

S E R M O N S,

B Y

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ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN
ORDINARY IN SCOTLAND.



L O N D O N :

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S E R M O N I.

RELIGION INTIMATELY CONNECTED
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P S A L M cxvi. 9.

*I will walk before the Lord in the land of the
living.*

MAN is a being of a compound nature; he consists of a soul and a body. By the former he is allied to God and angels; by the latter to earth and earthly things. In consequence of this, he is capable of two different sorts of *enjoyments*, subjected to two distinct classes of *desires*, and lives at once in two dissimilar states. From the body arise appetites for worldly things, and *pleasure in them*; from the soul, desires of things spiritual and eternal, and a relish for them. We live an animal or a natural life, and we live at the same time a rational or spiritual life. Thus

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by the very constitution of our nature, our attention is drawn different ways, our views are directed to contrary objects, and we are engaged in dissimilar employments. By concern about the one, we may become negligent of the other.

THE things of this world are the objects of sense; they are continually soliciting our notice; they force themselves into our view; they affect us strongly. By these means they are very apt to render us regardless of spiritual and eternal things, which can be perceived only by faith, which make but a weak impression on the thoughtless, which cannot influence our conduct, except we set ourselves voluntarily and designedly to meditate upon them. While we are intent on our occupations for the support of the animal life, we may very readily fall into neglect with respect to that occupation which belongs to us as reasonable and immortal creatures. We should guard against this with a care proportioned to the danger of our becoming guilty of it.

THE scripture perpetually inculcates upon us, that the eternal happiness of our souls, and the practice of holiness by which it is secured, ought to be our principal concern, and to engage us more earnestly than any of the possessions

sions and enjoyments which can profit us only in the present life, or any of those worldly employments which are subservient to the attainment of them. The least reflection is sufficient to convince us of the propriety and the importance of this conduct. To those who at all think seriously, the difficulty lies only in *preserving* a commanding impression of the necessity of this conduct, and putting it in practice, amidst the busy scenes and the dissipations of common life. These frequently obliterate the conviction, and efface the sentiments, which are produced by the most affecting representations of the superior value of spiritual and eternal things, exhibited in an hour of retirement and devotion.

It is of great moment, therefore, to acquire a striking sense of the manner in which a concern for the salvation of our souls, and application to the duties of religion, may be intermingled with our whole worldly employment, and exerted in the various circumstances of ordinary life. For discoursing on this subject, we may naturally take occasion from the words now read; *I will walk, says David, before the Lord in the land of the living. To walk before the Lord* *, and, *To walk with the*

* Gen. xvii. 1. xxiv. 40. xviii. 15. 1 Kings iii. 6. 2 Kings xx. 3. Psal. lvi. 13.

*Lord**, are beautiful expressions used in scripture, on purpose to convey this very view of religion: and the former of them conveys it the more explicitly in this place, by the psalmist's having added, *in the land of the living*. By these last words he no doubt designed to express the constancy of that obedience to God, which he promised in return for the mercies acknowledged in this psalm; he meant to intimate that he would persist in it to the end of his life: but they likewise naturally imply, that he would incorporate his religion with his whole ordinary life, and make it to run through all the occupations in which he might ever be employed in common with other men, and to blend itself with all the transactions relative to the present world, in which he might be at any time engaged. It is certain that the scriptures always suppose religion to be connected with common life, and designed for influencing us in all the affairs of it: they never represent it as a thing which may be laid aside when we come into the world, or for which we have no occasion while we are busied in the labour of our stations.

* Gen. v. 22. 24. vi. 9. Mich. vi. 8. Mal. ii. 6.

To consider religion in this important point of view, as what ought to mix with all our secular employments, and give a tincture and completion to all those actions which have the most intimate relation to the present animal life, is what I now propose.

By setting religion in this light, I do not mean to affirm, that it contains no duties distinct from the right conduct of our ordinary business, or that there are no exercises belonging to it, which are abstracted from common life. There are times and seasons appropriated to particular religious duties, into which no concern about our ordinary business should be allowed to intrude. There are assemblies called together for partaking in the sacraments, for public worship, and for hearing the word, where we must be intent on these exercises alone, and whence we must exclude all worldly thoughts and cares. There are exercises of devotion which must be performed in the secrecy and stillness of retirement; prayer, the reading of the scriptures, meditation on the principles of religion and the obligations of our several duties, self-examination, confession of our sins, and resolutions of amendment. We are not truly religious, if we allow concern for our temporal interests and diligence in our worldly business to lead us into the neglect

of these. They have not an immediate relation to the employments of our stations, but they are consistent with them: they suspend them for a little, but they can be performed without any inconvenient interruption of them. These duties of religion enter not directly into common life, nor are intimately incorporated with its functions; they are rather in appearance abstracted from them: but they are in reality subservient to the right discharge of them. They form impressions which may influence us in life; they revive sentiments which, without them, the hurry of business would dissipate; they invigorate principles of conduct which the avocations of the world would enfeeble, but which the good man must act upon every day. Without attendance on these duties of religion, we could have no good sentiments or principles to carry into the world with us: but we attend upon them to no purpose, if we carry not into the world with us, if we maintain not amidst all the bustle of the world, the good sentiments and principles which they are fitted to infuse. The church and the closet are the places where these duties are performed; but the world is the place where we must display the effects which they produce, and exert the temper of holiness which they cherish. The spiritual life must be recruited by the exercises of retirement

tirement and retreat: but when it is recruited by these, as the nourishment adapted to it, it is in the world that it must show its vigour: its functions must mix themselves with all those of the animal life; our employment for eternity must be interwoven with all our occupations for time.

IN the sequel I shall, *first*, point out the importance of this view of religion; and, *secondly*, explain it.

