

and shall we not, then, take heed what company we come in, and what we do and speak in our company? It is recorded of Mr. Latimer, the martyr, that though he was somewhat free in his speech when he was examined, yet when he heard a pen writing behind the curtain, then he was more wary. Why, believe it, there is a pen behind the curtain that sets down what you do and say in your company, whether good or bad. Now, therefore, as ever you do desire that God's own hand-writing, that God's own table-book may not be brought out against you, take heed what company you come into, and what you do and speak in your company. Thus shall you be able to avoid bad company, to choose good, and to improve the same. And thus I have done with these arguments of good company. A good man will have good company: "For I am a companion (says David) of all them that fear thee, and do keep thy precepts."

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## SERMON V.

### THE CARNALITY OF PROFESSORS.

*"For ye are carnal."*—1 COR. III. 3.

IN this chapter the apostle Paul doth charge the Corinthians with carnality, which charge he maketh good by divers arguments. The first is taken from their incapacity of receiving and digesting the strongest truths of the gospel: verses 1, 2, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, &c. For ye are carnal." The second argument is taken from the envyings, strifes and divisions that were amongst them: verse 3, "For whereas there are among you, &c., are ye not carnal?" The third argument is taken from those sects that were amongst them: verse 4, "For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" They set up one minister against another, crying up of one that they might cry down another, and so put themselves into sects; this was carnality. And upon this account he saith to them, again and again, "Are ye not carnal?" Where then observe thus much, that it is possible for

great professors of the gospel to be very carnal. These Corinthians were a church of Christ, and of all the churches they had the greatest gifts; and the apostle writing to them, calleth them "saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus," chap. i. 2. Yet here he saith they were carnal. Possibly, then, a man may be a member of a true church, have great gifts, and be a good man too, yet he may be very carnal; surely he that is a member of a church, greatly gifted, and a good man, is a great professor; this a man may be, and yet carnal. Possibly then a man or woman may be a great professor, and yet may be very carnal. Great professors may be very carnal. And if you ask what this carnality is, or when a man may be said to be carnal? I answer, in the general, that you may know what this means by the opposition and the application of it. It is applied sometimes to the unregenerate: John iii. 6, "That which is born after the flesh is flesh," or carnal; so it is not used here, for the apostle doth not charge the Corinthians with an unregenerate estate. Sometimes this word, carnal, therefore, is applied to the regenerate, such as are weaklings, babes and sucklings in religion, who have more sin than grace, more flesh than spirit; and so he speaketh of these Corinthians. But the word, carnal, is used also by way of opposition, and it is opposed sometimes unto what is mighty: so in 1 Cor. x. 4, "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty." And sometimes it is opposed unto what is spiritual, so Rom. xv. 27; vii. 14. Look, therefore, when a man's fleshly weaknesses do so far prevail, that he is not spiritual in his life and conversation as he should be, then he is said to be carnal, according to this scripture. Now thus it is possible that a member of a church, a gifted person, yea, good men may be very carnal. Possibly great professors may be very carnal. In prosecuting whereof we must inquire,

First, How it may appear that great professors of the gospel may be carnal.

Secondly, How far that carnality may reach or extend.

Thirdly, What is the difference between the carnality of the world and such as are good.

Fourthly, What an evil thing it is for a professor of the gospel to be carnal.

Fifthly, How we may be freed from this carnality and be more spiritual.

And if you ask,

How may it then appear that great professors may be very carnal?

