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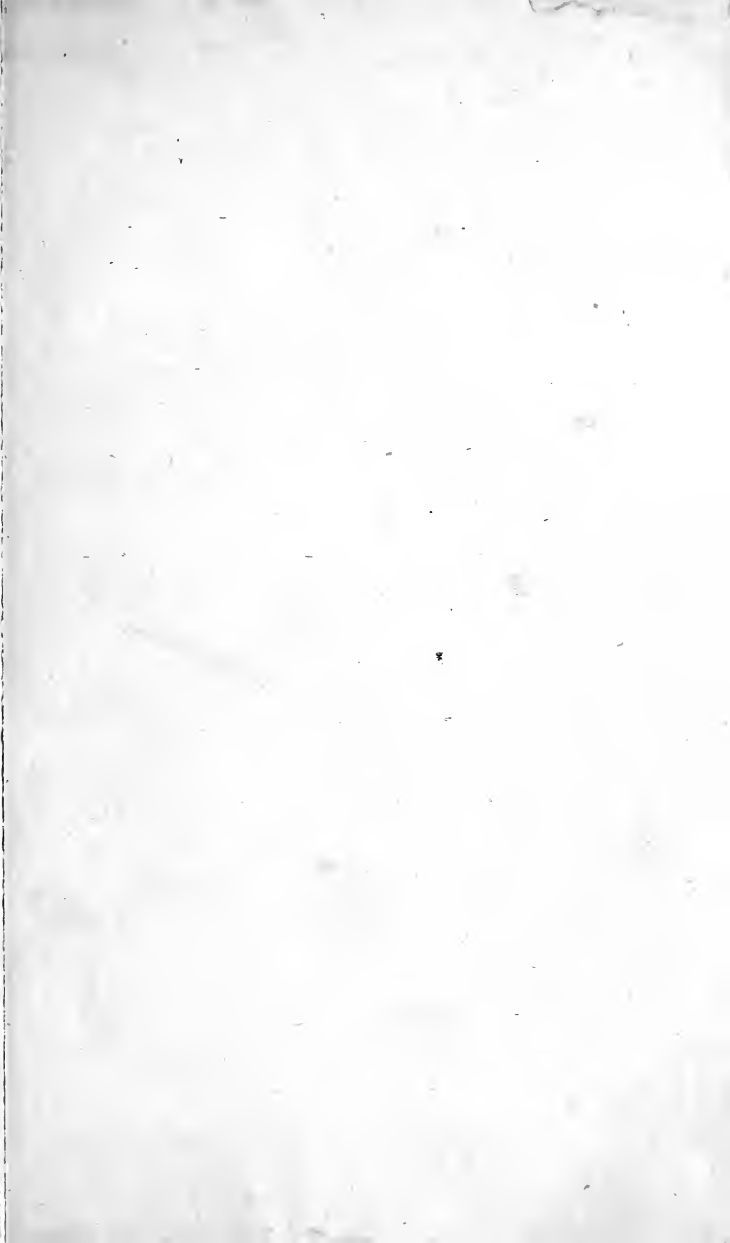
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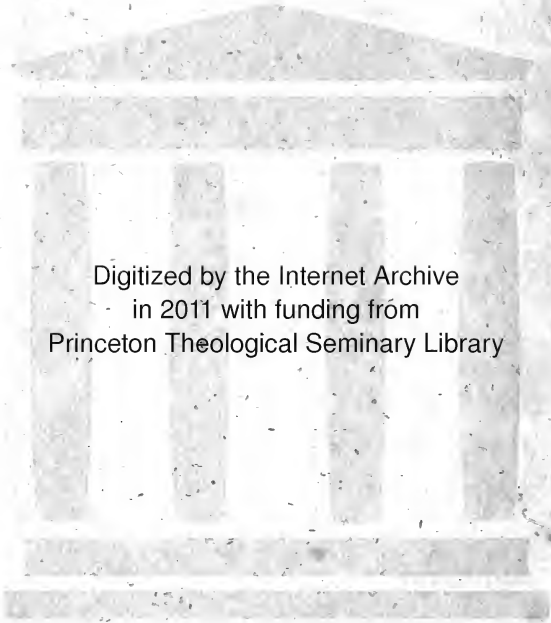
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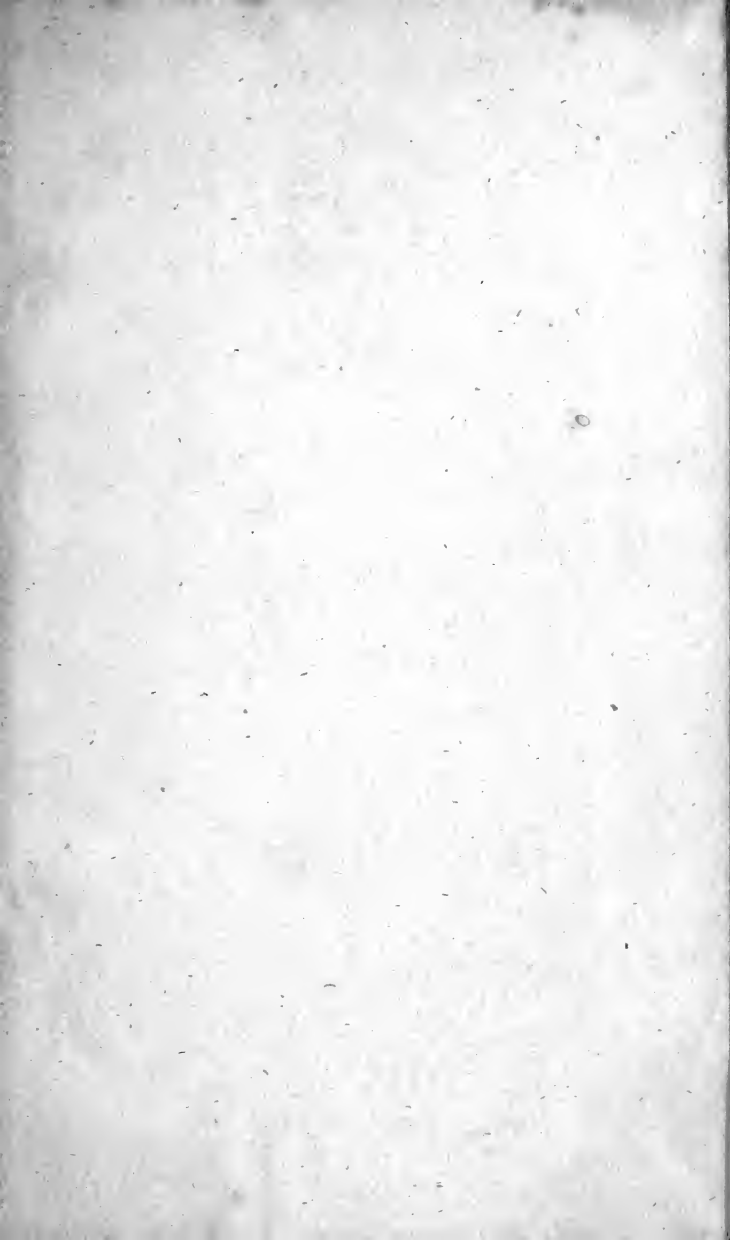
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SEVEN  
**SERMONS,**

