

among us almost all discourse on practical religion and plans of usefulness. I courted and eagerly yielded myself to this society, in my infatuation accounting it the token of God's peculiar favour towards me, to have thrown me among such saints!

Correction, therefore, was added to correction; for shortly, the writings of several vituperative and dogmatic censors of the church fell in my way, and forced on the growth of my conceited and condemnatory spirit. Their works became my Bible. Whilst, with them, I abjured human writings, and incessantly denounced the Christian world for having abandoned the great Protestant principle: "the Bible, and nothing but the Bible;" I read these works more than the Bible; allowed them to determine my judgment of the truth; and treasured up in my memory their arguments and decisions with a greater care than I exercised in endeavouring to retain the words of the Holy Spirit. I still studied the Scriptures—not, however, to improve my own piety, but to confirm myself in my peculiar views, and to collect arrows to shoot at my brethren.

Of course, the more modest and spiritual members of Christ's Church gradually receded from me: this I thought an honour, as indicating that I was too eminent in holiness, and too strong in argument for them. Still, I was offended at it, and, almost unconsciously, made it a reason for taking a position more decidedly hostile to them. This was the case, especially in reference to ministers; so that I attended their preaching from necessity, and for the purpose of marking their "gross contradictions" and "unscriptural blunders;" and, in social life, made them the butt of my sarcasms and fulminations. Now, they were "hirelings preaching for wages"—then "man-made ministers destitute of the spirit's qualification for their work." Some-

times they were "conspirators against the *simple* truth and *simple* ordinances and worship of the Gospel;" sometimes "priests, lording it over God's heritage to hold up their priest-craft, and retain the unrighteous mammon." It was "their pride and worldliness which made them cast out of God's family the kiss of charity, and washing of the saint's feet, and weekly communion. It was the proud raving of their carnal reasonings and human science, which seduced them to substitute so many monstrous errors for the plain truths of the gospel." Thus, I surely thought, without the slightest suspicion, that my pride of heart and intellect was my teacher.

I was, indeed, continually becoming more and more unhappy. I could find enjoyment neither in private exercises nor in public service—neither among my fellow complainers nor other professors—neither in the church nor in the world. I sometimes *said* I was happy, but I felt I was increasingly miserable, and assured myself it was the fault of others, not my own. "Oh! if I could but see the christian world return to its primitive purity; or if I could only find some little society of humble believers, with whom to observe Christ's simple ordinances, and with whom to be a witness for his simple truth, how blessed I should be!" So I thought, forgetting that a haughty and uncharitable spirit would make me miserable under the most favourable circumstances.

In this state of mind I continued, as long as I could find professors foolish enough to oppose or care for my censorious declamation; but when they let me alone, I became a little sober and silent. At the same time my comrades in the crusade against the professing world, differed among themselves, and evinced not the lowliest or loveliest disposition towards each other: and in their strife offended me. God also sent family trouble to admonish me. By these