

be dearly welcome. As many as come humbly lothing themselves, wondring at the free grace of God, and highly esteeming of precious and lovely Jesus, and adventuring to hazard their souls on him on his own terms, and to take him for their Husband and Lord; it shall not be accounted presumption in them so to do: Nay (as it is, *Cant. 3.*) *The bottom of his chariot is paved with love, and 'tis for the daughters of Jerusalem;* it is made for carrying and keeping believers. Leap hither (if I may speak so) and ye will fall soft, into a sweetly perfumed and soft bed, even in the arms of Christ. There was never a carpet, never a feather or down-bed so soft as that is; only come and cast yourselves over on it. Tho' ye think that ye cannot apprehend and take hold of him, he can and will apprehend and take hold of you; and he is so very tender-hearted, that he will kiss you, and even weep over you for joy (as it were) on your neck: And if ye have no garments, rings or jewels (to speak so) to adorn you, he will give these to you. Come forward then, come, O! come, and let it be a day of covenanting with him: And, in sign and token thereof, give up your names to him; and, for confirmation, take the seal of his covenant, the sacrament with your hand, and bless him with your heart, that so heartily welcomes you: And the blessing of God shall come upon you that come on these terms.



## A Sermon preached after the Communion,

On *Philip. 1. 27.* *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.*

**T**HERE are two great works that the ministers of the gospel have to do: One is to engage people to Christ, and to perswade them to receive him and close with him; the other is to induce them to walk worthy of him, *Col. 2. 6.* *As ye have (saith the apostle) received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Paul, thro' the hand of the Lord with him, had engaged the *Philippians* to close with Christ, and, as it were, to conclude the contract betwixt him and them; and now, being aged and in prison,

prison, and not knowing certainly if ever he shall see them again, he commends this to them in a special manner, whether he see them or be absent from them, that *only they would let their conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ*: As if he had said, Ye are privileged with the gospel, and have embraced it, and are eminent in the profession thereof; let me therefore beg this of you, that your conversation may be answerable to it. The adverb, *only*, intimates to them, that this was so necessary and of so great concernment, that in a manner it was their *one thing* they had to do, in comparison of which, in a manner, they had no other thing else to do, whether he were present or absent; this, in some respect, is all that he requires of them: And the argument whereby he presseth it is, *that whether he come to them or not, he may hear of their affairs*; and that he desires and expects, whether he be at liberty, or in prison and bonds, that they will thus especially testify their respect to him; which would be more refreshing and acceptable to him, than their communicating to him in his affliction, beyond all the rest of the Churches, was, and for which he commends them, *Chap. 4.* And in the close of the *verse* he instanceth *two* particulars, wherein he would have their conversation suiting the gospel; or *two* qualifications of a gospel-conversation and walk: *One* is, *Unity*, that they *stand fast in one spirit*: *Another* is, *Purity* in the faith, *that with one mind they strive together for the faith of the gospel*.

The *first* qualification is, joint and united stayedness and steadfastness, that they be not fleeting and wavering to and fro, easily disjointed and divided one from another, as many light professors are: And the *second* is, that they be studious in and striving for the purity of the doctrine of faith, and serious in the practice and exercise of faith; desirable and excellent qualifications of a Christian, *viz.* purity, solidity, and seriousness in religion.

We shall at this time speak of the exhortation, *Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ*. Where, by *conversation*, we understand the whole of a man's carriage and walk towards and before God and men; and by the *gospel*, the whole doctrine thereof, as it respects faith and manners or practice; but here more especially, as it

respects faith in Christ, both as it is opposed to *Heathenism*, and as 'tis opposed to the law or covenant of works: To walk then as becometh the gospel, is to walk answerably and suitably to it, and in the whole of their carriage and deportment to make a manifest difference to appear betwixt themselves and all other persons, as they are dignified, and as the gospel requireth.

The point of *doctrine*, to which we would speak from these words, and which lieth obviously in them, is, *That they who are privileged with the gospel, ought seriously to endeavour, and to make it their great business, to have their conversation suitable to, and becoming the same.* This is some way the *one thing* required of all the hearers of the gospel, of all that are baptized in the name of Christ. We need not stay on the proof and reasons of it, and the less, that none will dare down-right to deny it, and that the reasons are so obvious.

There are *three Uses* of it, that we would speak a little to: The *first* is for instruction, to teach us our duty: The *second* is of regret and exhortation, that the professors of the gospel, and of the name of Christ, should be so unlike and unanswerable to it: The *third* is of exhortation to this so very necessary and so much called-for a duty, as the compend of all duties, which we would press and set home by some considerations drawn from the necessity and advantage of it.

