

however, occasionally joined in a game, from an idea that too great preciseness might prejudice my neighbours; and I was then of opinion, that there was no harm in the practice, though it seemed a frivolous way of spending time. I felt it also a very awkward transition to remove the card table, and introduce the Bible and family worship; though I never omitted this service at home, and commonly proposed it in my visits. My fetters were, however, broken effectually, and at once, about January 1778, in the following manner. Being on a visit to one of my parishioners at Ravenstone, I walked out after dinner, as was my common practice on such occasions, to visit some of my poor people; when one of them (the first person, as far as I know, to whom my ministry had been made decidedly useful,) said to me, 'I have something which I wish to say to you, but I am afraid you may be offended.' I answered, that I could not promise; but I hoped I should not. She then said, 'you know A. B.; he has lately appeared attentive to religion, and has spoken to me concerning the Sacrament; but last night, he, with C. D. and some others, met to keep Christmas; and they played at cards, drank too much, and in the end quarrelled, and raised a sort of riot. And when I remonstrated with him on his conduct, as inconsistent with his professed attention to religion, his answer was, there is no harm in cards: Mr. Scott plays at cards!'—This smote me to the heart, I saw that, if I played at cards, however soberly and quietly, the people would be encouraged by my example to go further; and, if St. Paul would *eat no flesh while the world stood, rather than cause his weak brother to offend*, it would be inexcusable in me to throw such a stumbling-block in the way of my parishioners, in a matter certainly neither needful nor expedient. So far from being offended at the hint thus given me, I felt very thankful to my faithful monitor, and promised her that she should never have occasion to repeat the admo-

dition. That very evening I related the whole matter to the company, and declared my fixed resolution never to play at cards again. I expected that I should be harassed with solicitations; but I was never asked to play afterwards. *Let me therefore, from my own experience, as well as from the reason of the case, urge persons from their first entrance upon a religious course, when asked to do any thing which they disapprove, fairly to state their disapprobation as a point of conscience. For not only is this most becoming those in whom there is no guile, but it is also by far the most prudent proceeding. If they assign reasons drawn only from local and temporary circumstances, when those circumstances are changed, they will be pressed again and again with redoubled earnestness; whereas, if they once fairly declare their refusal to be the result of deliberate consideration, and the dictate of conscience, the hope of prevailing upon them will be given up, and they will save themselves great trouble and danger.*

“Let me also observe, that the minister, who would not have his people give into such wordly conformity as he disapproves, must keep at a considerable distance from it him self. If he walk near the brink, others will fall down the precipice.—When I first attended seriously to religion, I used sometimes, when I had a journey to perform on the next day, to ride a stage in the evening, after the services of the Sabbath; and I trust my time on horseback was not spent unprofitably. But I soon found that this furnished an excuse to some of my parishioners, for employing a considerable part of the Lord's day in journies of business or convenience. I need scarcely add, that I immediately abandoned the practice, on the same ground on which I resolved never more to play at cards, even before I thought so unfavourably of them as I now do.”

THE TABLES TURNED.

The following singular facts were