality of you also are fallen from your steadfastness ? In the times of persecution ye stood as a rock, though “ all the waves and storms went over you.” But who can bear ease and fulness of bread ? How are you changed, since these came upon you ! Do not many of you now (practically, I mean) put something else in the room of “ faith that worketh by love ? ” Do not some of you suppose, that gravity and composedness of behaviour are the main parts of Christianity ? especially, provided you neither swear, nor take the name of God in vain. Do not others imagine, that to abstain from idle songs, and those fashionable diversions commonly used by persons of their fortune, is almost the whole of religion ? To which, if they add family prayer, and a strict observation of the Sabbath, then doubtless all is well. Nay, my brethren, this is well so far as it goes ; but how little a way does it go toward Christianity ! All these things, you cannot but see, are merely external ; whereas Christianity is an inward thing, without which the most beautiful outward form is lighter than vanity.

Do not others of you rest in convictions or good desires ? Alas, what do these avail ? A man may be convinced he is sick, yea, deeply convinced, and yet never recover. He may desire food, yea, with earnest desire ; and nevertheless perish with hunger. And thus I may be convinced I am a sinner ; but this will not justify me before God. And I may desire salvation, (perhaps by fits and starts, for many years,) and yet be lost for ever. Come close then to the point, and keep to your principles. Have you received the Holy Ghost ; the Spirit which is of God, and is bestowed by him on all believers, “ that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God ? ” The time is short. Do you experience now that “ unction from the Holy One,” without which you confess outward religion, whether negative or positive, is nothing ? Nay, and inward conviction of our wants is nothing, unless those wants are in fact supplied. Good desires also are nothing, unless we actually attain what we are stirred up to desire. For still, “ if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,” whatever he desires, “ he is none of his.” O my brother, beware you stop not short ! Beware you

never account yourself a Christian, no, not in the lowest degree, till God "hath sent forth the Spirit of Christ into your heart;" and that "Spirit bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God."

3. One step farther from us, are you who are called (though not by your own choice) Anabaptists. The smallness of your number, compared to that of either the Presbyterians, or those of the Church, makes it easier for you to have an exact knowledge of the behaviour of all your members, and to put away from among you every one that "walketh not according to the doctrine you have received."

But is this done? Do all your members adorn the gospel? Are they all "holy as He which hath called us is holy?" I fear not. I have known some instances to the contrary; and doubtless you know many more. There are unholy, outwardly unholy men in your congregations also; men that profane either the name or the day of the Lord; that do not honour their natural or civil parents; that know not how to possess their bodies in sanctification and honour; that are intemperate, either in meat or drink, gluttonous, sensual, luxurious; that variously offend against justice, mercy, or truth, in their intercourse with their neighbour, and do not walk by that royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But how is this consistent with your leading principle,— "That no man ought to be admitted to baptism, till he has that repentance whereby we forsake sin, and living faith in God through Christ?"

For if no man ought to be admitted into a church or congregation, who has not actual faith and repentance; then neither ought any who has them not, to continue in any congregation: And, consequently, an open sinner cannot remain among you, unless you practically renounce your main principle.

4. I refer it to your own serious consideration, whether one reason why unholy men are still suffered to remain among you may not be this,—That many of you have unawares put opinion in the room of faith and repentance? But how fatal a mistake is this! Supposing your opinion to be true, yet a true opinion concerning repentance is wholly different from the thing itself; and you may have a true opinion concerning faith all your life, and yet die an unbeliever.

Supposing therefore the opinion of particular redemption true, yet how little does it avail toward salvation! Nay, were

we to suppose that none can be saved who do not hold it, it does not follow that all will be saved who do: So that if the one proved a man to be in ever so bad a state, the other would not prove him to be in a good one; and, consequently, whosoever leans on this opinion, leans on the staff of a broken reed.

Would to God that ye would mind this one thing, to "make your own calling and election sure!" that every one of you (leaving the rest of the world to Him that made it) would himself "repent and believe the gospel!" Not repent alone, (for then you know only the baptism of John,) but believe, and be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Are you still a stranger to that inward baptism wherewith all true believers are baptized? May the Lord constrain you to cry out, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" even till the love of God inflame your heart, and consume all your vile affections! Be not content with anything less than this! It is this loving faith alone which opens our way into "the general Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven!" which giveth us to "enter within the veil, where Jesus our fore-runner is gone before us!"

