

to make many a poor thoughtless creature who either was incapable of looking beyond the surface of things, or would not take the trouble to do so, conclude that religion was all a trick of priestcraft, it is impossible to calculate. But on this it is unnecessary here to dwell, as, however such characters may be allowed to remain in those societies where there is a manifest union of the Church and the world; we cannot suppose them at all tolerated by a church professing to be solely influenced by the authority of Christ.

4. We shall only add that neglecting the discipline of the house of God, is a fourth way in which we may cause men to err. This discipline is a means appointed by the great Head of the Church for preserving men from self-deception, correcting the errors of his people, and exhibiting to the world the genuine spirit and tendency of his Gospel and the character of his kingdom. It is sufficiently apparent that each of these ends are to a certain degree frustrated where his appointments on this subject are disregarded. The Apostle Paul expressly declares, under the influence of the spirit of prophecy, that, "in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." And after giving this description of character he adds as an injunction plainly binding on the disciples of Christ, and recorded for their direction in these last days,—“from such turn away.”—The first thing that deserves our notice in this passage is the peculiarity of character here mentioned as what was to distinguish the last days. All the features of human depravity contained in the first part of this description have existed in every age, but the peculiarity here is, that, at the period referred to, these should be found associated with “a form of godliness,