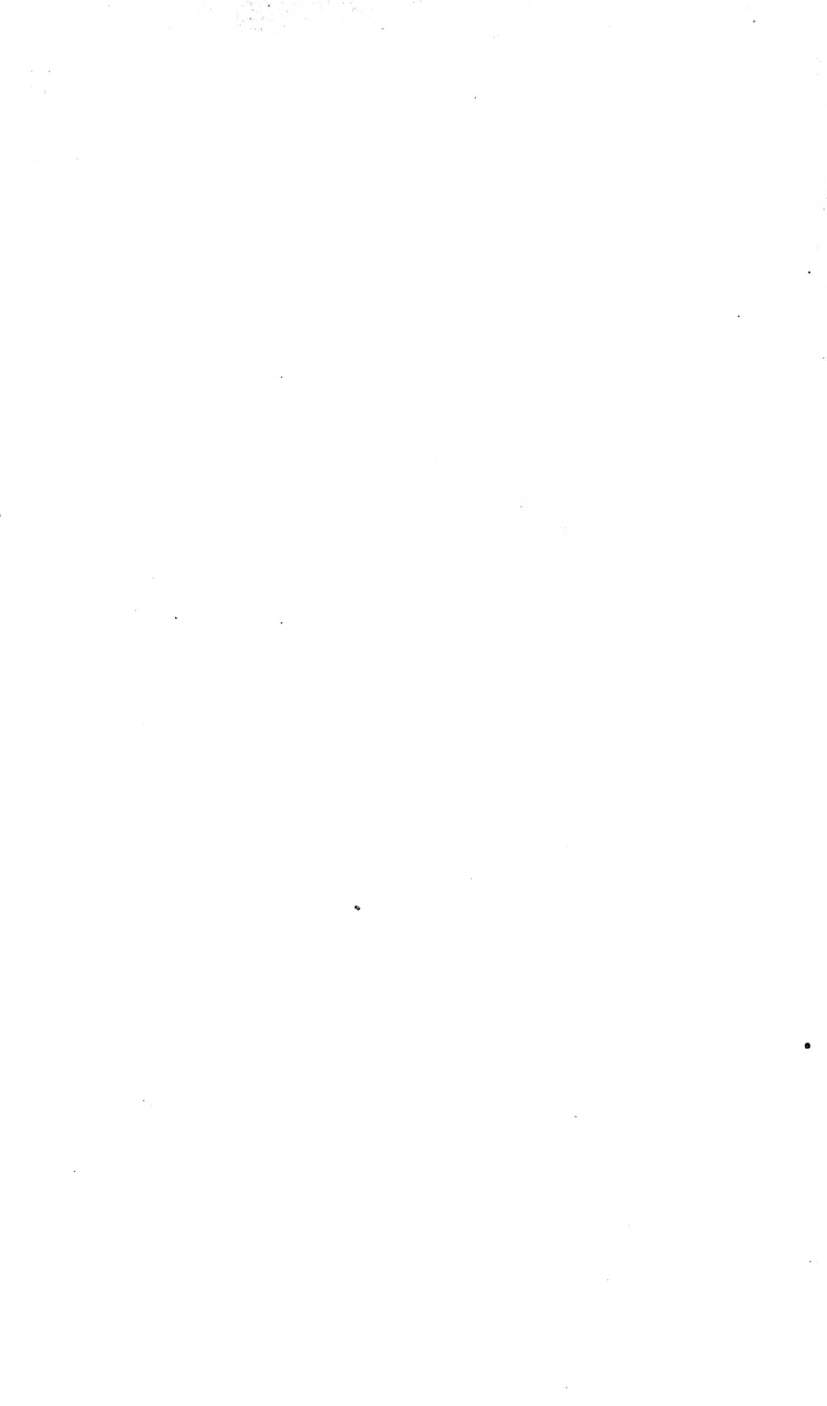




Callanus

From the Library of  
Professor Samuel Miller  
in Memory of  
Judge Samuel Miller Breckinridge  
Presented by  
Samuel Miller Breckinridge Long  
to the Library of  
Princeton Theological Seminary





*John Miller's Book*  
*Counsels of Prudence for the Use of*  
*Young People.*

A

# DISCOURSE

ON THE

Wisdom of the Serpent and  
the Innocence of the Dove :

In which are recommended general Rules  
of Prudence ; with particular Directions  
relating to Business , Conversation ,  
Friendship, and Usefulness.

---

By *NATHANIEL LARDNER.*

---

Published at the Desire of some Friends.

---

L O N D O N :

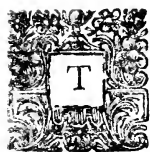
Printed for RICHARD FORD, at the *Angel*; in  
the *Poultry.* MDCCLXXXV. Price 6d





MATTH. X. 16.

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*



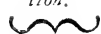
HIS advice is found among those directions, which our blessed Lord gave his disciples, when he sent them from him upon a commission in his life-

*Introduc-  
tion.*

time here on earth. *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying: Go not into the way of the Gentils, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

*Matth x.  
5--8.*

Introduc-  
tion.



'Tis reasonable to conclude, that the disciples received this commission with much pleasure and satisfaction, accounting it a great honour done them, and conceiving at the same time fond expectations of honour and acceptance wherever they came. They were to carry with them very joyful and desirable tidings; That *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*: They were empowered to confer very great benefits, and were required to do all *freely*, without receiving any gratuity. The limitation in their commission could not but be a high recommendation of it: the good news was to be published to *Jews*, and them only; not to *Gentils*, nor to *Samaritans*.

But our Lord thought not fit to dismiss them without some particular counsels and directions, which would be of use to them now, but especially hereafter; when their commission should receive an enlargement, both with regard to the subject matter of their message, and the persons to whom they were to carry it. And he judged it needful to give them some hints of a different reception from what they thought of, and some cautions to be upon their guard, that they might not afford any just ground



ground for misconstructions or injurious reflections, nor do any thing that should tend to draw upon themselves a disagreeable treatment. He therefore tells them: *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* You mean well yourselves, and you think well of others. But I must forewarn you, that many, to whom you are going, have selfish and malicious dispositions, and are subtle and artful. For which reason you are to be cautious and prudent: *Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* Maintaining your present innocence and integrity, decline dangers as much as possible, and take care not to give any ground for reflection upon your conduct.

This advice then of our Saviour to his disciples will give me just occasion to recommend some rules and directions of prudent conduct and behaviour to those who are entering upon the stage of action in the world. In doing which I shall take this method.

I. I shall represent the nature of prudence.

II. I shall shew the necessity, grounds and reasons of prudence.

III. I

III. I intend to lay down some rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct, with regard both to our words and actions.

*Nature of  
Prudence.*

I. I shall represent the nature of prudence. In general, it is a discerning and employing the most proper means of obtaining those ends which we propose to ourselves. He who aims at his own advancement is prudent, if he contrives a good scheme for that purpose, and then puts in practise the several parts of it with diligence and discretion. If the end aimed at be the good and welfare of others, in any particular respect; then prudence lyes in taking those methods which are most likely to promote the advantage of those persons, and in doing that in the way least prejudicial to ourselves, and most consistent with our safety.

It is an important branch of prudence to avoid faults. One false step sometimes ruins, or however greatly embarrasses and retards a good design. Therefore prudent conduct depends more on great caution and circumspection than great abilities. A  
bright

bright genius is necessarie for producing a fine composition. Courage and presence of mind are needful for a hazardous undertaking: But circumspection alone, such caution as secures against errors and faults, makes up a great part of prudent conduct, by preventing many evils and inconveniences.

*Nature of  
Prudence.*

Prudence likewise supposes the maintaining of innocence and integrity. We may not neglect our duty to avoid danger. The principal wisdom is to approve ourselves to God, and 'tis better to suffer any temporal evil, than incur the divine displeasure. These disciples of Christ were to go out and preach, saying: *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* That was the work assigned them by their Lord and master, which therefore it was their duty to perform, and they could by no means decline. But they might do it in the way which would least expose them to inconveniences, and was most likely to secure acceptance for their message and themselves. This is prudence.

We are not out of a pretense of discretion to desert the cause of truth. But we are to espouse it with safety, if we can; that

Nature of  
Prudence.



that is, maintain it in the way lest offensive to others, and lest dangerous to ourselves.

Nor have we a right from any rules of prudence to use unlawful methods to obtain our end. Our end is supposed to be good, and the means must be so likewise. Thus far of the nature of prudence.

Reasons of  
Prudence.

II. I would now shew the necessity, grounds and reasons of prudence. These are chiefly the wickedness and the weakness of men. The former is the reason which our Lord refers to. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents.* 'Tis upon this ground likewise, that St. Paul recommends the practise of prudent caution: *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* Some men are malicious and designing, enemies to truth and virtue, and to all that are hearty friends of either of them. Good men therefore are obliged to be upon their guard, and make use of some methods of defense and security. Others are weak and simple, and therefore liable to be misled and imposed upon by the insinuations of the subtle and malicious.

Eph. v.  
15, 16.

Nay,

Nay, if there were no bad men, yet there would be need of a prudent behaviour, because some who have not much reflection or experience are apt to put wrong constructions upon harmless actions.