5. There is a still wider difference in some points between us and the people usually termed Quakers. But not in these points. You, as well as we, condemn "all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" all those works of the devil which were recited above, and all those tempers from which they spring.

You agree, that we are all to be taught of God, and to be "led by his Spirit;" that the Spirit alone reveals all truth, and inspires all holiness; that by his inspiration men attain perfect love, the love which "purifies them as he is pure;" and that, through this knowledge and love of God, they have power to "do always such things as please him;" to worship God, a Spirit, according to his own will, that is, "in spirit and in truth."

Hence you infer, that formal worship is not acceptable to God, but that alone that springs from God in the heart. You infer also, that they who are led by him will use great "plainness of speech," and great plainness of dress, seeking no "outward adorning," but only "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

I will look no farther now, than simply to inquire whether you are consistent with these principles.

To begin with the latter: "He that is led by the Spirit will use great plainness of speech."

You would have said, "will use the plain language." But

that term leads you into a grand mistake. That term, *the plain language*, naturally leads you to think of one particular way of speaking; as if "plainness of speech" implied no more than the use of that particular form.

Alas, my brethren! know ye not, that your ancestors designed this only as a specimen of plain language? And is it possible that you should mistake the sample for the whole bale of cloth?

Consult the light God has given you, and you must see that "plainness of speech" does not lie in a single point, but implies an open, undisguised sincerity, a child-like simplicity in all we speak.

I do not desire you to refrain from saying *thou* or *thee*. I would not spend ten words about it. But I desire you, whenever you speak at all, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. I desire your words may always be the picture of your heart. This is truly plain language.

Either do not pretend to plain speech at all, or be uniformly plain. Are you so? I pray, consider. Do you never compliment? I do not suppose you say, "Sir, your very humble servant;" but do you say no civil things? Do you never flatter? Do you not commend any man or woman to their face? Perhaps farther than you do behind their back. Is this plainness of speech? Do you never dissemble? Do you speak to all persons, high or low, rich or poor, just what you think, neither more nor less, and in the shortest and clearest manner you can? If not, what a mere jest is your plain language! You carry your condemnation in your own breast.

6. You hold also, that "he which is led by the Spirit will use great plainness of dress, seeking no 'outward adorning,' but only the 'ornament of a meek and quiet spirit;'" and that, in particular, "he will leave 'gold and costly apparel' to those who know not God."

Now, I appeal to every serious, reasonable man among you,—Do your people act consistently with this principle? Do not many of your women wear gold upon their very feet; and many of your men use "ornaments of gold?" Are you a stranger to these things? Have you not seen with your eyes (such trifles as will scarce bear the naming) their canes and snuff-boxes glitter, even in your solemn assembly, while ye were waiting together upon God? Surely, they are not yet so lost to modesty, as to pretend that they do not use them by way of ornament.

If they do not, if it be only out of necessity, a plain oaken stick will supply the place of the one, and a piece of horn or tin will unexceptionably answer all the reasonable ends of the other.

To speak freely, (and do not count me your enemy for this,) you cannot but observe, upon cool reflection, that you retain just so much of your ancient practice, as leaves your present without excuse; as makes the inconsistency, between the one and the other, glaring and undeniable. For instance: This woman is too strict a Quaker to lay out a shilling in a necklace. Very well; but she is not too strict to lay out fourscore guineas in a repeating watch. Another would not for the world wear any lace; no, not an edging round her cap: But she will wear point, and sees no harm in it at all, though it should be of twelve times the price. In one kind of apron or handkerchief she dares not lay out twenty shillings; but in another sort lays out twenty pounds. And what multitudes of you are very jealous, as to the colour and form of your apparel, (the least important of all the circumstances that relate to it,) while in the most important, the expense, they are without any concern at all! They will not put on a scarlet or crimson stuff, but the richest velvet, so it be black or grave. They will not touch a coloured riband; but will cover themselves with a stiff silk from head to foot. They cannot bear purple; but make no scruple at all of being clothed in fine linen; yea, to such a degree, that the linen of the Quakers is grown almost into a proverb.