FIRST, *I shall* point out the importance of considering religion as connected with all the parts of our ordinary life.

THERE is no mistake about the nature of religion more dangerous than an opinion that it is inconsistent, or even unconnected, with the ordinary business of life: this opinion will produce different effects on different persons; but all the effects which it can produce, will be pernicious.

IF it be entertained, it will infallibly lead the generality to neglect religion altogether. Present things are so constantly in our view, the wants and the demands of the natural life are felt so strongly, that most men will be ingrossed by them, if they apprehend that,

without neglecting them, they cannot secure future and unseen things. Did all men perceive clearly, that they may *walk with God* while they are mixing in the societies and employments of men, and that they may most effectually promote their eternal happiness while they are occupied in the business of their temporal vocations, many would endeavour to *work out their salvation* *, who scarcely think of it, because they imagine it unconnected with their ordinary business, or incompatible with their worldly pursuits.

SOME however have so deep a sense of the importance of their eternal interests, and so strong a solicitude to secure them, that an opinion of their inconsistency with the business and pursuits of life will drive them into the opposite extreme. Under the influence of this mistake many have secluded themselves from the world, withdrawn from all the occupations of life; and given up themselves to idleness, contemplation, and solitary devotion. The life of such persons may be harmless, but it is useless: it may be freer from vice than the lives of others, but it is less virtuous; they have not been exposed to the same temptations with others; their innocence has in many cases

* Phil. ii. 12.

arisen only from their want of opportunity for committing sin, not from strength of mind, or the vigour of virtuous principles. Were a life of monkish indolence necessary or conducive to the improvement and salvation of our souls, God would not have placed us in a world where we have so many wants that cannot be satisfied without diligent application to a variety of occupations. An active and busy life is perfectly consistent with all that God requires of us, for pleasing him or for obtaining eternal happiness. Holiness preserved uncorrupted, and exercised vigorously, in active life, is much worthier than the inoffensive blamelessness of the mere recluse. You should yield your active service unto God. You cannot please him more effectually, than by following your several vocations, by engaging in the ordinary employments of life, by pursuing them with industry, and being conversant about them in a right manner. You do not serve God, you do not labour for eternity, you do not take care of your souls, only when you are meditating, or reading, or hearing, or praying, or partaking of the Lord's supper; but also as effectually, though these purposes be not perhaps so directly in your thoughts when you are going about your worldly business in a virtuous manner, when you are honestly and conscientiously doing the work of your stations.

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You may live to God, and yet live in the world. To renounce the world and fly to solitude, is to renounce the station which God has allotted us, and abandon the opportunities of doing good and becoming good, which he has given us.

MEN may entertain the mistake of which we are speaking, without running into either of the extremes now mentioned. They may regard religion as something wholly abstracted from life, and yet may engage in the ordinary business of life, without neglecting religion altogether. In this case they will take up with a false species of religion: they will be concerned, perhaps anxiously concerned, for their salvation, but they will pursue it in an improper manner. They imagine that the state of their souls depends only on some formal transactions with God, on some solitary and secret exertions of the will and the affections in dedicating themselves to him, and accepting of Jesus Christ; and that it is no wise affected by the manner in which they carry on their ordinary business. They think that they may be religious, though they be immoral; that they may provide for eternity, though they neglect the duties of time; that they may be in a state of grace, though they be bad husbands, bad wives, unnatural parents, undutiful

undutiful children, unfaithful servants, unkind and quarrelsome neighbours, or dishonest dealers. They regard the graces of the spirit as totally distinct from the moral virtues; the conduct which God approves, as perfectly different from that behaviour which is useful to mankind. They make an unnatural divorce between religion and morality. In the place of true holiness they substitute an absurd and unprofitable superstition. Alas, my brethren, they deceive themselves! If they act according to this idea, their religion will have no greater influence upon their conduct, than if they made no pretences to religion; and therefore it will have no more influence upon their eternal salvation. Genuine religion is wholly practical: grace is but the principle of virtue and good works. Your religion can be of no value, I should rather say, you have no real religion, if it do not enter into life with you, if it do not pervade and animate all your actions.

A VERY great part of that conduct by which your eternal happiness may be promoted, consists in transacting your ordinary business in a proper and virtuous manner. There is scarcely an action of your lives so insignificant as not either to promote or to obstruct your salvation. The most trivial and common actions may be performed right, or they may
may

may be performed wrong. We should all, therefore, maintain an uninterrupted care to perform all the actions of our lives aright. If we maintain this care, we shall forward our everlasting happiness, by the very same actions by which we obtain or enjoy present things. Many of the common actions of life are far from being trivial or unimportant in a religious and moral view. It is by living in society, and employing ourselves in the ordinary business of it, that we can find opportunity for many of our most important duties, for many of the principal functions of the spiritual and christian life: and by seizing these opportunities, and using them properly, we shall most effectually provide for eternity. It is from the ordinary occurrences of life, that we find occasion for the principal exertions of those virtues which regard either ourselves, our neighbour, or our God: and these virtues comprehend the whole of our duty, and constitute that holiness which is the necessary preparation for heaven.

THE observations which have been hitherto made, abundantly shew the importance of that view of religion which I am endeavouring to give you; they likewise explain it in some measure: for the more particular explication of it, which was the *second* thing proposed, let

us briefly point out, how the *three* great branches of our duty now mentioned, interweave themselves with the ordinary actions and employments of life.

I. THERE are many duties which we owe properly to ourselves, for practising which we find the opportunity in the course of ordinary life.