I answer, The more any man's judgment is defiled and dabbled with corrupt opinions, contrary to the grace of the gospel, the more carnal he is, especially if he father them on the Spirit, or on the gospel, for the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit. "The words that I speak (saith Christ) are spirit and life." Now two sorts of doctrines there are that are contrary to the gospel; the doctrine of natural free-will, and the doctrine of legal and Jewish ordinances. The doctrine of natural free-will is contrary to the substance of the gospel, which is the word of grace. The doctrine of legal and Jewish ordinances is contrary to the dispensation of the gospel, and both carnal. The doctrine of natural free-will is a carnal doctrine, for saith John, chap. i. 13, "Which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." The will of the flesh and the will of man go together. Was it not a carnal thing for Abraham to go into his maid Hagar? So is it also a carnal thing for a professor of the gospel to turn into a covenant of works, whereof Hagar was a type. And I appeal to yourselves, saith Austin to the Pelagians, pleading for the power of nature, and for natural free-will,\* What is that which makes an outward difference between one man and another? One is rich and another is poor. Doth man's will make that difference, or God's providence? Saith Austin: One man is strong, and another weak; doth man's will make the difference, or God's providence? One man or woman is fair, and another deformed; doth man's will make the difference, or God's providence? I suppose you will say that it is God's providence, not man's will that doth make the difference. And if you say that man's will makes the difference in these outward things, and not God's providence, "are ye not carnal?" how much more, if you say, man's will, and not God's grace, doth make the difference between one man and another in spiritual

\* Nec tribuuntur ista meritis voluntatum, sicut sunt celeritates, vires, bonæ valetudines, et pulchritudines corporum, ingenia mirabilia, et multarum artium capaces naturæ mentium, vel quæ accidunt extrinsecus, ut est opulentia, nobilitas, honores, et cætera hujusmodi, quæ quisque ut habeat, non est nisi in Dei potestate, &c.—Aug. de correp. et grat. cap. viii.



things? As for the doctrines of legal and Jewish ordinances, they are expressly called "carnal commands," Heb. ix. Now possibly a professor of the gospel may be baptized into these opinions, possibly he may hold the doctrine of free-will under the gospel of free grace. Possibly he may be baptized into the doctrines of Jewish, legal customs, ceremonies, and sabbaths, and of all the opinions that are now stirring and ranging abroad. What opinion is there, but the maintainers thereof do father it upon the Spirit? What brat or bastard opinion is there abroad, but men do come to lay it down at the door of the gospel, and father it upon the Spirit? Now when men do this, may we not say to them, as the apostle here, "Are ye not carnal?"

The more any professor is guilty of levity and lightness in their ways of the gospel, the more carnal he is; for says the apostle, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness; or things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay," 2 Cor. i. 17. Levity therefore is a sign of carnality. Now there is a twofold levity: one in regard of judgment, whereby men are unsettled in their judgment, saying yea to a doctrine to-day, and nay to-morrow, or soon after. This levity of judgment is a sign of carnality. The other levity is in regard of practice, whereby men are slight, vain, and frothy in their communication. Now possibly a professor may be thus light in both these respects. Some are light in regard of their judgment, unsettled; some are light in regard of their practice, for they can sit and spend a whole afternoon in vain conferences, and not a word of God, of Christ. Are not these carnal?

If there be little or no difference sometimes between the carriage and behaviour of a professor, and of the men of the world, then possibly a professor may be very carnal. And what difference was there between David and the men of the world, in that matter of Uriah? What civil man would have done as David did? And so now, though a professor may be very good and gracious, yet if he be stirred sometimes in a business of his own concernments, what difference is there between his carriage and the carriage of the world? May we not then say to such, "Are ye not carnal?"

If there be envyings, wranglings, strifes and divisions amongst the professors of the gospel, then it is possible that great professors may be very carnal; nay, that ye read in the text, and I wish we might not read it in our daily experience. It is the property of a gracious, spiritual frame of heart, to rejoice in others' graces, and to mourn for others' sins; it is the property of a carnal heart, to envy at others' graces, and to rejoice and triumph over others' failings. Now if professors be at variance, one of one judgment, and another of another, in case a man of another judgment do fail or fall, what rejoicings will there be. If I were spiritual, then I should more grieve for God's dishonour by the fall of a professor, than rejoice at the fall of my adversary; but yet so it is, though God's name be dishonoured by his fall, because he is a professor, yet another will triumph therein, because he is his adversary. Is not this carnal?

If a professor of the gospel can neither give reproof without anger, nor take a reproof without distaste; is he not carnal? "You that are spiritual, (saith the apostle,) restore him that is fallen, with the spirit of meekness." But now if an admonition or reproof be given, either it is given with anger, or it is taken with distaste; why? but because we are carnal.