Surely you cannot be ignorant, that the sinfulness of fine apparel lies chiefly in the expensiveness: In that it is robbing God and the poor; it is defrauding the fatherless and widow; it is wasting the food of the hungry, and withholding his raiment from the naked to consume it on our own lusts.

7. Let it not be said that this affects only a few among you, and those of the younger and lighter sort. Yes, it does your whole body: For why do you, who are older and graver, suffer such things? Why do ye not vehemently reprove them; and if they repent not, in spite of all worldly considerations, expel them out of your society? In conniving at their sin, you make it your own; you, especially, who are Preachers. Do you say, "They cannot bear it; they will not hear?" Alas! into what state, then, are ye fallen! But whether they will bear it or not, what is that to thee? Thou art to "speak, whether they

will hear, or whether they will forbear." To say the very truth, I am afraid you rather strengthen their hands in their wickedness. For you not only do not testify against it in the congregation,* but even sit at their table and reprove them not. Why, then, thou also art one of "the dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."

I fix this charge upon every Preacher, in particular, who saw a young woman, daughter to one of the Quakers in London, going to be married in apparel suitable to her diamond buckle, which cost a hundred guineas. Could you see this, and not call heaven and earth to witness against it? Then I witness against thee, in the name of the Lord, thou art a blind leader of the blind; thou "strainest a gnat, and swallowest a camel!"

Verily, the sin both of teachers and hearers is herein exceeding great. And the little attempts towards plainness of apparel, which are still observable among you, (I mean, in the colour and form of your clothes, and the manner of putting them on,) only testify against you, that you were once what you know in your hearts you are not now.

8. I come now to your main principle: "We are all to be 'taught of God,' to be inspired and 'led by his Spirit:' And then we shall 'worship him,' not with dead form, but 'in spirit and in truth.'"

These are deep and weighty words; but many hold fast the words, and are utterly ignorant of their meaning. Is not this

* You say you do testify against it in the congregation. Against what? "Against gay and gaudy apparel." I grant it. But this is not the thing I speak of. You quite mistake my mark. Do you testify against the costliness of their apparel, however plain and grave it may be? against the price of the velvet, the linen, the silk, or raiment of whatever kind? If you do this frequently and explicitly, you are clear. If not, own and amend the fault.

It is easy to discern how your people fell into this snare of the devil. You were at first a poor, despised, afflicted people. Then what some of you had to spare was little enough to relieve the needy members of your own society. In a few years you increased in goods, and were able to relieve more than your own poor. But you did not bestow all that you had to spare from them on the poor belonging to other societies. It remained either to lay it up, or to expend it in superfluities. Some chose one way, and some the other.

Lay this deeply to heart, ye who are now a poor, despised, afflicted people. Hitherto ye are not able to relieve your own poor. But if ever your substance increase, see that ye be not straitened in your own bowels, that ye fall not into the same snare of the devil. Before any of you either lay up treasures on earth, or indulge needless expense of any kind, I pray the Lord God to scatter you to the corners of the earth, and blot out your name from under heaven!

an exceeding common case? Are you not conscious abundance of your friends have done so? with whom the being "taught of God" and "led by his Spirit" are mere words of course, that mean just nothing. And their crude and indigested accounts of the things they did not understand have raised that deep prejudice against these great truths which we find in the generality of men.

Do some of you ask, "But dost thou acknowledge the inward principle?" I do, my friends: And I would to God every one of you acknowledged it as much. I say, all religion is either empty show, or perfection by inspiration; in other words, the obedient love of God, by the supernatural knowledge of God; yea, all that which "is not of faith is sin;" all which does not spring from this loving knowledge of God; which knowledge cannot begin or subsist one moment without immediate inspiration; not only all public worship, and all private prayer, but every thought in common life, and word, and work. What think you of this? Do you not stagger? Dare you carry the inward principle so far? Do you acknowledge it to be the very truth? But, alas! what is the acknowledging it? Dost thou experience this principle in thyself? What saith thy heart? Does God dwell therein? And doth it now echo to the voice of God? Hast thou the continual inspiration of his Spirit, filling thy heart with his love, as with a well of water, springing up into everlasting life?