As for the *first*, I think I may say, that, if ye had the apostle *Paul* preaching to you who have been communicants yesterday, this would be the great duty which he would enforce upon you, *Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ.* Ye will readily say, What is that? I confess 'tis hard to tell, 'tis so very marrowy and comprehensive; but it will be as hard to practise it, and a great deal harder. O that we were all breathing and pressing seriously and hard after it! However, we shall in the first place, and in the general, desire you to consider these few scriptures that hold it out, as namely, *Luke 1. 74, 75. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Tit. 2. 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. 1. 15. Philip. 3. 20.*

More particularly, from other scriptures ye may take it up in these; or, if we read and consider the gospel aright,

we will find these *five* things in it, which require a walk suitable, or a walk with respect to them, and such a walk becomes the gospel. 1. In the substance of it, our blessed Lord Jesus is (as it were) the *text* on whom the gospel is a notable commentary; and what he did, and how he suffered, is proposed as a fair copy for us to write after, in all things wherein he is set forth to us as a Pattern for our imitation. 2. That from whence the gospel comes, and which gives it its rise, even the love of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in whose blessed breast it bred; and to *walk as it becomes the gospel*, is to walk suitably to that love. 3. To walk as becomes the gospel, is to walk suitably to the great offers of it, and to the promises contained in it, the *exceeding great and precious promises, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature*; to walk suitably to all the excellent things, the sublimely spiritual and divine things promised. 4. It is to walk suitably to the commands and directions of the gospel, in reference to all duties: *Having therefore* (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. 7. 1.) *these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* 5. It is to walk answerably to the obligations which the gospel lays on us, and to the consolations that flow from it to us. If then we would walk as becomes the gospel of Christ, we must have a due respect unto all these.

If it should be enquired, What is it to have a respect to these in our walk? We answer, It supposeth and includeth these things. 1. A likeness and conformity; that what is called for in the matter of duty, or offered in the promise, we study to be like it: *We all* (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. 3. 18.) *beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2. Our suffering none of these things to ly by us unimproved, and our endeavouring to make the right use of them; to suffer none of the promises relating to justification, sanctification, or any other spiritual privilege and benefit to be useless, but to be laying due weight on each of them: And more especially, to be making right use of Christ the Mediator, *in whom all the promises are yea and amen*; (for certainly they neither walk as it becomes the gospel, nor are worthy of it, who make no use of him) to be

be making right use of the ordinances, word and sacraments, and of all appointed means of edification, publick, private and secret; and to be making right use of the comforts of the gospel, whereof there is thro' Christ a very large and liberal allowance on Christians. 3. It includes our delighting ourselves in the gospel, our endeavouring to be cheerful, to be cheered and made glad by the good things in it. A heartless, drooping and discouraging life and walk is very unbecoming the gospel of Christ.

We may, in a word, briefly sum up a Christian's conversation as becometh the gospel, in these *three*; 1. That he shine in his conversation, so as he may adorn the gospel. 2. That he improve, by the exercise of faith, the promises of it. 3. That he endeavour to live on the comforts of it, and to live in the hope and expectation of the comfort and refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the fulness of joys therein, that are coming. Somewhat of all these *three* is touched in those words, *Acts 9. 31. Then the Churches had rest, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied*: They walked in the fear of God, in respect of their practice; and, in respect of their faith, they walked *in the comfort of the Holy Ghost*; and they were *edified*, grew and increased, not only in respect of their number, but as to their spiritual state and stature: And thus, *the peace of God, which passeth understanding, guarded their minds and hearts through Christ Jesus*.

Or ye may look on the gospel as calling for these *two* things, in our external and visible conversation; 1. That none get any occasion by our walk to reproach the gospel; That none may have it, or any just ground given by us, to say, Take up such a professor of the gospel. O what prejudice to the profession of the gospel, is done this way, by the untender walk of many of its professors! 2. It is to walk so, as our carriage may be a commendation to the gospel, and an ornament to the profession of it: That, not only reproachers may be ashamed, who falsely accuse our good conversation; but, by beholding of it, they may be made to glorify God; That we may shine as lights, by our blameless walk; so holding forth the word of life (being practical preachers) by our convincing and edifying

ing carriage, in our several capacities, callings, stations and relations; that they who are not won by the word, may be won to the love of Christ, and of holiness, by our exemplary conversation, and by the humble, tender and conscientious discharge of the duties of those callings and relations; the husband being kind, and the wife tractable, child and servant obedient, &c. Excellent directions to this purpose are given by the apostles, and particularly by *Paul* and *Peter*, in their *epistles*.

More particularly (which will yet be but somewhat general) we may consider the gospel, 1. As it holds forth and calls for holiness, and so, for a holy and gospel-becoming conversation. And, 2. We would take a view of the nature of this holiness.

*First*, The gospel calls for holiness in a sixfold extent; a failing or defect in any of which, makes a conversation, in so far, to be unbecoming the gospel. 1. It calls for holiness in respect of all sorts of duties; *Be ye holy* (saith *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15.) *in all manner of conversation, as God is holy*; in prosperity and adversity; in religious, in moral, and in natural actions; *For it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.* 2. It is extended universally to all particular and individual duties and actions of all those sorts; it reacheth all manner of conversation. The divinely inspired scriptures instruct the man of God, how he may be made perfect in every good work; as it is, 2 *Tim.* 3. And a failing in thought, word or deed, is unbecoming the gospel. 3. It is extended in respect of the subject, *viz.* the whole man, and presseth that he be sanctified throughout: So, 1 *Thess.* 5. 23. the apostle prays, *The God of peace sanctifie you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless.* And, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. it puts to *clearse from all filth of the flesh and spirit*: It requires that the judgment be kept sound, and that no error or untruth be admitted by it; that the *mind* be sober, and free from any sinful distemper; that the *affections* be sanctifiedly regular, and that they debord not; that the *will* be straight, and brought up to the straight rule of obedience; and that the *conscience* be kept tender, that it be neither darkened nor impure: That the *members of the body* be yielded as instru-

