

selves from their brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food," and by this manifest dereliction of duty, do great injury unto God and provoke Him to just displeasure.

Now, if there be this backwardness in approaching God, in this His appointed way, we may reasonably enquire, what excuses are offered, what pleas are brought forward, as at all justifying or palliating such unreasonable conduct. For assuredly each absenter must be actuated by *some* reason, and that too of sufficient weight, to silence the voice of conscience, and to justify the course pursued.

There are, it is true, a vast number of professing christians who ought not in their present state to approach the Lord's table. Of some, the general conduct is so totally at variance with the tenor of God's word, that their presence, would bring upon themselves increased condemnation, and at the same time be highly detrimental to the interests of Christ's Church. The courts of God's house are trodden by men of every variety of character, and sometimes the open and notorious violator of the moral law, will, to quiet his conscience and to maintain his position in society, be a frequent, if not regular, attendant upon the services of the Sanctuary.—In such a case, attendance at the Lord's Table would be a profanation of that sacred rite, and the unhappy individual would bring down upon himself "a curse and not a blessing."

But it is not to notorious offenders against the laws of God and of man, that I wish to address myself. I would rather speak to that class of persons who, if we may judge from external appearances, are surely fitted to partake of the emblems of Christ's body broken and blood shed. Amongst those who apparently come under this