CHIEFLY

ADDRESSED TO YOUNG PERSONS,

ON

THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

I. BAPTISM,  
II. CONFIRMATION,

|| III. THE LORD'S SUPPER,  
|| IV. THE SABBATH.

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By JOHN SCOTT, A.M.

VICAR OF NORTH FERRIBY, AND LECTURER IN THE  
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HULL.

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*A New Edition, revised.*

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*“Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth,” is a  
precept big with the deepest wisdom.*

LORD CHATHAM.

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1815.

*Price Three Shillings and Sixpence in boards.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1910

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
540 EAST SOUTH EAST STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the application of Mr. [Name] for admission to the University of Chicago. The records of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences show that Mr. [Name] was graduated from the University of [Name] in the year 1908, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It is noted that Mr. [Name] was a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

It is the policy of the University of Chicago to admit students who have received a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. In view of the fact that Mr. [Name] has received such a degree from the University of [Name], it is recommended that he be admitted to the University of Chicago as a first-year student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
[Name]



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE first six of these Sermons were preached partly in 1807, and partly in 1809, and published in the latter of those years. Some animadversions on an obnoxious publication now sunk into oblivion, which were annexed in the form of notes, it has been thought no longer necessary to retain.*

*The seventh Sermon was preached before the Magistrates of Hull, in 1807, and has been twice published before, with Appendices on societies for the suppression of vice, and on Sunday-evening Lectures. The Appendices, together with such passages of the Sermon as appeared only of local application, are now omitted.*

*The following paragraph formed part of the advertisement originally prefixed to that discourse.*

*‘ To some readers an apology may appear necessary for  
‘ the very free use which has been made of the writings of a  
‘ celebrated divine, and moral philosopher, from many of  
‘ whose principles, both in religion and in morals, the author  
‘ must avow a decided dissent. But the quotations them-  
‘ selves must plead their own cause. If they strongly tend  
‘ to impress the minds of men with regard for the Sabbath,  
‘ and love for the public worship of God, this, it is hoped,  
‘ will fully justify their insertion, even in more copious  
‘ measure than the rules of good composition might warrant.  
‘ But, further than this, the author certainly considered it  
‘ as no small advantage, to be able to introduce such senti-  
‘ ments, as several here alluded to, in the words of a writer,  
‘ whom all allow to have possessed great talents, and a very  
‘ enlightened and liberal mind, and who has never been  
‘ charged with exceeding on the side of strictness.’*

*By the same Author,*

1. The Christian Minister's serious and affectionate Address to persons presenting a child to be baptized. 3d edit. 1½*d.*

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\* \* A new Edition of the Rev. T. Scott's Family Bible, in 6 vols 4to, price 7*l.* 10*s.* is just published by L. B. Seeley, 169, Fleet Street, and may be had by application to the Author, Aston Sandford, Thame, Oxon; the Rev. J. Scott, Hull; the Rev. T. Scott. jun. Buckingham; or the Rev. B. Scott, Redditch, Worcestershire.

# SERMON I.

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## ON BAPTISM.

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S. MATTHEW, XXVIII. 19, 20.

*‘ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Amen.*

**A**FTER our blessed Saviour’s resurrection from the dead, he continued with his apostles and disciples “ forty days, speaking to them of the “ things pertaining to the kingdom of God: ”\* —more fully explaining the nature of his religion, and the steps by which he would have them proceed to establish his church in the world.

The words of my text were among the directions then delivered. They are some of “ the “ last words ” of Jesus Christ; if not the very last words which he spake, before “ he was taken “ up towards heaven, and a cloud received him “ out of ” human “ sight: ”---a circumstance which cannot but add to the interest we take in

\* Acts i. 3.

them, though their intrinsic beauty and importance render every other recommendation needless.

“All power,” said the risen and just ascending Saviour, “is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And mark his first exercise of the power thus committed to him, in his mediatorial character. It is, to throw wide the doors of salvation to the whole race of mankind, that “whosoever will” may enter them; and to promise his universal and uninterrupted presence to his church, however despised or afflicted her lot!

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye, therefore, and teach,” or, more literally, “make disciples of, all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—Well may the evangelist subjoin his devout “Amen!”  
‘So be it, blessed Lord!’

But who, let me ask, that was not God as well as man, could, with any meaning, make such a promise, “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?” or, without impiety, require the nations of the earth to be baptized in his name, in common with that of the eternal Father?

The Christian sacrament of Baptism, thus instituted, will form the subject of the present discourse.

All of you, it may be presumed, have received Christian baptism. Many of you, as parents or sponsors, have presented others to be baptized; and many of you are about to renew the vows of baptism, in Confirmation. It behoves you all seriously to attend to the subject. I pray God, that you may do so to your lasting benefit!

1. The first question which may naturally be asked respecting baptism is, *Why do we use such a rite?* Our text furnishes the answer: Christ has commanded it.

We are satisfied also, that it is ‘most agreeable with the institution of Christ,’\* and the practice of his apostles, that the children of those, who have embraced his religion, should be received into his church by this sacrament, as the children of Jewish parents were incorporated into the Old Testament Church by circumcision.†

2. But a further question arises, *Why did our Lord appoint such a rite?* a rite which can carry with it no virtue, no efficacy, of its own?

To this we may reply, first, that various ablutions having been appointed among the Jews, as the means of purification from ceremonial defilement, it had by degrees become customary with them, to baptize every proselyte whom they received from the heathen nations. Hence

\* Church Articles, xxvii.

† Gen. xvii.

this was to them a familiar sign of embracing a new religion, and entering upon a new and more pure course of life.