struments unto righteousness. 4 It is extended to holiness, in respect of all capacities, callings, stations and relations; of husbands and wives, of masters and servants, of parents and children; as the apostle *Paul* heartily and frequently doth in his *epistles*, namely, *Col. 3. & 4. Eph. 5. & 6. Tit. 2.* where he presses it upon servants by this argument, *That the doctrine of God may be adorned*; and on wives by this, *That the doctrine of God may not be blasphemed*; and on all thus, *That the grace of God hath appeared in the gospel, (for that very end.)* 5 It is extended in respect of all times and places. *1 Cor. 15. ult.* we are commanded *always to abound in the work of the Lord*; in the whole tract of our conversation, at home and abroad, in secret and publick, in prosperity and adversity. 6 'Tis extended to, and requireth perfect holiness, holiness at the highest pitch: So, *Matth. 5. Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*; And, *1 Pet. 1. 15. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation, as God that calleth you is holy*: To be at exact holiness, even to have it perfect in respect of degree, in our design, desire and endeavour; *to be purifying ourselves, even as he is pure* (as it is, *1 John 3. 3.*) having him for our Pattern.

If any should here object, and say, To look on the gospel thus, as carving out a Christian's duty and walk so very exactly, in this extent and at this pitch, makes it appear to be very strict, and to differ little or nothing from the law; for what more doth that call for? so that this doctrine seems to be legal. I answer, This objection seems to imply a great mistake: For the difference betwixt the law and the gospel is not so much (if at all) in this, that the law requires more than the gospel; but that it requires what it calls for, on another certification. The law and the gospel agree in these three; 1. The gospel requires holiness in as large an extent as the law; so that whatever is a sin against the law, is also a sin against the gospel; for *Christ came not to abolish, but to fulfil the law.* 2. It requires holiness at the same pitch, or in the same degree; for the gospel commands us *to be holy as God is holy, and to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*: It dispenseth with no sin, nor with any degree of any sin, nor with the least omission of any duty, more than doth the law.

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3. The authority and obligation, that lies on, and binds to holiness, is no less in the gospel, than it is in the law; yea, we may say, that the obligation is in some respects greater.

But they differ in these three; 1. That the gospel taketh in the penitent, tho' he hath not been perfect and exact, and gives him pardon thro' Christ: Which the law doth not. 2. The gospel calleth for duty in the strength of Christ, and furnisheth strength for duty: But the law now furnisheth no strength, but only supposeth it; it only giveth out the word of command, requiring of men that they walk in the strength which they had once in Adam. So that, tho' the authority and obligation be the same, yet the manner and certification is not the same. If there be any breach or failing, the law says, *Thou shalt certainly die*: But the gospel (as I said) admits of repentance, and fleeing to Jesus Christ, *who took on him the curse of the law*. 3. The law accepts of no duty, if it be not exactly perfect in the degree: But the gospel accepts of duty, tho' imperfect, if there be sincerity; it accepts, on Christ's account, of a man, according to that which he hath, if there be a willing mind. So then, when ye are called to walk as becomes the gospel, ye would know that ye are not to dispense with yourselves, in the least, in any duty that the law calleth for; tho' the gospel doth indeed more sweetly call for it, its exactors and officers being peace and righteousness: It is the same holiness in the matter, extent and degree, which the gospel calleth for, with that of the law; tho' it much differeth as to the manner of calling for it.

Secondly, That we may know what is called for in the gospel, as a walk or conversation becoming the same, and so may yet further know the nature of gospel-holiness, (which was the second thing we proposed to speak to) ye would consider the gospel, as it is distinguished from the law, and as it holds out grace: Where we would speak, 1. Of some qualifications, that the gospel addeth, as to the performance of the same duties which the law requires. 2. Of some particular duties which it doth more especially call for, and which were not (severals of them, at least) so proper to the law.



As for the qualifications of duty, which the gospel ad-  
deth, they are these: (1.) A new end; for our end in  
duty now is, not to gain life by it, but simply to glorify  
God, as we may see, 1 Cor. 10. 31. I will not say but this  
end was in the covenant of works; but in the gospel this  
is not only the main end, but some way the only end, and  
the other quite excluded and thrust out; and, when we speak  
of the *glory of God*, we take in the glory of grace, and  
the glory of the Redeemer, who furnisheth grace. (2.) It  
adds a sweet motive, *viz.* love to Jesus Christ; *The love of  
Christ* (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 14.) *constraineth us*: It  
is no more mere awe, that is the motive; but love, and  
love to God in Christ, who hath redeemed and bought us.  
3. The gospel qualifies our obedience and walk, as to  
our undertaking thereof; that it be not in our own strength,  
but in the strength of Jesus Christ: It teacheth us to go  
through the wilderness *leaning on the Beloved*, and leaving  
the burden of the work on him; trusting more to him,  
than to our own feet or strength, as knowing that we can-  
not cripple out the way, nor do any thing without him, as  
it is, *John* 15. 5. (4.) There is a qualification required  
in respect of the frame of our own heart, with respect to  
a twofold fear: One is a filial and reverential fear, that  
proceeds from faith, in which we are *to work out the work  
of our salvation*; the other is, that it be without the fear  
that is opposite to the former, as the word is, *Luke* 1. 74.  
The gospel calleth us, in our walk, to have a fear with-  
out fear; a reverential fear without slavish fear: It would  
have us neither to be altogether afraid because of the law,  
which hath terror; nor to be without filial fear, for that  
is presumption; but to have faith and fear mixed together.  
(5.) The gospel qualifies our walk in spiritual duties, in  
respect of cheerfulness in going about them, which are  
to us (in so far as we have corruption in us) heavy and  
grievous; but the gospel maketh them easy and light, as  
it is said, *Matth.* 11. ult. *His yoke is easy, and his burden  
light*. Tho' it be a yoke, yet it is portable and light,  
when Christ and the believer are yoked together; nor are  
*any of his commands grievous*, as it is, 1 *John* 5. 3.  
(6.) Tho' the gospel call for holiness, yet it makes the  
person to be denied to it: It is a gospel walk, to be holy;  
but