*Reasons of  
Prudence.*  
~~~~~

And this leads us somewhat farther into the nature of prudence, and to observe a particular, which could not be so well taken notice of, before we had observed this ground and reason of it. For a great part of prudence lyes in denying ourselves, so as to keep some way within the limits of virtue. A good man, if all about him were wise and good, might be secure in his innocence alone. It might then be sufficient to mean well, and to pursue directly the good ends he has in view, without doing any harm in the prosecution of them. But now, on account of the weakness of some, he must not only be innocent, but he must also obviate misconstructions and misrepresentations.

We may perceive this in an instance or two. Our Saviour directs his disciples at the eleventh verse of this chapter: *Into whatsoever city or town ye enter, enquire who is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence.* This is more particularly expressed in another

*Reasons of Prudence.* ther Gospel: *In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: go*

*not from house to house.* They had not then in the Eastern countries houses of public entertainment. And it was usual for men of good dispositions, such as our Lord terms *worthy*, to entertain strangers. The disciples were sent two and two, they were not to make a long abode in any place, and would not be thought burdensome by any that were *worthy*, or hospitable men. But our Lord charges them *not to go from house to house*, or remove from the place they had first resorted to. This perhaps might be sometimes done very reasonably. But our Lord does now in a manner absolutely restrain his disciples from acting thus, whatever some others might do; that they might not give any the least ground of suspicion, or insinuation, that they were curious about their entertainment.

It was upon this principle that the Apostle *Paul* went yet farther, and in some places, particularly in *Greece*, waved his right to a subsistence from those he taught.

1 Cor. ix. 12. As he observes to the Corinthians: *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not*

not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Again: Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more. This rule he observed also at Thessalonica: For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. I have now given you a view of the nature of prudence, and the reasons of it.

Reasons of Prudence.

ver. 12.

1 Thess. ii. 9.

III. In the next place I am to lay down some rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct, with regard to our words and actions.

Rules of Prudence.

This is indeed a work of some niceness and delicacie, and is most properly reserved for men of distinguished characters. There is likewise oftentimes a backwardness in men to pay any deference to directions of this kind, except they are delivered by men of large experience, and of great renown for wisdom. For this reason, as it seems, *Solomon* in his book of Proverbs, containing excellent rules of virtue and

Rules of  
Prudence.



prudence, thought fit to introduce Wisdom herself proclaiming her kind intentions to mankind, and delivering many of those directions, that men might be the better induced to hearken to them. And when he was about to publish some remarks upon the world, and the affairs of men in it; he aggrandises his own character, and sets it off to the best advantage: giving himself the title of *the Preacher*, or *Collector*; one who had been long and carefully employed in laying up a store of just and useful observations; and who had good opportunities for that purpose, as he was *King in Jerusalem*: affirming likewise, that he had *given his heart to seek and to search out by Wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven*; that he had *seen all the works that are done under the Sun*, and that his *heart had great experience in wisdom and knowledge*.

Ecc. i.

ver. 1.

ver. 12.

ver. 12.

ver. 14

ver. 16.

As we have before us for our guidance the observations of those who have been eminent for wisdom, and whose character is well established in the world; it may be presumed, that all these high qualifications are not now requisite for a performance of this nature. And I would hope, that they,  
for



for whom the following directions are chiefly intended, are already so wise, or so well disposed at least, as to be willing to hearken to good counsel from any one who means them well. It will be my care to deliver such rules of prudence, as have been approved and recommended by those who have had a knowledge of the world, and are esteemed good judges of mankind. And I shall generally support the rules laid down by reasons, which if they don't convince, the counsel itself may be the less regarded.

Rules of this sort are very numerous, and have been often given, as many are in the book of Proverbs, without connection or dependence on each other. I shall propose those I mention in the following method: First I shall observe some general rules of prudence, and then some particular directions relating to business, civil conversation in the world, more intimate friendship and private relations; lastly, usefulness to others.

1. I shall mention some general rules of prudence. The preservation of our integrity in acting strictly according to the rules

General  
Rules of  
Prudence.



rules of religion and virtue will not be allowed a place among these rules. However, (as has been already shewn) it ought to be supposed. Our blessed Lord does not omit the innocence of the dove, when he recommends the wisdom of the serpent. I must therefore again desire it may be observed, that nothing I am about to say is to be understood as inconsistent with integrity; which, though not properly a rule of prudence, is oftentimes of advantage, and is both a means of security, and adds weight and influence to a man's character.

PROV. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his way shall be known.*

ch. xii. 28. *Again: In the way of righteousness there is life, and in the path way thereof there is*

ch. iv. 18. *no death. Moreover, the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Though virtu-*

ous and upright men should for a while lye in obscurity, they may shine hereafter with a greater lustre. And, which is above all external considerations and advantages of this present world, virtue is of the highest importance to the inward peace of the mind, and our everlasting happiness in the world to come. Supposing then a strict regard

regard to uprightness of heart, and innocence of behaviour ;

(1.) The first rule of prudence I lay down is this ; that we should endeavour to know ourselves. He that knows not himself may undertake designs he is not fit for, and can never accomplish, in which he must therefore necessarily meet with disappointment. Nor can any man have comfort and satisfaction in an employment that is unsuitable to his temper.

Beside a knowledge of our own genius, temper and inclination ; it is needful, that we should be also possessed of a just idea of our outward circumstance and condition, and the relation we bear to persons about us. It is one branch of prudence for a man to behave agreeably to his own particular character. If he mistakes that, he will be guilty of many improprieties. But a just discernment of our own circumstances, and of our relation to other men, will make way for an agreeable and acceptable deportment.

The knowledge of yourselves will prevent conceit on the one hand, and meaness of spirit and conduct on the other. You will readily act with that modest assurance, which

*General  
Rules of  
Prudence.*

which becomes your birth, estate, age, station, abilities, skill and other advantages, without departing from your just right, or assuming more than ought to be reasonably allowed you.

(2.) Endeavour to know other men. It is a point of charity to hope the best of every man, and of prudence to fear the worst. Not that these are inconsistent. It would be to misrepresent a Christian virtue extremely to suppose, that it obliged us to trust men without any knowledge of them. We are to hope and suppose of every man, that he is good and honest, till we have some proof to the contrarie. This is the judgement of charity. But we are not bound to employ men, or confide in them, till we have some positive evidences of their honesty and capacity for the trust we would commit to them, or the work in which we would employ them.

Some men are unreasonably suspicious and jealous. Because they are bad themselves, or because they have had dealings with some that are so, they have formed a notion that all men are false and unfaithful. This is a wicked extreme. They who are in it are fitly punished for so disadvantageous

advantageous and unjust an opinion of their fellow-creatures. Such must needs become contemptible themselves. They may be safe, but they can never make any figure in society; it being, I suppose, impossible for one man alone to carry on any important design, or do any thing considerable in any business or profession. There is therefore a necessity of mutual confidence among men.

On the other hand, some good men are apt to think, that all other men are so. This is oftentimes the sentiment likewise of the young and unexperienced. And indeed it must be some uneasiness to those who are innocent and undefigning themselves, to suspect other men, or to withhold trust and confidence from them. But however kind and favourable their apprehensions and inclinations may be, it would certainly be imprudent to trust to all appearances, and give credit to every pretense. The counsel in the text is given by our Lord to his honest well-meaning disciples, because he knew there were men in the world of bad dispositions, more than these unexperienced disciples were aware of:

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst*

General  
Rules of  
Prudence.

Prov. xiv.  
15.

*of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents.* Solomon has an observation to this purpose: *The simple believeth every word; but the prudent looketh well to his goings.* The confidence placed in men ought to be proportioned to the evidences of their faithfulness and capacity. If any act otherwise, there is danger of shame and disappointment. It must therefore be of great advantage in life to be able to form a true judgement of men.

The knowledge of men, the skill of discerning their talents and dispositions, will be of use not only in business, but also in civil conversation, in the choice of friendships and relations, in designs of usefulness, and indeed in every occasion and occurrence of life. You will thereby know, whom to trust with safety, whom to be free and open with in conversation, whose favour it is your interest to seek, on whom you can bestow your favours and services with a likely prospect of doing some good, or with hopes of grateful returns, if ever you should want them.

(3.) Watch, and embrace opportunities. This is a rule, which ought to be observed with regard to our words and actions.

*There*

*There is a season for every thing, and every thing is beautiful in it's season. There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence,* says Solomon. *A word spoken in due season, how good is it? A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*

General  
Rules of  
Prudence.

Eecl. iii. 1.  
11.

Prov. xv.  
23.

Eecl. iii. 7.

Prov. xxv.  
11.

In all affairs there are some special opportunities, which it is a point of wisdom to improve. *He that gathers in summer is a wise son. But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.* Some opportunities, like that here mentioned by Solomon, are obvious to all. And it must be gross stupidity not to know them, and incorrigible sloth to neglect them. But there are some opportunities, which will be observed and taken by none but those who are discerning and attentive. Every one can see an opportunity, when it is past: but he only who is wise, sees it beforehand, or perceives and embraces it when present.

ch. x. 5.

(4.) Advise with those who are able to give you good counsel. *Without counsel purposes are disappointed, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.* At least, in all important and difficult cases call in the aid of some friends. *Every purpose*

Prov. xv.  
22.

ch. xx. 18.

General  
Rules of  
Prudence.

*is established by counsel, and with good advice make war.* It is great presumption in any man to be self-sufficient, and to suppose, that in all cases he can act well by his own skill alone.

Prov. xii.  
15.

As counsel ought to be asked, so there should be a disposition to hearken to it; or at least, to weigh well the reasons that are brought for or against any design. *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkens unto counsel is wise.*

But yet there is need of some discretion in the choice of counsellors. They should be usually the aged and experienced; always, if possible, such as are sincere and disinterested. I scarce need therefore to caution you against advising with your rivals and competitors. If you are so happy as to have parents, to whom you can have recourse, you must be in the right to consult with them in affairs of moment. If you have not this advantage, however recollect the advices they have given you. Perhaps they have left with you some counsels of prudence, as well as of virtue. When you are forming designs inconsistent with their counsels, give such designs a second consideration, before you take a  
final



final resolution. This may be reckoned a point of wisdom, as well as a piece of respect due to those who heartily wished your welfare.

*General  
Rules of  
Prudence.*



After them advise with, and hearken to those who are most like them in a sincere and unaffected concern for your true interest. But if any whom you consult, always advise according to your own inclinations, you may be assured they are not your friends. It is not your interest they consult, but their own. So likewise, if any, of whom you honestly ask advice, with an intention to be informed and guided by them, are shy and reserved, though at other times, and upon other occasions, they are open enough, you should remember not to go to them again. It is not worth the while to reveal your designs to such. It can be of no advantage, and may be attended with some inconveniences.

(5.) Restrain and govern your affections. This is of great importance to the prudent conduct of life. In all debates he who is calm and composed, as all are sensible, has a vast advantage over a heated adversary. But I mean not the restraint of anger

General  
Rules of  
Prudence.

ger only, or resentment upon a provocation; but a steady government of all the passions, and a calm and composed temper of mind in all occurrences. He who is overfet by a cross accident, is lost beyond redress, and can never get out of a difficulty, though there still remain several ways of escape and recovery.

Avoid too great eagerness for any earthly thing. Men of violent inclinations are immediately for action. They have no sooner thought of a thing, but they must have it. They are at once passed the state of deliberation within themselves, and of consultation with others. Men who are extremely eager for gain and riches, are not always the most successful. They precipitate all their measures. They can never have an opportunity, because they can't wait till it offers. Such usually run desperate hazards, and accordingly meet with great losses. *Solomon*, who has so often spoken of the benefit of diligence, does nevertheless discourage eagerness of spirit and action, as ruinous and destructive.

Prov. xxi. *The thoughts of the diligent, says he, tend only to plenteousness: but of every one that is hasty, only to want.*

Then,

Then, the men of hasty spirit often plunge themselves into great difficulties; which no after thought of their own, nor kind assistance of their friends can extricate them out of. What *Solomon* says of men subject to intemperate anger is very likely to be the case of all who have any other ungoverned passion: *A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for, if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.* If you help them out of one trouble, yet they will soon run themselves into some other. And in another place the same wise man has given a lively image of the defenseless and deplorable condition of those who are under the government of violent passions: *He that has no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

Prov. xix.  
19.Prov. xxv.  
28.

It seems to be for this reason, that men of lesser abilities do often succeed better in business, and indeed in some important affairs, than the more acute and penetrating. They have slow capacities, but they are abundantly recompensed by the coolness of their passions. They move on a steady, even pace, without slips or falls; till at length, to the surprise of all who were not very

*General  
Rules of  
Prudence.*

very discerning indeed, they distance many who set out with much more life and vigour.

These are general rules of prudence. They need not to be mentioned again. But they ought to be observed upon every particular occasion, and will be of use in all the affairs and actions of life that require prudent conduct and management.

*Particular  
Rules of  
Prudence.*

§ II. I am now to lay down some particular rules of prudence concerning several branches of conduct, and divers circumstances of life. They will concern these four points; business, civil conversation, more intimate friendships and relations, and usefulness to others.

*Business.*

(1.) Of business. I may not presume to give many directions relating to this matter. But I apprehend it to be a point of great prudence, for a man to endeavour to be fully master of his employment. He who is skillful in his calling, and diligently attends to it, and is punctual to his promises and engagements, can seldom fail of encouragement. These may be generally reckoned surer means of success, than a large acquaintance, address, importunity,

or

or any other such like arts of procuring the dealings of men: though these need not be entirely neglected, and may be of use, if they are not too much depended on. Interest is a prevailing principle, and that will dispose men to be concerned with, and employ those who are skilful, diligent, and punctual.

*Business.*

'Tis also esteem'd a point of prudence for men to abide in the employment, to which they have been educated, and in which they have once engag'd; unless there be some great and particular inconvenience attending it, or some strong and peculiar inducement to another.

But by no means hearken to the speeches of those, who would draw you off from all employment. Some there are in the world, men of sprightly and aspiring fancies, (as they would be thought) who would persuade you, that business is below the dignity of rational beings; or however, of all who would shine and be distinguished. You will be justified by *Solomon* in throwing contempt on such imaginations: *He* Prov. xii.  
*that is despised, and has a servant, is bet-* <sup>9.</sup>  
*ter than he that honoureth himself, and lack-*  
*eth bread. Again, He that tilleth his land,* Ver. ii.

D

*shall*

*Busineſs.* ſhall have plenty of bread, but he that followeth vain perſons ſhall have poverty enough.

*Converſation.* (2.) The next thing concerning which I would give ſome directions is civil converſation. In general; endeavour to act according to your own character, and maintain that ſuitably to the perſons you meet with, of different abilities, principles and circumſtances.