John the Baptist accordingly adopted it, by divine appointment,\* as a token of repentance; and called not only upon gentiles, as the Jews had done, but upon the Jews themselves to receive "the baptism of repentance," and to bring forth the "fruits of repentance," if they would not be excluded from the kingdom of the Messiah, which was about to be set up in the world, and of which they had imagined themselves the natural heirs.†

And hence we may add, as a second and principal reason why our Lord appointed this ordinance,—that the rite itself is very significant. It is not merely an arbitrary, but a very natural, sign, of the 'inward and spiritual grace,' which it is intended to represent.

3. This then introduces a third question, *What is intended by this sign?* What does baptism represent to us?

It represents washing from sin. It signifies to us, that, as our bodies are cleansed by being washed with water, so do our souls need to be purified from sin.

And this purification from sin is two-fold: first, by the blood of Christ; and, secondly, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

\* John i. 33.

† Matt. iii. Compare Dan. ii. 44.

“The blood of Jesus Christ,” we read, “cleanseth us from all sin.” They “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” “Unto him that loved us,” saith St. John, “and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”\*

By this is meant, our deliverance from condemnation and punishment; and the removal of guilty fears from our conscience; our being “justified by the blood,” or “through faith in the blood” of Jesus Christ.†

And the reason why these benefits are ascribed to his blood is this, that, by his death upon the cross, he hath made atonement for our sins: hath made such a display of the evil of sin, and of the holiness and justice of the divine character; hath so asserted the honour of the divine law and government; that God may now be glorious in the salvation of sinners, whose perdition his perfections otherwise required. Through this propitiation God is “just,” while he is “the justifier” of sinners that “believe in Jesus.”‡

Through this medium, therefore, that is, through a “Mediator, who gave himself a ransom” for us, is all mercy exercised, all pardon granted. “By him all that believe are justified from all things:” but “there is none other name

\* John i. 7. Rev. i. 5, 6. vii. 14.

† Rom. iii. 25. v. 9. Heb. ix. 14. ‡ Rom. iii. 24—26. iv. 5.

“under heaven given among men whereby we  
“must be saved.”

Let him, who has hitherto remained careless about his sins, hear these solemn truths and take warning! Let the guilty conscience hear them and be emboldened to return unto God, pleading the name of his Son! Let all hear and apply them for their souls' health!

The other way in which we are to be washed from sin is, by the regenerating, sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, purifying our hearts and lives from the polluting love and practice of sin. “According to his mercy he saved us,” saith St. Paul, (speaking of true Christians,) “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing  
“of the Holy Ghost.”

The blessing, of which we last spoke, may be compared to the pardoning of a criminal, who must otherwise suffer the sentence of the law: that of which we now speak, to the curing of some deadly disease, which would otherwise infallibly destroy the unhappy sufferer who laboured under it.

Both these blessings our necessitous situation indispensably requires: both, blessed be God! are amply provided for us in the gospel. Though distinct, they are inseparable. To procure for us pardon and peace with God, is the peculiar work of ‘God the Son, our Redeemer:’ to



“renew us in the spirit of our minds,” that of ‘God the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier.’

Both appear to be sometimes intended by the figure of the baptismal water: but, as the atonement of Christ, and our “justification by his blood,” are especially set forth in the other sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; so the grace of the Holy Spirit, and our sanctification as effected by it, seem to be particularly represented in Baptism: \* purifying water, and refining, transforming fire, being the constant scriptural emblems of the Holy Spirit. †

Accordingly our church, in her Catechism, (alluding to our being ‘buried,’ as it is expressed; in the water, and ‘raised up again’ from it,) describes, ‘the inward and spiritual grace of ‘baptism’ to be, ‘a death unto sin, and new ‘birth unto righteousness:’ for, as she elsewhere admonishes us, we must ‘remember ‘always, that baptism doth represent unto us ‘our profession, which is, to follow the example ‘of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like ‘unto him; that, as he died and rose again for ‘us, so should we who are baptized die from sin,

\* In this view, the two sacraments, and the great doctrines of atonement by the blood of Christ, and sanctification by the grace of the Holy Spirit, mutually reflect light and dignity upon each other. The doctrines explain the sacraments; and the sacraments display most strikingly the importance of those doctrines, to the commemoration, the honour, and the illustration of which, the only positive institutions of Christianity are dedicated.

† Is. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Matt. iii. 11. Acts ii. 3.

‘ and rise again unto righteousness, continually  
 ‘ mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections:  
 ‘ and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness  
 ‘ of living.’ And, in her Article on the subject,  
 ‘ she declares baptism to be, ‘ a sign of regener-  
 ation or new birth,’ that is, of that change of  
 heart and life of which we have spoken.

Our Lord also appears to view the subject exactly in the same light, when, in his discourse with Nicodemus,\* he pronounces, “ Verily, verily, “ I say unto thee, except a man be born of “ water and of the spirit,”—of water as the ‘ outward and visible sign; of the Holy Spirit, as the giver of ‘ the inward and spiritual grace,’--- “ he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

But baptism is not only ‘ a sign’ of these blessings, but also, as the nature of a sacrament implies, ‘ a *pledge* to assure us thereof,’ if we rightly seek them, and ‘ a *means* whereby we receive ‘ the same,’ if we properly use it.† Hereby, as ‘ by an instrument, *they that receive baptism* ‘ *rightly* are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our ‘ adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy ‘ Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is ‘ confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of ‘ prayer unto God.” †

And even infants, who have committed no

\* John iii.

† Church Catechism.

‡ Church Articles, xxvii.

actual sin, need this washing, and this renovation of heart: because, as our church teaches us from scripture, ‘they are conceived and born in sin.’\* And, beyond all doubt, they are capable of these benefits. It is as much possible for them to receive from Him, who “filled” John the Baptist “with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s “womb,” a new and right bent and *disposition* of heart, (which shall discover itself as they become capable of shewing their dispositions,) as it is for them naturally to possess a wrong bent and disposition of heart, which all experience evinces that they do.

And this unspeakable blessing we may cherish the hope that they shall enjoy, if we be sincere and earnest, as we ought to be, in our prayers for them. Hence our church says, that, ‘being ‘born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, ‘they are, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children ‘of God, and heirs of everlasting life.’† Not that she confounds what, in her catechism and articles, she so carefully teaches us to distinguish, ‘the outward and visible sign,’ and ‘the inward ‘and spiritual grace:’ but, borrowing her language from times when baptism and effectual conversion to God were, comparatively, seldom separated, she presumes, *wherever she has no evidence to the contrary*, that, in answer to the prayers of the congregation, and of pious

\* Baptismal service, prefatory address.