but it takes in that with it which we have, *Phil. 3.* to forget those things that are behind, to be denied and dead to all our attainments, and to count all but loss and dung for Christ. It was indeed a law-walk, to be blameless; but it is a gospel walk, to study to be blameless, and pressing hard after perfect holiness, and yet to forget it, and to be denied to all conceit of it; and to be desirous to be found in Christ Jesus, not having our own righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness which is by faith.

As for the particular duties, at least some of the duties, that are more particularly called for in this walk and conversation becoming the gospel; ye may take these shortly. The first whereof is, A living by faith; and that is, when a Christian hath faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, as it were another life to him: For tho' there was a life of faith, or of dependence on God, in Adam before the fall; yet not the life of faith in a Redeemer: *I live* (saith the apostle, *Gal. 2. 20.*) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that now I live in the flesh, is by faith on the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And this is to be taken along the Christian's walk, even a continued application to and of Christ: This is that which he first betakes himself to, for righteousness; yea, when right, he employs him constantly, as *he is made of God to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*, as he is said to be made to believers, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* The second is, The exercise of repentance, which was not called for as a duty by the law, tho' much ruin followed the breach of it; This was the sum of *John's* and of *Christ's* preaching; *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Tho' it be, alas! a very much slighted exercise, yet daily repentance notably suiterh a conversation becoming the gospel. 3dly, A gospel-conversation would be in and with the exercise of hope. There was love to God under the law, but not so properly the exercise of hope; there was, it is true, hope in respect of the thing promised, in case there had been no violation of the law; but not as respecting Christ Jesus, who is the believer's hope, *Col. 1. 27.* *Christ in you the hope of glory.* I doubt much if the exercise of hope be well known to Christians in this generation; few know what it is to hope to the end, as *Peter* exhorts, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* A fourth

is, The denial of ourselves, and the exercise of humility ; for as the gospel calleth for the denying of our own righteousness, so for the denying of our own wills, affections, lusts, appetites, and desires. There is another sort of love-singleness and deniedness called for now, than under the law ; because *we are bought with a price, and are not our own*, as it is, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *If any man will follow me, let him deny himself*, saith our Lord, *Matth. 16*. A *fifth* is, Much mortification, that we be crucified to the world, to ourself, and to our sinful lusts ; *I am crucified* (saith Paul, Gal. 2.) *with Christ, yet I live*. So, *Chap. 6*, he tells us, *that he was crucified to the world, and the world to him* ; And he exhorts Christians, *Col. 3. 5.* to *mortify their members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, covetousness, &c.* A *sixth* is, Much patience, meekness, forbearance, long-suffering, wherein our Lord hath given and left himself for a none-such Pattern, *Matth. 11. 29.* *Learn* (saith he) *of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*. So, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22. And hence, meekness, patience and forbearance are so much and so frequently called for in the gospel, and on gospel-grounds, as great duties becoming the gospel, or as special pieces of a gospel-conversation. The *seventh* is, A heavenliness in our conversation, a deniedness, a holy abstractness from earthly things, and living in heaven, while on earth ; and a living more where we love, than where we live : *If ye be risen with Christ*, (saith the apostle, *Col. 3. 1.*) *set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth* : Which is also called for, *Philip. 3. 20.* by his own example proposed for our pattern, *Our conversation* (saith he) *is in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour*. To be much in our affections set on the things that are on the earth, to be earthly-minded, is unbecoming the gospel. An *eighth* is, A great eye on eternity ; an eye, whose looks are not bounded within time, but pierce thorow time ; and all the fogs, mists, and clouds that are in it. 'Tis much unbecoming the gospel, to have our hope much (not to say, only) in this life, or to be much taken up about the driving of earthly designs and projects ; but it is a good qualification of a gospel-conversation, to have an eye before us on eternal life, 2 Cor. 4. ult. *While* (saith the apostle) *we look not*