9. Art thou acquainted with the "leading of his Spirit," not by notion only, but by living experience? I fear very many of you talk of this, who do not so much as know what it means. How does the Spirit of God lead his children to this or that particular action? Do you imagine it is by blind impulse only? by moving you to do it, you know not why? Not so. He leads us by our eye, at least, as much as by the hand; and by light as well as by heat. He shows us the way wherein we should go, as well as incites us to walk therein. For example: Here is a man ready to perish with hunger. How am I "led by the Spirit" to relieve him? First, by His convincing me it is the will of God I should; and Secondly, by His filling my heart with love toward him. Both this light and this heat are the gift of God; are wrought in me by the same Spirit, who leads me, by this conviction as well as love, to go and feed that man. This is the plain, rational account of the ordinary leading of the Spirit; but how far from that which some have given!

Art *thou* thus led by the Spirit to every good word and work, till God hath thereby made thy faith perfect? Dost thou know what faith is? It is a loving, obedient sight of a present and reconciled God. Now, where this is, there is no dead form; neither can be, so long as it continues. But all that is said or done is full of God, full of spirit, and life, and power.

10. But perhaps, as much as you talk of them, you do not know the difference between *form* and *spirit*; or between worshipping God in a formal way, and worshipping him "in spirit and in truth."

The Lord is that Spirit. The seeing and feeling and loving him is spiritual life. And whatever is said or done in the sight or love of God, that is full of spirit and life. All beside this is form, mere dead form; whether it be in our public addresses to God, or in our private; or in our worldly business, or in our daily conversation.

But if so, how poor and mean and narrow have your views and conceptions been! You was afraid of formality in public worship: And reason good. But was you afraid of it nowhere else? Did not you consider that formality in common life is also an abomination to the Lord; and that it can have no place in anything we say or do, but so far as we forget God? O watch against it in every place, every moment, that you may every moment see and love God; and, consequently, at all times and in all places, worship him "in spirit and in truth!"

My brethren, permit me to add a few words in tender love to your souls. Do not you lean too much on the spirit and power which you believe rested upon your forefathers? Suppose it did! Will that avail *you*, if you do not drink into the same spirit? And how evident is this,—that, whatever you once were, ye are now "shorn of your strength!" Ye are weak and become like other men. The Lord is well nigh departed from you. Where is now the spirit, the life, the power? Be not offended with my plain dealing, when I beseech you who are able to weigh things calmly, to open your eyes, and see multitudes, even in the Church, pursuing, yea, and attaining, the substance of spiritual life, and leaving unto you the shadow. Nay, a still greater evil is before you: For, if ye find not some effectual means to prevent it, your rising generation will utterly cast off the shadow as well as the substance.

11. There is an abundantly greater difference still, according

to your own account, between us who profess ourselves members of the Church of England, and you who are members of the Church of Rome. But notwithstanding this, do you not agree with us in condemning the vices above recited; profaneness, drunkenness, whoredom, adultery, theft, disobedience to parents, and such like? And how unhappily do you agree with us in practising the very vices which you condemn!

And yet you acknowledge, (nay, and frequently contend for this with a peculiar earnestness,) that every Christian is called to be "zealous of good works," as well as to "deny himself and take up his cross daily." How, then, do you depart from your own principles, when you are gluttons, drunkards, or epicures? when you live at your ease, in all the elegance and voluptuousness of a plentiful fortune? How will you reconcile the being adorned with gold, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, with the "denying yourself and taking up your cross daily?" Surely, while you indulge the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, the excellent rules of self-denial that abound in your own writers leave you of all men most inexcusable.

12. Neither can this self-indulgence be reconciled with the being "zealous of good works." For by this needless and continual expense, you disable yourself from doing good. You bind your own hands. You make it impossible for you to do that good which otherwise you might. So that you injure the poor in the same proportion as you poison your own soul. You might have clothed the naked; but what was due to them was thrown away on your costly apparel. You might have fed the hungry, entertained the stranger, relieved them that were sick or in prison; but the superfluities of your own table swallowed up that whereby they should have been profited. And so this wasting of thy Lord's goods is an instance of complicated wickedness; since hereby thy poor brother perisheth, for whom Christ died.