As long as we dwell in these earthly tabernacles, some foresight and diligence about the necessaries and conveniences of the present life, is unavoidable. God doth not forbid it: he hath not made it inconsistent with the pursuit of future happiness. None would wish to starve or to be naked: God doth not require you to court these hardships. You may be diligent; you ought to be diligent in your callings: God not only allows, but commands you to be diligent; *not slothful in business* *, is a precept of divine authority; there are many similar precepts: God promises his blessing to diligence, and gives frequent encouragement to it. That man sins, and obstructs his own progress to heaven, who is idle in his station. Religion renders industry a duty towards ourselves, enforced by the authority of God: by reflecting

* Rom. xii. 11.

on this obligation to it, and allowing it to have some influence upon us, we shall convert every exertion of industry in our trade or profession into an act of obedience to God: and if, while we are prompted to industry by the instincts and prospects of the animal life, common to all men, we be also impelled to it by a regard to the commandment of God, this additional motive cannot fail to quicken our industry, to increase it, and to render it more successful.

GOD requires that the immediate objects of your industry should not engross your whole hearts; that you should not imagine the attainment of them sufficient to make you happy; that amidst your labour for them you should maintain a sense that there are things of infinitely greater consequence, to be either obtained or lost. Religion requires you to carry these sentiments through life with you: they will not enfeeble your industry, they will only restrain it from forced and unnatural exertions; they will be no hindrance to its regular and healthful motions, they will only prevent its running into distorted and convulsive agitations; they will not destroy that eagerness which gives spirit and perseverance to your endeavours, they will only extinguish that anxiety, solicitude, and carefulness, which,
while

while they make you neglect eternal things, often render you at the same time incapable of pursuing present things in the most effectual manner, and create immediate vexation of spirit, for which no success can make amends. In a word, such sentiments carried through life, and acted upon, will only sanctify your industry, and render it conducive to your future happiness, while it continues as subservient as ever, or even becomes more subservient to your present interest.

WE are so formed as to be capable of enjoyment in those earthly things which we possess. God doth not contradict our constitution by his laws; he doth not require us to become insensible even to the lowest pleasures. All men eat and drink: they are among the most common actions of your lives; yet religion is concerned in them. If, in eating and drinking, you are luxurious, intemperate, or debauched, you swallow down poison to your immortal souls: but if you eat and drink temperately and in moderation, without overvaluing or repining for the pleasures which you have not, or abusing those which you have, avoiding sensuality and excess; if you eat and drink in that degree which promotes the health and strength of the body, which renders it fitter for the service of the soul, which is decent,
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and becomes a reasonable creature, made for much higher enjoyments; then you serve God every time you eat and drink; you nourish your souls unto eternal life, by the very same actions by which you daily nourish your bodies.

IT is a duty which we owe to ourselves, to preserve sobriety of mind, composure of spirit, a freedom from all violent passions, humility, and self-government. It is in the ordinary employments of life that we find both temptations to violate this temper, and occasions for exercising it: it is only by maintaining it amidst all the occurrences of common life, and all the calls, and vicissitudes, and tumults of business, that we can obey those divine precepts which enjoin it. You are engaged in the pursuit of some considerable advantage: you have now an opportunity of curbing the violence of your desires, of keeping them from possessing your whole souls: this is incumbent on you, and by this you shall prepare yourselves for that happy state which excludes every ungoverned passion. In the course of your occupations you meet with unexpected incidents, sudden turns, perplexities, and intricacies: you are called to avoid being discomposed by them; this will be a preparation for the superior regions of perfect

fect serenity and peace, at the same time that it prevents present uneasiness, and even fits you for the most proper management of your worldly business.

IN this world, objects frequently occur which tend to draw us off from the path of life. They meet us in the scenes of business, and in the hours of relaxation and amusement, in company, in solitude, in every situation. Continual circumspection and watchfulness against their drawing us into the ways of death, by seducing us into sin, is a duty which we owe to our own souls: and it is a duty which we must put in practice every day, and every hour, in every place, and in every condition. We must carry this temper through life with us, we must preserve and exercise it in all the various circumstances in which at any time we stand, else we cannot persist stedfastly in the narrow way that leads to heaven.

2. IN like manner, in the ordinary business of our lives we shall find the most frequent and the best opportunities of performing our several duties to our fellow-men. Religion requires us to embrace these opportunities: and by embracing them, and performing the duties suitable to them, we shall serve God, and

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please him, and contribute to the salvation of our own souls.

You spend the day in merchandize, in labour, in the business of your calling whatever it is: you must carry your religion along with you; you must exercise it all the time you are thus employed. You may do your work either honestly and uprightly, or the contrary. If you deceive those with whom you have dealings, or defraud them, or injure them, you injure your own souls much more, you move a step forward to destruction. But if in every part of your business without exception, you act justly and equitably, and deal with integrity and faithfulness; you *walk before the Lord*, while you seem to be only busy in your worldly calling; you advance in your journey towards heaven, while you seem to be only going round in the circle of employments which belong to this mortal state. The shop, the exchange, the occupations of active life, form the only theatre on which the virtues of justice, fidelity, and honesty can be practised; and without constantly practising these, you can have no religion. These virtues tend to secure the confidence of men, and to promote your worldly prosperity; and by the uniform practice of them, you likewise *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth*

moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.*

IN the train of life, in the intercourse of society and business, some person does you undesigned harm, or an intended injury. This is the time when you have it in your power to exercise, and by exercising to improve, patience, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, kindness. It is only by exercising them in such circumstances, by making them to run through all the actions to which such circumstances give occasion, that you can shew yourselves to *be the children of the Highest* †, and heirs of the kingdom of life. If, on the occasions mentioned, you, on the contrary, indulge bitterness, anger, wrath, malice, revenge; if you give way to the expressions of these dispositions in the communications of company, or the connexions of business; you show yourselves alienated from the gentle spirit of true religion, and you render yourselves fit for the society of those fallen angels in whom malevolent passions reign.