If a professor of the gospel do use carnal engines to obtain his designs, is he not carnal therein? Now thus it may be possibly with some great professors of the gospel. Abraham was a good man, and a great professor, yet when he would secure and preserve himself, he said to Sarah, "Say thou art my sister." The thing was true, and no lie, but it was a carnal engine that he then used to obtain that design. We read of Abner, that when he would bring about the kingdom to David, for his own preferment, then he went to the heads of Israel, and told them of the promise that God made to David. Here he made use of a religious engine to obtain his own carnal ends. Sometimes men use their carnal engines to obtain religious designs; sometimes they use religious engines to obtain their carnal ends: and what more ordinary than this, even amongst professors. Why? but because they are carnal.\*

\* Ne quis in honestas cupiditates religionis glaucomate obligato.—Vide Cluveri Histor. Mundi p. 108.

The more selfish any man is in seeking his own particular interest in the time or cause of public concerns, the more carnal he is; a selfish principle is a carnal principle. Now this may be amongst professors. Why, says the Holy Ghost to Reuben, Judges v., "Why abidest thou amongst the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flock; and why did Dan remain in ships?" There was a great cause afoot, Zebulun and Naphtali came forth, but as for Asher they abode in the creeks, Dan in the ships, and Reuben abode among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings, &c. That is, says Peter Martyr,\* *plus pecundum balatu quam reipublicæ cura*; they were taken with their own particular interest, more than with the public concerns. Do I therefore mind my own particular interest, more than the public concernment; and in times of public concerns or calamities, do I seek to raise myself, and to get a place, a preferment, and great things in this world? then am I carnal. Yet thus, even thus it is with many professors at this day. Why? Because they are carnal. Possibly then great professors may be very carnal, and that is the first thing.

Secondly, Well, but suppose this doctrine be true; great professors may be very carnal; how far may this carnality of professors reach and extend?

It may reach and extend unto all our life, as a scurf may grow over all the body; so this carnality may grow over all the body of a man's conversation, and extend unto every part thereof.

For will you instance in our thoughts, apprehensions, reasonings, and conclusions? Is it not a carnal thing to abound with carnal reasonings? This the disciples did before Christ's ascension, therefore saith he often to them, "Why reason you so amongst yourselves?"

Or will you instance in the matter of our affections; is it not a carnal thing for a man to love and savour the things of the world? This professors may possibly do, witness the parable of the thorny ground.

Or will you instance in the matter of our words? Is it a carnal thing to bite and devour one another, and to carry

\* Habitabat Reuben ultra sordanem in pasevis videtur, que ob suas oves ut greges rei. pub. curam omisisset, eo nomine nos accusat, quod tunc sua curarint. Plus pecadum balatu quam reipub. cura capebantur.—Pet. Mart. in Judg. 5.



tales between men. Yet this the Galatians did, "If ye bite one another, shall ye not be consumed one of another?" Gal. v. 15.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our condition? Is it not a carnal thing to be discontented with one's condition, and to think that I can carve better for myself, than God hath carved? This the Israelites did when they said, Would God we had stayed still in Egypt.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our lives, and reformation of our practice? Is it not a carnal thing for a man to run from one extreme to another? *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currant.* Yet what more ordinary than this in the way of reformation from no liberty, to all liberty; from prodigality to covetousness?

Or will ye instance in the matter of our duties? Is it not a carnal thing for a man that hears the word of God, to apply it to another, and not to apply it to himself? Saying, that the preacher met with such an one, and not think of himself; or to be more taken with the volubility of expression, than with the spirituality of the ordinance; or if a man preach the word, is it not a carnal thing to have flings and throws at particular persons, or to preach the gospel for hire, that he may get a living thereby, or to preach Christ out of envy? Yet this the apostle says to the Philippians that some did in his days.

Or will ye instance in the matter of the enjoyments and special communion with God? Is it not a carnal thing to desire incomes from God, for the sweetness of them? The ordinance of the Lord's supper is an ordinance wherein you enjoy much of God, and have special communion with him; yet you know how the apostle blames the Corinthians for their carnality therein; and if ye look into Luke xxii. 24, you shall find that even at the Lord's supper, the disciples of Christ were debating who should be greatest; a carnal thing for any of them to desire greatness above the other, but that this question should be started then, what carnality was here?