He is happy in the art of converſation, who can preſerve a mean; without being light, or formal; neither too reſerved, nor too open. Reſervedneſs is diſagreeable and offenſive; too great openeſs, in mixed company, with which you are not well acquainted, is often attended with dangerous conſequences. It may be a good rule for every man, to guard eſpecially againſt that extreme, which he is moſt liable to fall into; by which he is in the greateſt danger of expoſing himſelf, or offending others. Which is the worſt extreme, may not be eaſy to determine. But I think, if we will take the judgement of *Solomon*, too great openeſs muſt be the moſt inconſiſtent with prudence. For ſilence is with him a mark of wiſdom, and there is ſcarce any one thing he has oftener recommended than

than the government of the tongue, nor any thing he has more plainly, and more frequently condemned, than talkativeness. I shall remind you of some of his sayings upon this argument. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. But he that refraineth his lips is wise. He that hath knowledge, spareth his words: even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise, and he that shutteth his lips, is esteemed a man of understanding. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright. But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that has understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known. He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth, shall have destruction.* Especially, be cautious of what you say of others; and be not too forward in giving characters, either by way of praise or dispraise.

The only end of conversation is not to entertain, or instruct others. You are likewise to aim at your own improvement, and the encrease of your present stock of learning and knowledge. Nor is it

Conversa-  
tion.

cessarie, in order to be agreeable, that you should entertain the company with discourse. You may as much oblige some men by patient attention to what they say, as by producing just and new observations of your own. For young persons particularly, silence and modestie must be advantageous qualities in conversation. St. James's precept is general: *Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak*: And if attended to, would lessen the multitude of some mens words, very much to their own benefit, and the improvement of society.

James i.  
19.

Rom. xii.  
18.

Another rule of prudence relating to this matter, which is also a point of duty, is: *If possible, live peaceably with all men*. Do not needlessly offend, or disoblige any. A resolution to please men at all adventures, amidst the present variety of sentiments and affections in the world, would engage us, at seasons, to desert the cause of truth, liberty and virtue. And therefore our Lord has justly pronounced a woe upon those who are universally applauded, saying: *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you*. Such a reputation is rarely to be obtained without a base and criminal indifference for some things very valuable

Mat. vi.  
1.



valuable and important to the general interests of mankind. However, do not despise any man, though ever so mean. Malice and hatred are active principles. And, as has been often observed: One enemy may do you more mischief, than many friends can do you good. Nor is there any man so mean, or so feeble, but he may some time have an opportunity of doing you much good, or much harm.

You are not to be afraid of men, nor too solicitous to please them, nor to stoop to flattery or meaness to gain their favour. These are methods neither very virtuous, nor very prudent. For they seldom procure lasting esteem or affection. If you gain mens favour by flattery, you can keep it no longer than you are willing to be their slaves or their tools. But you may endeavour by easie civilities, and real services to oblige and gain all you can. This we may do, this we ought to do, according to the rules of christianity, good breeding and prudence.

Choose, as near as may be, the conversation of those who are wiser and more experienced than yourselves. Avoid the company of those, who indulge intemperate  
rate

Conver-  
sation.



rate mirth, and neglect the rules of decency; from whom you can expect no benefit, and from whom you are in danger of receiving a taint to your virtue, or a blot to your reputation. *He that walketh with wise persons, saith Solomon, shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

Prov. xiii.  
20.

Friendship.

(3.) In the third place I shall mention some observations concerning more intimate friendships and private relations. It is a rule to choose friends among acquaintance, and not to enter into intimacie with those of whom you have had no trial, because a false friend is the most dangerous enemy. *Solomon* has a direction relating to this point: *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not.* The meaning is not, that we should not desert such, or refuse to assist them when they are in distress: but it is a rule of prudence, to choose for friends, or to apply to those, when we are in any trouble or difficulty, whose sincerity and faithfulness have been tried and experienced.

Pro. xxviii.  
10.

In the choice of friends it may be prudent to have some regard to equality of age, as well as circumstance, and to an agreement

agreement of sentiments and dispositions. *Friendship.*

If you are to avoid the conversation of the openly vicious, (as was before observed) you are to make friendship only with men of known and approved virtue. Let those be your friends whom God himself loves; the meek, the humble, the peaceable who abhor strife and contention. *Solomon's* caution against familiarity with men of a contrary disposition is delivered with some peculiar concern and earnestness: *Make no friendship, says he, with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.* You may likewise consider, whether they shew a good economy in their own affairs: what has hitherto been their behaviour among their friends and acquaintance: what proofs they have given of fidelity, discretion, candour, generosity. The more good properties meet in your friend, the more entire and comfortable will be your friendship, and the more likely is it to be durable. Happy is the man, who has a few friends; true, discreet, generous. But to admit into intimacy men destitute of all good qualities, who neither have faithfulness nor generos-  
fity

Prov. xxii.  
24, 25.

*Friendship.*

fity to stand by you in distresses and afflictions, nor wisdom to direct you in difficulties, would be only to encrease the troubles and vexations of life, without abating any of them, or making provision for a perplexed and difficult circumstance.

Solomon, who was sensible of the blessing of a true friend, and has described the advantages and the offices of friendship, has also strongly represented the disappointment and vexation of misplaced con-

Prov. xvii.

<sup>17.</sup>  
Eccles. iv.

9, 10, 11,  
<sup>12.</sup>

fidence: *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not easily broken.* But then he has observed likewise by way of caution and admonition: *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

Prov. xxv.  
<sup>19.</sup>

When you have adopted any into intimacy and friendship, they are in a great measure

measure upon a level with relations. *Friendship.*  
 Though they differ somewhat, I shall speak of them jointly, to avoid prolixity.

There are here two things principally to be aimed at: one is, that friendships and alliances be preserved without open ruptures: the other is, that whilst there remains an outward shew of friendship, or alliances subsist, there may be a real harmonie, and a mutual exchange of affections and services.

In the first place, it is of great importance, that friendships and alliances, once contracted, should be preserved, without open ruptures. For, though you have right on your side; yet breaches between friends; or relatives, are seldom without scandal to both parties. But if you escape that, you will not avoid all uneasiness in yourselves. A distant strangeness, or open variance after mutual endearments, will be grievous to men of kind and generous dispositions. The other end is the preservation of a real harmonie.

In order to secure both these ends several things are of great use. 'Tis an observation of *Solomon* relating to this point: *A* Pro. xviii:  
*man that has friends must shew himself* <sup>24.</sup>  
*friendly.* You must not admit a selfish  
 E temper.

*Friendship.* temper. You are to be concerned for your friend's interest, as well as your own.

As perfection is not to be found on earth, you are to be prepared and disposed to overlook some faults. You are not to know every thing which you see or hear.

Prov. xvii. *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love ;*  
9. *but he that repeateth a matter, separateth*  
ch. xii. 16. *very friends. A fools wrath is presently*  
*known: but a prudent man covereth shame.*

If any difference happen, drop it again as soon as you recover your temper. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.* You are not to break with a friend for a small matter.

ch. xvii.  
14.

The better to secure the lasting love and good will of your friends, aim not barely at the preservation of a real affection for them, and the performance of real services, but consult likewise the manner of performing benefits. You think this worthy of your regard in order to gain a friendship: Why should you not also for preserving, or cherishing it?

Indeed, all good offices should be done in an obliging manner. And friendly actions are to be improved by friendly words. There is a polite piece of advice in the  
book

book of Ecclesiasticus: *My son, blemish not thy good deeds; neither use uncomfortable words, when thou givest any thing. Shall not the dew assuage the heat? So is a word better than a gift. Lo, is not a word better than a gift? But both are with a gracious man.*

Friendship.  
Ecc. xviii.  
15, 16, 17,

Trespass not too far on the goodness and affection of the kindest and most loving friend or relative by too frequent contradictions, especially in matters of small moment; or by too keen, or too frequent jests, or by any seeming neglect, or a rude familiarity: but whilst you use the openness, freedom and confidence of a friend; oblige yourselves to the same, or very near the same outward forms of civility and respect with which you receive a stranger. This must be of some importance, because few men can persuade themselves, that they are really beloved, when they seem to be despised.

(4.) The last thing to be spoken to is *Usefulness*. usefulness to others. Though I am giving rules and directions chiefly to young people, who are but setting out in the world; yet I think it not proper to omit entirely this matter, there being few good and innocent persons, however young, but have

*Usefulness.*

also some generosity; and they are apt to be forming designs of usefulness to other men, as well as of advancement for themselves.

There are two branches of usefulness; one concerning the interest of civil society, the other the interest of truth and religion: or the temporal, and the spiritual good and welfare of men.

One branch of usefulness is serving the interest of civil society. For this every man may be concerned, having first carefully informed himself about it, that he may make a true judgement wherein it consists. You should manifest a steady regard to the public welfare upon every occasion that requires your assistance: shewing, that you are not to be imposed upon by false pretences, and that your integrity is inviolable: That you will not for a little present profit, nor for all your own personal share in the world, sell, or betray the welfare of the public and of mankind in general. If you maintain this steadiness in the way suitable to your station, it will procure you weight and influence. I suppose this may be more advisable, than to imitate those, who out of a forward zeal for the public have been so far transported

ed



ed as to leave their proper station, and set upon reforming the world, hoping to root out at once all abuses and corruptions. From some things that have already happened in the world, in almost every age and part of it, one may safely foretell, what will be the issue of such an undertaking: You will be baffled, and then despised. Possibly, *Solomon* has an eye to such attempts as these, when he says: *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?*

Ecc. vii.  
16.

It is a regular and becoming deportment in a man's own proper station, which is most likely to give him weight and authority. Go on therefore by a just discharge of all the duties of your condition, to lay up a stock of reputation and influence. To do this will be great prudence, and to improve it, as occasions offer, or to hazard and lay it all out for the good of the public, in a case of emergence, will be both prudent and generous.

The other branch of usefulness is promoting the interest of truth and religion. There are three or four rules to be observed here, which may be collected from some directions, and the example of our blessed  
 Lord

Usefulness.

Lord and his apostles. Cast not your pearls before swine: If they persecute you in one city, flee into another: Instruct men, as they are able to bear it: Use mildness of speech, and meekness of behaviour.

These rules partly regard our own safety, and partly the best way of obtaining the end aimed at. For, as every good man ought to have a zeal for the happiness of others, and particularly for promoting truth and virtue; so it is a point of prudence to pursue such good ends in the use of those means, which are most likely to obtain them, and with as little danger or damage to ourselves as may be.

The *first* is a rule delivered by our Saviour: *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.* There is a rule of like import in the Proverbs: *Speak not in the ear of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.* This too is partly the design of that direction which St. Paul gives to *Timothy*: Describing some men, that they had a *form of Godliness, denying the power of it*; from such, says he, turn away. Leave them, as men whom you have no prospect of doing any good to. Our Lord himself

himself observed this rule, for he rarely addressed directly to the Pharisees, but rather taught the people. And his disciples afterwards having made a tender of the Gospel to the Jews, when they rejected it, went from them to the Gentils.

Usefulness.

The true character of those men who are not the subjects of instruction is, that they *trust in themselves, that they are righteous, and despise others.* Again: *Their heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted and healed.*

Acts xiii. 46.

Lukexviii. 9.

Matt. xiii. 15.

These are not to be instructed. Nor would they admit a direct address and application to be made to them. You may warn others against them, you may weep over them, you may pray for them, but you can't teach them. 'Tis a dangerous thing to offer them any service to enlighten them. If they are not under some external restraints, *they turn again and rent you.* If therefore upon trial you meet with men of this character and disposition, you are to retreat as well as you can. The most that can be thought of is to wait for a better opportunity.

However,

Usefulness.

Matth. x.  
27.

However, our blessed Lord gives this charge to his disciples: *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house top.* Proclaim the doctrine you have heard from me publicly where ever you go, and do all that lyes in your power to recommend it to all men. And it must be owned, that they who have an opportunity of applying to great numbers of men, either by discourse or writing, have a vast advantage; and they are bound by their fidelity to Christ, and by all that's dear and sacred in truth, religion and virtue, to improve this advantage to the utmost of their ability. If they scatter abroad the principles of religion, some will fall upon good ground, whence may be expected a plentiful harvest.

Matth. x.  
23.

The *Second* rule relating to this matter is, *If they persecute you in one city, flee into another.* You may decline the heat of mens rage and displeasure, and reserve yourselves for better times, or for more teachable and better disposed persons. Of the first believers after our Lord's ascension 'tis said: *And at that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad thro' out*

Acts viii.  
5.

out the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 'Tis likely, the apostles had some special directions from the Holy Ghost, not to depart from Jerusalem, and they there enjoyed accordingly a special protection. But the rest of the believers left Jerusalem for the present, and shifted for themselves, as they could, in other parts. Nay we afterwards find apostles also observing this rule. Peter having been delivered out of prison by an angel, after he had been put in custody by Herod, departed, and went to another place. Of Paul and Barnabas it is related, that when at Iconium there was an assault made both of the Gentils, and also of the Jews, to use them despitefully, they were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lyes round about.

Thirdly, teach men as they are able to bear it. So did our blessed Lord. Says the Evangelist: *And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they are able to bear it.* So he taught the disciples also, delivering some things with some obscurity, because they were not able to bear a plain and full revelation of them: *I*

*Usefulneſs.* *have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* This may be the

John. xvi.  
12.

fault of men, that they are not able to hear every truth plainly ſpoken : But yet there muſt be ſome compliance and condeſcenſion in this reſpect. *And I, brethren, ſays*

1 Cor. iii.  
1, 2.

*St. Paul to the Corinthians, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt Jeſus. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it. You*

1 Cor. ix.  
22.

*must therefore, as the apoſtles did, become all things to all men, that by all means you may ſave ſome. You are not to depart from your own integrity, nor your proper character : but ſo far as can be done conſiſtent with theſe, you are to ſuit your inſtructions to mens abilities and conditions.*

*Fourthly,* in this work uſe great mildneſs of ſpeech, and meekneſs of behaviour. You are not to provoke any that are teachable by reflecting on their want of underſtanding, not to ſuffer your zeal to degenerate into rudeneſs. It has been obſerved by ſome, that the apoſtles of Chriſt were eminent examples of an excellent decorum in their diſcourſes, and in their whole behaviour. And among other directions

to

to *Timothy* St. Paul has not failed to recommend particularly meekness of behaviour, as the most likely method of reclaiming men from their errors. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth.* That you may gain men to truth and virtue, apply the strongest arguments to their reason and conscience, without a contemptuous treatment of their persons or prejudices.

These gentle methods of reformation will be generally preferred by good men, and may be reckoned the most probable means of conviction: But I don't deny, that some faults and follies of men may fitly be ridiculed; and some men may be rebuked sharply by proper persons, and with all authority. All which is no more than putting in practise the direction of *Solomon*: *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he wise in his own conceit.*

