

they are gay, showy, pleasing to the eye, the putting them on does not spring from a single view to please God. It neither flows from, nor tends to advance a meek and quiet spirit. It does not arise from, nor in any way promote, real, vital godliness.

2. And if they are in any wise costly, if they are purchased with any unnecessary expense, they cannot but, in proportion to that expense, be destructive of good works. Of consequence, they are destructive of that charity which is fed thereby, hardening our heart against the poor and needy, by inuring us to shut up our bowels of compassion against them.

3. At least, all unnecessary expenses of this kind, whether small or great, are senseless and foolish. This we may defy any man living to get over, if he allows there is another world. For there is no reward in heaven for laying out your money in ornaments, or costly apparel; whereas you may have an eternal reward for whatever you lay out on earth.

4. Consider this more closely: here are two ways proposed for laying out such a sum of money. I may lay it out in expensive apparel for myself, or in necessary clothing for my neighbour. The former will please my own eye, or that of others; the latter will please God. Now suppose there were no more harm in one than in the other; in that which pleases man, than in that which pleases God; is there as much good in it? If they were equally innocent, are they equally wise? By the one I gratify the desire of the eye, and gain a pleasure that perishes in the using; by the other, I gain a larger share of those pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. By the former, I obtain the applause of men; by the latter, the praise of God. In this way I meet with the admiration of fools; in that, I hear from the Judge of all, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

5. Brethren, whatever ye are accounted by men, I would not have you fools in God's account. "Walk ye circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise;" not in those ways which God may possibly forgive, (to put things in the most favourable light,) but in those things which he will certainly reward. "In wickedness be ye children" still; "but in understanding be ye men." I want to see a visible body of people who are standing examples of this wisdom; patterns of doing all things, great and small, with an eye to God and eternity.

V. 1. But we may be assured, the wisdom of the world will find a great many objections to this. Accordingly, it is objected, First, "If God has given us plentiful fortunes, if we are placed in the higher ranks of life, we must act suitably to our fortune. We ought to dress according to our rank; that is, in gold and costly apparel." Not to insist that none of you are of this rank, I answer, where is this written? Our Saviour once occasionally said, "Behold, they who wear gorgeous" (splendid) "apparel, are in kings' courts;" but he does not say, they ought to be even there; he neither enjoins nor countenances it. And where is this enjoined or allowed by him or any of his apostles? Bring me plain scriptural proof for your assertion, or I cannot allow it.

2. "But did not God give express command by Moses, that some even among his chosen people should be adorned in the most exquisite manner with gold and precious stones, and costly array?" Indeed he did; he expressly commanded this with regard to Aaron and his successors in the high priesthood. But to this I answer, First, this direction which God gave, with regard to the Jewish high priest, can certainly effect no person in England, unless the Archbishop of Canterbury; and I apprehend, he does not plead the precedent. Secondly, the Jews and we are under different dispensations. The glory of the whole Mosaic dispensation was chiefly visible and external; whereas the glory of the Chris-

tian dispensation is of an invisible and spiritual nature.

3. "But what then are gold and precious stones for? Why have they a place in the Creation?" What if I say I cannot tell? There are abundances of things in the creation which I know not the use of. What are crocodiles, lions, tigers, scorpions for? Why have so many poisons a place in the creation? Some of them are for medicine: but whatever they are for, in whatever manner they may be useful, they are certainly not to be used in such a manner as God has expressly forbidden.

4. "But if they were not thus adorned, kings and generals would be despised by their subjects and soldiers." Supposing they would, that is nothing to you; for you are neither kings nor generals. But it is absolutely certain they would not, if they were not despised on other accounts. If they are valiant and wise, they will never be despised for the plainness of their dress. Was ever general or king more esteemed or beloved by his subjects and soldiers than King Charles of Sweden? And it is sure he wore no gold or costly apparel, not so much as a common officer. But we need not go so many years back. Who is the prince that is now honored and beloved both by his subjects and soldiers far beyond any other king or general in Europe? There is no need to repeat his name. But does he gain his honor and love by the costliness of his apparel? So far from it, he rarely uses any other dress than the uniform of his own guards.

5. "But if all men were to dress like him, how would tradesmen live?" I answer, (1.) God certainly considered this before he gave these commands. And he would never have given them, had he not seen, that, if they were universally observed, men in general would live better than they otherwise could: better in this world, as well as that to come. (2.) There is no danger at all that they should be universally observed. Only a little flock in any civilized nation will observe them, till the knowledge of God covers the earth. (4.) If those who do observe them, employ the money they thus save in the most excellent manner, then a part of what before only served to sat a few rich tradesmen for hell, will suffice to feed and clothe and employ many poor that seek the kingdom of heaven. (4.) And how will those tradesmen themselves live? They will live like men, by honest labor; most of whom before lived like swine, wallowing in all gluttony and sensuality. But, (5.) This is all mere trifling. It is only a copy of your countenance; for it is not this, it is not a regard to trade, or of the good of the nation, that makes you disobey God. No; it is pride, vanity, or some other sinful temper, which is the real cause of these sinful actions.

6. "But we cannot carry on our own trade without dressing like other people." If you mean only conforming to those customs of your country that are neither gay nor costly, why should you not dress like other people? I really think you should. Let an Englishman dress like other Englishmen, not like a Turk or a Tartar. Let an English woman dress like other English women, not like a French woman, or a German. But if you mean conformity to them in what God has forbidden, the answer is ready at hand: If you cannot carry on your trade without breaking God's command, you must not carry it on. But I doubt the fact; I know no trade which may not be carried on by one who uses plain and modest apparel. I fear, therefore, this too is but a copy of your countenance; you love these things, and therefore think them necessary. Your heart carries away your judgment; if you were not fond of them, you would dream of their necessity.

7. In one single case these things may be necessary, that is, unavoidable; namely, that of women who