YOU go into company, you enter into conversation: the characters and the conduct of others become the topics. This is the situation

* Mat. vi. 19.

† Luke vi. 35.

in which you are called to make candid and favourable constructions, to vindicate aspersed innocence, to clear up misconstrued virtues, to agologize for exaggerated failings, to *spea*k *the truth in love**. You have opportunity for these duties every day : it is in the relaxations of society, in the turns of common conversation, that you find the opportunity ; and they are essential and important duties of religion. If instead of performing them, you, in your gayest meetings, and most unreserved talk, defame, slander, revile, or backbite, you need make no pretensions to true religion in your closets or at church. *If any man among you, says the apostle James, seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain* †. He that bridleth not his tongue from offences so heinous as these, doth the office of Satan, and by the employment of those which he reckons his disengaged hours, and for which he thinks that little account will be required of him, entitleth himself to a portion with Satan.

IN the course of your employments, by the events which cast up in the train of your ordinary business, you have opportunities of returning good to your benefactors, of doing

* Eph. iv. 15.

† Jam. i. 26.

services to those who have done you evil, of supplying the wants of the poor, by employing them, or by other means which are in your way, of supporting the friendless, of producing concealed merit, or of doing some other good office to those with whom you meet. Different employments afford different means of doing the same good offices to others, or opportunities of doing different good offices; but every employment affords some means, and some opportunities. It is a great part of the duty which God requires of you, to embrace and improve these opportunities: this is to *do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*; by this you *lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life* *.

I CANNOT mention particularly all the ways in which true holiness will enter into social life, and exert itself towards others, in all the varied scenes and complicated situations which turn up in the course of ordinary business. In addition to the instances already given, I shall only observe in general, that every act of proper behaviour which we show as parents, as children, as masters, as ter-

* 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

vants, as we belong to a particular occupation or profession, as we are placed in a particular relation, is a real act of holiness, pleasing to God, and conducive to our eternal happiness. On the other hand, every instance of improper behaviour in any of these relations or situations, displeases God, and retards our progress to heaven. When we contemplate religion as thus concerned in our whole behaviour towards others, as either observed or violated in all our social actions, how extensive does it appear to be? how uninterrupted are our opportunities for it? how constant should be our attention to it? how often do we neglect or transgress its obligations, when we imagine our actions perfectly indifferent, and removed wholly out of the province of religion?

3. WE must likewise carry piety along with us through the whole course of our lives; we must exercise godliness in all our occupations: else we have no true religion, nor can be fit for the enjoyment of God. This is an important part of our subject, the illustration of which we cannot now enter upon.

E R R A T A.

Page 55, l. ult. *for intention, read intension.* P. 61, l. 12, *read room,* l. 22, *put a comma after examination.* P. 74, l. 2, *for of them all, read them all.* P. 79, l. 26, *read worms of;* l. 29, *for cvii. read cii.* P. 80, l. 8, *del. in.* P. 91, l. 8, *for conduct, read contelt.* P. 106, l. 12, *for them it, read them in it.* P. 130, l. 27, *after Rom. iv. 3. insert Gal. iii. after Gen del. Gal.* P. 157, l. 2, *read would it not.* P. 162, l. 1, *for more, read worse.* P. 169, l. 4, *read their folly.* P. 232, l. ult. *for weakneis, read meeknefs.* P. 234, l. 16, *read their tempers.* P. 258, l. 15, *for foundation, read fountain.* P. 269, l. 2; *for in a, read in thy.* P. 271, l. 2, *for to, read in.* P. 273, l. 25, *for greatest, read chief.* P. 301, l. 6, *read its necessity.* P. 304, l. 21, *for and, read not.* P. 305, l. 1, *read can practise.* P. 309, l. 12, *for thoughts, read thought.* P. 321, l. 2. *read only prohibits.* P. 370, l. 8, *for most, read more.*

S E R M O N S,

B Y

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M D C C L X X X.

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S E R M O N I. II.

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The first promise of the Redeemer. 71—99

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125

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P S A L M cxvi. 9.

*I will walk before the Lord in the land of the
living.*

RELIGION considered in its just extent, contains two sorts of duties, the duties of piety, and those which regard the actions of the natural and social life. Both are essential to it. But men show a strong propensity to consider the former as unconnected with life, and the latter as unconnected with religion, and by a misconception of both sorts equally, though in different respects, to disunite religion from the occupations of common life. It proceeds from a partial view of both these; and it tends to render our practice of both defective.

MEN confine their idea of piety to the acts of immediate worship; they consider it not as what should, as what can enter into common

life; they think that they serve God, only when they are worshipping him, and disengaged from their worldly employments. Conceiving religion in so false and contracted a light, they necessarily regard the actions of the natural and social life, as without the verge of religion, as not requiring or admitting any regulation or direction from its influence.

IN consequence of these partial and imperfect conceptions, some have withdrawn from the business of life, that they might give up themselves wholly to devotion, or have become negligent in their lawful calling, as interrupting their application to religion; and many more, intent on their worldly employments and interests, and regarding all acts of devotion as encroaching upon these, neglect them totally, or crowd them into as little time as possible: *God is not in all their thoughts* *.

PERSONS of a serious turn, and sensible of the importance of piety, will apply to what they consider as belonging to it. But if they imagine acts of immediate worship to be all that belongs to it, their application will be of little value. They will be punctual in performing these: but they will think that when they have performed these, they have done all

* Psal. x. 4.

that

that piety requires, and are abundantly religious; and too often they imagine that, if they spend some hours of the day in devotion, they may do, through the rest of it, whatever they please, whatever their vicious passions prompt them to; at least they are not sufficiently careful to avoid doing so. Thus their religion becomes a mere round of external services, attended perhaps with transient and unmeaning emotions of soul, but not a preparation for the right conduct of life; and they bear in themselves that character of corruption, which the apostle assigns to the men of the last days, *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* *.

