

prayer can only be an ejaculation. If he meditates, he will be liable to dream, and do nothing well. Still, he may be religious; he must be religious, to work well. What is a profession? A livelihood, in the world's phrase. No, it is not a livelihood; it is a life. It is a man's trying to answer, as he best can, the first question in the Shorter Catechism. "What is the chief end of man?" You do not suppose that this present life is all child's play, and that its great object is not wrought out till hereafter. Why, life on the other hand, is all most serious; all religious; a good life, such as many lead, is a hymn; the life of Jesus Christ an unbroken hymn, of praise. When a man chooses a profession he should be think himself, that he is now about to live in the truest sense, and to do that which shall be repeated for ever to his eternal honour or his eternal disgrace. He is going to glorify God, as he best can; and to do so, the first thing required is, that he throw himself into his profession heart and soul. I say, any view of religion which goes to make out that a man *dare* not do this, for his soul's sake, is false and unnatural. Any view of religion which presents our work in this world as our work only, and not God's work, and from which the natural inference is that to do that work heartily, as unto the Lord is impossible, is a view that has no authority from the Bible, and that puts asunder what God has joined, work and religion. A man's work, whatever that be, is his religion, in the truest sense. Such a doctrine, of course, is liable to abuse, and needs its safeguards. What right has any man, or class of men,—What right has Satan, the author of confusion and misrepresentation, to take from God's superintendence those great secular professions without which this world would be a wildestness, and we wandering savages therein? They belong to God, every one of them; and to say they do not, is merely to repeat a falsehood of the Father of lies. "All these things will I give thee"—he has nothing to give. He has only the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the undue desire of these things, ungodly abuse of them. The things themselves are not his, but God's. Every lawful profession is religious; it becomes worldly, through the worldliness of its members, as it is degraded by the unworthiness of its members. Thus for instance, is that noblest of secular professions, whose members are privileged to go about doing good as Jesus Christ did it, healing those oppressed of the Devil with divers sicknesses,—thus is it degraded by men who enter into it with other and selfish aims, who live by fraud, pretending to a knowledge they have never had and to a skill they never could acquire and whose character and aims are fitly

summed up in one expressive word which I need not here quote. And so it comes, that healing is looked upon not so much as a good, religious work—a work for which we honour the man who does it, as simply a work, which must be paid for, and when it is unsuccessful, is paid for with grumbling. That work, to be rightly done, must be done to God, with high, pure, unselfish aim, with resolute self-sacrifice such as many shew, with humble acknowledgement of God's gifts, and above all with deepest trust in his blessing when we try to do our duty therein. Thus again is that other noble profession whose proper idea is the casting out of the demon of discord righting wrong, defending the poor and needy from their oppressor executing judgment and justice in the earth for all that are oppressed, and preserving society under the guardianship of that law, of which, as a grand old writer says, "there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world" thus again is that profession of such exalted dignity and honour, that profession to which should belong in fullest measure the blessing of the peacemakers degraded often to a bye word by those who entering it for gain and not for godliness, use their knowledge to foment strife rather than to heal it, and are a curse instead of a blessing, to a Christian land. And last of all, how is that profession of which it becomes not me to speak, degraded beneath the level of them all by those who have entered it for a piece of bread, make use of its high themes of sacred eloquence and its mantle of respect, to win them popularity, applause, fortune, who are all things to all men, but not that they might save some,—men of whom the Apostle Paul had he lived in our day, might have told us even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, (whose God is their belly,) and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. These are the worst cases. God forbid that we should speak of them as common—and why do we speak of them at all? Is it not to shew that the parable of the wheat and tares is oft times repeated, and that there is not a good work which God has upon earth but the enemy as has his counterfeit, so prominent, so shameless, that men, looking no further, begin to think that it is all counterfeit, and good men having that work to do, do it fearfully and with suspicion, as if God were to some degree offended with them for doing it. He is offended, and justly, when you withdraw your allegiance from him, and do the work with other motives and in another spirit than he has ordained. But it is well-pleasing in His sight to see a man in whatever station diligent in his work, doing all things