I have now set before you some general rules of prudence, and some particular directions concerning divers branches

*Conclusion.* of conduct. But you are not to suppose, that prudence is to be learned by rules only. It is rather a habit, which must be gained by observation, action and experience. Suffer not yourselves to be embarrassed and perplexed with a great multitude and variety of rules, nor be over solicitous above a proper decorum. For too great anxiety always spoils the performance. In a word, be but fully master of your own character, and possessed of an habitual desire of pleasing, together with a modest persuasion, that you shall do well, and you will do so.

There can be no occasion for me to add a particular recommendation of the studie of prudence, having before shewn the necessity, and the grounds and reasons of it. The Text itself demonstrates the lawfulness and expedience of prudent conduct. Nor can any be altogether insensible of the importance of it to success in life. Virtue, learning, the knowledge of arts and sciences, are like diamonds, that have an intrinsic value, but must be set and polished, before they are fit for show or use. Tho' divers other natural and acquired accomplishments may procure affection and esteem,



esteem, 'tis discretion only that can pre-  
 serve them. Conclusion.

I am not apprehensive of any abuse of the directions here laid down. They have no tendency to make men selfish or cunning. They are designed for the young and unexperienced; as likewise for the honest, the good-natured, and the generous, of any age and condition. Though you should be simple, they who are designing will practise their arts of subtlety and mischief. By a prudent behaviour you will not encourage their evil practises, but only secure yourselves against them, and be better qualified for success and usefulness in the world.

After all, you are not to depend upon your own care and prudence, but to recommend yourselves and your honest well-laid designs to the divine protection and blessing. It has been seen by those who have diligently observed human counsels and events, *that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men* Eccl. ix.  
*of understanding, nor yet favour to men* 11.  
*of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.* As all human affairs are liable

to

*Conclusion.*

to accidents and disasters, a firm persuasion, and serious regard to the over-ruling providence of God, which is not limited by the present scene of things, can't but contribute to your happiness, by preparing your mind for all events, and enabling you to bear afflictions and disappointments with patience.

It may likewise be one good foundation of happiness, to admit but moderate affections for the great things of this world. If you are truly religious, you may be content with a little, and will manage that well. Without a great estate, by frugal and prudent conduct you may have enough for yourselves, and your immediate dependents, and be able to do good to others also. Happy had it been for some men, as well as for the public, if from the very first, and all their days, they had rather aimed to be wise and good, than rich or great! Finally, if you do good for the sake of doing good, which is a noble principle; and with a view to future rewards, which are incomparably great, and certain: you will not be much concerned, though you miss of present re-  
wards;

wards ; which you know to be but trifles, *Concluser.*  
and never were your principal aim.

May you then add to virtue prudence, and abound in both yet more and more ; that you may escape the snares of the wicked, and the misapprehensions of the weak ; may have success in business, acceptance with mankind, happiness in friendship and every private relation ; may be useful members of civil society, and of the church of God ; may enjoy contentment, and peace of mind, in all events : and at length obtain the distinguished recompenses, which God, who is infinitely wise and holy, will bestow upon those, who have not only been *undefiled in the* <sup>Pf. cxix.</sup> *way,* but have also advanced the welfare <sup>I.</sup> of their fellow-creatures, and the honour of his name in the world.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
*The E N D.*

*Published by the same Author.*

I. **T**HE Credibility of the Gospel History Part I. Or, The Facts *occasionally* mentioned in the New Testament confirmed by Passages of ancient Authors, who were contemporary with our Saviour or his Apostles, or lived near their time. With an Appendix concerning the time of Herod's Death. *The second edition with Additions.*

II. The Credibility of the Gospel History Part II. Or, The *Principal* Facts of the N. T. confirmed by Passages of ancient Authors. Volume *first and second*; containing the History of the *Christian* Writers of the first two Centuries, and their Testimony to the Books of the New Testament; with alphabetical Tables of Authors and Matters.

III. A Vindication of three of our Blessed Saviour's miracles: *The raising of Jairus's daughter; the widow of Naim's son, and Lazarus*: in answer to the Objections of Mr. *Woolston's* Fifth Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour. *The second Edition.*

A  
C A U T I O N

A G A I N S T

C O N F O R M I T Y to this World:

T W O

D I S C O U R S E S

O N

R O M A N S xii. 2.

---

By NATHANIEL LARDNER.

---

L O N D O N :

Sold by J. GRAY, and J. DAVIDSON, in the  
*Poultry*; and T. SANDERS, in *Little Bri-*  
*tain.* M D C C X X X I X.



## DISCOURSE I.

R O M. xii. 2.

*And be not conformed to this world.*

**T**HIS chapter contains directions to the practise of many virtues. It begins with exhortations of a general nature, recommended with great earnestness: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* In the remaining part of the chapter are recommended to Christians divers virtues; such as humility, faithfulness and diligence in the improvement of their talents, and in the discharge of the duties of their several stations, undisssembled love of

each other, patience under afflictions, a love of peace, forbearance of enemies, and even kindnesse to them, if they are in distresse.

My present design is to consider the cautionarie direction of the text: *And be not conformed to this world.* By the *world*, as you well know, in the New Testament, and in common discourse, is often meant this present state, and the things of it. It likewise sometimes denotes the sinful customs and practises of men, who live in this world; or the bad men of the world, who live according to the lusts of the flesh, and as if they looked for no other happinesse, but what consists in the possessions and enjoyments of this world. And so generally had men abandoned themselves to sin and folly, that Satan is spoken of as the *God of this world*: as if he had been the deity, they acknowledged and worshiped.

2 Cor. iv.  
4.

Indeed before the coming of Christ, and the publication of his gospel, human nature lay in a very deplorable and degenerate condition, being generally involved in great darknesse and ignorance, and under the power of irregular and exorbitant appetites  
and



and affections: little virtue, either in the Heathen or the Jewish world: things contrary to reason practised by men of every rank: the very principles of the guides and instructors of men too much suited to extenuate vice, or too weak to check the torrent of it; and often recommending little else but a bare performance of external acts of religion, without, and in the stead of real virtue and true piety.

The apostle therefore now writing to the Christians at Rome judged it necessarie at the begining of his practical directions to caution them against being carryed away with the stream of irreligion and wickedness. And it is to be feared, that still there may be reason for such a caution. The gospel may have made some considerable alteration in the world. Yea, it ought to be owned, that the world has been greatly reformed and amended thereby. It has blessed many with juster sentiments concerning God and the way of serving him. It has also had a good effect upon the manners of men; and many have been influenced by the good principles they have received. Great numbers have been pre-

saved from sins, they otherwise would not have escaped. And others have reached to degrees of virtue, which they never would have attained without it's assistance. And the number of truly good and upright men is not so small as formerly; but, we may reasonably suppose, much enlarged and encreased.

Nevertheless there are many, whose lives are not agreeable to the rules of right reason, or the precepts of the Christian Religion. And though it should be allowed, or charitably supposed and hoped, that they are not now the most, who act contrarie to the precepts of religion; yet a caution, *not to be conformed to the world*, may not be useles or needles. If there are but few, who act as men of the world, and are principally influenced by the things of this present life: yet considering the deceitfulness of our hearts, the biasse of inclination to some sins, and the force of only a few bad examples; (especially, where there are many;) it may be reasonable to guard against imitation of them, or conformity to others in that which is evil.

In discoursing on this text I shall take the following method :

I. I shall endeavour to shew the design and meaning of this direction.

II. I intend to consider the importance of observing it, and offer some reasons and arguments against conformity to this world.

III. After which, I shall conclude with a few reflections.

I. I shall endeavour to shew the design and meaning of this direction.

And hereby is not to be understood, that we are studiously to avoid all conformity and agreement with men of the world. We all agree in one common nature, and perform the ordinarie functions and operations of the animal and rational life. And we are to provide for the wants and necessities of nature, as well as other men. Nor does the apostle design to restrain or forbid a diligent pursuit of the comforts and advantages of this life, in any methods that

are lawful and innocent: But what he means is, that we should not be led aside by multitudes, or by any of those we converse with, into the practise of any thing sinful and unlawful.

But beside this general explication of the words, I would mention some particulars, in which we ought not to be conformed to others, how much soever such things may prevail.

I. We are not to be conformed to the world in those sins, which are called *sins of the flesh*. In this caution the apostle very probably has an eye to these things, inasmuch as they were very generally indulged among the Heathens, by whom the Christians at Rome were surrounded. So he writes to the Ephesians: *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord; that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentils walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so*  
learned

*Eph. iv.*  
17—22.

learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. He requires, that such things be *not once named* Eph. v. 3. among Christians; that is, that there be no instances of such transgressions among them: but that they behave, *as becometh* ver. 11. saints; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darknesse, but rather reprove them. He likewise directs, that *foolish talking and jesting, which are not con-* ver. 4. *venient,* should quite cease from among them.

Nor are we to indulge ourselves in any intemperance or excess, that disorders the reason, prejudices the health, and indisposes for the duties of life. *And be not drunk* Eph. v. 18. *with wine, wherein is excess.* We are not to be guilty of compli-ance here. Though some should take it ever so much amiss, that we will not be like them, or bear them companie therein, we are resolutely to decline a conformity with them. Thus St. Peter, referring to the prevailing customs of Heathens: *For the time past of our* 1 Pet. iv. *life* 3, 4.

life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentils, when we walked in lasciviousnesse, excesse of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excesse of riot, speaking evil of you. So it was then. And it is to be feared, that still among some, and in some places, this kind of excesse is so common, that not a few may be tempted by the customarinesse of it.

2. Christians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in any injustice, either in the way of fraud or violence.

*Eph. iv.*  
28.

Says St. Paul to the Ephesians: *Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good.* Among the ancient lawes of God delivered to the Israelites are such

*Lev. xix.*  
35, 36.

as these: *Ye shall do no unrighteousnesse in judgement, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephab, a just hin shall ye have. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of*

*Prov. xi. 1.*

*the land of Egypt.* Solomon observes: *A false balance is abomination to the Lord. But a just weight is his delight.* And God him-

self

self by his prophet reproves prevailing injustice in this manner: *Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?* Mic. vi. 10, 11. Christians then certainly ought to be fair and open in their dealings, and to do to every man what is just. Though we could unobserved detain what is rightfully due to any, we should not withhold it. We are not only to decline un reputable methods of gain, which all men would condemn, and cry out of; but every artifice that is unjust and unequal, however common with some, and secure from the cognizance of human laws. We should be willing to exert ourselves to secure to others their rightful possessions against unjust invaders; but should never employ our power, or art, or influence, for getting into our hands what belongs to others. Though a good man does not choose to be oppressed, and would use all proper measures to secure himself from wrong; yet he would much rather suffer, than do an injurie. To be wronged of his possessions, or rightful inheritance,

heritance, by the artifices of designing persons, might be matter of much grief and concern: but to treat others in such a way never enters into his heart. Nor would any consideration whatever prove a temptation to such fraudulent proceeding. He would rather lose what he has, than gain the greatest estate by an act of injustice.

3. Christians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in the practice of *known falshood*. It is one of St. Paul's practical directions to the Ephesians: *Therefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. For we are members one of another.* The words we use are to express the sense of our minds. We are not to promise any thing, but what we intend to do. And when we have promised, we are to perform according to our engagements. Nor does it seem consistent with truth and sincerity to make pompous professions of affection, respect and esteem, beside, and beyond the sense of our minds: creating thereby vain dependences, and big expectations; for our own present interest possibly, but to the real detriment, and lasting and piercing vexation and disappointment

*Eph. iv.*  
25.



pointment of those who have been deceived by us. A Christian also, one would think, should reckon it incumbent on him to have a regard to truth in lesser, as well as in greater matters. However customarie it may be with some people to be at the same time at home to some, and abroad to others, and to direct their attendents to deliver a known falshood, and to persist in it: a man of honour and conscience will scarce encourage, or approve a practise, which is a breach upon sincerity, and may have pernicious consequences.

I need not add here, that if we are not to transgress the rules of veracity in our ordinarie discourse and conversation, much less may we falsify upon solemn occasions: when, beside the weight of our own credit, we call God to be witnessse to the truth of what we say.

4. We are not to conform to the world, and the men of it, in *a profane use of the name of God*. Reverence is always due to the supreme being: in which they appear to be defective, who upon trivial occasions appeal to God for the truth of what they say. If any should insist, that they do it  
sometimes

sometimes without knowing they do so, or thinking of it: they only shew thereby, that they have been long habituated to a practise, which is not to be justified. For, is it not an offense, to attest insignificant points with an oath? which is a solemn and awful thing, not to be introduced into society, but for deciding matters of weight and importance. A sober and considerate Heathen, or Deist, who has upon his mind a serious sense of religion, would not approve that the divine being should be mentioned, or spoken of in such a light and irreverent manner, as would be judged a contemptuous use of the name of a great man. And shall Christians venture upon such an use of the name of God, who have so much more reason to love and honour him! Is it not strange and surprising, that a sin, to which, as is often sayd, there is so little temptation, should be so common, as it is, among those who are called by that honourable name! But however common it may be among some, chiefly, I think, of the higher and lower ranks of men; (in which, as well as in some other

other

other things, they too much agree;) let us not be conformed to them therein.

Nor can it be fit for us to stake *our salvation, or life, or credit*, for the truth of matters of little or no consequence, as some frequently do. This is a practise, that is not to be reconciled to the reason of any thoughtful and considerate person, who has a sense of religious obligations, and is concerned for the good order and welfare of society. And our blessed Lord has interposed here, and has expressly forbid not only the swearing by the name of God in conversation, and the ordinary commerce of life, but also those lesser, or more diminutive oaths, in which the name of God is not expressly invoked. *Ye have heard, that* Mat. v. *it has been said by, [or, rather to] them of* 33, 34. *old time: Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you: Swear not at all: Our Saviour does not intend to forbid swearing upon solemn and momentous, but only upon trivial and ordinary occasions: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king.*

*Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* These directions of our Lord are sufficiently clear, and easie to be applied by men of these times.

It is unnecessary to add, that if invocations of the Deity in a light manner, and upon trivial occasions, be evil; it is still a more aggravated offense to call upon God to condemn or destroy others upon occasion of none, or very trifling affronts and injuries.

5. We are not to be conformed to the world in *idleneffe and mispending of time.* Though it should be the custom of some, or of many around us, to devote their time and abilities to trifling matters, of little or no use and benefit to themselves, or others; they are not to be followed or imitated by us. Diversions are allowable, if they are innocent in themselves, and if they are made use of by us as a refreshment of our wearied spirits, and that we may be better fitted for employments of a higher nature. But diversions are not to be suffered to grow up  