† Private Bapt. serv.

friends, the inward grace *accompanies* the outward sign: which, we may well believe, would much more frequently be the case than it is, were it not for the defect of faith and prayer, in the several parties concerned. But, if the after life of the baptized person demonstrate the sad fact, that in his instance this charitable supposition was unfounded, far, far indeed, would the church be from encouraging him to hope, that he had, in such a state, any part or lot in the eternal blessings of Christ's kingdom. No! in that case, he is 'an inheritor of the 'kingdom of heaven' in no higher sense, than those persons were, "*children of the kingdom,*" of whom our Lord, at the very time he gave them this name, declared, that they should be "cast out into outer darkness." \*

We are baptized, then, because our Saviour Christ hath commanded it: and he commanded it, principally, we may believe, because it is an impressive sign of purification from sin.

4. A further very important question arises, what does baptism imply on the part of those to whom it is administered, or of their representatives? *What do we profess*, when we receive baptism, or present a child to be baptized? †

\* Matt. viii. 10—12.

† In the baptism of infants, every man present is 'put 'in remembrance of his own profession made to God in 'his Baptism.'---*Bapt. Service*, 1st Rubrick.

In the first place, it is evident, that we profess our belief of Christianity, our reception of Christ as our Saviour, and our unreserved submission to his doctrines and precepts.—Baptism was originally designed as a visible and public profession of becoming Christ's disciples, and embracing his religion. “Go ye, *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing them,*”—is the language of my text.

And, in an age when Christianity, yet new in the world, was rejected by Jews, despised by gentiles, and persecuted by all, to make this profession was no small proof of sincere faith in Christ, and devout attachment to his cause. Then, at least, it might reasonably be presumed, that few would submit to receive the outward and visible sign, who did not already possess, in some degree, the inward and spiritual grace.

But circumstances are now changed. Now it is discreditable *not* to profess ourselves Christians: and therefore thousands will now present their children for baptism, and for confirmation, who neither themselves live as the disciples of Christ, nor desire that their children should do so: nay, who would be pained at heart to see their children fulfilling their baptismal vows, by renouncing the ‘poms and vanity of this wicked world.’ and conscientiously making, not the customs and fashions of men, but ‘the holy will and commandments of God,’ the rule of their lives.—Awful indeed is such conduct! In some views, it is even worse than the part taken by the open enemies

of Christ: it is betraying his cause, while, like Judas, we give him the salutation of pretended friendship and feigned respect.

But not only does baptism, from the design of the institution, express, in general, a reception of the Christian religion: it also, from the evident signification of the rite, as above explained, indicates an acknowledgment, and professed belief of all the great leading doctrines of Christianity: I mean, especially, of the fall and depravity of man; of redemption and justification by Christ, dying for us, and "washing us from our sins in his own blood;" of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Ghost; and, consequently, of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead.

I have already spoken on the principal of these topics; and shewn how striking a lesson the sacrament of baptism reads to us,—addresses, if I may so speak, to our very senses,—respecting them. He, who disbelieves these doctrines, must necessarily consider the rite itself as insignificant, and not appointed to represent any thing important to us. He who, disbelieving them, yet offers himself, or presents his child, for baptism in our church, must be guilty of vile hypocrisy; for they are studiously interwoven with every part of her services for the occasion.

But, my brethren, that we assent to these doctrines, that we hold them as sentiments, is

not sufficient. By no means. They are all addressed to the heart and conscience. They all immediately concern the heart and conscience. We must feel their force and influence upon our own hearts and consciences, or we do not rightly 'believe' them.

Are you then, let me ask it with affectionate earnestness, Are you bowed down in the dust of deep repentance before God, under the sense of your depravity of heart, and corruption of life? Are you, day by day, in secret, (as you profess to do at church,) 'acknowledging and bewailing your manifold sins and wickedness, which you, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, most justly provoking God's wrath and indignation against you?' Are you renouncing all confidence in whatever you have done, or can do, to put away your sins, to recommend you to God, or even to intitle you to an interest in Christ, that you may trust only in the blood and righteousness of that "lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and may cast yourselves entirely (as lost sinners, who have no other hope,) upon the free mercy of God as exercised through him? Do all the quiet and peace of conscience which you enjoy, all your hope and confidence towards God, arise, not from inconsideration, not from self-complacency and self-righteousness, not from presumption, but from humble and living faith in the Redeemer? Are they obtained and preserved only by "coming

“unto him;”\* by earnest, believing application to him for the fulfilment of his gracious promises, made to the “weary and heavy-laden” soul! by ‘feeding upon him in your heart by ‘faith, with thanksgiving?’ by “living the life “which you now live in the flesh by the faith “of the Son of God?” Are you, again, as desirous to be delivered from your sins, your sinful tempers, and dispositions, and practices, as of escaping the punishment due to them? And are you, for this purpose, not only watching and striving against these evils, from day to day, but, by earnest prayer, seeking the grace of the Holy Spirit of God to change your very hearts, “to renew you in the spirit of your mind,” ‘to sanctify you,’ and to assist and enable you to subdue your sinful propensities, and to vanquish all the enemies of your souls? Unless such be, in some good measure, your course, you are yet, notwithstanding all your professions, strangers to true faith in Christ: you have not practically and effectually believed the great ‘articles of the Christian faith,’ as in your baptism you engaged to do.

But, lastly, baptism implies the devotion, the consecration of the baptized person to God, to

\* Matt. xi. 28, 29. John i. 11, 12. iii. 14, 15. vi. 35. xv. 4. Gal. ii. 20. Heb. vi. 18. vii. 25. 2 Tim. i. 12. These passages strikingly illustrate what the Scripture means by that *faith in Christ*, to which every thing in the Christian life is ascribed.



live to his service and glory. Hence its very title of a *sacrament*, which was the name of the military oath among the Romans, binding the soldiers to inviolable allegiance to their commander, and adherence to their standards. Hence the very vows of baptism, (of which we shall hereafter speak more particularly,) ‘ that we will renounce  
 ‘ the devil and all his works, the pomps and  
 ‘ vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful  
 ‘ lusts of the flesh; that we will believe all the  
 ‘ articles of the Christian faith; and that we  
 ‘ will keep God’s holy will and commandments,  
 ‘ and walk in the same all the days of our life.’  
 And hence the words, which in our baptismal office, accompany, and explain the sign of the cross: ‘ We receive this child into the congrega-  
 ‘ tion of Christ’s flock, and do sign him with  
 ‘ the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter  
 ‘ he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of  
 ‘ Christ crucified, and to fight manfully, under  
 ‘ his banner, against sin, the world, and the  
 ‘ devil; and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier  
 ‘ and servant unto his life’s end.’

