

## WORDS OF THE WISE.

## ISAAC AMBROSE ON WORLDLY PLEASURES.

"The directions of self-denial, in respect of worldly pleasures, are these : "

"1. Look on pleasures, not only as vain, but as vanishing: they are soon gone from us, or we are soon gone from them. 1. They are soon gone from us, 'the fashion of this world passeth away': all pleasures are but like a mountain of snow, that melts away presently. 2. We are soon gone from them; it is but a while, and then we and all our pleasures must together vanish; if death draws the curtain, and looks in upon us, then we must bid a farewell to them all, never laugh more, never have merry-meeting more; never be in jollity any more. Oh! when we are called to eternity, then all our delights will leave us, and bid us adieu forever; and how doleful will this be to all the sons and daughters of pleasure! Your season is done, you have had your time, it is gone, it is past, and cannot be recalled."

"2. Consider, this is not the season that should be for pleasures. The Apostle James lays it as a great charge upon those in his time, that they 'lived in pleasure on the earth.' This is a time to do the great business for which we were born. Oh! did we think that eternity depended upon this little uncertain time of our lives, we would not say that sensual pleasures were now in season. Surely this time should be spent in seeking to make our peace with God; this is a time of suing out our pardon, of mourning, and sorrow, and trouble of spirit, and no time for jollity and fleshly delights. If a condemned man had two or three days granted him that he might sue out his pardon, were that a time for pleasures and sports? Thus it is with us; the sentence of death is upon us, only a little uncertain time is granted us, to sue out a pardon; let us know then what is our work, and let us apply ourselves to it."

"3. Ponder the carriage of the saints before us. You know the mean provision that John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, had: his fare was locusts and wild honey, and yet there was not a greater born of woman before. Timothy, although he was sickly, yet would not take liberty to drink a little wine, but only water, till Paul wrote to him; and in that liberty there was but little granted, and that for his stomach's sake, and his often infirmities. Basil in an epistle to Julian, mentions the mean fare he and others with him lived on; they had no need of cooks, all their provisions was the leaves of plants, and a little bread: and Hierom reports of Hilarion, that he never eat anything before the sun went down, and that which at any time he ate was very mean: and Hierom himself lived so abstemiously, that he had nothing daily but a few dried figs with cold water."

"4 Do we for Christ, as Christ hath done for us. What! was he content to part with the pleasures of heaven, the bosom of his Father, to redeem poor man? and shall not we part with the pleasures of a little meat or drink for him? Is not all his glory revealed in his word and work, sufficient to show him worthy of our love, and to make us willing to part with such empty, poor, slight things, as sensual pleasures? Surely the daughters of pleasure must undress, if ever they will be beautiful in Christ's eyes; their ornament must not be the "outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

"5. Meditate on those pleasures above, and say, (you that have the experience of the pleasantness of God's ways.) 'If the nether springs be so sweet, what will the upper be.' If the lower Jerusalem be paved with gold, surely that upper Jerusalem is paved with pearls!' It is an excellent speech of Bernard—"Good art thou, O Lord, to the soul that seeks thee; what are those