into

into constant employments, and to thrust out useful and necessarie businesse. Then they become sinful. For this life is our only opportunity of providing for eternity: and therefore it would be lost, if spent in eating and drinking, and playing, without making preparation for a future state. If we rightly consider the shortnesse of life, the work we have to do, the many avocations that are almost unavoidable; we shall think, that time ought not to be squandered and thrown away, but improved with care and diligence.

A large part of most mens time is requisite for providing the necessaries, or comforts and conveniences of life. If they should indulge sloth and idlenesse, they would be reduced to want and poverty. If the necessaries and comforts of life are provided to our hand for us, we may be well employed in improving our minds, and in serving and helping others.

And do we think, that we have no occasion to employ some time in private, in serious meditation and reflection upon ourselves, and our more public and ordinarie conduct? Are we satisfi'd, that all is right

B

already,

already, and that our behaviour is without fault, or that there is no room left for amendment? May it not be of use to take some time to review our diversions and amusements, our transactions in business, and even our acts of public worship?

Time very often runs waste in conversation, and yet we ought not to be un sociable and unfriendly. Should we not therefore be glad to render that time more profitable? As for those who have superior abilities, or any superior advantage in point of age, character and station: May they not do well to aim at raising and improving friendly conversation? And should not others be ready to join in such attempts, and to set forward those topics that are instructive and edifying, as well as entertaining? that those seasons may not be altogether, and always, void and empty spaces, of which we can give no good account, but useful and beneficial; such as all may be able to reflect upon with pleasure, and some with thankfulness, long afterwards.

6. We are not to be conformed to the world in *a censorious temper, and detracting speech and discourse*. Some there are, who  
scarce

scarce think any thing well done, but what is done by themselves: who have a mean opinion of the abilities and performances of other men, or seem to have so. And by artfully lessening and detracting from them they endeavour to bring the rest of mankind into the like sentiment.

Some men have a vast acquaintance with the private affairs and actions of their neighbours, but more especially, as it seems, with their weakneses and failings. And having a good deal of knowledge of this kind, it is not easie for them to hide such a treasure. Men who have a great deal of knowledge are usually fond of shewing it, and sometimes even among those, who set no value upon the sciences they are masters of. But men are apt to be communicative of this knowledge above any other, because discoveries of this sort are generally acceptable; the smallest trifles of this nature being more eagerly sought, and more readily embraced by abundance of people, than relations of great and noble actions.

There can be no good reason, why men should be prying and inquisitive into the

private affairs of families, or particular persons. When such things are known, there can be very seldom any good purpose served by divulging them. If they are mentioned at all, certainly there can be no good reason for giving them a wrong turn, making things appear worse than they are, concealing circumstances, that might alleviate an imprudence; and possibly adding some others, that tend to aggravate and enhance it.

This must be owned to be an unreasonable practise. But yet it is not uncommon. Though every man is tender of his own good name, how many act, as if the reputation of other men and their families was a thing of small value in their esteem!

We are therefore to be upon our guard here. We are not to form and raise stories to the prejudice of others. Nor are we to report what we have heard without reserve, or caution, or any good occasion for so doing. Nay, it might be well, if sometimes we would decline receiving relations of this kind, that the practise of tale-bearing may be the more effectually discouraged. Or,  
if



if we can't well avoid hearing them, however doing it without any satisfaction, real or apparent, and diverting the discourse to other matters, as soon as may be.

If we do not arrive at this degree of perfection, yet let us take heed, that we be not rash and severe in our censures, nor condemn and exclaim against actions and conduct, of which we know but very few circumstances.

We are all too apt to transgress in many things, and in few things more, than in an abuse of the faculty of speech. Says St. James: *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing, that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.* Jam. iii. 1, 2.

I might here particularly caution and argue against loading men with censures and reproaches on account of their differing from us in matters of speculation. For whereas upon other occasions some turn the imprudences of others into heinous sins, here men often make that a crime which is a virtue. They censure men as

abandoned of God, and in a state of damnation, for believing certain opinions, which possibly are true and reasonable. But if they be false, still those persons would not deserve to be severely censured by us, if they have honestly used their best endeavours in the search of truth. Let us not be conformed to others in such a temper and conduct as this. But when men differ from us, let us take the more favourable side of the question; and hope, that though they are mistaken, as we think, yet they do not err wilfully, or obstinately, but that they are open to conviction, and are sincere and upright. But at present I say no more of this matter. \* \*

7. We are not to be conformed to this world, or the men of it, in a *luxurious and extravagant course of life*. And, have we not reason to be upon our guard here? Is not this a prevailing and general fault? Has it not invaded all ranks and orders of men? Is not this one of the sins of our days? and does it not manifestly bring upon us many dif-

\* \* *If any should find this discourse too long for one reading, they may break off here.*

distresses and calamities, and threaten us with more? Does not extravagance prevail, not in one thing only, but in all? Is it not seen in diet, apparel, furniture, equipage, diversions, and in every article of expense that can be named?

What can be said in defense of that †† gaming, in various forms, which has been so greatly improved and cultivated, in which great numbers of people have attained such exquisite skill and understanding? Is not this the ordinary diversion, or rather business of many among us; of rich and poor, high and low, young and old? Are there not numerous instances of this practice, which are plainly, and extremely unreasonable? Certainly, it cannot but be offensive to see those gaming for sums of money, be they greater or smaller, who, so far as can be judged by their outward appearance, are extremely destitute. And it must be a manifest and heinous immorality, for men to mispend time, and ha-

B 4

zard

†† Since these discourses were composed and pronounced, an *Act* of Parliament has passed *for the more effectual presenting of excessive and deceitful gaming*. All wise men, I am persuaded, agree in wishing it may have a good effect.

zard fums of money in this way, whose families are unprovided of things necessarie for their support.

If then transgressions of this kind are common with any of our rank and acquaintance, we ought to be upon our guard, and take heed that we be not conformed to them. For gaming is altogether improper for some. And to be addicted to it, or to hazard large fums of money this way, must be unreasonable in all. The losse of time, hazard of estate, health, temper, virtue, with which this practise is attended, should either entirely deter men from it, or at least induce them to be very careful not to exceed.

But this is not the only thing to be avoided by us. There are many other ways of profuseness. And, when this is the case: When frugality is unreputable; when economie is thought to be below all people of rank, of both sexes; when they who make a decent appearance, and pay to all what is justly due to them, and relieve and support distressed families, and are liberal in promoting divers good works: when such as these can scarce maintain  
their

their credit in the world, for want of pomp and splendour, and a glittering shew and appearance; then certainly we have need to be upon our guard against that profuseness, which is above our circumstances, which might exhaust our substance, involve us in perplexing and inextricable difficulties, and hazard the total losse of that little virtue that remains in us.

8. Another thing, in which we ought not to be conformed to this world, is *uncharitableness in things of a religious concern*. This we may have reason to guard against. For the pride of our hearts, the good opinion we are too apt to have of ourselves, disposes us very much to be offended with those who differ from us. Therefore, if unfavourable sentiments of some persons, and a severe treatment of them, be common, we are in great danger of being misled. Indeed this has often been a common, though it be an heinous injustice. It has been common among those who have been the people of God by profession, as well as among ignorant Heathens and idolaters. How strangely a blind zeal, or uncharitable temper toward such as dif-

ferred from them, raged among the Jewish people, we see in the historie of the New Testament; particularly in their treatment of the apostle Paul, and other harmless disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. If we were to look into the historie of Christianity, since it prevailed in the Roman empire, and observe the conduct of the several sects and parties of Christians; we should find it a difficult undertaking to vindicate the conduct of any one of them, when they have been uppermost, and have had power in their hands. Scarce any age or period, but affords instances of hard and unrighteous treatment of men for the sake of some differences in religious opinions. Very few of those who have had the chief direction of church-affairs, who have not been blamable for some rigour and uncharitableness in sentiment or practise. And oftentimes they who by their stations have been guides and teachers of others have earnestly inculcated such a zeal, such a temper and conduct toward those who have not been in all things of the same mind with them, as is extremely unrighteous and unmerciful. Nor are they those only who  
are

are chief in power that are guilty in this respect. For they also who are few in number, and of small authority, in comparison of others, will sometimes assume, and become imperious and uncharitable toward those who differ from them in these points.

This then is a very common fault. And because common, the greater care and circumspection are necessarie. For every one has a right to think for himself, and is obliged to determine according to the best of his own judgement and understanding. And it is a duty incumbent upon every one to enquire seriously into the things of religion, and to judge according to evidence. Therefore no man, or body of men, civil or ecclesiastical, can have a right to impose religious creeds or articles upon other men, and to punish them for not assenting to them. Any one may propose reasons and arguments in behalf of his opinions: But no man ought to enforce assent any farther than his arguments convince.

It is true, no one has a right to do, or teach any thing, that is contrarie to the peace of society. That is the magistrate's province.

province. But where opinions are innocent, and have no direct tendence to disturb the peace and quiet of others, and men are guilty of no injustice, they have a right to the protection of the power of the society in which they live, and ought to enjoy the privileges of peaceable subjects.

And that we ought to avoid a persecuting, and a malevolent temper and conduct with regard to men of different sentiments, and to practise much tenderness, mildness, forbearance and love, is apparent not only from the reason and fitness of things, as just now hinted, but also from the conduct and example of our Blessed Lord and his apostles, and from the mildness of the principles and precepts of the Christian religion, as recorded in the books of the New Testament; which was not planted and spread in the world by force and violence, by human authority, and the power of the sword, but by reason and argument, and the example of a holy and amiable life and conversation. Moreover, the Christian religion did by the like means spread and prevail for a good while after the death of Christ's apostles, and their fellow-labourers, without human supports, and notwithstanding frequent



frequent and violent persecutions. And though the favour of the civil power and authority, upon the conversion of Constantin, might be an advantage for a while: yet I suppose, it may be allowed to be a just observation, that since Christians, instead of being persecuted, as they had been by Jews and Heathens, have persecuted one another, Christianity has made little progress, but has rather lost ground. For the once numerous and flourishing churches of the East, and in a large part of Africa, have been all, in a manner, long since swallowed up in Mahometanism. And I presume, it may much dispose us to moderation to observe, that where there is the most rigid imposition, and tyrannical government, as in the church of Rome, there are the grossest errors, and the most unreasonable superstitions, together with a very deplorable corruption of manners, especially where that ecclesiastical tyrannie is at the greatest height.

Let us not then be afraid of religious liberty, as prejudicial and unfriendly to truth. Let us not by any means concur in any methods of rigour and severity toward men  
of

of different sentiments, as thinking thereby to promote the interest of religion and virtue. For beside that such methods are in themselves unreasonable and unrighteous, they are also detrimental to the cause of truth.

9. Another thing, in which we ought not to follow others, is *indifference about the things of religion*. Of this men may be in danger on various accounts. Considering the many differences and dissensions, there are upon this head; the animosity and fierceness with which religious disputes are often managed; the many abuses of religion, that is, it's name and profession, by hypocritical, artful and self-interested men; some may be apt to take offense, and to determine, no more to concern themselves about it, but let all things abroad have their course; whilst they, for their part, secure, as far as possible, their own present worldly ease and advantage.

Others may be in danger of much indolence upon this head from other considerations. Religion, say they, is an abstruse and difficult thing. Let us therefore acquiesce in the determinations of our superiors and governours in church and state, and believe as they require. Or, let us follow

follow those to whom we are allyed, and do as they desire, especially if they are at all importunate, without giving ourselves any pain about this matter.

But this indifference and indolence ought to be guarded against. Whatever dissensions there are in the world, partly through human weakness, partly through human wickedness and deceit, there is a difference of things. Truth and virtue are realities, built upon solid foundations. And with care and attention the great and general principles of true religion, and the main branches of virtue, may be discerned from error and vice.

Every man therefore should endeavour, to the best of his power, according to the circumstances he is in, to know and understand the chief things of religion, and the grounds and evidences of them. He should be disposed to profess the truth so far as he is acquainted with it, and to appear among those, who make a public acknowledgement of the great creator and sovereign of the world, and of that revelation, which he has made of his will to mankind. He should be concerned for the rights of conscience

science in general, and be heartily desirous, that all men may enjoy the privilege of worshipping God according to their light and knowledge. He should never joyn in oppressing others for conscience sake: but according to his station and circumstances should oppose such measures, and vindicate those who are any way injuriously treated on account of their religious sentiments.

10. and lastly, We are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in *an excessive and inordinate affection for earthly and temporal things*. We are not to act, as if this world were our home, and the things of it our portion, and our all. We should be more moderate in our desires of temporal good things, and less afraid of the evils and sufferings of this life, than many are. If some seek the things of this world, more than those of another; and, if disappointments in such pursuits plunge them into incurable grief and distress; we should be cautious of such intemperate affection for earthly things. If some are unreasonably transported with successes in their worldly designs, and are elated thereby beyond measure, so as to treat others

others with scorn and disdain; we should be ashamed of such misbehaviour. If we are blessed in like manner, let us thankfully own the goodnesse of God; but *re-joyce as though we rejoyced not, because the fashion of this world passeth away.* Do many repine, and murmur against God, because they are not prospered, as some others are? and is there among men a general uneasinesse with their own circumstances? We should be contented and resigned; that it may appear, we acknowledge the over-ruling providence of God, and that there are other sources of joy and satisfaction, beside encrease and abundance of worldly goods. Whatever condition we are in, especially if we are in any higher station, let us not *seek our own interest* only, as too many do, *but every one of us also another's wealth.*

In these things we are not to follow, or imitate other men; nor in any thing else, that is dishonourable to the majesty of God, or that debaseth, and is unworthie of our rational and immortal nature, or that is injurious to our fellow-creatures. In other

C

things,

things, which are not contrarie to reason, or exprefs revelation, we may do as others do: We may enjoy the fame comforts, follow the fame employments, take the fame diverfions, that others do; and may ufe the language of the place and countrey and time, wherein we live. For I do not intend to caft a fnare before you, or raife groundlefs and needlefs fcruples in any man's mind. It is not my defign abfolutely to condemn mufic, or danfing, or thofe diverfions, in which chance, or hazard, has a part, as well as fkill; or thofe entertainments, in which are represented the humours and manners of men, and the revolutions of ftates and empires, or the viciffitudes of particular perfons. Thefe things I do not look upon, as in themfelves, and always evil. They then only become evil, when they are perverted, or abufed; (as I fear they often are;) or when they are accidentally evil, or hurtful to us, for want of prudent circumfpection; which is neceffarie every where, and at all times, and more efppecially upon fome occafions.