WHETHER men have a regard to religion, or have not, if the actions of the natural and social life be considered as without the province of religion, the necessary consequence will be, that men shall think themselves at liberty to perform them, not according to the rules of religion. Whenever we look upon the ordinary actions of common life as indifferent, whenever we forget that there is either virtue or vice in almost every one of them, we are in great danger of indulging vice and contracting guilt in the performance of them. Whenever we allow ourselves to imagine that

* 2 Tim. iii. 5

these actions have no influence on our salvation, we shall be ready to do them in such a manner as must obstruct our salvation.

OF the three classes of duties which are incumbent upon us, those which regard ourselves, and those which regard other men, are too often considered as little connected with religion, and are, for that reason, reckoned such as may be in some measure neglected without great danger to our salvation. I have therefore shown that our habitual behaviour, both towards ourselves and towards others, in the various situations of common life, necessarily implies good or evil, and promotes or obstructs our everlasting happiness. The other class of duties, those which regard God, and are comprehended under the name of piety, are, on the contrary, often considered as unconnected with the ordinary business of life. In opposition to this mistake, I now proceed to show, That we must carry piety along with us through the whole course of our lives, that we must exercise godliness in all our occupations; else we can have no true religion, nor be fit for the enjoyment of God in heaven.

WE may acquire some lively impressions of God, in retirement, or in the ordinances of worship; but if these impressions do not remain

main with us and actuate us, when we enter into the world, and all the time we are conversant in the world, they are of no moment. Religious affections may be nourished in the retreats of devotion, as a child is fed within doors : but it is in the open air, and by the bustle of exercise, that the child acquires and shows health, vigour, and agility; and it is in the field of the world, and by being introduced into its several occupations, that the religious affections obtain and display strength, firmness, and energy. It is in the world they are put to the trial, it is there we find opportunities for exerting them, and it is by being exerted there that they are improved into a commanding temper of piety.

THERE is no situation in life, which gives not scope for some exercise of godliness, and which requires it not, if we would not be wanting to our duty. Piety or a regard to God, is a vital spirit which may run through, and ought to run through, all the virtues which respect either ourselves or others, to animate, to model, and direct them. It is not excluded from any place or condition which admits any virtue whatever; it cannot be dispensed with from any such place or condition, but that virtue loses much of its lustre, and is even in danger of perishing.

LOVE

LOVE to God is an affection which does not spend itself in silent admiration, or warm feelings: it is fit to enter into life, and to act in life. We are commanded to KEEP ourselves *in the love of God**: it is a temper which may possess us as constantly, and influence us as regularly, as affection to a parent or a friend. It should influence us through life, in the whole of our behaviour, in a manner similar to that in which affection to a parent or a friend, operates on such parts of our behaviour as have a respect to them. Love to God does not display itself so much, or ascertain its sincerity and ardour so unexceptionably, by any emotions inwardly felt, or by any raptures of devotion, as by its effects upon our actions; by making us delight to obey and please God in every part of our behaviour; by making us willing to relinquish what we most fondly desire, or to incur what we most vehemently dread, rather than offend him in committing any sin, or neglecting any duty; by alluring us to the imitation of all those moral attributes which render God the object of our love; and by cherishing benevolence, and drawing out beneficence to all men, who are the children of our Father in heaven. Love to God will find opportunities for some of these exer-

* Jude, ver. 21.

cises of it, in all our worldly business, in all the actions and events of common life: and if any man neglect these exercises of it, whenever he finds opportunity for them, *how dwelleth the love of God in him* *? His heart is void of it, though liveliness of imagination or a constitutional warmth of affection may lead him to presume that his love to God is ardent.

REVERENCE of God is not more analogous to the love of God, in itself, than in its effects upon our ordinary conduct. It is not exercised only when we set ourselves to contemplate and celebrate his greatness: we may be, and we ought to be, *in the fear of the Lord all the day long* †. If we have any reverence of God, it will show itself every hour in our most common behaviour; in the shade of solitude, amidst the temptations of society, the cares of business, and the relaxation of amusements, in every situation, it will make us to *stand in awe, and not sin* ‡; it will prompt us to act in a manner worthy of the presence, the majesty, and the perfections of God.

GRATITUDE is due to God for the blessings which we receive from him. The events of ordinary life furnish us with constant subjects

* 1 John iii. 17.

† Prov. xxiii. 17.

‡ Psal. iv. 4.

of gratitude. You eat your daily food ; you find yourselves in health ; you receive the price of your labour ; you obtain something which you desired ; you prosper in your way : your duty in all these situations, the apostle Paul points out, *In every thing give thanks ; be grateful, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you* *. The exercise of gratitude is not confined to professed acknowledgments of the mercies which we have received, in praise and thanksgiving, in private or public devotion. The world also is a field for the exercise of gratitude. It is exercised whenever it implants in the heart a new motive to abstinence from sin and hatred of it, whenever it warms the soul with additional alacrity in doing good, and makes us take greater pleasure in it. These exercises of gratitude should be diffused through life, as much as the blessings are, which demand our gratitude ; they should influence us as often as we are engaged in any action which can imply either good or evil : and what one action of our lives does not imply them ?