I will not recommend to you either the writings or examples of those whom you account *heretics*: (Although some of these, if you could view them with impartial eyes, might "provoke you to jealousy:") But O that God would write in your hearts the rules of self-denial and love laid down by Thomas à Kempis! or that you would follow, both in this and in good works, that burning and shining light of your own Church, the Marquis de

Renty! Then would all who knew and loved the Lord rejoice to acknowledge you as the "Church of the living God;" when ye were zealous of every good word and work, and abstained from all appearance of evil; when it was hereby shown that you were filled with the Holy Ghost, and delivered from all unholy tempers; when ye were all "unblamable and unrebukable, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, showing forth" to all Jews, infidels, and heretics, by your active, patient, spotless love of God and man, "the praises of Him who had called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

13. "Men and brethren, children of the seed of Abraham," suffer me to speak a few words to you also; you who do not allow that Messiah the Prince is already come and cut off. However, you so far hear Moses and the Prophets as to allow, (1.) That "it is the inspiration of the Holy One which giveth man understanding," and that all the true children of God "are taught of God." (2.) That the substance both of the Law and the Prophets is contained in that one word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." And, (3.) That the sure fruit of love is obedience, "ceasing from evil, and doing good."

And do you walk by this rule? Have you yourselves that "inspiration of the Holy One?" Are you taught of God? Hath he opened your understanding? Have you the inward knowledge of the Most High? I fear not. Perhaps you know little more, even of the meaning of the words, than a Mahometan.

Let us go a little farther. Do you "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength?" Can you say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?" Do you desire God at all? Do you desire to have any thing to do with him, till you can keep the world no longer? Are you not content, so you enjoy the good things of earth, to let God stand afar off? only calling upon him now and then, when you cannot do without him. Why then you do not love God at all, though you will sometimes condescend to use him. You love the world. This possesses your heart. This, therefore, is your god. You renounce the God of your fathers, the God of Israel;

you are still uncircumcised in heart. Your own conscience bears witness, you in this no more hear Moses and the Prophets, than you do Jesus of Nazareth.

14. From Moses and the Prophets it has been shown, that your forefathers were a "faithless and stubborn generation; a generation which set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaved not steadfastly unto God." And this you acknowledge yourselves. If you are asked, "How is it that the promise is not fulfilled? Seeing 'the sceptre is' long since 'departed from Judah,' why is not Shiloh come?" your usual answer is, "Because of the sins of our fathers God hath delayed his coming." Have you then reformed from the sins of your fathers? Are you turned unto the Lord your God? Nay, do ye not tread in the same steps? Bating that single point of outward idolatry, what abomination did they ever commit, which you have not committed also, which the generality of you do not commit still according to your power? If therefore the coming of the Messiah was hindered by the sins of your forefathers, then, by the same rule, your continuance therein will hinder his coming to the end of the world.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God" is, that he would "gather the outcasts of Israel." And I doubt not, but, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then "all Israel shall be saved." But, mean time, is there not great cause that ye should say with Daniel, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and unto all Israel. O Lord, we have sinned, we have rebelled against thee, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Yet, O our God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do! Defer not, for thine own sake; for thy city and thy people that are called by thy name."

15. I cannot conclude without addressing myself to you also, who do not admit either the Jewish or Christian Revelation. But still you desire to be happy. You own the essential difference between vice and virtue; and acknowledge, (as did all the wiser Greeks and Romans,) that vice cannot consist with happiness. You allow likewise that gratitude and benevolence, self-knowledge and modesty, mildness, temperance, patience, and genero-

sity, are justly numbered among virtues; and that ingratitude and malice, envy and ill-nature, pride, insolence, and vanity, gluttony and luxury, covetousness and discontent, are vices of the highest kind.

Now, let us calmly inquire how far your life is consistent with your principles.

You seek happiness. But you find it not. You come no nearer it with all your labours. You are not happier than you was a year ago. Nay, I doubt you are more unhappy. Why is this, but because you look for happiness there, where you own it cannot be found? Indeed, what is there on earth which can long satisfy a man of understanding? His soul is too large for the world he lives in. He wants more room.

*Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi,
Ut brevibus clausus Gyaris, parvæque Seripho.**

He has already travelled through all which is called pleasure; diversions and entertainments of every kind. But among these he can find no enjoyment of any depth; they are empty, shallow, superficial things: They pleased for a while; but the gloss is gone, and now they are dull and tasteless. And what has he next? Only the same things again; for this world affords nothing more. It can supply him with no change. Go, feed again; but it is upon one dish still. Thus

Occidit miseros crambe repetita.†

Yet what remedy under the sun?