And this dedication is expressly directed by our text, (which contains the original institution of the ordinance,) to be made equally to each of the three Persons in the adorable and undivided Trinity.—“ Baptizing them in the  
 “ name of the Father, and of the Son, and of  
 “ the Holy Ghost.”—So solemnly and authoritatively is the belief of this sacred mystery, which forms the foundation of the whole doc-

trine of redemption, inculcated upon us, at the very threshold of our admission into the Christian church.

Such then is the nature of Christian baptism, and such the professions made in it. It denotes purification from sin: and to be baptized is to avow to all the world, that we receive Christ as our Saviour; that we practically believe all the great truths of his religion, and deeply feel their importance and value; and that we devote ourselves to the service of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

5. The *benefits* sought in baptism, and sealed by it to all those in whom is found “the answer of “a good conscience”\* to the professions which it implies, we have already, virtually, explained; and shall not now further enlarge upon them. They are, in short, all the great blessings of Christianity; the pardon of sin, sanctification by the Holy Ghost, adoption into the family of God, the enjoyment of his favour here, and the inheritance of everlasting life hereafter. In the language of our church, they are---being ‘made ‘members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.’

But, independently of any saving benefits to individuals baptized, great public advantages are derived from the general observation of the rite. It is one of those positive institutions by which

\* 1 Peter iii. 21.

the evidence of Christianity is confirmed, and its great doctrines kept continually in view. It brings baptized persons within the pale of the visible church; and secures to them an education, comparatively, at least, Christian: it leads them to hear the gospel preached; and teaches them to consider themselves as those "to whom the oracles of God are committed"\* and addressed; on whom all Christian duties are binding, as well as to whom all the privileges of true Christians are offered. These are circumstances of vast importance to the persons concerned: and they give to Christian ministers the advantage of addressing congregations, in some degree instructed in the nature, and acknowledging the obligations, of the truths which they have to inculcate, instead of leaving them to execute their commission amidst a world of heathens.

And now then, dearly beloved in the Lord, seeing ye have all been partakers (we may presume,) of the external rite of baptism; seeing also that such unspeakable benefits are by it sealed to all those who are baptized, and "born again," not of water only, but of the Holy Ghost; oh let me beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by your Christian profession, and by the worth of your immortal souls, that ye rest not content without the inward and spiritual grace,—without "the sprinkling of the

\* See Rom. iii. beginning,—in answer to the objection, "What profit in circumcision?"

“blood of Jesus,” to cleanse you from your guilt, and the “sanctification of the Spirit”\* to remove your depravity,---to make you holy here, that you may be for ever happy hereafter! This, God is witness! is “our heart’s desire and “prayer” for you all.

Oh think, how deplorable, how intolerable it will be, having been “exalted unto heaven,” in Christian privileges, to be at length cast down to hell for not improving them! Oh how will you bear, as our Lord declared to the impenitent Jews would be their case, to see many, at the last day “coming from the east, and west, and “north, and south, and sitting down in the “kingdom of God, and you yourselves” “the “children of the kingdom,”—those who, but for their own folly and disobedience, should have actually been the ‘inheritors of the kingdom of ‘heaven,’---“cast out into outer darkness?”---Heaven forbid that such should be your doom! Yet, assuredly it will be the doom of multitudes! of many who entertained no apprehensions of the kind! Hear ye the words of our Saviour Christ: “Strive to enter in at the strait “gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to “enter in, and shall not be able. When once “the Master of the house is risen up, and hath “shut to the door, and ye begin to stand with- “out, and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, “Lord, open unto us!’ and he shall answer, “and say unto you, ‘I know you not, whence

\* 1 Peter, i. 2.

“you are;’ then shall ye begin to say, ‘We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets:’—We have heard thy gospel; we have been baptized in thy name; we have professed thy religion; we have communicated at thy table:—“ But he shall say, “ ‘ I tell you, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.’ “ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, “ when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and “ Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom “ of God, and you yourselves thrust out.—And “ behold! there are last which shall be first, and “ there are first which shall be last.” \* I know not a more awful passage in the word of God.— And, if this will be the doom of “ many,” † it *may* be of us! It *will* be our’s, if we supinely take it for granted that it will *not*. It will be our’s, if we do not bestow great and serious pains to prevent it—“ to flee from the wrath to come” —“ to strive to enter in at the strait gate”—“ to fight the good fight of faith”—“ to lay hold on “ eternal life.”

Oh let not all our opportunities be thrown away! let not our advantages be given us in vain, or worse, infinitely worse than in vain! Let us not, having been brought so near to heaven, by carelessness, by love of the world, and of sinful indulgence, by neglect of salvation, plunge ourselves into hell! We are ‘ called to a state of ‘ salvation,’ and placed in circumstances peculiarly

\* Luke xiii. 24—30.

† Compare Matt. vii. 22.

favourable for securing our everlasting bliss; \* let us not have for ever to reproach ourselves with having thrown away such a prize, placed within our reach, or in our very hands! Awake, arise, implore of God, that he would give you his grace to 'embrace and ever hold fast' the proffered blessings. His authority commands, his mercy invites, his "terrors" should "persuade" you. He "waiteth to be gracious:" to bestow upon you whatever may be needful to your final welfare.

Thus would we exhort, persuade, intreat all who come within the sound of our voice: and, in particular, all baptized persons, 'all who profess 'and call themselves Christians.' Examine yourselves, whether you have yet had any more than "a name to live," while you have been spiritually "dead." How have you performed the vows of God which are upon you? What! have you served the devil, the world, or the flesh, instead of renouncing them? trampled on the commandments of God, one or all, instead of keeping them! Yet still he stretcheth out the arms of mercy, ready to receive you if you will now return to him: ready to blot out your iniquities, to "heal your backslidings," to number you with his children. Oh "seek ye the Lord while he may "be found!"

But especially we would address ourselves to you, my dear young friends, who are about to offer yourselves for confirmation. 'Being now

\* Rom. iii. 1—3.