Or will you instance in our approach unto Christ, and coming to Christ? If carnality be excluded in anything, surely it will be excluded here; yet, says the apostle, "henceforth know I no man after the flesh," no not Christ himself;

it seems that formerly they did thus know Christ himself, and were too carnal in their very knowledge of Christ, but says Christ to those that followed him, "Ye follow me not because of the miracles, but because of the loaves." Plainly then this carnality may extend and reach unto all our actions, and if there be no action that a professor can do, but this carnality may get and soak into it, then surely this doctrine is most true, that possibly a great professor may be very carnal, possibly great professors of the gospel may be very carnal; and so much for the second.

Thirdly, But you will say, If a professor may be carnal, and this carnality may possibly boil up to such a height; is there any difference then between the carnality of the world, and of the professors of the gospel?

I answer, Yes, much, if professors be godly, for all professors are not godly. For though a professing good man may labour under much carnality and be too fleshly, yet he is not born after the flesh; for, saith the apostle Paul, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free-woman," Gal. iv. 22, but he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh, but he of the free-woman, by the promise. Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; that is, the legal covenant, and the covenant of grace. Now we, brethren, saith he, verse 28, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. We are born after the promise, the promise comes and works grace in us; we are regenerated and born again by the word of the promise; and therefore though these children of Abraham may labour under much carnality; yet they are not born after the flesh, as carnal, unregenerated men are, who are the children of the bond-woman, and belong to the legal covenant.

Though professing good men may be very carnal, yet there is a grace and goodness that doth run along there withal, for they are the smoking flax, and though there may be much smoke and carnality that may offend the eyes of beholders, yet there is a fire of grace and zeal that runs out therewithal. What a smoke did Jonah make when he ran away from God, and was froward and peevish even with God himself? But though therein he was very carnal, yet still there was a grace and goodness that did go along therewith.



Though a good man may be very carnal, yet he doth not sow to the flesh, or savour and relish the things of the flesh most. A carnal wicked man doth savour and relish the things of the flesh; thus to be carnally minded is death, saith the apostle, "And those that sow to the flesh, shall reap corruption," Rom. viii.

As for those that are carnal and wicked, it is not so with them, though a good man may be very carnal and may labour under much carnality, insomuch as his parts may be too big for his grace, and his passions may be too big for his parts, yet he doth not take up a carnal prejudice against the whole way or power of godliness; the wicked are carnal, and they are carnally prejudiced against the very power of godliness in the strictness of it. Possibly a good man may be prejudiced against this or that particular way of God; but as for the power of godliness, he is not carnally prejudiced against that.

Though a good man may be very carnal, and labour under much carnality, yet that carnality doth not bear the rule and sway in his life. *Finis actionem domina et regina.* Look what a man's general and utmost end is, that doth give a law unto all his actions, that rules, that sways, and is the yard wand unto all his actions; \* as for example, if the world and profit be my end, my general and utmost end, then my actions generally are directed and swayed by it; and I must preach so much as may stand with my profit; I must go to meetings and improve soul-opportunities so far as may stand with my profit; I must acquaint myself with men so far as may stand with my profit; and if such and such things may not stand with my profit in the world, then I must not do the same. Why? Because the world is my great and utmost end, and every thing must strike sail unto it. Now, I say, though a good man may labour under much carnality, yet there is no carnal thing that doth bear sway with him as it doth in those that are carnally wicked.

Though a good man may be very carnal, yet his practical conclusions and therefore are not so carnal, as the men of the world's are. Mark what carnal therefore the men and people of the world have, Prov. vii. 14, 15, "I offered my peace offering, now therefore am I come forth to meet thee."

\* *Finis dat mediis amabilitatem ordinem et mensuram.*

A strange therefore ; as if she should say : I have been at duty, and at the ordinance, and therefore now am some forth to play the whore. Ye know also what a therefore Pilate had upon the judgment of Christ, " I find no fault with him, now therefore scourge him and let him go." Oh, strange therefore ; I find no fault with him, therefore whip him ; nay therefore whip him not, for I find no fault in him. Are there not such therefores still in the hearts of men, The Lord is gracious and merciful, therefore I will go on to sin ; the Lord is patient and forbearing, therefore I will repent afterwards. But, says David, " Oh how great is thy loving kindness, therefore do the children of men put their trust in thee." Though a good man be too carnal, yet he is not so carnal in his main inferences and conclusions as the carnal world is.