But

But then the restrictions and cautions before-mentioned ought to be here remembered. Men are not to waste their time, or their substance, in diversions and amusements. They ought not to hazard any large part of their substance, the losse of which might be any considerable inconvenience to them. They should decline such games, as greatly engage them, and too much raise their passions. Men may do well to take heed, that no amusements rob them of their wisdom, or their seriousness, or their importance in life. If any indecency appears in the entertainments set before them, they ought to detest and resent it, to shew their dislike and abhorrence of it, and to discountenance it in the way best suited to their station and character. We ought ever to be careful to avoid familiarity with the wicked. And it should be esteemed a point of prudence rarely to be neglected, especially by young persons, not to venture alone, where there is any danger, but to secure to themselves the companie of some sober and religious associates; whose presence may keep off

some temptations, or give a check to them.

It is almost needless for me to add, that I do not understand, or explain this text, as regulating mens outward garb. A good man may without scruple follow the fashion of his countrey, and the habit of others about him, of the like rank and station in the world. St. Peter indeed gives such directions as these to women, especially the married: *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* But it is easie to perceive, that what this apostle intends hereby is, that such should esteem the ornaments of the mind above those of the body, and be more concerned about that which is inward, than that which is outward. God declares to the Jews by the prophet Hosea: *Hof. vi. 6. I desired mercie, and not sacrifice.* But no one understands thereby, that God had not desired sacrifice at all, but that he preferred



ferred mercie above sacrifice, or desired the one more than the other: as appears also from what immediatly follows: *and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings:*

So likewise our Lord says: *Lay not up to yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt.* Mat. vi. 19, 20.

*But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.*

He does not absolutely forbid to seek, or lay up earthly treasures; but he teaches men to prefer heavenly and incorruptible above earthly and corruptible treasures, and to be more concerned for the one than the other.

These observations are to be applied to the like excellent advices of the apostle Paul upon the same subject: *In like manner also, (I will) that women adorn themselves in modest* 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

*apparel, with shamefacednesse and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly aray, but (which becometh women professing godlinesse) with good works.*

This text then is not a caution against complying with others in things in which there is no harm, but against following men in that which is really evil and sinful.

I should now proceed to shew the importance of observing this cautionarie direction, according to the explication that has been given, in it's several branches and articles. But that, with a reflection or two by way of conclusion, must be deferred to another opportunity.

## DISCOURSE II.

ROM. xii. 2.

*And be not conformed to this world.*

**I**N discoursing on these words I have proposed in the first place to shew the design and meaning of this direction, *Be not conformed to this world*: Secondly to shew the importance of observing it; and then to add a reflection or two by way of conclusion.

II. Having formerly explained this cautionarie direction, I now proceed to the second head of discourse; *to shew the importance of observing it, and to offer some reasons and arguments against conformity to this world.*

1. It is plain, that *the wise and holy apostle esteemed this a thing of no small mo-*

*ment.* This caution is placed almost at the head of the practical directions, with which he concludes this large and copious epistle to the Romans. And I suppose, that the earnestness, with which this address begins, ought to be understood to be continued and carried on in the words of the text. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* It follows: *And be not conformed to this world.* As if he had said: And by the consideration of the same mercies of God, in which you, as Christians, have partaken abundantly, be persuaded not to be conformed to this world, and to be upon your guard against complying with the men of it in any thing that is evil.

2. By no means, upon no account, be ye like the men of this world in any of their evil and corrupt practices. *Though you live where sin abounds,* and where some sins are even fashionable, you are to keep yourselves free from them. Though such things should be practised and indulged not only by many, but by the most, and those who by  
means

means of their wit and fine parts, or by their high quality and station in the world, can give reputation to whatever they do, and make almost any thing appear graceful; you are not to be moved from your stedfastness in virtue, or from those purposes you have formed upon a serious and deliberate view and consideration of things.

Though our lot should be cast in times and places, in which there are few who love true religion, and walk in the path of virtue; and though these few should be mean in their outward appearance; let us be contented to have our portion with them. And though in the way of irreligion and vice should be found the learned, the rich, the great and honourable of this world; let us not be drawn aside by their example. We ought not to be induced to any compliances that are sinful. This is a forbidden and dangerous complaisance. We may part with what else we will for peace sake, and for the good of others. But we can do no man any good upon the whole by parting with our integrity. I say upon the whole: for possibly by some acts of wickedness the present temporal interest of some particular

particular persons may be advanced. But it is a most unreasonable thing, that one man should hazard his eternal salvation for the sake of the temporal grandeur of another. And besides, he who upon any considerations whatever violates the lawes of God and reason sets his neighbour a pernicious example, that may harden him in sin to his final and utter ruin.

Let us not then go over to those who are involved in the practise of vice. But let us do all that lyes in our power to bring them over to the love and practise of true holinesse. And for this end let us endeavour to set religion in a good light: Let our conversation be an example of strict virtue, without austerity. If our mirth is without levity, let us also be serious without morosenesse or peevishnesse. Above all, let our religion be sincere and undissembled; not an empty, though solemn profession, but a real principle, producing the good fruits of righteoufnesse, gentlenesse and mercie.

3. Herein, it must be owned, there is no small difficulty. But *there is a necessity of it*, unless the world were so reformed  
that

that all in general were wise and good. Our Blessed Lord therefore says: *Enter ye* Mat. vii.  
*in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate,* <sup>13, 14.</sup>  
*and broad is the way that leadeth to destruc-*  
*tion, and many there be which go in thereat.*  
*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the*  
*way, which leadeth unto life, and few there*  
*be that find it.* And says St. John: *We* 1 John v.  
*know, that whosoever is born of God sineth* <sup>18.</sup>  
*not. But he that is begotten of God keepeth*  
*himself, and that wicked one toucheth him*  
*not. And we know that we are of God,*  
*and the whole world lyeth in wickedness.*

4. It is an ancient precept in the law of Moses: *Thou shalt not follow a multitude* Ex. xxiii.  
*to do evil.* And Solomon says: *My son, if* <sup>2.</sup>  
*sinners entice thee, consent thou not: My son,* Prov. i.  
*walk thou not in the way with them, refrain* <sup>10 and 15.</sup>  
*thy foot from their path.* It has been al-  
ways esteemed by wise men a noble and  
commendable resolution of Joshua: *As for* Josh. xxiv.  
*me, and my house, we will serve the Lord;* <sup>15.</sup>  
though all the tribes, and other families of  
Israel, should forsake the Lord, and go after  
other gods. But Christians are better for-  
tified against the temptation of numerous ex-  
amples than other men, and have stronger  
motives

motives to stedfastneſſe in virtue. They know better than others the excellence and obligations of true holineſſe, and the deformity of ſin, and the different conſequences of each. If it would be a fault in other men, it muſt be much more ſo in them, to be influenced by numbers to forſake the paths of religion and virtue.

5. And though the number of *the ſincerely good and reſolutely virtuous* may be ſmall in a comparative view, yet they are *more than a few* upon the whole. Some there have been in all ages, who have approved themſelves to God and their own conſciences. The apoſtle to the Hebrews having given a catalogue of excellent perſons from almoſt the beginning of time, ſome of whom *endured the tryal of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented,* animates the Chriſtians of his days with the conſideration of their number, when collected together. *Wherefore,* ſays he, *ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that does ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.*

6. Some



6. Some *singularity*, or eminence, and uncommon stedfastness in that which is truly good and excellent, *is very becoming, and even expedient in Christians.* How can it be otherwise? If the principles and precepts of their religion be more sublime, pure and perfect, than those of any other religion, and have a suitable influence; must they not necessarily create some difference between them and other men? They are certainly obliged to act according to the truths they have received. They gladly would, that others should keep them company. But if they obstinately refuse, and will not be persuaded, they must leave them behind, and follow Jesus whither he leads them. *If ye were of the world, says* John xv. *our Lord to his disciples, the world would* <sup>19.</sup> *love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Christ supposeth, that as his people are not of the world, so they will often meet with disagreeable treatment in it. But they are to remember their character, and to endeavour to excell, and thereby to be useful. After this manner he speaks to his people and followers:

*Mat.* v.  
13—16.

followers: *Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost it's favour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be troden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.* Says St. Paul

*Eph.* v. 7,  
8.

to the Ephesians: *Be not ye partakers with them; for ye were some time darknesse, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Once more,

*Philip.* ii.  
15.

in the epistle to the Philippians: *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

7. Our blessed Lord highly approves, and will reward and distinguish those, who are faithful to him in the midst of temptations, and uphold the honour of his name in the

*Luke* xii.  
32.

world. He sayd to his disciples: *Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* In the book

of

of the Revelation he encourages some by his servant John: *Thou hast a few names* Rev. iii.  
*even in Sardis, which have not defiled their* <sup>4, 5.</sup>  
*garments. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthie. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father, and before his angels.*

8. Finally, *there will be much comfort and satisfaction of mind resulting from this conduct, even in this world.* The context suggests this argument. *Present your bodies, give up yourselves sincerely to God, as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Let the temper of your mind become truly religious, spiritual and heavenly, instead of being any longer sensual and carnal: *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.* Then you will not only know and discern, but approve, and delightfully perform that reasonable and excellent worship and obedience, which the  
gospel

gospel requires. Hold on then in the way of religion and virtue, notwithstanding the temptations you meet with to decline and forsake it: the pleasure will be great, your comforts will grow and encrease, and you will more and more approve the choice you have made, as wise and reasonable.

III. I shall now conclude with a few reflections.

I. *Be not conformed to this world.* Is there occasion for such a caution as this? Is the world in which we live degenerate and corrupt? and are we lyable to be misled and ensnared by it? May not this dispose us to a life of privacie and retirement? or reconcile us to it, if it is our lot? Must not this also abate our affection for this world, and life therein, and encrease our willingnesse to depart out of it, whenever God pleaseth? If we are continued in the world, and act therein; let us take care, both that we be not ensnared ourselves, and that no one be the worse for us. Let us scorn to give any countenance and support to falshood or vice. Let us esteem it our indif-

indispensable duty to answer the ends of life. If preferment is not to be obtained, but by base and sinful compliances, let us give over all thoughts of rising in the world. If we cannot keep our station, without parting with our integrity, let us resign it. It is better to live with a good conscience in obscurity and contempt, than to enjoy the caresses and applauses of fellow-creatures in the way of falsehood and iniquity. Better, I say: for the end of such will be happy and glorious. The psalmist of old could say: *I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glorie, and no good thing will be withhold from him that walketh uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* Psalm lxxxiv.

2. Let us each one, in our several stations and circumstances, attend to this caution: *Be not conformed to this world.*

You that are young possibly will admit to be warned and admonished. I shall therefore remind you of a few particulars. To persons of your age the world and

D

many

many things therein have peculiar charms; and what is customarie and reputable comes to you with strong recommendations, and must be very taking. You are desirous of esteem, and think it fit and becoming in such as you to lay hold of that which tends to render you acceptable and agreeable, or to raise and advance you in the world. But, if you have a serious sense of religious things, you must be aware, that you are not to follow the example of others, whether right or wrong. You will do well therefore, whilst you are setting out in the world, to form a fixed purpose and resolution of mind, that you will govern yourselves by the rules of reason and revelation. Take heed, that the commonesse of some sins never abate the horrour and dread you once had of them. Avoid friendship and intimacie with the corrupt and degenerate part of mankind; *lest you learn their ways, and get a snare to your soul.* Let your usual companions be such as appear to have impressions of religion upon their minds, and walk in the paths of virtue. You will be helpful to each other; good beginings will

Prov.  
xxii. 25.

be cherished and improved, and you will keep one another in countenance, if you should meet with some, who are so vile and daring, as to scoff at religion and virtue, and ridicule your conscientious respect to the obligations of either.

But, beside the young, there are *others* also, to whom this cautionarie direction might be addressed, if they would receive it. For, as the young are lyable to be seduced by their companions and equals: so likewise they who are of *mature age* may be in danger of being misled by the bad example of some of their equals in age and station; or by some of superior station, influence and authority; who to outward appearance are serious and attentive, but it is only to the honours, riches, preferments, state and grandeur of this world. Our Lord freely reprov'd such people, and warn'd others against them; as may be seen at large in the twenty third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, and elsewhere.

*Then spake Jesus unto the multitude and to his disciples, saying: The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and*

*Mat.xxiii.*

*1-3.*

do: but do ye ~~not~~ *not* ~~do~~ *do* their works. For  
 ver. 5. they say and do not. But all their works  
 ver. 13. they do to be seen of men. But woe unto  
 you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites: for ye  
 shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.  
 For ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer  
 ye them that are entering to go in. Our  
 Luke xii 1. Lord charged his disciples to beware of the  
 leaven of the pharisees, which is hypocrisie.  
 These men had an outward appearance of  
 sanctity, and were greatly esteemed by ma-  
 ny. Nevertheless they were plainly influ-  
 enced by selfish views, which prejudiced them  
 against the truth, and led them also to ob-  
 struct and discountenance those who were  
 well disposed to it. How can ye believe,  
 John v. 44. said our Lord to some of them, which re-  
 ceive honour one of another, and seek not the  
 honour that cometh from God only? St. Paul  
 Tit. i. 11. observes to Titus, that some teach things  
 which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.  
 ii. 1. But, says he, speak thou the things which  
 become sound doctrine. He earnestly cau-  
 tions Timothie against a covetous disposi-  
 tion, which had been fatal to some, who  
 had taken upon them the profession of the  
 1 Tim. vi. 10, 11. Christian religion, saying: *The love of mo-  
 ney*



ney is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. An undue love of wealth, honour, influence and authority, may be as prejudicial to the interests of religion in a man's mind, as an inordinate love of sensual pleasure. And there may be as much need for some to guard against the example of the formal, who are covetous, ambitious and aspiring, as for others to be upon their guard against that of the gay and voluptuous, the thoughtless and inconsiderate.

Let us then all attend to this cautionarie direction, and the thoughts annexed to it in the same verse: *And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

And let us beg of God to assist us in resisting the temptations of a vain world: that we may never be induced to follow a multitude in that which is evil; but may be

be followers of those, who in ancient or later times have given an example of lively faith and stedfast virtue: that we may at length sit down with them, not only in peace and safety, but in the plentiful possession of the truest riches, and the full enjoyment of the purest and sublimest entertainments, in the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

*The E N D.*

*Published by the same* AUTHOR.