‘ come to years of discretion,’ you are called upon to consider, ‘ what your God-fathers and God-mothers promised for you in your baptism.’ These promises were made in order that you might be admitted to great benefits. You are now invited ‘ to ratify and confirm the same,’ that, solemnly binding yourselves to perform them, and, by the grace of God, actually performing them, you may enjoy all the great and everlasting benefits of Christianity. Oh think what those benefits are! To have your sins all forgiven you, for Christ’s sake. To have almighty God for your father and friend, in life, in death, and for ever. To have Christ for your redeemer and saviour; the Holy Ghost for your sanctifier, your teacher, your guide, and your comforter. To live here piously, holily, usefully, happily, under his influence. To look forward to death without fear; and to have heaven for your everlasting home. Are not these most desirable blessings? Almighty God now offers them to you. He invites, yea intreats, you to come and receive them freely,—giving up yourselves to his service. “ They that seek me early, (he saith) shall find me.” Jesus Christ commands, that we “ suffer” even “ little children to come unto him, “ and forbid them not.” “ Of such,” he says, “ is “ the kingdom of God.” Oh may your hearts be early fired with the holy ambition of obtaining his favour, and receiving his blessing! O may you “ remember your Creator in the days of your “ youth!” ‘ Twill save you from a thousand

‘ snares, to mind religion young.’ ‘ ’Tis easier  
 ‘ work if you begin to serve the Lord betimes.’  
 It will be easier, by much, to enter upon the ser-  
 vice of God now, than at a period when sinful  
 propensities are confirmed by indulgence, evil  
 habits contracted, and irreligious connexions  
 formed. And at the end, ‘ ’Twill please you to  
 ‘ look back, and see that your whole lives were  
 ‘ God’s.’—True, there are difficulties in your way  
 even now : but God will enable you to overcome  
 them if you pray to him. True, you are young :  
 but you may die young, as so many do, and then  
 your opportunities are over. Be persuaded then  
 to be serious in what is before you. Consider the  
 vows you are to make. Pray to God that you  
 may be sincere in making them, and not mock  
 him with ‘ solemn words upon a thoughtless  
 ‘ tongue.’ Pray to him that you may perform  
 what you vow. Then shall you be “ blessed in  
 “ your deed.” Your ministers and pious friends will  
 rejoice over you. Angels in heaven will rejoice  
 over you. God himself, and your Redeemer,  
 will rejoice over you.\* You yourselves will look  
 back upon the transaction now before you, and  
 rejoice in it for ever.

A few words more I cannot but add, to  
 parents and sponers who bring children to bap-  
 tism. Consider, we beseech you, the serious  
 nature of this proceeding. Alas! that it should  
 be so lightly regarded as it commonly is. You

\* Luke xv. 10. Is. liii. 11.



make solemn professions yourselves on such an occasion. You profess yourselves Christians, and by so doing virtually renew your own baptismal vows. How then are you performing them? Pause, pause upon that question. You make also solemn engagements for your conduct towards the children baptized;—that you will see that they be ‘virtuously brought up to lead a godly ‘and a Christian life,’ and be instructed in ‘all ‘things which a Christian ought to know and ‘believe to his soul’s health:’\* in short, that you will do what in you lieth, by example, by instruction, by admonition, to cause them to perform the vows made for them. And do you then go away, and think no more of your engagements to God, to his church, and to the poor infants who are so unhappy as to have such faithless sureties? Do you leave them to grow up uninstructed, unadmonished; and, by your conduct encourage them rather to serve, than to ‘renounce, the devil?’ to follow, rather than to shun, ‘the pomps and vanity of this wicked ‘world?’ Did you thus break your engagements with men, what would be the estimate made of your character? Yet “if one man sin against “another, the judge shall judge him; but if a “man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat “for him?”

Finally, in bringing your children to baptism, you profess to seek great blessings for the helpless infants themselves—whom you, their parents,

\* Baptismal service—Address to the sponsors.

have brought into existence, but whose existence not all the world can ever again extinguish: who must live for ever, happy or miserable, according as they obtain or fail of the blessings thus sought for them. And can you do this with careless, unfeeling indifference? *Study, seriously, the prayers*, offered up for your children at their baptism. Surely they must interest your hearts! Surely you can never be unconcerned whether they be fulfilled or not! Surely you cannot go away, and never more offer up the like prayers for them! —Consider your past failures: and may the God of heaven grant you repentance, and grace in future to discharge the solemn duties incumbent upon you!

# SERMON II.

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## ON CONFIRMATION.

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### JEREMIAH, L. 5.

*Saying, 'Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten!'*

**I**T has pleased Almighty God, very commonly, in his word, to represent his dealings with mankind, his promises to them, and the duties which he, in consequence, requires of them, under the notion of a *covenant*. "I," he said to Noah, immediately after the deluge, "behold I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you,—neither shall all flesh be any more cut off by the waters of a flood."\* To Abraham he engaged, "I will establish my covenant between me, and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." † And accordingly a covenant was solemnly made and ratified by God with the people of Israel, at Mount Sinai, soon after their deliverance from

\* Gen. ix. 9.

† Gen. xvii. 7.

Egypt. The Lord promised, that, if they would “hearken to his judgments, and keep them, and do them,—he, the Lord their God, would keep unto them the covenant and mercy which he swore unto their fathers; and would love them, and bless them,” so that they should be “blessed above all people.” But, on the other hand, it was denounced, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law, to do them.”\*

As the Israelites so lamentably departed from their engagements with God, it became one great office of their pious princes and reformers to call them to renew, and bind themselves more strictly to observe, this covenant. Their history records several remarkable transactions of this kind; particularly in the times of Joshua, of Asa, of Jehoshaphat, of the high priest Jehoiada, of Hezekiah, and of their last good king, Josiah: † and seldom did any great reformation take place among them, without a solemn renewal of their covenant with God.

And the privileges and duties of the Christian dispensation are still represented in the same way. In the thirty-first chapter of this book, the introduction of the gospel is thus predicted: “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

\* Deut. vii. & xxvii. 26.

† Jos, xxiv. 2 Chron. xv, xxiii, xxix—xxxi, xxxiv.

“ in the day that I took them by the hand to bring  
 “ them out of the land of Egypt (which my  
 “ covenant they brake, although I was a husband  
 “ unto them, saith the Lord :) but this shall be  
 “ the covenant that I will make with the house of  
 “ Israel,” that is, with the true church of God,—  
 “ After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my  
 “ laws in their inward parts, and write them in  
 “ their hearts, and will be their God, and they  
 “ shall be my people.”—Accordingly the gospel  
 is commonly denominated “ the new covenant ;”  
 and the very book in which it is revealed is styled  
*The New Testament*, or rather, *Covenant*.

These remarks may illustrate the language of  
 my text, and prepare the way to the application  
 of it which I propose.