16. The sounder judgment, the stronger understanding you have, the sooner are you sated with the world; and the more deeply convinced, all that cometh is vanity, foolish, insipid, nauseous. You see the foibles of men in so much clearer a light, and have the keener sense of the emptiness of life. Here you are, a poor, unsatisfied inhabitant of an unquiet world; turning your weary eyes on this side and on that side; seeking rest, but finding none. You seem to be out of your place: Neither the persons nor things that surround you are such as you want. You have a confused idea of something better than all this; but you know not where to find it. You

* Frets at the narrow limits of the world,
As in a prison pent.

† They are surfeited with the dull repetition.

are always gasping for something which you cannot attain, no, not if you range to the uttermost parts of the earth.

But this is not all. You are not only negatively unhappy, as finding nothing whereon to stay the weight of your soul; but positively so, because you are unholy: You are miserable, because you are vicious. Are you not vicious? Are you then full of gratitude to Him who giveth you life, and breath, and all things? Not so; you rather spurn his gifts, and murmur at Him that gave them. How often has your heart said, God did not use you well? How often have you questioned either his wisdom or goodness? Was this well done? What kind of gratitude is this? It is the best you are master of. Then take knowledge of yourself. Black ingratitude is rooted in your inmost frame. You can no more love God, than you can see him; or than you can be happy without that love.

Neither (how much soever you may pique yourself upon it) are you a lover of mankind. Can love and malice consist? benevolence and envy? O do not put out your own eyes! And are not these horrid tempers in you? Do not you envy one man, and bear malice or ill-will to another? I know you call these dispositions by softer names; but names change not the nature of things. You are pained that one should enjoy what you cannot enjoy yourself. Call this what you please, it is rank envy. You are grieved that a second enjoys even what you have yourself; you rejoice in seeing a third unhappy. Do not flatter yourself; this is malice, venomous malice, and nothing else. And how could you ever think of being happy, with malice and envy in your heart? Just as well might you expect to be at ease, while you held burning coals in your bosom.

17. I entreat you to reflect, whether there are not other inhabitants in your breast, which leave no room for happiness there. May you not discover, through a thousand disguises, pride? too high an opinion of yourself? vanity, thirst of praise, even (who would believe it?) of the applause of knaves and fools? unevenness or sourness of temper? proneness to anger or revenge? peevishness, fretfulness, or pining discontent? Nay, perhaps even covetousness.—And did you ever think happiness could dwell with these? Awake out of that senseless dream. Think not of reconciling things incompatible. All these tempers are essential misery: So long as any of these are harboured in your breast, you must be a stranger to inward peace.

What avails it you if there be no other hell? Whenever these fiends are let loose upon you, you will be constrained to own,

Hell is where'er I am : Myself am hell.

And can the Supreme Being love those tempers, which you yourself abhor in all but yourself? If not, they imply guilt as well as misery. Doubtless they do. Only inquire of your own heart. How often in the mid-career of your vice have you felt a secret reproof, which you knew not how to bear, and therefore stifled as soon as possible!

18. And did not even this point at an hereafter; a future state of existence? The more reasonable among you have no doubt of this; you do not imagine the whole man dies together; though you hardly suppose the soul, once disengaged, will dwell again in a house of clay. But how will your soul subsist without it? How are you qualified for a separate state? Suppose this earthly covering, this vehicle of organized matter, whereby you hold commerce with the material world, were now to drop off! Now, what would you do in the regions of immortality? You cannot eat or drink there. You cannot indulge either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life. You love only worldly things; and they are gone, fled as smoke, driven away for ever. Here is no possibility of sensual enjoyments; and you have a relish for nothing else. O what a separation is this, from all that you hold dear! What a breach is made, never to be healed!

But beside this, you are unholy, full of evil tempers; for you did not put off these with the body; you did not leave pride, revenge, malice, envy, discontent, behind you, when you left the world. And now you are no longer cheered by the light of the sun, nor diverted by the flux of various objects; but those dogs of hell are let loose to prey upon your soul, with their whole unrebated strength. Nor is there any hope that your spirit will now ever be restored to its original purity; not even that poor hope of a purging fire, so elegantly described by the heathen poet, some ages before the notion was revived among the doctrines of the Romish Church.