on the things that are seen, but on the things that are not seen, and eternal. A ninth is, Much joy in God, much cheerfulness and heartfomness; therefore believers are willed to rejoice alway and evermore. So, 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5. Rejoice evermore; and, Philip. 4. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again, I say, rejoice; which he so much presses on them, because (as it is like) he knew that they were given to walk droopingly and heavily, which did not so become the gospel, as rejoicing in God, singing and making melody in their hearts to him, cheering themselves in him, and delighting themselves in the Almighty. A tenth is, Spiritual contentment. A contented conversation is a conversation becoming the gospel: Be careful for nothing (saith the apostle, Phil. 4. 6.) but in every thing let your requests be made known unto God, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. And then follows downward a little, I have learned in every state or case to be content: I know how to suffer want, and how to abound, &c. This conversation was very becoming the gospel; he proposes himself as a pattern herein to them. There are many professors of religion, who cannot have, but they are vain; and, when they want, they are anxious and discouraged; 'tis hard to carry the cup even: But a gospel-conversation is equal, sober and composed, and not much up with having, nor much down with want; nor is it easily outwitted and nonplussed by the vicissitudes of those external things. An eleventh is, Watchfulness. A gospel-conversation is a watchful conversation, and never much surprised or moved: Or thus, Watching (especially over the heart) joined with prayer, is a peculiar duty, that a walk becoming the gospel calls for, that we be not found like the slothful servant, when his lord cometh. This is a duty well-becoming us who live under the gospel, because we have readily stronger corruptions, and are at least under more temptations, than those who lived under the law. A twelfth is, Much self-examination or self-searching, because of much corruption in us, and much guilt lying on us, is a duty which the gospel calls for; that we may see what comes of it, how it is mortified and done away: And, there being many promises in our offer, we should see what acceptation they get, and how they are embraced; there is hazard of mistaking our spiritual state, &c. All

which calls us to be much in this duty, *Examine yourselves, prove your own selves*, as says the apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 5. *13thly*, The making of our calling and election sure, becomes the gospel. When we are hovering, and at an uncertainty as to our soul's estate, we are not only to try it, but to endeavour to put it out of question; *I write these things to you* (says John, 1 John 5. 13.) *that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life*. Ye would not only believe, but study to know that ye believe, that ye may comfort yourselves in it: And it is a piece of a conversation and walk unbecoming the gospel, to hang loose in suspense, and at an uncertainty, in that greatest and gravest business. *14thly*, Trusting in God, becomes the gospel; and unbelief and distrust of God, is unbecoming the gospel. *Said I not unto thee* (saith the Lord to Martha, John 11.) *That if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* To have a gracious offer from God, and to scar at it, as if he were not in earnest, is very unbecoming the gospel: Whenever he pipeth, it becomes us well to dance; and to believe and credit him, when he speaks fair and comfortably. *15thly*, A gospel-conversation takes in, and calls for, not only holiness, but a shining exemplary holiness, holiness with a divine lustre and splendor on it. Merely legal holiness is dim and dark, and hath little or no lustre; therefore believers are called *children of the light and of the day*; and they are said to *shine as lights, in the midst of a crooked generation*. It is not only a conversation not spotted, or that is something well-favoured; but such a conversation, that is well-lyned (to speak so) within, with the imputed righteousness of Christ, and much inherent grace and holiness, and with outward self-denied visible splendor and glory: *Let your light* (saith the Lord, Matth. 5.) *so shine before men*, &c. Even as the glory of his body, when he was transfigured on the mount, made his clothes to shine; so there is something of grace within, that makes the external actions and carriage of believers to shine: And words that will be very tasteless and sapless from others, tho' for the matter good, will have another sort of relish and weight from them; and prayer from their mouth will have another sort of refreshful sweetness. *16thly*, A gospel-

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conversation takes in, and calls for, much joy in affliction and tribulation; *We rejoice in tribulation*, saith the apostle: It will make the Christian *take joyfully the spoiling of his goods*, as they did, *Heb. 10. 34.* It will make men come from the presence of councils, rejoicing, that they are accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, as it did the apostles, *Acts 5. last.* My brethren (says James) count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, or tribulations: It makes pleasant and heartsome bearing of crosses from God, and of injuries from men; it makes the Christian stoop humbly and very low to these; it will not suffer him to render evil for evil, but will put him to do good for evil, and it makes him do it on a gospel-ground and account; because Christ frankly forgave the Christian *ten thousand talents* of his debt, he is ready to forgive *an hundred pence* of petty and inconsiderable injuries done against him. 17thly, A gospel-conversation is a sweet, quiet, peaceable, well-humoured conversation: It makes men and women good to live with; it hath much love and pity to them that are without; it is a good neighbour; it is a great friend to unity, and a great enemy to division: It presses hard after *standing fast in one spirit.* 18thly, A gospel-conversation implies a settled fixed condition, that is not fleeing and wavering; it suffers not Christians to be one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow, very unbecoming the gospel: A gospel-conversation will not suffer a man to be a temporizer, or one that cometh and goeth with every turn of the tide, to be of any party that is upmost; but puts to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free.* The believer's heart is fixed, and his conversation is stable, when it is as it becometh the gospel. 19thly, It is a bold conversation, that will scar at no trial for Christ, but will hazard and venture far, ere it expose the gospel to contempt and reproach; therefore it is said, *Philip. 1. In nothing being terrified by your adversaries:* It is very loth to do or to forbear any thing, that may make the gospel to be evil spoken of. 20thly, It is a spiritual conversation, or a walking in the Spirit, as the word is, *Gal. 5. Walk in the Spirit* (saith the apostle) *and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.* And, *v. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.* It makes us to pray in the Spirit, to

praise in the Spirit; and, by assistance of the Spirit, it puts upon endeavours to do every thing that is called for. 21stly, A gospel-conversation is a wrestling and fighting conversation, striving and warring against temptations without, and a body of death within. A lazy, secure, whole-hearted conversation, when a person is lying by, and is not setting himself against, nor purifying himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, but at truce with corruption, is not (sure) becoming the gospel: Hence the apostle, *Rom. 7.* hath such a combat with the remainder of indwelling corruption, sometimes complaining of, sometimes protesting against it, and sometimes bitterly bemoaning and crying out under its captivating power: There being in the believer two contrary parties, one of grace, and another of corrupt nature, which are contrary one to another, as it is, *Gal. 5. 17.* a believer, in a gospel-conversation, is like *Jacob's* and *Esau's* struggling in the womb: It is for this cause that, *Eph. 6.* all the pieces of the spiritual armour are particularly described, and Christians, as Christ's soldiers, commanded to put them on; and to have a gospel-conversation, is to be improving all the pieces of that compleat armour of God aright, to their several ends.