This chapter and the succeeding one predict  
 the destruction of Babylon ; and the restoration of  
 the Jews from their impending captivity in that  
 city, in consequence of the well-known decree of  
 Cyrus, recited in the beginning of the book of  
 Ezra. Beautiful is the picture, here prophetically  
 delineated, of the poor captives returning, not  
 only to their land, but to their God, with tears of  
 repentance for their sins against him, and of joy  
 for the renewed indications of his favour to them!  
 “ In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord,  
 “ the children of Israel shall come, they and the  
 “ children of Judah together, going and weeping :  
 “ they shall go and seek the Lord their God.

“ They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces  
 “ thitherward, saying, ‘ *Come, and let us join our-*  
 “ *selves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that*  
 “ *shall not be forgotten!*”

Now these words speak precisely the sentiments which we would express, when we invite you to baptism, or to confirmation. ‘ Come,’ we would say to you, ‘ Come, join yourselves to the Lord, ‘ in a perpetual, an everlasting covenant, never to ‘ be forgotten.’

Baptism, as we so lately explained it to you, is, where rightly received, “ the seal” of such a covenant; as circumcision was of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed. Every person, receiving baptism, does himself, or by his sureties, in hope of the blessings of which that sacrament is ‘ a means and a pledge,’ renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and devote himself to God through the Redeemer.

Confirmation, though not, like baptism, expressly ‘ ordained by Christ himself,’ yet is derived from the earliest practice of the Christian church, perhaps from that of the Apostles themselves. At least, without contending that it is the same “ con-  
 “ firmation of the churches” in the faith, attended with “ the laying on of hands,” and the communication of the Holy Ghost, of which we read in the Acts and the epistolary writings of the apostles,\* yet its ultimate design is, *virtually*, the same: it aims at the same great object, by such means as

\* Acts viii. 14—17. xiv. 22. xv. 32, 41. xix. 6. Heb. vi. 2.

are left in our power. Its intention is, by calling baptized persons to a more particular consideration of the nature and obligation of their professions, and to a solemn and public renewal of them, to establish their minds in attachment to Christ, and to engage them unalterably to be 'his faithful soldiers and servants' for ever.

Such a transaction seems peculiarly proper with respect to those, who, as the great mass of the people in Christian countries are, have been baptized in their infancy. What can be more natural or expedient, than to call upon such persons, when they 'are now come to years of discretion, and have learned what their God-fathers and God-mothers promised for them,' before they were capable of promising for themselves; and when they are now just entering upon life; to come forward, and seriously say, whether they recognize their baptismal vows; whether they humbly purpose to stand to them; and, in attestation of their so doing, 'themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly, before the church, to ratify and confirm the same; and also to promise, that, by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as, by their own confession, they have assented unto.'

And this is the account which our church gives of Confirmation.—What, I ask, can be more reasonable, than that she should require from each of her young members such an avowal? Without something of the kind, she must be at a loss to

determine, whether she is to consider them as continuing her members, or as renouncing their baptism, and their connection with her.—What is it, but like Joshua's address to the people of Israel, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will "serve," the Lord, or other gods? Or like that of Elijah, "How long halt ye between two "opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; "but if Baal then follow him." \*

And may not confirmation, thus understood, admit of the most important improvement for the good of such young persons? It furnishes both to ministers, to parents, to sponsors, and to all who have the superintendance of youth, the most desirable opportunity for communicating religious instructions, and impressing serious sentiments on their minds. The solemn prayers, also, of the church are offered up for them, on the occasion; and these will, no doubt, be aided by the fervent intercessions of all pious persons, for what form the rising hopes of the church, as well as of the community.

And shall the seed of divine truth be all thrown away? Shall God refuse to "hear his own elect, "who cry day and night unto him," pleading for the fulfilment of his promises? No! it will not be, it cannot be, it *is* not, the case. Those ministers, who have had most experience, and have taken most pains on these occasions, have given us the most encouraging reports of the happy effects produced by means of them. They

\* Josh. xxiv. 14, 15. 1 Kings xviii. 21.



have found many young persons at these times; “join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual “covenant, not to be forgotten:” and many more in whose minds the seed of divine truth was then sown, which, perhaps even long afterwards, sprang up, and ripened into a blessed harvest.

Let us hope, my Christian brethren, that what we have thus “heard with our ears,” we shall ourselves witness, realized before us: and that, while so many young persons are early entering upon courses of vice and folly, we shall see not a few, in consequence of what is now doing for them, devoting themselves to the Lord from their youth.

And you, my young friends, oh that we could inspire you with this hope and ardent desire for yourselves, which are our heart’s desire and hope for you! Hear ye the promises of God made to his church with respect to those who are placed precisely in your circumstances, and pray that they may be fulfilled in yourselves, individually. Thus saith the Lord to his church, by his prophet Isaiah: “Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and “thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen: for I will “pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods “upon the dry ground: I will pour *my Spirit* “upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine off- “spring: and they shall spring up as among the “grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall “say, ‘I am the Lord’s;’ and another shall call “himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall “subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,”---engag-

ing himself to be his seryant,---“ and shall surname  
“ himself by the name of Israel.” \*

In order that the blessings, here so beautifully described, may accompany your confirmation, that it may indeed prove the “ joining of your-  
“ selves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant,” let me obtain your serious attention to the further instructions upon the subject, which I am about to address to you.

1. First then, I say, reflect that this is a most *solemn transaction* in which you are engaging. I have already explained to you its nature. It is entering into covenant with God. It is devoting yourselves to his service in this life, that you may inherit his everlasting kingdom in the life to come. It is, ‘ with your own mouth and consent, openly, ‘ before the church, ratifying and confirming’ your baptismal vows.

What those vows are, I purpose to explain to you more particularly, in another discourse. But you must know enough of them to be aware, that they are of a very serious nature.

The duties to which they bind you are of eternal and unalterable obligation. You cannot escape from their obligation, even by refusing to make, or to renew these vows. Every human being who comes to the knowledge of them, is bound to perform them, and is a rebel against his Maker, if he fail to do it.

\* Is. xlv. 3—5.

Yet certainly thus *engaging* for the performance of them is a solemn transaction, well adapted to impress the mind with a sense of the obligations under which it lies, and to fortify it against every temptation to violate or neglect them.

Making promises to our fellow creatures is a serious act, and the violation of them highly criminal. But how much more serious, to vow unto God! and how much more heinous a crime, the non-performance of our vows.

Yet have not many persons present this sin lying at their door? Oh consider it: repent of it: lest it be your ruin!

