

it: and finding it accord with reason, they flatter themselves that *their* reason has discovered it. 'After grazing' as one expresses it, 'in the pastures of revelation, they boast of growing fat by nature.'—So long as they reside among people, whose idea of right and wrong are formed by the morality of the gospel, they must (unless they wish to be stigmatised as profligates,) behave with some degree of decorum. Where the conduct is uniform and consistent, charity and even justice, will lead us to put the best construction upon the motive; but when we see men uneasy under restraints, and continually writing in favour of vices which they dare not openly practice, we are justified in imputing their sobriety, not to principle, but to the circumstances attending their situation."*

ESSAY ON THE CATECHISM.

IN the third commandment we are forbidden to take the name of God in vain, and are told that God will not hold those guiltless who do take his name in vain.—It is a distinguishing feature of the Christian dispensation that the very thoughts of the heart as well as the words of the mouth are included in all the denunciations which are made against the impurity of our nature.—Irreverent *thoughts* of God are as much forbidden therefore in this commandment, as blasphemy or dishonourable mention of his name.—So sensible was holy Job of this that when "the days of the feasting of his children were gone about, he sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts—Thus did Job continually."—Besides the irreverent thoughts of the heart, there are many overt sins forbidden in this commandment. To take the name of God in vain, means, in the most heinous sense of the term, to swear falsely by his name, or to swear to the truth of that which either we know to be false, or do not know to be true, or what is understood generally by a false oath.—This crime is so horrible and so utterly destructive of all confidence in society, that it is severely punished even by human laws—and with regard to the divine laws on the subject, God himself says, by the mouth of his Prophet "speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour—and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts to his neighbour, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate saith the Lord."—"Thou shalt not forswear thyself (says our Saviour) but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths"—and with regard to blaspheming or making dishonourable mention of God's name, in common conver-

* Fuller's Gospel its own Witness, p. 113.