Though a good man may be very carnal, yet he is very sensible of his carnality, and is much humbled ; for when I saw, said David, the prosperous estate of the wicked, then I had such carnal reasonings as these, I have cleansed my hands in vain ; but, says he, " I was a beast therein," Ps. lxxiii. 22. The more a man looks into the spirituality of the law, the more he will be sensible of his own carnality ; now a good man looks much upon that. As for the law, says Paul, " That is holy, spiritual, good, but I am carnal," Rom. vii. 14. Who was a more spiritual christian than Paul ? Yet he was sensible of his carnality. Why ? Because his eye was upon the spirituality of the law. Now so it is with all those that truly fear the Lord ; they do not stand and compare themselves with others, for that would augment their carnality ; but they compare themselves with the law and word of God, and so they are exceeding sensible of their own carnality, and are humbled for it. So that then now you see, there is a difference, and what that difference is ; and though the carnality of the good professor be not so bad as the carnality of the world and the men thereof, yet it is evil ; the best of this carnality is naught, and if you ask me

Fourthly, Wherein the evil of it doth appear ? I answer, in many things it is a very evil thing for a professor of the gospel to be carnal. For,

Is it not an evil thing for a man to walk contrary unto his



profession? *Peccatum majus ubi repugnantia major*;\* is it not an evil thing for a judge to do unjustly? Yea. Why? Because it is contrary unto his profession. Now the profession of the gospel is spiritual, and the professors of the gospel are so described and called. The spiritual man judgeth all things; and ye that are spiritual, restore such an one, &c. The weapons of our warfare, saith the apostle, are not carnal. Carnal weapons are suitable to carnal profession, but spiritual weapons are suitable to spiritual profession. It is observed, therefore, that the weapons of the papists, in advancing their religion, are very carnal. Somewhat they have in their religion which doth comply with every man's carnal humour.† If a man be devotional, they have a cloister for him; if he be disputative, they have their schools for him; if a man or woman do pretend to chastity, they have their nunneries and priories for them; if a man be given to filthy wantonness, they have their allowed stews for them; if a man be given to honour and greatness, they have a cardinal's cap for him; and if he be given to despise and neglect the world, they have a mendicant friar's place for him: some carnal thing still they have that doth suit with the carnal and wicked humours of men. Why? But because their warfare is carnal, and so the weapons of their warfare are carnal. But the professed religion is spiritual and reforming: how have they, therefore, advanced their religion, but by powerful preaching, printing good books, translating the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue, catechising and instructing the younger, open disputings for the truth, and sufferings for the same: thus the reformed religion hath been carried on by good and spiritual weapons. Why? For our warfare is spiritual. Now in these times we are upon another condition of reformation, we are reforming the very reformation, and therefore the weapons of our warfare should be most spiritual. Are we therefore carnal now in these days? then do we walk contrary unto our profession.

Again, Yea, though you be a good man, yet, if you be carnal, you do thereby make yourself unfit both to do good and receive good. Carnality makes you unfit to do good, it will hinder the vend of their commodity. I think sometimes,

\* *Peccatum majus ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem et peccatum.*—Aquín.

† Sir Edward Sandys Relig. West.



says Luther,\* to convert all the congregation, but the auditor comes and smells something of a man in what I say, and so he turns away, and no good is done. And in experience, what good doth admonition do, when administered in passion? This carnality is an hindrance to your doing good; and as it is an hindrance to your doing, so it is an hindrance to your receiving it. It stops your ears and eyes; your ears from hearing the word, and your eyes from seeing into the dispensations of God. Yea,

Thereby you will be apt to give and to take offence. As this carnality will make you unfit to do and receive good; so it will make you apt and ready to give and to take offence. Who more apt to give and take offence than young christians? And why so? but because they are babes and carnal. Yea,

Though you may have some real goodness in you, yet if you be carnal, you may dishonour God more by your carnality, than you may honour him by your goodness. And is it not an evil thing for a man to dishonour God more by the carnality of his profession, than he can honour God by his profession?