COMMON life is the acknowledged sphere of resignation to the will of God. Piety exerting itself in resignation, is the proper root, and

* 1 Theff. v. 18.

the only firm support of many of those duties to ourselves, the operation of which through the occurrences of common life, either has been already delineated, or may easily be traced; composure, for instance, amidst the tumults and fluctuations of the world, tranquillity in the uncertainty of its prospects, contentment and self-enjoyment under its disappointments, fortitude in the view of its dangers. If these virtues are nipt off from piety, they become puny, and wither, and die. They must be practised through life; but they cannot be practised except the exertions of a pious temper be twisted, as it were, with all the acts of them, to give them strength. All the events of life, are uncertain; we are often in adversity, our favourite designs are disappointed, our dearest comforts are taken from us, we become interested about trifles, and they fail us: we cannot perform the duties which we owe to ourselves in these seasons, without deriving aid from piety. These are the seasons which demand the practice of resignation, submission, and trust in God: these are the seasons in which we must put forth all our strength to retain and exercise these pious principles, else we shall fall into the sins of peevishness, discontent, repining, murmuring, anxiety, and solicitude.

PIETY

PIETY requires subjection to the authority of God, as well as submission to his providence. A sense of his authority will produce a constant disposition to obey his laws. But his laws are nothing else but rules for the particulars of our behaviour in all the various circumstances of human life: there is not a situation in which we can be placed, that is without the verge of their direction; there is not a situation in which our conduct will not be affected by our having a regard to God's supreme authority, or by our failing in that regard.

GOD is not an unconcerned spectator of the behaviour of reasonable beings; he trieth their hearts, he weigheth all their actions, he approveth, or he disapproveth them. A sense of this, a prevailing respect to his judgment, a contempt of the opinions of all the world when opposed to it, is an important part of piety, and a part of it for exercising which the state of this world gives continual opportunity. In this world, we see vice practised, and hear it justified; we find virtue neglected, and even turned into ridicule: the immediate pleasures and advantages of sin disguise its horrors; the the present uneasinesses and inconveniencies to which virtue sometimes exposes men, eclipse its beauty; corrupt fashion seems to alter the measures of right and wrong behaviour; the promiscuous

cuous distribution of outward things renders us inattentive to the opposite natures and the opposite consequences of righteousness and iniquity. Such situations frequently occur in the train of ordinary life; and they give opportunity for exerting a supreme regard to the unerring judgment of God, who can see through every disguise, who cannot be imposed upon by the most plausible pretences, whose *judgment is always according to truth**. This regard is exerted when, in the whole tenour of our lives, we maintain an abhorrence of all evil, and the love of all goodness, and persist invariably in avoiding the one and pursuing the other, uninfluenced by the false opinions of men, or the irregular appearances of the world, and valuing only the approbation of God.

PIETY leads us to the imitation of God: but all that is enjoined us under the idea of imitating God, consists in the right performance of the several actions of common life, particularly of the social life. It consists in our *loving our enemies, doing good to them that hate us, blessing them that curse us, praying for them which despitefully use us and persecute us, giving to every man that asketh of us, and lending, causing no man to despair* †. It consists in *putting away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and*

* Rom. ii. 2. † Mat. v. 42---48. Luke vi 27---36. *μετὰ τὴν ἀπελπιζομένην.*

34 *Religion intimately connected* SERM. II.
*clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice, and
being kind one to another, tender-hearted, for-
giving one another, and walking in love**. It
consists in *purifying ourselves †,* and *being holy
in all manner of conversation ‡.* It is only in
the course of our ordinary conduct, and amidst
the temptations which occur in society, that
we can have scope for these exertions of a god-
like disposition.

IN a word, all the affections which belong
to a temper of piety, unite their force to restrain
us from doing evil, and to excite us to do
good, in all the varied situations of common
life. Every pious affection shows itself by
suitable expressions in the offices of devotion;
but no pious affection is completed by these
immediate expressions of it: there are likewise
active exertions of piety, which run through
the whole of our ordinary behaviour. Every
regard to God, in a manner peculiar to itself,
inclines or urges us to all the duties of life,
that is, to the right performance of all, even
our most common actions.

DEVOUT persons have often recommended it
as highly beneficial, to mix acts of immediate
worship, silent ejaculations of adoration, thank-

§ Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1, 2. † 1 John iii. 3. ‡ Pet. i. 15,
giving,

giving, prayer, confession, or repentance, with our ordinary employments; and have justly remarked that, unobserved by men, and without any interruption of these employments, we may find time and opportunity for them in the busiest scenes of life, and even in the midst of our innocent amusements. This is a proper and very advantageous practice; *and yet show I unto you a more excellent way**: piety may be, and ought to be, still more intimately mixt and incorporated with our ordinary employments; they ought all to be constantly carried on under the restraints which religion imposes, and by the principles which it inspires. To carry them on in this manner, will be to come up to the full import of the descriptions of a life of virtue uniformly pursued under religious impressions, which the scripture gives, when it speaks of good men as *setting the Lord always before them* †, *acknowledging him in all their ways* ‡, *walking before the Lord*, or *walking with God*.

THE gospel having brought us acquainted with the Son of God, requires faith in him. Faith in Christ may be considered, either as a firm belief of what he has taught us, or as a dependence on his atonement and mediation

* 1 Cor. xii. 31.

† Psal. xvi. 8.

‡ Prov. iii. 6.

for our acceptance with God, notwithstanding the demerit of our sins and the imperfection of our holiness. Considered in both lights, faith is a principle fit to run through our whole lives, and to mix with all the most ordinary actions of them.