**T**HE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY, Part i. Or, The Facts *occasionally* mentioned in the New Testament confirmed by Passages of ancient Authors, who were contemporary with our Saviour or his Apostles, or lived near their Time: With an Appendix concerning the Time of Herod's Death. *The Second Edition with Additions.*

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY, Part ii. Or, The *Principal Facts* of the N. T. confirmed by Passages of ancient Authors, &c. Vol. i. ii. and iii. Containing the History of the *Christian Writers* of the first two Centuries, and of Part of the third, and their Testimony to the Books of the New Testament.

A VINDICATION of three of our Blessed Saviour's Miracles: The raising of *Jairus's Daughter*, the *Widow of Naim's Son*, and *Lazarus*; in Answer to Mr. *Woolston's* fifth Discourse. *The Second Edition.*

COUNSELS OF PRUDENCE for the Use of young People: A Discourse on the Wisdom of the Serpent and the Innocence of the Dove: in which are recommended general Rules of Prudence; with particular Directions relating to Business, Conversation, Friendship, and Usefulness.



A  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

Of the late REVEREND

WILLIAM HARRIS, D. D.

Who dyed *May* 25. 1740.

*Æt.* LXV.

---

By NATHANIEL LARDNER.

---

L O N D O N :

Sold by JOSEPH DAVIDSON at the *Angel*,  
and JOHN GRAY at the *Cross-Keys*, both  
in the *Poultry*. MDCCLX.



TO THE  
CONGREGATION  
OF

*Protestant Dissenters,*

Meeting in

CROUCHED FRYARS, LONDON,

This SERMON,

Occasioned by the DEATH of their late  
Honoured and Worthy Pastor,

The REVEREND

Dr. WILLIAM HARRIS,

And Published at their Request,

*Is Inscribed by*

*Their humble Servant,*

N. LARDNER.





## 2 THESS. i. 10.

*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*

**W**HEN our Lord comes again, he comes to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his works; as the Apostle writes in this context to the Christians at *Thessalonica*, who suffered persecution for the gospel: *It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us: when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that*

B believe:

*believe* : that is, when he shall come to be glorified, in the eye of the whole world, in the punishments inflicted on the final and ir-reconcilable enemies of God and religion, and in the glorious and happy circumstances of those who have sincerely embraced the truth, and have been under the power and influence of it.

We may improve these words, by observing and enlarging somewhat upon these three propositions :

I. *Christ will come again.*

II. When he comes, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumstances of his people.

III. He will be admired by all who have believed in him, and continued faithful to the end.

PROP. I. I. *Christ will come again.* This is no less certain, than that he once dwelt on this earth. The time is still a secret to us, and perhaps to all orders of intelligent creatures. But the thing itself is undoubted. He will come again at the time appointed of the Father, as St. *Peter* observes in one of his first sermons after the descent of the Spirit : *whom the heavens must receive, till the time of the restitution of all*

*all things.* At the very instant of his ascension, his disciples were expressly assured of it by two angels; *This same Jesus, say they,* Acts i. 11. *which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.* Our Lord himself often spoke of it to his disciples, and with the fullest assurance of the certainty of the event. *I go to* John xiv. *prepare a place for you.* *And if I go and pre-* 2, 3. *pare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my self, that where I am, there ye may be also.* But he never acquaints them with the time. And because, for wise reasons, that is kept secret, he frequently exhorts them to watchfulness and circumspection. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching . . . . Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh.*

But though the time is unknown, the second coming of their Lord is no less the object of the faith of God's people now, than his first coming was of the saints under former dispensations. And the fulfilment of ancient predictions, in his first coming, confirms the hope of his appearing again. Nor

is the great design of his coming into this world as yet accomplished. He will therefore certainly come once more, to compleat the work he has begun.

We also know some of the circumstances of his expected coming, which are very different from those of the first. Then he was in the form of a servant. Hereafter he will appear in the character of the universal Lord and judge : *He will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire : He comes in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him : He will sit on the throne of his glory, and before him will be gathered all nations.*

PROP. II. II. *When Christ comes again, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumstances of his people.* Here we may observe two things : *first*, what there will be, at that time, in their circumstances, which will reflect honour upon him. *Secondly*, what perfections in him will then be glorified and appear illustrious.

I. *First*, what there will be, at that time, in the circumstances of his people, that will reflect honour and lustre upon him. There will be such things as these ; the perfection  
of

of their holiness, their external glory, and their great number.

1.) One thing in *Christ's* people, which will then reflect honour upon him, is *the perfection of their holiness*. They, who then appear among his people, and are owned by him, are such as had believed in him, and served him faithfully in this world. The virtue of these, which here had some alloys and imperfections, will then be completed. *The church, which he loved, and for which he gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, will then be presented to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, being holy and without blemish.* Eph. v. 25—27.

2.) Another thing in his people that will reflect honour upon him is *their external glory*, or the lustre of their persons; their bodies being then raised up immortal, and no more liable to death, or diseases. Soul and body are reunited, freed from all the infirmities of sinful and mortal flesh. They have enlarged capacities, fitted for the noblest services; celestial minds, and celestial bodies; bodies no longer clogs to the soul in its divine employments, but made fit for a partnership with it in uninterrupted and endless praise  
and

and happiness. The representations, which the scripture gives us of this glory of the  
 1 Cor xv. 42—49. *faints, are to this purpose : So also is the resurrection of the dead : It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body-----The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly-----We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. So St. Paul. And, says  
 Philip. iii. 21. another Apostle : It does not yet appear, what we shall be : but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

3.) In the day of his second coming Christ will be glorified in the number and great multitude of his saints. He himself once spoke of his disciples and people, as a little flock.  
 Luke xii. 32. It was so then indeed. Few there were that believed in him ; fewer still, who had the courage to own him publicly, and before the world. Most men were then ignorant of  
 him,

him, or offended at him. And oftentimes his professed visible people have made but a small and inconsiderable appearance, in comparison of the rest of the world. But in that day, the number of his redeemed ones will appear to be a great multitude ; when all who have held the faith of *Jesus*, or dyed in the hope and expectation of him, in any age, shall be gathered together from all the ends of the earth, and shall come from the east and the west to meet their triumphant Lord. Says St. *John* in the *Revelation* : *After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindred, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying : Salvation unto our God, which siteth on the throne, and unto the lamb.* *Rev. vii.*  
9, 10.

If *Christ's* people and followers should not then appear to be so numerous, as those who have not known him, or not obeyed him ; yet they may, as they certainly will, be a great number, exceeding what the contracted charity, or the melancholy apprehensions of some now admit of and suppose. There may be many among his  
faints,

faints, not only out of all nations and people, but also out of all sects and parties; some of which were far from being very conspicuous or renowned on this earth.

There will be many of all ranks, of different gifts and attainments: Some, of great learning, and the most exalted capacity; who preferred the knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, and him crucified, above all other science; as best suited to secure the practise of virtue, and advance it to the greatest perfection, and support the mind under the afflictions of this life. Others there will be, of meaner capacities, unable by the exercise of their own reason, to trace out the principles and obligations of religion and virtue, or to comprehend the abstruse speculations, and profound reasonings of the philosophers; who from the doctrine, miraculous works, great example, conspicuous and well-attested death and resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, have learned the nature and obligation of true religion, as consisting in the love of God and our neighbour, and the certainty of future recompenses, and have been engaged thereby to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Some there will be in this number, who had gone far from God, and been greatly entangled



tangled in the snares of an evil world, and were in the utmost danger of everlasting perdition ; who having been pierced with a sense of sin, and drawn by the gracious invitations of the gospel, became sincere penitents, and eminent saints. Others, who having been educated in the principles of the Christian doctrine, and having been from the beginning under the impressions of them, continued to walk with Christ in white, and kept their garments clean, unspotted from the world. There will be here a glorious appearance of such as bought the truth, and would not sell it ; who took the kingdom of heaven by violence, and chose the narrow path of virtue that leads to the sight of God and the heavenly life : when they, who should have animated and encouraged them by their counsel and example, laid obstacles in their way, and would have persuaded them rather to seek the ease, riches, honours and preferments of this present world. Some there will be of large minds, who studied the principles of reason and revelation, and were well acquainted with the mind of Christ ; who here earnestly recommended general benevolence, promoted peace and friendship among men, and happily prevented contentions and divisi-

ens. They will have distinguished honour in that day. And some others, possibly, shall not miss of the divine favour, who from false apprehensions, and a mistaken zeal, had been here too apt to reject some, whom they should have received as brethren in Christ, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. There will be some, who in this state of trial had done honour to religion, by a chearful, as well as steady obedience. They had a comfortable persuasion of the divine favour and acceptance, and they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.

*Gal. ii. 20.* They could say : *The life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* They will triumph and exult, when Christ, the judge of all, shall confirm the testimony they had in their minds, that *they were the children of God.* Others there will be, men of true simplicity and integrity, but dejected and low-spirited. They hoped, but could never fully clear up to their satisfaction, that they loved God ; nor arrive at a settled persuasion, that they were loved of him ; who, *Rev. xx. 12.* when the *books shall be opened,* will know, to their unspeakable joy, that *their names also were written in the book of life.* There will be a great number, who here on earth were despised

despised of men, and lived in mean condition; who will be owned by Christ for his people, as having been resigned, contented, thankful in the circumstances allotted them by divine providence. There will be many, who had honoured the Lord with their substance, who *clothed the naked, fed the hungry, visited the sick*, and spoke comfortably to those who were cast down. There will be many who had gone through great tribulation, who *labored* and did *not faint*: a noble and numerous company of martyrs and confessors, who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, or laid down their lives in testimony to the truth.

Will not this multitude of such persons reflect honour upon him, by whom they were redeemed; through whose means they were carried safe through the temptations of this world, and were enabled to persevere to the end, notwithstanding the difficulties they met with? If it be true, as it certainly is, that *they who be wise shall shine as the brightnesse of Dan. xii. the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever*: how glorious is Jesus, the source of this wisdom, the spring of this zeal for truth and virtue!

2. *Secondly*, we are to consider, what perfections in Christ will then be glorified, and appear illustrious. And it is reasonable to suppose, that his wisdom, his power, and his faithfulness will then be very conspicuous.

1.) *His wisdom.* The preaching of the cross has appeared foolishness to many in this world: but then it will be manifest, beyond the possibility of farther doubt and question, that *the foolishness of God*, that divine dispensation, which many had despised, was wiser than all the wisdom of men. Some indeed, yea not a few, do now perceive and acknowledge it to be a well laid design, admirably suited to the weakness and degeneracy of the human nature. And they are ready to say with the Apostle: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! And that God hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.* But at that time the contrivance of this dispensation will appear still more wonderful. It will be manifest, particularly in the great number of the saints then collected, and brought together in one, from the several parts of the world; to whom *Christ has been made of God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

1 Cor. i.  
25.

1 Cor. i.  
30.

It

It is indeed a vast and delightful scene of contemplation, which will then lye open to the faints ; to observe the original design, several steps, continued progresse, and final completion of the recoverie and salvation of so many frail and sinful men, by Jesus Christ; and to observe the extent of his government of the church, and the world in general, in the several parts and ages of it, from the time of his exaltation to the right hand of the throne of God, to that great and glorious day, when all mankind are brought before his tribunal.

2.) At that time *the power of Christ* will be glorified. It will appear great and wonderful in the resurrection of the faints, just performed by his word. This is what our Lord spoke of, as so marvellous, in answer to some cavils of the Jews: *For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth. And he will skew him greater things than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . . Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall bear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they*

*they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*

3.) Another perfection, to be glorified at that time, is *the truth*, or *faithfulness of Christ*. This is the day for the full accomplishment of all his promises, upon which his people have depended, and by which they have been animated in the whole of their course. Here he delivered rules of life, and made gracious promises to such as obeyed them. He encouraged men to forsake all earthly goods for his sake and the gospel, assuring them of abundant recompense hereafter. In his conference with Nicodemus he useth these expressions: *Verily I say unto thee : We speak what we do know, and testify that we have seen.* In his preaching he publicly declared with the greatest solemnity : *This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* Once more, he says to his disciples : *In my Father's house are many mansions : If it were not so, I would have told you.* Upon the ground of a clear conviction of his divine authority

*John iii.*  
11.

*John vi.*  
39, 40.

*John xiv.*  
2.

thority and character, which he claimed, and a persuasion of the truth of all his declarations and promises, his people have acted as they have done. They have given themselves up to him, and obeyed him. They have been induced to seek principally such things as are now distant and unseen; and not to prefer, but oftentimes to forego the pleasures, possessions, honours of this present world, and every thing desirable therein, in hope of being raised up by him to immortal life and everlasting happiness. So they have acted: so they have believed, and trusted in him. And now his truth is manifest in the event. Those things, which were once the objects of desire and hope, are possessed and enjoyed. His faithfulness was believed before, and there was good evidence of the truth of all he said, and they who depended upon it, acted wisely and reasonably: but now it is even seen. Not one jot or tittle of his word has fallen to the ground, but all is fulfilled. Not one of those *little ones*, whom men despised, has perished, whom he had assured that it was the good pleasure of the Father to give them a kingdom. Not one of those, whom the Father had given him, is wanting, but all his sheep are placed at his right hand.

His

His truth and faithfulness may be farther illustrated, at that time, by the peculiar degrees of honour and glory conferred upon those, whose virtue has been eminent, and tried by great difficulties and sufferings here. Many indeed, and great are the encouragements, which he gave in the course of his ministry to those who should be eminent, steadfast and constant in virtue. And future rewards will certainly be answerable to those encouraging declarations, and the hopes he has raised by them. *Blessed are ye, says he, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake : Rejoice and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven.* When the disciples desired to know, who should be *greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, he did not deny that there would be distinctions therein : but intimates, that he who should be most humble, and for the sake of truth and the good of mankind, most abase himself, would in the end be most exalted, and be *greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. When the two disciples petitioned, *to sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom*, he did not grant their request ; assuring them it was not a thing to be determined by him, upon

Matth. v.  
11, 12.

Matth.  
xviii. 1, 4.



upon the ground of any personal regards and considerations. Nevertheless he adds : *It shall* Matt. xx:  
*be given to them for whom it is prepared of my* <sup>23.</sup>  
*Father.* And he insinuates to them, that  
 one way of being nearest to him in his glory,  
 is to *drink of his cup, and be baptised with*  
*the baptism, with which he was to be baptised ;*  
 that is, to suffer in testimony to truth, if  
 called thereto. In figurative expressions he  
 pronounces a special blessing upon men of u-  
 niform virtue and obedience. *Blessed are those* Luke xii.  
*servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh shall* <sup>37.</sup>  
*find watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he*  
*shall gird himself, and make them to sit down*  
*to meat, and will come forth and serve them.*  
 When Thomas, upon the ground of an over-  
 bearing evidence, admitted the truth of his  
 resurrection, our Lord graciously accepted the  
 profession of faith which he made : But at  
 the same time, he breaks forth into a superior  
 commendation of such as should be better dis-  
 posed to truth. *Jesus saith unto him : Tho-* John xx:  
*mas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast be-* <sup>29.</sup>  
*lieved : Blessed are they which have not seen,*  
*and yet have believed.*

Agreeable hereto are many declarations of  
 the Apostles. For, says St. Paul, *our light* 2 Cor. iv.  
D
*affliction* <sup>17.</sup>

*affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight*  
 1 Pet. i. 7. *of glory.* And St. Peter : *That the tryal of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ : that is, they who when tried by difficulties and sufferings in the cause of truth, are not thereby overcome, but still continue faithful, and are only more and more refined and sanctified, shall receive abundance of honour and praise at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

Hereby the Lord will be glorified ; when the truth and equity of his judgement shall be manifest in rewards, proportioned to his declarations, and the great hopes he had raised in the minds of the sincere and upright. The cause of virtue is then compleatly vindicated by him. Every instance of right conduct is recompensed. And the most eminent virtue, which here on earth is sometimes exposed to the greatest difficulties, and the worst reproaches, receives an equal reward. This is glorious to the judge of the world.

These are perfections of Christ, which are  
 glori-

glorified by the perfect holiness, external glory, and great number of his people. For, as the Apostle says, *Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice in it*: so also is Christ, the head, honoured and glorified in the honour of each saint, much more in the honour and glory of the whole church, which is his body. This is the day, when good men, of all ages and nations, of every rank and condition, of different capacities and attainments, who have lived under the several dispensations of reason and revelation, make up one visible and harmonious assembly. Nor is there any longer one member of the church suffering, or tempted: All have finished their course, and their warfare is accomplished. In the stile of the Revelation, *they are clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands*, the ensigns of victory and triumph. 1 C r. xii.  
26  
Rev. vii.  
9.

It is then a day glorious to Christ, and a day of unspeakable joy to his people. He must be honoured and revered by those also, to whom his appearance is not joyful. For all the unjust neglect and contempt of him and

his people are for ever confuted, and put to shame ; and a full conviction is wrought in the minds of all, concerning the reasonableness of the gracious promises formerly made in favour of virtue, and the great rewards now conferred upon it.

It is, moreover, reasonable to suppose, that at this time Christ will be very glorious in the esteem of the blessed angels, and all orders of intelligent beings. For the angels are said to

*Heb. i. 14.* be *ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation.* And

*1 Pet. i. 12.* they *desired to look into those things,* that were done at the publication of the gospel. It may be therefore justly concluded, that they likewise partake in the joy and acclamations of this day ; and that in their eyes, or well as in those of his people, Christ is glorified : especially since they are spoken of as present at this time, and coming as attendants on the judge of the world.

See also  
*Rev. v. 11—14.*

**PROP. III.** III. When Christ comes again, he will be *admired*, particularly, *by all them that believe.* Three things will appear admirable at that time : Christ's personal glory, the greatness of his love in what he has done for his people, and

and his goodneſſe in the kind reception he gives them, and the great reward he beſtows upon them.

I. *Chriſt's personal glory.* He comes on the clouds, with an innumerable company of the heavenly inhabitants in his train. And many awful appearances there will be to encrease the grandeur and ſolemnity of that day. There will be alſo the glory of his own perſon, ſuited to his real dignity, and the great characters he ſuſtains, of head of the church and judge of the world. Once, when he was on earth, in the days of his humiliation, he was gloriouſly transformed in the view of three of his diſciples : *His face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment became white as the light.* The deſcription given of that one tranſient glorification may help us to ſome imperfect idea of the preſent glory of the human nature of Chriſt in his ſtate of exaltation, and of that in which he will appear, when he comes to judge the world. But though we cannot now diſtinctly conceive of it, we may be aſſured it will be ſuch, as will raiſe the wonder of all, and afford every believer a pleaſing ſurpriſe and joy. Each ſaint will have a glory of his own, with which he will  
be

be satisfied : All will admire, and be delighted with the transcendent glory and majesty of him who is their common Lord and head.

2. Another thing that will be admired at that time is *the love of Christ in what he has done for his people, in order to bring them to the glorious and happy circumstances in which they then appear.* This was always matter of wonder to those who duly considered it. It will hereafter appear more admirable. It was owing to the doctrine taught by him in a mean condition, and farther confirmed by his painful death and glorious resurrection, that their hearts were won to God and virtue. It was

*Heb. xii. 1, 2. by looking unto Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and then sat down on the right hand of the throne of God; that they laid aside every weight, and ran with patience the race that was set before them.* If he had not first overcome neither had they overcome, as they have done, the allurements and terrors of an evil world. His victory encouraged them, and made them conquerors. So it is in the Apostle's

*Rom. viii. 35-37. triumphant challenge: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distresse, or persecution . . . ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.*

3. An-

3. Another thing, that will be admired by them that believe, is the *goodnesse of Christ in the kind and gracious reception he gives them, and the reward he bestows upon them.* This may be argued from the representation, which our Lord himself has given of the solemn procedure at the end of the world: *Then shall the king say unto them on the right* Matth. *band : Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the* xxv. 24. *kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; a stranger, and ye took me in. Then shall the righteous answer unto him, saying : Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ?* It will appear amazing goodnesse in him, to consider, and reward acts of kindnesse, done to their afflicted and necessitous brethren, as done to himself ; especially as they are conscious, that the principle of virtue, from which those good works have proceeded, was formed by his care and institution, and was owing to that love, wherewith he first loved them, in living a life of sorrows, and dying a painful death for their sake.

Thus

*Applicati-  
on.*

Thus we have meditated a while upon the several parts of this text. And we perceive, the day of Christ's second coming will be a day of great splendour and magnificence. And shall it not be a day of joy unto us? shall we not partake in the glory and triumphs of that time? This well deserves our consideration. It was a desirable thing, to see the Saviour of the world, when clothed in the sinless infirmities of the human nature. It must be much more desirable, to see him coming in his glory. But neither of these his comings is of advantage unto all. They were his disciples only, and such others, as attentively heard his words, and received them into good and honest hearts, who were entitled to a blessing, as he says to them: *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.* So it will be likewise in the time of his second coming. He appears to compleat the redemption of those only, whose salvation was begun here, and who were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the sons of God.

*Matth.  
xiii. 16.*

This text leads us to two things, necessary to our seeing Christ with joy; that we be  
*saints;*



*saints, and believers; or, that we have a faith, which purifyes the heart, and produces works of righteoufneffe in our lives. So let us be prepared for the coming of the Lord. And let us be diligent, that we may be found of <sup>2 Pet. iii.</sup> him in peace, without spot and blameless. Let <sup>14.</sup> us be such in the frame of our mind, and in all our actions, at every season, that we may be ready to meet him, when-ever he comes. These are they, whom Christ pronounceth blessed, as before shewn. His words at length are these; *Blessed are those servants, whom the <sup>Luke xii.</sup> Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. <sup>37, 38.</sup> Verily I say unto you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.**

May this be our case, as we have reason to <sup>*The Character.*</sup> believe it was that of our Honoured Pastour, whose death we, and many others, now lament! At the same time we ought to be thankful, that he has been so long upheld by his Lord and Master in his service, and particularly, as pastour of this congregation, for the space of forty years and upwards: Of

E

which

which relation to this society, and the harmonie that had all along reigned therein, he speaks with satisfaction in the preface to his *Discourses on the principal Representations of the Messiah, throughout the Old Testament* : “ Recommending them particularly to those  
 “ of his own charge, to whom he had then  
 “ stood so long related, and with whom he  
 “ had lived in an uninterrupted peace,  
 “ and with many marks of a distinguish-  
 “ ing respect : ” which is to your, as well as his honour. He concludes that preface with these words, shewing what was the constant aim of his labours, and what the reward he most desired : “ Such as they  
 “ are, *says he*, I make a humble sacrifice of  
 “ them to the honour of the blessed Re-  
 “ deemer, and lay them at his feet : having  
 “ no higher ambition in this world, than to  
 “ serve his interest, and be accepted of him,  
 “ nor higher expectation and hope, than to  
 “ be with him, and behold his glory.”

His sermons in the stated course of his ministry were judicious, and practical, filled with just sentiments, and texts of scripture aptly applied ; composed with great propriety  
 of

of expression, and exactness of order and method ; suited to meaner, as well as better capacities ; the fruit of much study, and serious thought and consideration. The subjects of his preaching were of a large compass, taking in the general principles of religion, with the grounds and evidences of them, and the important duties of the Christian life, recommended by forcible motives and considerations : Not neglecting any of the various wants and exigences of men, but aiming, by proper and well-chosen arguments, to awaken the secure, quicken the slothful, comfort the afflicted, and strengthen the weak : Nor always laying the foundations of religion, but carrying on good beginnings toward perfection. Thus, as a faithful steward and wise overseer, he divided to every one a portion. How he performed some other branches of his pastoral office, many of you must likewise be very sensible, and can bear testimony to the fidelity and tenderness, with which he admonished, warned, advised, comforted, in private, as the circumstances of things required. His performances at the public ordinations of ministers were always greatly esteemed.

In funeral discourses, whether for ministers, or other useful Christians, he had a happy art of giving the best likeness without flatterie. His delivery, as you well know, was grave and manly, entirely free from affectation, with very little action, in a word, worthy of himself. As his assistance was much desired in many other places, and his preaching was generally acceptable ; I trust there are many, to whom he has been, under God, the instrument of forming a principle of virtue, and of cherishing and improving it by the word of God dispensed by him ; who shall be to him, in the great day, a crown of glory and rejoicing. Notwithstanding the exactness of his own compositions, he was a candid hearer of others ; and was a true friend, as well as an excellent pattern to younger ministers, in preaching and in conversation.

In his family he was a watchful guardian, a faithful monitor, an affectionate friend.

He had a great command of his temper and his words. He was scarce ever seen to be angry. He very seldom sayd any thing to the disadvantage of any one. And was  
 much

much more apt to commend, than find fault.

He was a steady friend. If any, who stood in that relation to him, came into trouble; he did not desert them, but liberally relieved, and affectionately comforted them, and persisted to take care of them under continued distresses and afflictions; though sometimes some such returns were made, as could not be altogether agreeable.

He was happy in the esteem and respect of great numbers of his brethren in the ministry, and many others; men of much reading, sound judgement, unquestioned probity, and eminent in their several spheres and stations. Not now to insist on the regard shewn him by those of the congregation, to which he was more especially related, and in whom he had much comfort: which was mentioned before.

He scarce ever lost any friendship entirely. For being always master of himself, he never irritated by hasty and offensive expressions the displeasure, which any through prejudice might conceive against him. And, as goodwill had never ceased, nor enmity taken place,

on

on his part, when opportunities offered ; (which were not unlikely to happen, considering his reputation and influence in the world ;) he cheerfully performed offices of kindneſſe for ſuch perſons, or their friends, and thereby laid them under freſh obligations. Thus he overcame evil with good, and regained the love and eſteem of thoſe, who for a while had been eſtranged from him.

He was a ſincere friend of religious and civil liberty. And was always of a catholic ſpirit, loving good Chriſtians of every communion.

Such were his attainments, that it may be well ſuppoſed he was particularly fitted for the converſation of men of rank, and of extenſive knowledge. But he could condeſcend, And in the ſociety of meaner perſons he was the ſame man ; as well-pleaſed, and as free and communicative, as in any other ; provided he found an inquiſitive temper, and ſome good underſtanding in the things of religion. In thoſe ſeaſons he appeared very amiable to ſuch as were attentive, and diſpoſed to obſerve.

The beſt judges have acknowledged the  
pieces

pieces published by him, which consist of several volumes, and are upon divers subjects and occasions, to be the works of a masterly hand. How constant he was in the public services of his ministerial office in this place, and how frequent elsewhere, are things well known. And when it is considered how laboured and finished all his compositions were ; and that, besides, he read much, both ancient and modern authors ; had a numerous acquaintance, and a large epistolary correspondence ; and that with care he revised many works of his learned friends, and kindly forwarded some of them to public view, and performed abundance of other good offices in private, and had a concern in many great and useful designs of a more public nature ; it may be somewhat difficult to conceive, how he should have sufficient time and strength for what he did. But he was blessed with a most ready apprehension, which fitted him for quick dispatch ; and moreover, he loved employment, and could endure long and close application.

But to draw to a conclusion : Dr. HARRIS may be said to have excelled among good men,

men, on account of the number of virtues possessed by him in a conspicuous degree, and on account of the great uniformity of his temper and conduct in the several occurrences of his life. Among great men, in like manner, he had a distinction, inasmuch as there have been few, in whom so many accomplishments have met together and been united. And what may serve to confirm this part of the character, however exalted it may appear, is his great reputation in the world, which \* began very early, and continued to the last; not sought by him, but attending him, as the shadow and concomitant of his merit.

By the greatness of his capacity he was qualified for the highest stations in life, and might have shined therein. But it is as glorious

\* Dr. Harris was for a short time Assistant to Mr. Read in Gravel Lane, Southwark. In 1698. the 23d year of his age, he was chosen to succeed the very eminent Mr. Timothy Crusoe in the pastoral care of the congregation in Crouched Fryars, London. In 1703. he was entrusted by the Executors of Mr. Nathanael Taylor with the publication of the posthumous papers of that celebrated preacher; to which he prefixed a preface, an example of that excellent manner, by which all his writings are distinguished. How great his credit has been of late years, is well known. I add no more. But, for some farther memoirs of Dr. Harris, would refer to the funeral sermon preached by Dr. Grosvenor.



rious to despise great things, as to seek and obtain them. Merit is an intrinsic thing, and depends not upon outward advantages. Nor is his at all the less for choosing to serve God, and abiding in the way most agreeable to his own judgement, and endeavouring to be useful among those Christians, who were much of the same mind with himself; to whom he has been an ornament, and will be a lasting Honour.

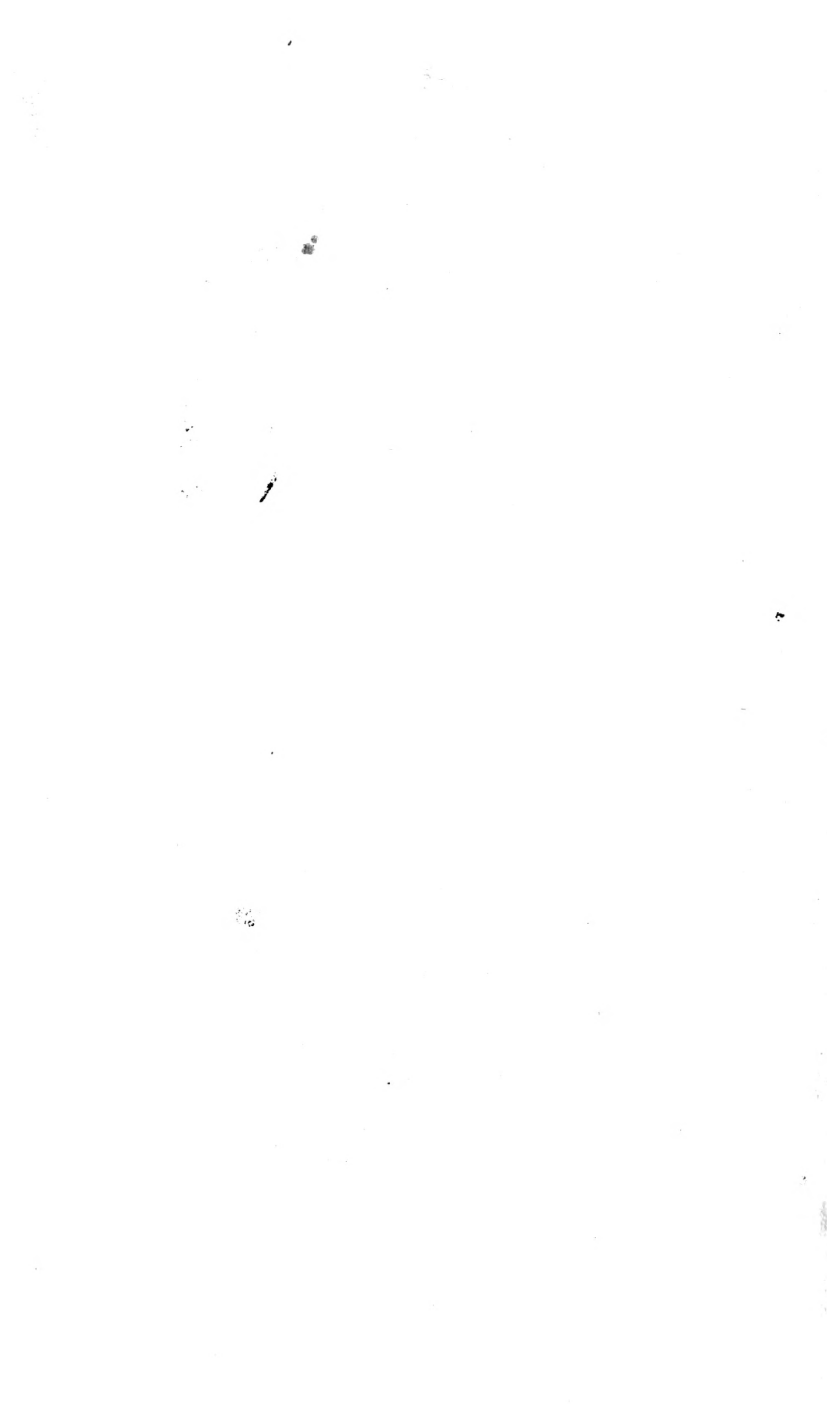
The relation that has subsisted between this excellent person and us, is now dissolved and broken by the stroke of death. And it becomes us to submit our wills to the divine will and pleasure, and to acquiesce in this afflictive and discouraging event. But there are also other duties incumbent on us. It is a direction of the Apostle: *Remember them* Heb. xiii. *that have had the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: and considering the end of their conversation, their stedfastness and perseverance, follow their faith.* There is honour and respect due to the memorie of such. And we ought likewise to imitate their virtues. We should recollect the instructions that have been given us, and

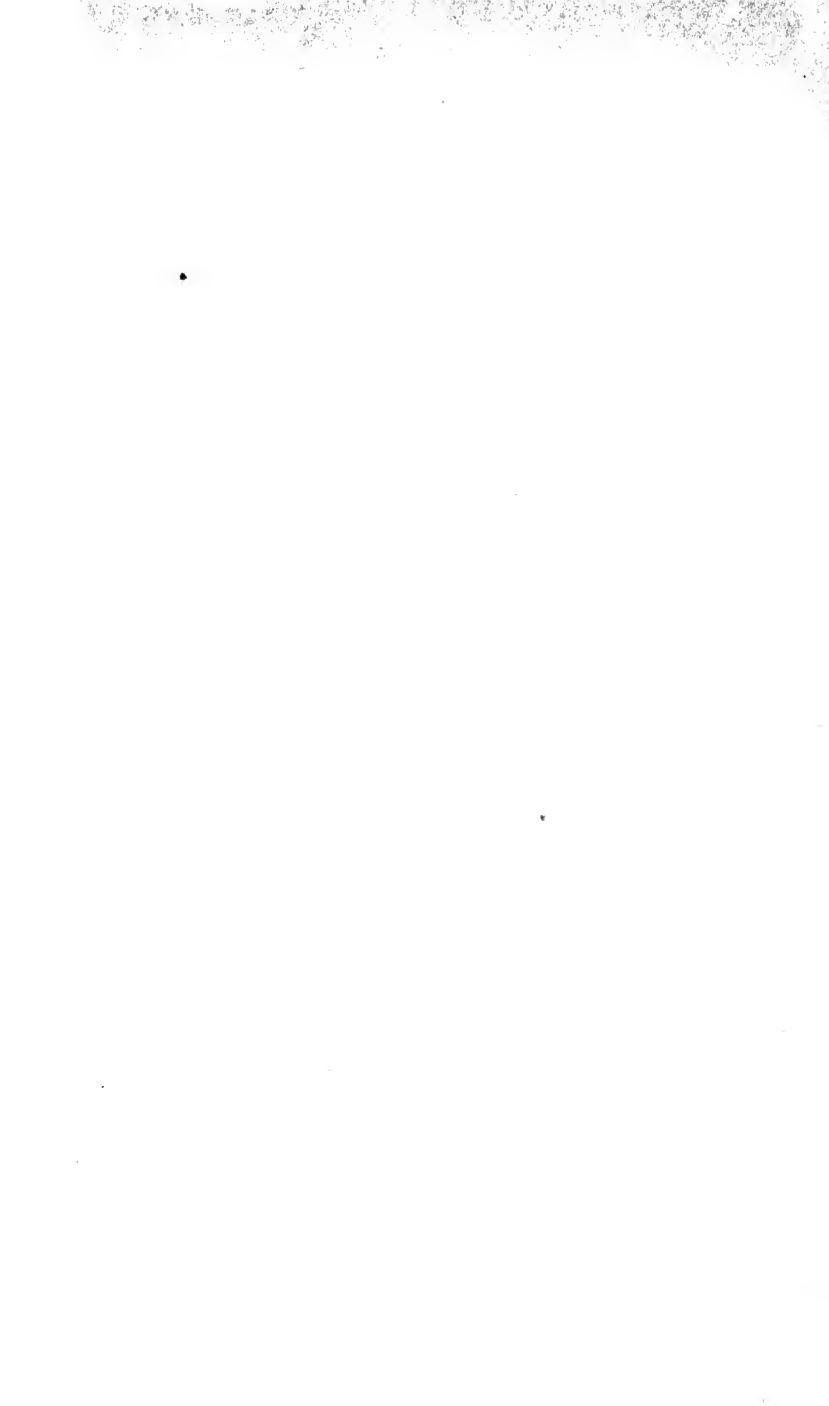
continue to follow and obey them. We are to be thankful for the blessing we have enjoyed ; and are also to consider, that we have had a talent, of which we must give an account. If we shall be able to give a good account in the end, this will be joyful to those who have been our guides and instructors, and to ourselves. Both they and we shall, then, receive a full reward.

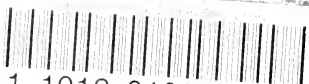
*T H E E N D.*











1 1012 01004 4719