

they had reaped from his tender mercies, and the consolations they had experienced from his Divine love. And this must ever be the case with all those who are anxious to lay up treasures in Heaven. It is, however, to be feared that many persons who delight in discoursing on religion allow themselves to be carried away by the customs of the world, and are afraid of being called enthusiasts, hypocrites, or fanatics, should they attempt to turn the channel of conversation to questions of eternal interest. This fear becomes a sufficient argument for them to consent that the questions, which beyond all others distinguish us as rational, accountable, and immortal creatures, should be banished from society. But are we to give up this great source of comfort and improvement, because some persons have been found to be deceivers? Are we to refuse ourselves the blessings of religious communication because society has sometimes been disturbed with indiscreet zeal? To the weak who shrink from contending with the world, and who sink into its habits and rules rather than resist them, we are under the necessity of saying, that our Lord disapproves of neutral characters. We must either be with him or against him. The Christian life is a life of warfare. Every age has its difficulties and temptations, by which it is particularly characterised. Persecutions to death are passed away. No one is tempted to abjure the faith by the fear of temporal punishment, but it is not real terrors that are the most formidable enemies, the lap of luxury, the stream of dissipation, the fear of ridicule, frequently detach greater numbers from the Faith, than torments and death. And these are the obstacles to a religious life with which Christians have at present to contend. That charity which thinketh no evil has been confounded with a false candour or liberality which condemns all religious opinions alike, and producing an idle indifference to the Gospel, terminates in a total deadness to its concerns, or is transformed into passive hostility. Many Christians perceiving this tendency congratulate themselves on discovering the happy medium of reconciling a compliance to the world with their religious profession. They are careful of their exterior appearance, are neither profligate in their conduct nor rigid in their observances, hence they are able to avoid many of those evils which the genuine Christian meets, and to ap-