

**A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT
AND HOLY LIFE, ADAPTED TO THE
STATE AND CONDITION OF ALL
ORDERS OF CHRISTIANS, PP. 1-
279**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649064069

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, Adapted to the State and Condition of All Orders of Christians, pp. 1-279 by William Law

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM LAW

**A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT
AND HOLY LIFE, ADAPTED TO THE
STATE AND CONDITION OF ALL
ORDERS OF
CHRISTIANS, PP. 1-279**

175-57.

240 34

SERIOUS CALL

TO A

DEVOUT AND HOLY LIFE,

ADAPTED TO THE

STATE AND CONDITION

OF

ALL ORDERS OF CHRISTIANS.

BY WILLIAM LAW, A. M.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.—LUKE VIII. 8.
Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—PAUL.

NEWCASTLE :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. BARKER, HOOD STREET.
1845.

J. BARKER, PRINTER, HOOD STREET.

Jiff
Tappan Presb. Assoc.
1-11-1933

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAP. I.—Concerning the nature and extent of Christian devotion	1
II.—An inquiry into the reason, why the generality of Christians fall so far short of the holiness and devotion of Christianity	10
III.—Of the great danger and folly of not intending to be as eminent and exemplary as we can, in the practice of all Christian virtues	17
IV.—We can please God in no state or condition of life, but by intending and devoting it all to his honour and glory	29
V.—Persons that are free from the necessity of labour and employments, are to consider themselves as devoted to God in a higher degree	43
VI.—Containing the great obligations, and the great advantages of making a wise and religious use of our estates and fortunes	50
VII.—How the imprudent use of an estate corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous passions through the whole course of life; represented in the character of Flavia	58
VIII.—How the wise and pious use of an estate, naturally carrieth us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian life; represented in the character of Miranda	65
IX.—Containing some reflections upon the life of Miranda; and showing how it may, and ought to be imitated by all her sex	74
X.—Showing how all orders and ranks of men and women of all ages, are obliged to devote themselves unto God	88
XI.—Showing how great devotion fills our lives with the greatest peace and happiness that can be enjoyed in this world	103
XII.—The happiness of a life wholly devoted unto God, farther proved, from the vanity, the sensuality, and the ridiculous poor enjoyments, which they are forced to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This represented in various characters	117

2-23-33 JMB

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
XIII.—That not only a life of vanity, or sensuality, but even the most regular kind of life, that is not governed by great devotion, sufficiently shows its miseries, its wants, and emptiness, to the eyes of all the world. This represented in various characters - - - - -	129
XIV.—The mischiefs of idleness, excess of sleep, etc. - - - - -	142
XV.—On Thankfulness, etc. - - - - -	150
XVI.—Humility - - - - -	151
XVII.—Showing how difficult the practice of humility is made by the general spirit and temper of the world. How Christianity requireth us to live contrary to the world - - - - -	157
XVIII.—Showing how the education which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practised. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of Paternus - - - - -	168
XIX.—Showing how the method of educating daughters makes it difficult for them to enter into the spirit of Christian humility. How miserably they are injured and abused by such an education. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of Eusebia - - - - -	181
XX.—Frequency of devotion equally desirable by all orders of people. Universal love is here recommended to be the subject of prayer. Of intercession, as an act of universal love - - - - -	198
XXI.—Of the necessity and benefit of intercession, considered as an exercise of universal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally such intercession amends and reforms the hearts of those that use it - - - - -	218
XXII.—Resignation to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God in all our actions and designs - - - - -	233
XXIII.—Of evening prayer. Of the nature and necessity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confession of all our sins. How we are to fill our minds with a just horror and dread of all sin - - - - -	244
XXIV.—The conclusion. Of the excellency and greatness of a devout spirit - - - - -	251
Appendix - - - - -	262

A SERIOUS CALL
TO A
DEVOUT AND HOLY LIFE.

CHAP. I.

CONCERNING THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHRISTIAN
DEVOTION.

DEVOTION is neither private nor public prayer; but prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. Devotion signifies a life given, or devoted to God.

He therefore is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in every thing, who serves God in every thing, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing every thing in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our prayers; that in them we are to look wholly unto him, and act wholly for him; that we are only to pray in such a manner, for such things, and such ends as are suitable to his glory.

Now let any one but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least shadow of a reason why we should make God the rule and measure of our prayers; why we should then look wholly unto him, and pray according to his will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look wholly unto God and make him the rule and measure of all the other actions of our life. For any

ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our parts, our time, or money, that is not strictly according to the will of God, that is not for such ends as are suitable to his glory, are as great absurdities and failings, as prayers that are not according to the will of God. For there is no other reason why our prayers should be according to the will of God, why they should have nothing in them but what is wise, and holy, and heavenly, there is no other reason for this, but that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same wisdom, holiness, and heavenly tempers, that we may live unto God in the same spirit that we pray unto him. Were it not our strict duty to live by reason, to devote all the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing every thing in his name, and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most heavenly prayers. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities ; they would be like prayers for wings, when it was no part of our duty to fly.

As sure therefore as there is any wisdom in praying for the spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that spirit the rule of all our actions ; as sure as it is our duty to look wholly unto God in our prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live wholly unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto him in all the ordinary actions of our life, unless he be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our prayers look wholly unto him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in labour or diversion, whether they consume our time or our money, are like unreasonable and absurd prayers, and are as truly an offense unto God.

It is for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a mixture of ridicule in the lives of many people. You see them strict as to some times and places of devotion, but when the service of the church is over, they are but like those that seldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of spending their time and money, in their cares and fears, in their pleasures and indulgences, in their labour and diversions, they are like the rest of the world. This makes the loose part of the world generally make a jest of those that are devout, because they see their

devotion goes no farther than their prayers, and that when they are over, they live no more unto God, till the time of prayer returns again ; but live by the same humour and fancy, and in as full an enjoyment of all the follies of life as other people. This is the reason why they are the jest and scorn of careless and worldly people ; not because they are really devoted to God, but because they appear to have no other devotion, but that of occasional prayers.

Julius is very fearful of missing prayers ; all the parish supposes Julius to be sick, if he is not at church. But if you were to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by humour and chance ? why he is a companion of the silliest people in their most silly pleasures ? why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion ? If you were to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him ? why he is busy at all balls and assemblies ? why he gives himself up to an idle gossiping conversation ? why he lives in foolish friendships and fondness for particular persons, that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness ? why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons, without considering that he is to love every body as himself ? If you ask him why he never puts his conversation, his time, and fortune under the rules of religion, Julius has no more to say for himself, than the most disorderly person. For the whole tenor of Scripture lies as directly against such a life, as against debauchery and intemperance : he that lives in such a course of idleness and folly, lives no more according to the religion of Jesus Christ, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man was to tell Julius that there was no occasion for so much constancy at prayers, and that he might, without any harm to himself, neglect the service of the church, as the generality of people do, Julius would think such an one to be no christian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a person only tells him that he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himself as others do, that he may spend his time and money as people of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and passions as most people do, Julius never suspects that man to want a christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.