ALL the truths which Christ hath taught us in the gospel, are motives to the practice of holiness; they are constantly proposed in scripture, as incitements both to holiness in general, and to the several particular virtues. The faith which the gospel requires, is not a mere *assent* to these truths: it implies such a lively impression, and such a permanent sense of them, as may form our whole temper to holiness, and influence all our actions. A temper of holiness consists in the strength of good affections, and in purity from vicious passions: good affections are excited when their objects are brought into our view, and placed in a striking light; they are strengthened when their objects are brought often into view, and attentively considered: the truths of religion set these objects of good affections in the most striking lights, and a firm belief of the truths of religion keeps these objects constantly in our view, and fixes our attention upon them; and thus renders the good affections habitually prevalent in our hearts. It is this same belief
likewise

likewise that presents to our minds all those considerations which tend to counteract vicious passions, and to purify us gradually from them. Every action proceeds from some motive, without which neither would the action be done, nor that affection which is its immediate principle be supported: every good action proceeds from some religious motive, from some truth urging us to the practice of it; it is faith that suggests this motive, and it must suggest it in the moment in which the action is to be done. True faith keeps all the principles of religion, which can in any way influence our conduct, which can either restrain us from doing evil or prompt us to do good, in a continual readiness to occur to us, whenever we have occasion for them. We have occasion for them in every situation in which we have occasion to act. Faith therefore must attend us, and suggest the principles of religion as motives to action, in every place, and in every one of our various occupations. It must run through our whole conduct, bestowing vigour and stability on all our virtues, *purifying our hearts**, *working by love* †, producing *good works* ‡. It alone can furnish the weapons with which we may combat all the alluring prospects which sin sets before us, and all the difficulties and

* Act. xv. 9. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Tit. iii. 8. Jam. ii. 14. 26.

gers to which virtue may expose us; and of these weapons we have need every moment; *this, says John, is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith**: to overcome the world, our faith must operate as often as we are conversant with the world. It is when faith thus exerts itself in restraining us from sin, in cherishing good affections, in exciting us to the several duties of life, that we may be said to *walk by faith* †. The apostle Paul exhibits his own faith in this very attitude, when he says, *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God* ‡.

FAITH considered as a dependence upon Christ, seems not to mingle so congenially with the ordinary actions of life: yet it is truly fit to mingle with them in a very great degree. Whenever we reflect that we have committed any sin, and feel remorse for it, (and, in the present frail state of man, how often must this happen to every sensible heart?) it is faith exerting itself in dependence upon Christ, that mitigates our sorrow, and restores our cheerfulness. Whenever we are conscious of a good action, when the consciousness of it gives us *good hope* ||, it is by trust in Jesus Christ that this hope is supported, and pre-

* 1 John v. 4, 5. † 2 Cor. v, 7. ‡ Gal. ii. 20. || 2 Theff. ii. 16.

served from sinking beneath the sense of our imperfection and guilt. It is dependence upon Christ, that encourages us to amend what we know to be wrong in ourselves, and in our former conduct; for it is dependence upon him, that makes us to feel that it shall not be in vain: and while we are imperfect creatures, a great part of right conduct must consist in endeavours to do the several actions of life better than we have done them in former instances. In general, hopes and fears of futurity not only arise in the hours of reflection, but often influence us in the actions of life; and in a Christian, hope and fear can never be wholly separated from exercises of faith towards Jesus, who *delivereth us from the wrath to come**, and *through whom eternal life is the gift of God to us* †.

THE gospel reveals to us the Holy Spirit also, and requires us to exercise dependence on the assistance which he is sent on purpose to impart. To be convinced that this dependence should run through our whole lives, and mingle with all our actions, and to understand how it may do so, we need only recollect the end for which the assistance of the Spirit is given. It is given for our sanctification; it is given to be a principle of purity, and virtue, and activity

* 1 Thess. i. 10. † Rom. vi. 23.

in well-doing. Through the whole course of our life, and in all its occupations, we have opportunities of avoiding evil and of doing good; and whenever we exert ourselves in either, it should be with dependence on the aids of the Divine Spirit. We should have an habitual trust in these, similar to that habitual sense which good men entertain of the dependence of their nature and all their powers upon God. If we have such trust, it will lead us, not only to recognise, at stated times, the Holy Spirit as the author of our virtues, and to pray to God for his aids; but also to look up to him in the very moment of action, and, by the consciousness of the presence and support of so powerful an assistant, to invigorate ourselves in every hour of languor, and to encourage ourselves in every moment of temptation and difficulty, that we may, without weariness or intermission, put forth all the strength which he imparts to us, in resisting all the attacks of sin, and practising every virtue, as we find the opportunity. It is this habitual and active improvement of the divine aids, that the apostle recommends to the Galatians; *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit**: the expression implies, that we should have the whole tenour of our ordinary behaviour regulated by the influence of the Spirit of God.

* Gal. v. 16.

THUS

THUS I have endeavoured to represent religion to you, in its connexion with ordinary life. I have shown the importance of this view of it; and I have explained it, by pointing out the opportunities which ordinary life affords for the practice of religion, and by tracing the influence of religion on our behaviour in these several opportunities. Religion consists not in our withdrawing from the occupations of the present world, but in our being conversant in them after a virtuous manner. The apostle Paul, in describing that goodness which the gospel was revealed on purpose to enforce, reduces it to the three heads of virtue which we have now illustrated, *that we live soberly, righteously, and godly*, and he adds, *in this present world**: the addition is not vain, it suggests the very idea which I have made it my business to unfold; it intimates that we have no religion, no Christianity, if we do not carry it into the world with us, and exercise it in all the circumstances of life. The apostle James gives us the same view of religion, though in a different manner of expression; *Pure religion and undefiled before God even the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world* †: the world

* Tit. ii. 12.

† Jam. i. 27.

contains temptations to vice, and it presents opportunities of doing good in all the ways of virtuous exertion; both occur at all times and in all conditions; and pure religion consists in guarding against the former, and embracing and improving the latter, whenever they occur. When our Saviour was most solicitous for the happiness of his disciples; when he had the most immediate view of the dangers to which they were exposed in a world that *hated them*, as it had *before hated him**, when he declared that they were *not of the world*†; even then he said to his Father, *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil*‡. It was by being sent forth into the world, and acting in it, that they could be useful, and that they could become happy.

