

vate retirement sent the Comforter for my relief; for which I humbly bless his holy name.

The sense I had of the state of the churches, brought a weight of distress upon me: the gold to me appeared dim, and the fine gold changed; and though this is the case too generally, yet the sense of it in these parts hath, in a particular manner, borne heavy upon me. It appeared to me, that through the prevailing of the spirit of this world, the minds of many were brought to an inward desolation; and instead of the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and heavenly wisdom, which are the necessary companions of the true sheep of Christ, a spirit of fierceness, and the love of dominion, too generally prevailed. From small beginnings in errors, great buildings, by degrees, are raised; and from one age to another are more and more strengthened by the general concurrence of the people: and as men obtain reputation by their profession of the truth, their virtues are mentioned as arguments in favour of general error; and those of less note, to justify themselves, say, such and such good men did the like. By what other steps could the people of Judah arise to that height in wickedness, as to give just ground for the prophet Isaiah to declare in the name of the Lord, "that *none* calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth:" Isaiah lix. 4. or for the Almighty to call upon the great city of Jerusalem, just before the Babylonish captivity, "If ye can
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