The more carnal you are, the more you are exposed, and expose yourself to the temptations of Satan, and his instruments. It was a carnal thing for David to number the people; Satan observed this carnal affection, and the text says, That he stirred him up to number the people. And if professors have their carnal ends hanging out, what may not the devil and his agents add and join thereunto? Yea,

The more carnal you are in your profession, the more you will lose the sweetness of your christian communion. What happiness can a gracious spiritual heart take in conversing with a carnal professor? Suppose a man deal but in outward friendship, what happiness can he have in conversing with one that is selfish, that seeks himself in all his acquaintance and converse? Is there any happiness in that friendship where a man must always stand upon his guard, to keep himself from the selfish designs of him that he walks with?

\* Sentit anima hominis verbum arte super se compositum esse, et stercore humano (ut apud Ezekielem est) opertum, humano affectu pollutum, ideo nauseat super illo, et potius irritatur quam convertitur.—Luther loc. com. clas. 4. de minister. verbi.

No, surely. Much more may I say in our spiritual converse and communion. What happiness, what sweetness can I take in conversing with him that is selfish and carnal? Oh, this carnality is a great enemy to the sweetness of christian communion, it will eat out all the sweetness of it. And

It will hinder the advance and progress in the ways of God, and knowledge of Christ: for what growth or advance can a people make in their practices, when ministers cannot advance them in their preachings. Now, says the apostle here, "I could not deliver to you strong meat;" why? "because ye are carnal." Wherefore says the apostle, "Would you grow in grace? then laying aside all malice and superfluity of naughtiness, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." How is it therefore with me; am I a professor, and yet carnal? Then do I walk contrary unto my profession; then am I thereby unfit to do good, or receive good; then am I fit to take, and to give offence; then may I dishonour God more by the carnality of my profession, than I may honour him by my profession; yea, and thereby do I expose myself to the temptations of Satan and the world; then shall I lose the sweetness of christian communion, and be kept from growth in grace. Surely therefore it is an evil thing, and very evil for the professors of the gospel to be carnal; yet this may be possibly in great professors, members of churches, and men of great parts and gifts, and a good man too may be very carnal; such were these Corinthians. Possibly therefore, a man may be a great professor, yet he may be very carnal. That is the doctrine.

Fifthly, Now if you ask, What then is our duty that doth flow from hence? I answer,

If great professors of the gospel may be very carnal, then why should any man stumble, or be offended at the ways of God and godliness, because of the carnality of professors? Will ye be offended at that which ye know must and shall come to pass? "These things have I told you before, (saith Christ) that when they come to pass, you may not be offended." Now he hath told us beforehand, "That in the last days the kingdom of heaven is like to ten virgins waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, and they all sleep;" that is, there shall be a general scurf and carnality grow upon the



face of all profession. And now ye know these things, will ye be offended? Or will ye be offended if your own offence will be your own ruin? "Woe to the world, (saith Christ) because of offences; offences must come, and woe to him through whom they come." Here is a woe and a woe; a woe to the offender, and a woe to the offended. "Woe to the world," why? Because their offence will be their own ruin. And whoever you are that are apt to be offended at these things, either the lives of professors is the rule by which you walk, or the Scripture. If the lives of professors be the rule of your life then why do you not live as they do; as the best of them do? Why are you not rather convinced by their goodness, than stumbled by their carnality? And if Scripture be your rule, why then do you not say in the midst of all these carnalities, Well, yet the Scripture is the Scripture, and godliness is godliness; and therefore though all men have their failings, and the fairest face hath its wart, and there is none so spiritual, but hath some carnality, "yet I and my house will serve the Lord;" for I walk by Scripture, and Scripture is Scripture still, and godliness is godliness still. Oh, take heed and be not offended.

