

do not wish to see it in all the rigour and severity with which it reigned supreme in the days of the English Commonwealth, producing, as the natural and inevitable result of its too great interference with individual freedom, the opposite extreme of vice and godlessness which marked the time of the Restoration; but with all our heart we desire and pray that the spirit of Puritanism may ever live, with strength enough to withstand the floods of frivolity and profligacy with threaten out utter demoralization.

For the measure of nonconformity to the world that does exist amongst us we are thankful; we wish, indeed, that in regard to such things as we have specified that nonconformity were more general and more strict in all Christians' lives and homes, it would be no disadvantage to most of us to be more Puritanical than we are. But, rather than urge a greater strictness with reference to worldly amusements, we wish to notice some more important matters to which we are not so much in the habit of applying the Apostle's rule. Many religious people seem to think that worldly conformity consists mainly, if not entirely, of the worldly ways above noted; and, if they avoid these ways, they are satisfied and appear to consider that they obey Paul's admonition. Now, we believe that, with the very strictest abstinence from such worldly conformity as we have described, there may be a conformity to the world of the very worst sort. We have said that Christian people disapprove of gambling in most of its forms. We have chosen this qualified expression advisedly—in most of its forms—on the turf, at the card-table, in the billiard-room; betting upon dogs, upon pigeons, upon pugilists, upon boat-races—such betting is almost entirely abstained from by professing Christians where profession has in it any serious reality. But there is mercantile gambling—in shares, in cotton, in iron, in commodities of all sorts; and many a church member and church office-bearer, who believes a pack of cards to be the devil's bible, and would burn it if he found it in his house, has no scruple whatever about taking part in transactions which no clear mind and healthy conscience can distinguish as differing, morally, from the most blackguardly swindles of the race-course and the most exciting hazards of the gambling hell. If by worldliness we are to understand every evil thing that is very prevalent in the world, then nothing is more worldly than covetousness; yet, in regard to this, the majority of professing Christians, including many who are very prominent in church matters, seem to think that they are at liberty to dispense entirely with St. Paul's advice and to be as much conformed to the world as they please. Between Christians—and we do not use the term in a merely nominal sense, but as indicating men who

really believe in Christ, and understand and acknowledge Christian responsibility—between many such and the most worldly of the world very little difference is discernible in regard to this worldly characteristic. A man may be a greedy, grasping miser, a by-word amongst worldlings, and yet not only remain in full fellowship with the most strictly disciplined church but live and die without any qualm of conscience as to his conformity with the world. We do not say that the world is dishonest. We wish, at any rate, to think better of our fellow-men than to suppose dishonesty so prevalent as to be characteristic of all who may be termed men of the world. Among such men there are multitudes whose veracity and honour are beyond all suspicion. Nevertheless, in the world, there is much dishonesty of which we continually hear loud and angry complaints, and see abundant proof; but we fear that, in so far as the world is dishonest, there is, on the part of religious professors, a large measure of worldly conformity. Do men feel much sater in the hands of Christian men of business than when dealing with others? Do even Christian people, as a general rule, prefer to deal with Christian men of business, in the confidence that they will be the more veraciously and honourably treated? We hope that such questions can be answered with an unflinching "yea;" but we are not sure. Sure, however, we are that such is the answer that Christian profession ought to enable us to give.

It is also a fair question whether Christians might not, along with their anxiety to be superior to worldly amusements, manifest a deeper anxiety for superiority to the world's standard of honour and justice. It is, we fear, rather rarely that nonconformity to the world displays itself in declining to take, in business matters, advantages over our neighbour which the world considers allowable and justifiable. Because our neighbour is poor, because he is in straightened circumstances and forced to sell, we, a Christian buyer, will bend down his price and purchase for £50 what we well know to be worth £100; and we will do this, not because we are poor also; but because we love to make a bargain, and pride ourselves on our shrewd business habits. There are, we are afraid, not a few Christian men to whom, in such a case, it would be simply useless to appeal on any other grounds than perfectly well understood worldly rules. "Business is business," they would say, with an air indicating their impression that they are using an unanswerable argument, and they would be rather indignant at the bare supposition that they were amenable to any other laws. Of all worldliness this, perhaps, is the most dangerous, for it is so insidious. Indeed, it is very possible for a man to be most thoroughly worldly-minded in this respect and yet live in the delusion that he, at