

propriate to themselves many advantages which he must be contented to lose. But these benefits are not to be regretted, they are dearly purchased by the loss of principles, nor will these lukewarm professors have reason to boast of their adroitness when called upon to give an account of the deeds done in the body. But let us descend to particulars, by shewing you the excellence of religious conversation from the practice of the Faithful in every age, from its great efficacy as the means of instruction, and from the happiness it confers.

1st. From the practice of the Faithful in every age.

It is of great advantage to recur to the practice of former ages in removing groundless prejudices, because the counsel given by the dead awakens no suspicion as to its sincerity. We are willing to listen to advice from the departed, which we would spurn from the living; they have no interest to serve, assume no superiority, do not remind us of our negligence and errors, with a self complacency, or with indignation and reproach. There is likewise a pleasure in transporting ourselves to the society of former times, a freshness, a richness of feeling highly salutary in cherishing in our own breasts the practices and habits for which they were distinguished. And in considering ourselves members of the primitive Church of Christ, we cannot for a moment conceive a single meeting without much of that conversation which we wish to recommend. We cannot, even in idea, present the disciples and new converts, without anticipating the most interesting inquiries. Those who had never seen our blessed Lord, and who were converted to the Truth after his resurrection, would be incessant in their questions concerning the Redeemer. They would ask of his manner of speaking and acting, the description of that mild majesty tempered by human limitations, that heart and soul transpiercing look yet encouraging rather than alarming, that condescending affability, that cordial sympathy and comprehensive wisdom, that affectionate love, connecting the present with the future, earth with heaven. We have only to look into our own hearts for a thousand anxious questions respecting his deportment, his manner of instructing his disciples, the lineaments of his countenance, his manner of walking, his attention to the poor, his treatment of the Scribes and Pharisees.