————— *Alie panduntur inanes*
Suspense ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.—
Donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe,

*Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit
Æthereum sensum, atque auræ simplicis ignem.**

19. What a great gulf then is fixed between you and happiness, both in this world and that which is to come! Well may you shudder at the thought! more especially when you are about to enter on that untried state of existence. For what a prospect is this, when you stand on the verge of life, ready to launch out into eternity! What can you then think? You see nothing before you. All is dark and dreary. On the very best supposition, how well may you address your parting soul in the words of dying Adrian:—

Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou know'st not whither?

Thy pleasing vein, thy humorous folly
Is all neglected, all forgot;
And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hop'st and fear'st thou know'st not what.

“Thou know'st not what!” Here is the sting, suppose there were no other. To be “thou know'st not what!” not for a month, or a year, but through the countless ages of eternity! What a tormenting uncertainty must this be! What racking unwillingness must it occasion, to exchange even this known vale of tears for the unknown valley of the shadow of death!

And is there no cure for this? Indeed there is an effectual cure; even the knowledge and love of God. There is a knowledge of God which unveils eternity, and a love of God which endears it. That knowledge makes the great abyss visible; and all uncertainty vanishes away. That love makes it amiable to the soul, so that fear has no more place! But the moment God says, by the welcome angel of death, “Come thou up hither!” she

Claps the glad wing, and towers away,
And mingles with the blaze of day.

20. See ye not what advantage every way a Christian has

* Some to the piercing winds are stretch'd abroad;
Some plung'd beneath the watery gulf: The fire
In some burns out the deep-imprinted stain,
Till the long course of slowly-rolling years
Has purged out every spot, and pure remains
The' ethereal spirit, and simple heavenly fire.

over you? Probably the reason you saw it not before was, because you knew none but nominal Christians; men who professed to believe more, (in their way of believing,) but had no more of the knowledge or love of God than yourselves: So that with regard to real, inward religion, you stood upon even ground. And perhaps in many branches of outward religion the advantage was on your side.

May the Lord, the God of the Christians, either reform these wretches, or take them away from the earth, that lay this grand stumbling-block in the way of those who desire to know the will of God!

O ye who desire to know his will, regard them not! If it be possible, blot them out of your remembrance.

They neither can nor will do you any good. O, suffer them not to do you harm! Be not prejudiced against Christianity by those who know nothing at all of it: Nay, they condemn it, all real substantial Christianity; they speak evil of the thing they know not; they have a kind of cant word for the whole religion of the heart; they call it enthusiasm.

I will briefly lay before you the ground of the matter, and appeal to you yourselves for the reasonableness of it.

21. What a miserable drudgery is the service of God, unless I love the God whom I serve! But I cannot love one whom I know not. How then can I love God till I know him? And how is it possible I should know God, unless he make himself known unto me? By analogy or proportion? Very good. But where is that proportion to be found? What proportion does a creature bear to its Creator? What is the proportion between finite and infinite?

I grant, the existence of the creatures demonstratively shows the existence of their Creator. The whole creation speaks that there is a God. But that is not the point in question. I know there is a God. Thus far is clear. But who will show me what that God is? The more I reflect the more convinced I am, that it is not possible for any or all the creatures to take off the veil which is on my heart, that I might discern this unknown God; to draw the curtain back which now hangs between, that I may see Him which is invisible.

This veil of flesh now hides him from my sight; and who is able to make it transparent? so that I may perceive, through this glass, God always before me, till I see him "face to face."

I want to know this great God who filleth heaven and earth; who is above, beneath, and on every side, in all places of his dominion; who just now besets me behind and before, and lays his hand upon me; and yet I am no more acquainted with him, than with one of the inhabitants of Jupiter or Saturn.

O my friend, how will you get one step farther, unless God reveal himself to your soul?