These are things (and such others) that are particularly called for in a gospel-walk and conversation: And if we would take a little view of them altogether, and gather the meaning of this *use of instruction* from the exhortation, *Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ;* the sum of it may be briefly given in these four, 1. To be exactly studying holiness. 2. To be denied to our holiness, as *Paul* was, *Philip. 3.* 3. To be especially taken up with those particular duties, of living by faith, of exercising repentance, of aiming at, and closely pursuing after communion with God in Christ Jesus; (which is, tho' a much abused duty, and unworthily prostituted in the mouths of many, a most precious both duty and privilege) exercising hope, self-denial, &c. so that we may be in case warrantably to say with the apostle, *1 John 1. 14. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* 4. To be much in the exercise of all these heartily and cheerfully; and to be comforted and refreshed

shed in doing duty, and yet denied to all our doing. A Christian, having a suitable conversation to the gospel, sees his ills, and is humbled; observes God's goodness, and comforts himself, and blesses God heartily for his goodness in respect of both, and because there is hope of an outgate from all his evils, and a day coming when he shall be finally and fully redeemed from all his iniquities.

The *second use* leads us to *regret* and *expostulate* with hearers and professors of the gospel, of this time. Tho' this be the thing, and the *only* thing, that they are called to; yet, if we should go thorow and view the conversation of the most part, O how very unsuitable, and unbecoming is it to the gospel! even so very unsuitable, that, if our hearts were tender, they would break and bleed within us to behold it. But, alas! it is a part of our unsuitableness, that we cannot suitably lament it: Little zeal for God, and sorrow for what dishonours him and reflects on the profession of his name, are much gone from this generation. Oh! whither shall we go, into the city or country, to find a conversation becoming the gospel? We cannot be without some conviction, that we ought to be zealous for the glory of God, and serious in the study of holiness in all manner of conversation, that the gospel be not reproached and blasphemed: If we be so, and if such a conversation be a duty, and a very reasonable duty, how comes it to be so little minded and made conscience of? If we profess Christ to be our Husband and Head, our Captain and Leader, ought we not to be like him, and follow him? I take it for granted, that this will be generally assented to, as being very just and reasonable; and yet, without accomplishing a very diligent search into our own way, may we not find, at the first view, much, very lamentably much unsuitableness in our walk to the gospel? Need we descend to particulars? is not our unsuitableness obvious, palpable and undeniable? Let me but ask ourselves a few questions: Are we making suitable use of the promises, and often meditating on them? are we taken up with delighting ourselves in God, and in the great and excellent things contained in the promises? do we study to be like them, and suitably to improve them? do we study to have those poor performances of duty that we go about, so



qualified as the gospel calls for? The lifelessness and whole-heartedness, that manifestly discover themselves in our very hearing of these things, declare much what we are: Your ministers are some way perplexed and puzzled how to deal with you, and know not well whether to speak or to be silent, whether to pipe or to mourn. What suitableness is there to the gospel, when the conversation of many is so spotted? So far, alas! are we from shining, that we are rather like blind lanterns without light. I shall only, for whetting an edge on this regret and expostulation, instance in a few of these particulars touched on before, as to our suitableness to the gospel. (1.) Do we live by faith? Alas! is there such a life as this known by most of us? We are readily either living securely; carelessly and unconcernedly, without troubling ourselves with such matters; or else, on the other hand, we give way to unbelief, and will hardly admit of any thing that may settle and make us foot a stand: We are found often running from one extremity to another; we are either carnally vain, light and frothy, or we are anxious, heartless and dejected, and are very seldom found steering a straight course betwixt extremes, and stemming the port. (2.) We may instance it in the exercise of repentance, which well becomes the gospel: Our Lord Christ, *John the Baptist* and the apostles preached it, and 'tis commended to all; 'tis an exercise very suitable and proper for sinners, and more especially for such sinners as have had many offers of grace, and have much slighted them: But where is it? ah! where is it? Converts are rare in these days, and among converts the kindly exercise of repentance is rare; we are generally as whole-hearted, as if we were living under the covenant, where there is no promise of pardon to a penitent sinner. I mean not every sort of repentance, for there is a worldly sorrow that works death; there is a legal repentance, arising mainly, if not only, from the fear of punishment: But I mean of serious and hearty gospel-repentance, arising from the consideration of God's holiness, and of his mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, that is accompanied with holy zeal, fear, indignation and revenge, as it is described, 2 Cor. 7. (3.) Where is self-denial? Is not that

