

# ADVICE TO AN APPRENTICE.

---



As soon as you are bound, you are at your master's disposal, and not at your own; he has then a right to your hands, your strength, and ALL that you can do. He becomes a sort of parent to you; and though not a natural, yet a legal father. You are also obliged, not only by the laws of your country, and the tenor of your indentures, but by the fifth com-

mandment of God, to pay him all due submission and honor. To do this is a most material part of your duty as a Christian, as well as your undeniable debt as an apprentice. It is required of you by God, in holy scripture, and you must not once imagine that you do what is pleasing to him unless you conscientiously perform it. Now, that you may know what it is that your master will expect from you, and what it is that the Lord has enjoined you with regard to him, remember it consists, first, in reverence of his person ; secondly, in obedience to his commands ; and, thirdly, in faithfulness in his business.

First, in reverence of his person. You must esteem him very highly for his superiority's sake and the resemblance he bears to God. For God who made you, and has an uncontrollable power over you, has communicated some of that power to your master ; so that you are to look upon



him as the representative, in some sort, of the divine majesty, and invested with some of his authority.—Accordingly St. Paul says, 1 Tim. vi. 1. “You must count him worthy of all honor;” *all*, that is, internal and external, that of the actions and words, as well as that of the heart. It is not enough to maintain a worthy estimation inwardly, but you must let it appear on all occasions outwardly, by behaving yourself very obligingly to him before his face, and by speaking very respectfully of him behind his back. Whatever you have reason to think will grieve or displease him, or will be prejudicial or offensive to him, that you must cautiously forbear.

Secondly, obedience to his commands. Observe how full the apostle speaks to this purpose, Col. iii. 22. “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.” See likewise, from this passage, not only the necessity, but also the compass

and latitude of your obedience, how large and extensive it is. It reaches not barely to a few, but to all and every instance. If you should receive orders that are ever so much against the grain of your inclination, you must force yourself to comply with them; receive them as you used to do nauseous physic; though they may be unpleasant at first, they will do you good, and be comfortable to you afterwards; your own pleasure must always stoop, and give way to your master's. Remember who hath said, "Servants, obey your masters in all things." He that was higher than the highest of us all, even the most excellent and illustrious person that ever lived, condescended to the lowest and (such as our fine folks would account) most shameful offices. Neither be dejected because you are treated in an unworthy manner, or set to do some mean and low office for your master or his family; but rejoice rather in



that you are made like unto the Redeemer, and in the happy prospect you will have of becoming great in heaven, by being little on earth. I am aware this piece of advice is not so unexceptionable as the rest, it may possibly be adjudged the mark of too yielding and sneaking a spirit; but never forget that the things which are most highly esteemed by God, are held in least repute by men. I know and am sure, that if any apprentice would make such a compliance for the sake of preserving peace, and out of conscience to the command of God, and with an eye to the example of Christ, there is a day coming when he will not repent of it; when it will not be deemed a blot in his character, but be "an ornament of grace to his head, and more comely than chains about his neck." Well, you see your obedience must be universal; you must come when he calls you, and go where he bids you; do all that he

commands you, and let alone all that he forbids you. This must, moreover, be done, not grudgingly, or of necessity, but readily and gladly: for hear what the scripture saith, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily;" and again, "with good will doing service;" so that we must not creep, but be quick and expeditious in our business, however disagreeable. You must not go about it with grumbling words and muttering in your mouth, but with so satisfied an air as may show that you are pleased with whatever pleases your master.

Thirdly, in faithfulness in his business. This is the last branch of your duty to your master; and since Moses has obtained an honorable testimony on this account, be you also "faithful in all his house." You may find this, as indeed all the qualifications of a good servant, described by St. Paul, Tit. ii. 10. "Not purloining, but showing all fidelity." You are



charged not to purloin, that is, not to keep back from your master, nor to put into your own pocket, nor convert to your own use, any of that money which, in the way of trade, passes through your hands. You must not sell at a cheaper, and buy at a dearer rate, in order to have some valuable consideration made you privily in your own person. These differ from robbing on the highway, only in being less open and notorious; but they are flagrant acts of dishonesty, and will cry to heaven for vengeance. Such tricks and villanies do the same thing by craft and treachery as housebreakers do by force and violence. Therefore renounce, detest, and fly from them as much as from fire, arrows, and death. Besides which, you are to show all good fidelity. What is meant by this, you may understand by reading how Joseph conducted himself in Potiphar's service. Your master, it is likely, will commit the

management of some of his affairs to you; and you must endeavour, by a discreet behaviour and a pious life, to bring the blessing of the Lord upon all that you take in hand. You must lay out your time, and your labour, and give all diligence to answer the trust reposed in you. You must not delay the business which is urgent, nor do your work by halves, nor transfer that to others which it is expected you should do yourself. ‘The slothful man is brother to him that is a great waster;’ therefore you must avoid idleness and carelessness. In a word, you must do nothing knowingly and wilfully that is likely to impoverish your master, but seek by all lawful means to increase his substance. All this you must observe, not only when he stands by you, and inspects you, but when his back is turned, and you are removed from his view; otherwise your service is nothing but eyeservice.

FINIS.