If great professors of the gospel may be carnal, then why should we not all take heed of their carnality? Possibly a member of the church may be carnal, and shall not we then take heed of carnality? Possibly a man of parts, and gifts, and graces too may be carnal, and very carnal, and shall not we then take heed of carnality? And in case that we have been, or are carnal in our profession, why should we not all labour to scale off this carnality?

But what shall we do herein; I confess I have been and am very carnal in my profession, what shall I therefore do that I may be rid of this carnality, and be more spiritual?

I answer, In case you have been carnal, be humbled for it; a man will never leave a sin for the time to come, unless he be humbled for the time past. Now who is there in all the congregation, but may cry, Guilty, guilty; I am the man or woman that have been carnal under my spiritual and gospel profession? Why then, go to God and humble yourself before him, in reference to the carnality of your profession.

In case you have begun a profession of Christ, be sure that you look well to your beginnings and settings out. It



is possible that a carnal beginning may make a spiritual ending; but ordinarily if men set out the wrong way at the first, they go wrong all the day after. And it is usual with men to be carnal at the entrance into their profession. *Facite me*, &c. said he, Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be a christian: but *dimidium facti*, He that hath well begun hath done half his work. Be sure therefore that you look to your beginnings, and first settings out for godliness. And in case,

That you are a professor of some standing, then make it your work and business to go over your work again, and to refine your work. "Ye are now come to that mount, where the Lord hath given you wine upon the lees well refined." Ordinances refined, and gospel enjoyments refined. And what do these call for but a refined conversation; and how should that be, but by making it your work and business to refine all your duties? True, I have prayed many times, but now I will go and refine all my prayers. I have conversed with the saints, now I will go and refine my converses; yea, I will make it my work now to refine my works.

Whether you be of long or late standing in religion, pray much for the pourings forth of the Spirit upon you. Ye read in the gospel, that the disciples were very carnal before Christ's death; but after his ascension, then they were very spiritual. Why? Because the Holy Ghost was then fallen down upon them. Would ye be more spiritual, and less carnal, pray for the pourings out of the Holy Ghost upon your souls. And,

Take heed of a selfish spirit, especially in matters of religion; for a selfish spirit is a carnal spirit. The more plainness of heart you have, the more free you will be from designs and selfish carnalities. Go therefore to the Lord, and pray unto him for a plain and open spirit.

And in case you are to deal with any fleshly concernment, there watch most. A good man should be spiritual in carnal things. But when we meddle with carnal things, we are apt to be carnalized with them; and therefore the more carnal the concernment is, the more do you watch and pray, lest you enter into this temptation.

Be sure that you take heed of conversing with carnal and

wicked company: " Evil words corrupt good manners," saith the apostle. And what good words shall ye have with them? With them ye shall meet with that which shall prejudice you against what is good, and those that are good. Would ye therefore be freed from the carnality of profession? Take heed how you come into carnal wicked company.

Call yourself often to an account, and examine your ways, whether they be spiritual or carnal. Come, oh, my soul, thou hast been in such a company, but hast thou not been frothy, vain, passionate, or carnal in it? Thou hast been this day amongst those that are spiritual; but hast not thou been carnal in the midst of them? Come, O my soul, thou hast been at such a work this day, but hast thou not been selfish in it; hast not thou desired to be seen therein; hast not thou been carnal even in thy spirituals? Thus daily call yourselves to an account. And

Consider but this one thing, That the only way to lose a mercy, is to be carnal in it. If you be a professor, one that God loves, the more carnal engines you use to obtain a mercy, the more like you are to lose it; and in avoiding of misery, the more carnal your engines are to avoid it, the more like it is for to come upon you: if you be wicked and ungodly, the Lord, it may be, will let you obtain your ends by your carnal engines: but if you be godly, the more carnal engines you use to obtain a mercy, the more like you are to lose it. Now therefore as you do desire to avoid misery, and to obtain mercy, labour to be more spiritual; take heed of carnal engines in all your designs; make it your work and business to be more spiritual; rest not upon your holy mount, saying, " The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;" for it is carnal; and take heed of divisions, strifes, and envyings; " For if these things be among us, are we not carnal?" And this may easily be; for you see the text, and you remember the doctrine. Possibly great professors may be very carnal. Wherefore let us all make it our work and business to be more spiritual.