that a rare thing? Many of us cannot bear a word reflecting on *self*, neither can we quit a word once uttered by us (tho' it may be somewhat rashly and unadvisedly) wherein *self* is concerned, but will needs maintain and defend it: O what reeling and whirling-about with the time is there among us? What hard pursuing after, and even chasing of self-interests and designs? (4.) Where is spiritual joy and rejoicing in the Lord? who delight themselves in the Almighty? who bless themselves on earth, in the God of truth? who do really and humbly boast in him all the day long? who bless themselves in, and think themselves well come to, with precious Jesus Christ as their Mediator and Redeemer, as their Lord, Head, and Husband? who rejoice and glory in the midst of tribulation, in the hope of the glory of God? Joy in external things is much withered away from us, and it is just with God that it should be so, since we live so great strangers to the *joy of the Lord*, which is *our strength*: Upon but a very overtrial, we will easily discover, that there's amongst us none, or but very little, spiritual joy in God; I mean not only, nor so much of sensible joy, as of our little active stirring up of ourselves to give obedience to that command concerning *rejoicing in God alway and evermore*. May I not conclude then, that there is great ground of expostulation with us all, both believers and others, who may be convinced, that this lieth indispensibly on them, even to have a conversation as it becomes the gospel of Christ? ah, how little conscience is made of it! O mourn for and lament our shortcomings, as to this; and fall to the work, fall about it more than ever, as your main business, to have a conversation becoming the gospel. Many already are a reproach and a shame to the gospel, (and it will disclaim them) and, who shall live to see it, a great many more will be so: Alas! few or none of us all have a conversation as becomes the gospel; which is a lamentation, and should be for a lamentation.

The *Third use* is of *exhortation*, That seeing such a conversation is so much, and with such speciality called for, and yet so little seriously endeavoured by most; let me turn over to you the apostle's exhortation to the *Philippians*: If ye would know how to behave at home and abroad, in the

the duties of worship, and in the duties of your particular callings, stations and relations, even in all commanded duties; then, *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ*, and beware of doing any thing that is unbecoming the gospel, or that may give ground to speak any ill of it; beware of letting the precious promises ly by you unimproved, but study to be like them: O study holiness in all manner of conversation; which is not only and simply to be holy, or to have holiness, but a holiness influenced by the gospel-promises in Christ, believably improved, as the apostle exhorts, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Not only to be externally holy, but to be in the exercise of the graces of the Spirit within; to cleanse from all filthiness of the spirit as well as of the flesh, especially to purify the heart, the fountain of pollution; even to study to be pure as he is pure; to aim at holiness in the strength of Christ, in the largest extent and in the highest pitch, and yet to be denied to it, and all vain conceit of it; even to account it but loss, in the point of justification before God; to be in the practice of all the duties of religion sweetly, pleasantly, heartfully and cheerfully, walking under all sorts of lots with a gospel-contentedness: This, O! this would be a conversation-worthy of, and becoming the gospel; nay, it would make a little heaven on earth. And we desire to be as pressing and peremptory in calling for this from you, as ever we urgently pressed you by any call or invitation to receive the offer of the gospel, and of Christ therein; and if we were to speak to you all, O men and women, one by one, by name and surname, this would be our exhortation to you, *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ*.

We come now (as we promised) to press this on you by some few *Considerations*: And, 1. Consider the authority that enjoins it, and lays it on you; and if ye trust him, and expect the accomplishment of any promise of the gospel from him, then take this as proceeding from the same authority: Presume not, under the pain of God's displeasure, and of cheating your own souls to their ruin, to take or meddle with the promise, if ye mind not sincerely to study a suitableness in your conversation to the gospel. 2. Consider, not only the reasonableness of the thing,

thing, but also the sweet easiness of it; for, taking it in a gospel-sense, 'tis an easy yoke and a light burden: And 'tis withal very suitable and congruous to all professors of the gospel; Ought not a minister to be like his calling, a merchant to be like his calling, a tradesman to be like his trade and calling? Ought not also a Christian to be like his Christian calling, like the gospel which he professeth? 3. Consider the ties and obligations, that all who profess to have received the gospel, are under: Are ye not obliged to such a conversation, by your baptismal vow? Which obligation, tho' many of you forget, yet God will require it. Think ye that ye are free to live as ye list, to live like the gospel or not, or to take one piece of a gospel-walk, and leave another? Ye are professedly resigned to God in baptism, and are by it obliged to live every way as it becometh the gospel; and ye must either on the matter renounce your baptism and deny Christ, and so deal treacherously with him, or ye must make it your business to live like the gospel. 4. Consider, that this gospel will be the rule whereby ye shall be judged, whether ye have indeed received the Mediator, the promises and privileges, the duties and directions, and the graces of it, and improved them, or not; *In the day* (saith the apostle, *Rom. 2.*) *that God shall judge the secrets of hearts by my gospel.* If ye would have boldness when death and judgment come, endeavour a conversation becoming this gospel: Tho' your conversation were very much becoming the law (as it is impossible now without gospel-grace) yet will not that satisfy the Judge; for ye will be judged both by the law and gospel: 5. Consider, that, tho' the Lord had required many hard things of you, you would most certainly have been obliged to have performed them; and now, when he requires only this, ought ye not so much the more to aim at it, and endeavour it? Otherwise ye bring up an ill report on this gospel, as if it were an unsupportable heavy burden, and most uneasy yoke; for which ye must answer at your peril. Consider the dreadful doom and sentence of the slothful servant, who said, *He is a hard master.* 6. Consider the great prejudice that a walk unbecoming the gospel hath with it. I cannot easily, nay not at all to the full, tell you the pre-

