

piety in the Church is generally much more solid than amongst the Sectarians.* Your incidental remarks too respecting the *new conditions* of church-membership, which the Dissenters would establish, strike me very forcibly; indeed now you have brought the matter before me I could wonder how an innovation which appears so dangerous and unscriptural could so long have escaped my observation; it is like robbing those of their Christian privileges and casting them again out of the pale of the Church into the wide world of iniquity whom, in the name of Christ, they have professed to receive as the children of God; and truly those who are thus treated can never be expected to feel that having been 'baptized into Christ' the vows of the Lord are upon them. I fear such Ostrich-like conduct towards the 'lambs' of Christ, interwoven as it is in the very nature of dissent, goes far to prove how great is the evil of schism.

Mr. Secker.—I think then we are agreed that, with all its faults, we shall not mend ourselves by leaving the Church in the hope of finding a purer Christian community; especially when we bear in mind that great improvement, which, by the mercy of God, has taken place within the last few years in the Church of England both as respects Apostolic Order, Scriptural zeal and personal holiness. But to give your friends all the advantage of the objection, I will suppose that 'the Church is as cold in its love to Christ and as formal in its piety towards God' as they imagine, and even then I am prepared to show, as I stated a while back, that it is an entire misconception of the path of duty to suppose that even in *such a case* it would be right to leave her communion, for that the man who does so, is guilty of the sin of schism. This I prove by the following considerations:—

1. That in the Jewish Church, however sinful were its priests, or however corrupted were its ordinances, no one could forsake its pale or neglect its services without rendering himself liable to the judgments of Almighty God for so doing. Thus we find it written in the book of Deuteronomy, 'And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die;' (xvii. 12) and in Leviticus dreadful are the threatenings which Jehovah pronounces against those who 'should despise his statutes,

or whose soul should abhor his judgments so that they should not do *all* his commandments but break his covenant.' (xxvi. 15, 16, &c.) And here you see is no exception made, in case the priesthood itself should become unholy, as indeed we know it oft-times did; the command to unity is exceeding broad. I thus judge therefore that as schism was a crime so hateful to God, under the Old Dispensation as to be punished with death, even so still He must look upon it with abhorrence.

Mr. Brown.—But what have we to do with Jewish laws? Christ you know came to do away with the Mosaic Ritual and to set us free from all such bondage.

Mr. Secker.—True; Christ did abolish the Mosaic Ritual, with all its burdensome ceremonies; but remember, my dear friend, that He himself says, 'Think not that I am come to *destroy* the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' (Matt. v. 17.) Now from the way in which most Dissenters speak of the Jewish Dispensation, one would be ready to suppose it to have originated with Moses, and that Christ, as its bitter enemy, sought to destroy it root and branch. Whence, Mr. Brown, I appeal to you as a man of sense, and candour, whence has arisen this desire of the Dissenters to pour contempt upon a Dispensation which was established solely by God himself? Is it not because *there*, God himself speaks so clearly, both by precept and example, respecting the Divine authority of Ministers and Rulers, the necessity of obedience, the sin of division, and the other evils necessarily connected with democratic insubordination and religious dissent, that they feel themselves bound, in self-defence, to deny the authority of these his former teachings? But this cannot be right; for God changeth not, and human nature also remains the same in all its distinctive peculiarities; hence I can scarcely understand how any honest man can dispute that the great principles upon which God acts towards His people must be the same in all ages; it is the mode of carrying them out only which can vary; and it is the Jewish Church alone to which we can look for an example of those principles by which He would have His Church guided; as under our Dispensation He tests our reverent obedience and holy love by pointing us, as it were, to that, to learn his will as respects the principles upon which he would have his visible Church ordered. Thus St. Paul tells us that the Jewish Dispensation was 'the shadow of heavenly (or Christian) things'; and 'the pattern of things in the heavens' (Heb. viii. 5; and ix. 23). I judge, therefore, by the example of the Jewish Church, that even spiritual deadness forms no sufficient apology for our forsaking the Church of God.

2. The next reason, why I think it wrong to leave the Church on account of its supposed deadness and formality, is, that no provision for

*[The person here alluded to is Mr. Hughes, a Baptist preacher, who was Secretary to the Bible Society. His words are these:

"From my extensive intercourse with Christians of all denominations, I have come to the full conviction, that there are no body of persons in the nation among whom the Spirit of the Gospel is so consistently exhibited as among the pious members and ministers of the Established Church. The piety in that quarter is of a better cast, more deep, more solid, more simple, more scriptural, less showy, than in any other."—Ed. CH.]