THE example of our Saviour, as well as the intimations of scripture, sets religion in this point of view. Through all the early part of his life, he laboured in Joseph's vocation, as a carpenter: he left it not till the season came when he was called to enter on another vocation, inconsistent with it, and which required all his time. Even after that, he still lived in the world, mixed in society,

* John xvii. 14.

† Ver. 16.

‡ Ver. 15.

conversed with men, *was in all points tempted like as we are* * ; and in this situation continued to be *without sin* †, exhibited an example of every virtue in perfection, and by that example shewed mankind, in what manner religion should exert itself in the several occurrences of common life. It is for the same purpose, that the lives and actions of good men are recorded in scripture; it is to let us see, how they exercised their religion in the scenes of action and in secular employment: and the wisdom of God, by delivering a great part of the scripture in the form of history, has provided for recording so great a number and variety of examples, that in them we may observe the operation of religion in almost every possible condition and juncture of human life. If you be not religious and virtuous in active life, in whatever station you fill, in whatever occupation you follow, it is your own fault, not the fault of your situation: religion and virtue may be incorporated: with the business of every lawful calling; these have actually been incorporated together in the practice of many of your fellow-men. The spirit of true religion, and the spirit of worldly business, are not repugnant, like a drop of water and a drop of oil, which repel

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Heb. iv. 16.

each other, and refuse to mingle; they may be rendered like two drops of mercury, which run together and form one drop. The improvement and happiness of our souls is most effectually promoted when all our worldly occupations are rendered subservient to it: our present interests will likewise be best secured when all our endeavours after them are regulated by religion and virtue.

WHEN the boundaries between religion and ordinary life are misplaced, both must be unduly contracted. They are not like two territories separated by a precise limit, but like territories which, besides the parts that lie in this manner distinct, have many fields in common, or connected by mutual servitudes, so that they can be cultivated and improved only by united efforts. It is sometimes said, that God has reserved the Lord's day for himself and his service, and that he has given us the other six days of the week for ourselves. This manner of speaking is inaccurate, and has too much a tendency to disguise the connexion between religion and common life. The Lord's day, God has in some sense reserved peculiarly to himself; on it we ought to abstain from our worldly occupations: but its exercises are not unrelated to these occupations, they are designed to prepare us for the right and virtuous

ous

ous management of them, and should be performed with this view. The other six days, God has allowed us for our worldly occupations; but not exclusively of serving him: for in these very occupations we ought to serve God every hour of all the six days. We do serve him in them, whenever we carry them on in a virtuous manner. By thus carrying them on, we promote our salvation, though we should not at all times explicitly intend to promote it by them. But it will render our worldly occupations the more subservient to our salvation, for it will contribute to our practising them aright, that throughout the whole course of them we preserve a solicitude for our salvation, and frequently exert actual desires of promoting it by means of the labours of our station. Thus shall we be possessed of an habitual good intention; thus shall we apply a good intention to our most indifferent actions, and direct them all to laudable and worthy ends.

SOME have apologized for the multiplication of ceremonies in religion, by asserting that this multiplies the opportunities of serving God, and the means of promoting our salvation. The apology is frivolous: the observance of ceremonies is neither serving God nor a means of our salvation, except the cere-

monies be of divine appointment; and if they were, yet still the multiplication of ceremonies, would multiply our dangers of neglecting his will and falling into sin, would increase the difficulty of religion, would render many things necessary which might have been safely omitted if God had not required them by positive precepts, and would thus prove a snare to our souls. But the ordinary actions of life must necessarily be done: and by setting ourselves to do them all with a regard to God, and with a view to the improvement and salvation of our souls, we shall, without incurring any new danger or inconvenience, multiply the means of our salvation, increase the number of our virtues, and avoid many vices: we shall render our whole existence one continued act of goodness, religion, and obedience; and we shall be, in all the situations and occurrences of life, pleasing to him whom we are made to please, and in pleasing whom our happiness consists.

To conclude, we are at present in a state of discipline for eternity: every event, every circumstance of this state gives us opportunity for the practice of some virtue; and it is by acting virtuously in every circumstance of this state, that we can be improved in holiness, and become fit for heaven. Our commonest ac-

tions are those in which we think religion least concerned, and on which we are apt to bestow the least attention : but of our commonest actions we ought rather to take the greatest care ; for they are most frequently repeated ; they will therefore form the strongest habits ; they will most promote our improvement and our happiness, if they be constantly performed right ; but they will most obstruct it, if we indulge ourselves in a custom of performing them wrong.

E R R A T A.

Page 55, l. ult. *for* intention, *read* intension. P. 61, l. 12, *read* room, l. 22, *put a comma after* examination. P. 74, l. 2, *for* of them all, *read* them all. P. 79, l. 26, *read* worms of; l. 29, *for* cvii. *read* cii. P. 80, l. 8, *del.* in. P. 91, l. 8, *for* conduct, *read* contest. P. 106, l. 12, *for* them it, *read* them in it. P. 130, l. 27, *after* Rom. iv. 3. *insert* Gal. iii. *after* Gen *del.* Gal. P. 157, l. 2, *read* would it not. P. 162, l. 1, *for* more, *read* worse. P. 169, l. 4, *read* their folly. P. 232, l. ult. *for* weakneis, *read* meeknefs. P. 234, l. 16, *read* their tempers. P. 258, l. 15, *for* foundation, *read* fountain. P. 269, l. 2; *for* in a, *read* in thy. P. 271, l. 2, *for* to, *read* in. P. 273, l. 25, *for* greatest, *read* chief. P. 301, l. 6, *read* its necessity. P. 304, l. 21, *for* and, *read* not. P. 305, l. 1, *read* can practise. P. 309, l. 12, *for* thoughts, *read* thought. P. 321, l. 2. *read* only prohibits. P. 370, l. 8, *for* most, *read* more.