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judice it will bring to you ; only this I will say, that it had been better for you that ye had never heard the gospel ; it had been better that ye never had been piped to by the gospel, and that ye had never heard any of its sweetest musick-springs, if (to follow the Lord's own similitude so far) ye endeavour not to keep all the measures thereof in your dancing after it, in your walking conform to it. Tell me, if we may be in earnest with you, what if ye were called even now or before night to give an account of your improving of and profiting by the gospel, whereof ye have so very much, and from which ye have been so often piped unto, how utterly unanswerable would many of you be found to be ? Your trifling way of walking alone and in your families, your neglecting of prayer in them, with the chiding and bitterness betwixt husbands and wives, and with and amongst servants ; your omitting to instruct children and servants in the principles of religion ; your tippling and mis-spending your time, declare sufficiently what your conversation is. If any of you shall say, The conversation that you press, is a harder work and a more difficult task than we can win at ; Is it any thing else, than what the Holy Ghost by the apostle presseth on all the hearers of the gospel ? O ! take heed of branding a walk becoming the gospel with so black a note, as if it were an unsupportable yoke of intolerable hard bondage, lest it be said to you, *Evil and slothful servants*, &c. If ye had been serious and diligent in making use of the gospel in a gospel-way, by improving Christ and the promises, this work would have gone better with you, and ye had been in much better case than ye are in now : If ye had been more in the practice of gospel-duties, and in the exercise of gospel-graces in secret, your visible conversation might and would have been much more as it becometh the gospel.

As for you that have communicate, there is a peculiar tye upon you : You have renewed your covenant with God, and is there any covenanting with God, but it hath this in it, That, if there be thereafter a falling-back, such back-sliders come under the guilt of treacherous dealing with him ? Let me, for a conclusion of this discourse, say these few things to you ; 1. Is it suitable, think ye, to fast the

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one day for your not walking as it becometh the gospel, and to take unjust liberty to yourselves the next day? on a fast-day to spue out your foul and abominable sins, and to return with the dog to the vomit in a few days thereafter? will ye be so unsuitable to your professions and confessions? Beware of that, for the Lord's sake; better ye had never fasted nor confessed, than thus to mock the Lord.

2. Many of you have been at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in it ye have professed that ye have taken Christ for your Husband, which implies the tie and obligation of a dutiful wife: What, I pray, is that, but to *have a conversation as becometh the gospel, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called?* as the apostle exhorts, *Eph. 4. 1.* And is there any straiter bond on earth whereby men can be bound? If, after thus covenanting with Christ, ye shall foully fail or fall back, will it not exceedingly aggrege your guilt? 3. Are there not of you who have come under some private engagements to the Lord? I take it for granted, if ye have not been scorning God in your humiliation, and in your communicating; I take it (I say) for granted, that severals of you have come under particular and personal engagements to God: If so, ye would beware of loosing those ties, and of violating those so solemn engagements; and the rather, that it is to be feared, if ye keep not promise to God now, ye may never get a communion again to renew it. 4. I would have some of you remembring of those particular obligations ye came under, and promises that you made to us, when you received your tokens, to amend those faults whereof ye were well known to be guilty: Most certainly those promises, especially so explicately made, will bear witness against you, if those evils be continued in, or relapsed into; and we shall bear witness for Christ against you, if ye shall not be answerable to your engagements: For the Lord's sake, put us not to it.

Essay in good earnest, and set about the study of this gospel-becoming conversation: I shall forbear to speak of encouragements to this. It will be one good encouragement, to consider seriously, that it is a walk becoming the gospel and Christ in it; that it hath such promises made to it, and such a Surety for every promise; that the cerri-

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fication of the law is not at it; that ye have pardon of sin promised to you on your repentance, and furniture at hand for every thing called for from you. Take it in short, whatever your calling, station or relation be, *Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ*: And remember the ties and obligations that ye are under, whether more general or more particular; otherwise they shall be remembered to, and against you. Now, the Lord himself enable you, by his all-sufficient grace, to suit all your obligations, to pay all your vows, and to make all your honest resolutions practicable, relating to this *Conversation becoming the gospel of Christ*.

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## A very heavenly SERMON,

*Preached, if not after the communion, yet very pertinent for such an occasion (however it is subjoined to the immediately preceding, because of the affinity of purposes)*

On Philip. 3. 20. *For our Conversation is in Heaven.*

**T**HE life and work of a Christian is a far other thing than, for the most part, it is taken to be; and, no question, were we often thinking on, and studying the qualifications and extent of a Christian conversation, to which believers are called, we would walk with stopped mouths, in the deep sense of our great shortcoming, and there would not be such delusion under the conceit of self-righteousness: But the ignorance of this, makes carnal men think themselves to be something; and makes even believers themselves, that they walk not so humbly, nor press so seriously towards the mark; neither do they propose to themselves, as they ought, a just and perfect pattern to follow.

Amongst other qualifications of a Christian walk and conversation, this is one, and a very considerable one, *That our conversation should be in heaven*: A thing we fear the most part of the Christians of this age scarcely believe, much less endeavour, that they should live with their hearts above in heaven, in the lively expectation of the Saviour's