22. And why should this seem a thing incredible to you; that God, a Spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all flesh, should discover himself to your spirit, which is itself "the breath of God," *divinæ particula auræ*; any more than that material things should discover themselves to your material eye? Is it any more repugnant to reason, that spirit should influence spirit, than that matter should influence matter? Nay, is not the former the more intelligible of the two? For there is the utmost difficulty in conceiving how matter should influence matter at all; how that which is totally passive should act. Neither can we rationally account either for gravitation, attraction, or any natural motion whatsoever, but by supposing in all the finger of God, who alone conquers that *vis inertię* which is essential to every particle of matter, and worketh all in all.

Now, if God should ever open the eyes of your understanding, must not the love of God be the immediate consequence? Do you imagine you can see God without loving him? Is it possible in the nature of things? *Si virtus conspiceretur oculis*, (said the old Heathen,) *mirabiles amores excitaret sui*.^{*} How much more if you see Him who is the original fountain, the great archetype of all virtue, will that sight raise in you a love that is wonderful, such as the gay and busy world know not of!

23. What benevolence also, what tender love to the whole of human kind, will you drink in, together with the love of God, from the unexhausted source of love! And how easy is it to conceive that more and more of his image will be then transfused into your soul; that from disinterested love, all other divine tempers will, as it were naturally, spring: Mildness, gentleness, patience, temperance, justice, sincerity, contempt of the world; yea, whatsoever things are venerable and lovely, whatsoever are justly of good report!

* This quotation from Cicero is thus translated by Addison:—"If virtue could be made the object of sight, she would (as Plato says) excite in us a wonderful love."—EDIT.

And when you thus love God and all mankind, and are transformed into his likeness, then the commandments of God will not be grievous; you will no more complain that they destroy the comforts of life: So far from it, that they will be the very joy of your heart; ways of pleasantness, paths of peace! You will experience here that solid happiness which you had elsewhere sought in vain. Without servile fear or anxious care, so long as you continue on earth, you will gladly do the will of God here as the angels do it in heaven; and when the time is come that you should depart hence, when God says, "Arise, and come away," you will pass with joy unspeakable out of the body, into all the fulness of God.

Now, does not your own heart condemn you if you call this religion enthusiasm? O leave that to those blind zealots who tack together a set of opinions and an outside worship, and call this poor, dull, lifeless thing by the sacred name of Christianity! Well might you account such Christianity as this a mere piece of empty pageantry, fit indeed to keep the vulgar in awe, but beneath the regard of a man of understanding.

But in how different a light does it now appear! If there be such a religion as I have sketched out, must not every reasonable man see there is nothing on earth to be desired in comparison of it? But if any man desire this, let him ask of God; he giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

24. May you not ask, quite consistently with your principles, in some manner resembling this?—

"O thou Being of beings, thou cause of all, thou seest my heart; thou understandest all my thoughts: But how small a part of thy ways do I understand! I know not what is above, beneath, on every side; I know not my own soul. Only this I know, I am not what I ought to be. I see and approve the virtue which I have not. I do not love thee, neither am I thankful. I commend the love of mankind; but I feel it not. Thou hast seen hatred, malice, envy in my heart; thou hast seen anger, murmuring, discontent. These uneasy passions harrow up my soul. I cannot rest while I am under this yoke; nor am I able to shake it off; I am unhappy, and that thou knowest.

"Have compassion upon me, thou whose years do not fail! on me who have but a short time to live. I rise up, and am cut down as a flower. I flee as it were a shadow. Yet a little

while and I return to dust, and have no more place under the sun.

“Yet I know thou hast made my soul to live for ever; but I know not where, and I am unwilling to try. I tremble, I am afraid to go thither, whence I shall not return. I stand quivering on the edge of the gulf; for clouds and darkness rest upon it. O God! must I go always ‘creeping with terrors, and plunge into eternity with a peradventure!’

“O thou Lover of men, is there no help in thee? I have heard (what indeed my heart cannot conceive) that thou revealest thyself to those that seek thee, and pourest thy love into their hearts; and that they who know and love thee, walk through the shadow of death and fear no evil. O that this were so! that there was such an unspeakable gift given to the children of men! for then might I hope for it. O God, if there be, give it unto me! Speak, that I may see thee! Make thyself known unto me also in the manner that thou knowest! In anywise, let me know thee, and love thee, that I may be formed after thy likeness! That I may be love, as thou art love; that I may now be happy in thee; and, when thou wilt, fall into the abyss of thy love, and enjoy thee through the ages of eternity.”