All the circumstances, likewise, under which this ratification of your vows is to be made, are solemn. It is to be made in the house of God, and in his more immediate presence, invoked for the occasion; before a large assembly of his professed worshippers; and to one of the principal ministers of his church:—as we may justly say, “before so great a cloud of witnesses.” It is to be accompanied with solemn prayers, and the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, craving the divine blessing upon you. It is to be made by every one of you all, ‘with his own mouth and ‘consent.’ The Bishop puts to all the persons to be confirmed the following question, which every one of you is to consider as addressed to himself, personally: ‘Do you here, in the presence of God, ‘and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at ‘your baptism; ratifying and confirming the same.

‘ in your own persons, and acknowledging your-  
 ‘ selves bound to believe and to do all those things  
 ‘ which your God-fathers and God-mothers under-  
 ‘ took for you?’ And to this question ‘ every one  
 ‘ is audibly to answer, *I do.*’

Assuredly this is a covenant “ that shall not be  
 “ forgotten.” Its consequences shall be “ ever-  
 “ lasting.” If it be truly and uprightly made, you  
 shall remember it through life with satisfaction;  
 you shall remember it in death as your consolati-  
 on; you shall remember it to all eternity with  
 grateful joy; as having “ this day avouched the  
 Lord to be your God;” and having been from  
 this day acknowledged by him, as his servants and  
 children. But if it be made inconsiderately, igno-  
 rantly, insincerely, and, in consequence, remain  
 unfulfilled; then its effect must be, to bring down  
 upon you “ a curse and not a blessing;” and,  
 unless deep repentance prevent, the remembrance  
 of your unholy trifling with God will prove a  
 never-dying worm of remorse, corroding your  
 conscience for ever.

Oh then, my dear young friends, be impressed,  
 be deeply impressed, with the enormity of enter-  
 ing upon this most serious transaction, as so  
 many, alas! do, in a spirit of profane levity.  
 Dread to make the day of confirmation a day of  
 frivolity, and much more a day of disorder, of  
 riot, and wantonness. Pray earnestly to God,  
 that he would impress a devout seriousness upon  
 your spirit, both during the day, while you are  
 previously preparing for it, and whenever, (as I

hope will often be the case,) you may hereafter reflect upon it.—‘Be serious in a serious cause.’

But 2dly, though a solemn, this is also a *pleasing service*, kindly appointed for your good: for your present comfort, and your everlasting benefit.

That Almighty God should condescend to enter into covenant with the sinful children of men, to take them for “his people,” and to engage to be “their God,” and their “portion for ever, and “ever,” displays kindness and mercy more than tongue can express. Well may we exclaim, “Lord, what is man, that thou so regardest him?” Yet, that it has pleased God thus to deal with men from the beginning, we have already shewn. “Come out from” a wicked world, “and be ye “separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto “you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, “saith the Lord Almighty:”\*---this hath been his gracious language “in all generations.”

And, from several passages which have been already quoted, we find, that it is addressed to us with express reference to “our seed, our “children after us,” as well as for our own benefit. “This is my covenant with them, saith “the Lord,” (directly predicting the Redeemer and the gospel,) “My Spirit, which is upon thee, “and my words which I have put in thy mouth, “shall not depart out of the mouth of thy seed,

\* 2. Cor. vi. 17, 18.

“ nor out of the mouth of thy *seed's seed*, saith  
 “ the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” \*

Hence the children of the Jews were incorporated into the visible church of God by circumcision, and the children of Christian parents are incorporated into it by baptism.

And great is the notice which Almighty God has taken of *young persons* in his word; great the kindness which he has shewn for them. Nothing is more frequently repeated than his command to us, to instruct them in his truth, to “ train them in the way wherein they should “ go;” “ to bring them up in the nurture and “ admonition of the Lord.” “ Remember thy “ Creator,” he admonishes, “ in the days of thy “ youth.” “ I love them that love me, and they “ that seek me early,” they especially “ shall “ find me.” And, to name no more instances, let me call your particular attention to the admirable condescension and kindness of our blessed Saviour, when some pious parents so naturally and simply brought their “ little children unto him, that he should put his hands “ upon them, and pray.” “ His disciples,” we are told, “ rebuked those that brought them,” thinking that they gave him unprofitable trouble. “ But when Jesus saw it, he was *much displeased*, “ and said unto them, ‘ Suffer the little children “ to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of “ such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say

\* Is. lix. 21.

“unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” And he *took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*\* How exquisitely beautiful is this! Striking indeed, one would believe, must have been the effect of this transaction upon the parties concerned in it. What an obligation must it have fixed upon the parents to train up their children to the service of that Saviour, to whom they had presented them, and who had so graciously received and blessed them! What a plea must it have furnished with the young persons themselves, when come to years of discretion, not basely to desert or disobey him, to whom they had been thus devoted in their infancy, and who had shewn such tender regard for them.† And is it not in the highest degree encouraging to all truly Christian parents, whose first desire for

\* Mark x. 13.

† ‘What a topic of expostulation would this transaction give the ministers of Christ, if these parents afterwards brought up their children in an unchristian manner, or set them a bad example! Or, with the children; if they renounced that Saviour, who had so condescendingly taken them in his arms and blessed them! In what a variety of ways might instructions and admonitions, both to the parents and to the children, be grounded upon it; and what a sweet subject of converse would it afford to the parents, in afterwards instructing the children! What a plea in prayer for them! And might not infant-baptism be improved to similar purposes, did all, who approve and contend for it, bestow due pains to make it a means of grace to themselves, and those concerned?’

SCOTT in loc.

their beloved offspring is, the blessing of Christ? Is it not most inviting to young persons?

My dear young friends! just as these parents did, would we bring you, or invite you to come, into the presence of the gracious Saviour, that you may receive his blessing, and go forth and live in the world as becomes those who have been thus consecrated to God your redeemer, from your youth. It is no less for your own good, your comfort, your happiness, than because we would have you to do your duty, that we wish you to ratify, and to perform your baptismal vows. Remember the blessings of baptism, where it is 'rightly received.' \* 'To be made members 'of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of 'the kingdom of heaven.' What inestimable blessings are these!—In what sense you are to understand your *having been made* partakers of them, we endeavoured to explain to you in a former discourse. You are said to be so, *upon the supposition* of your having received 'the 'inward and spiritual grace,' of baptism, as well as 'the outward and visible sign.' And, if you do indeed possess this inward and spiritual grace, it will shew itself by leading you to keep your vows,—renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil; believing truly in Christ; and walking in the commandments of God. But if you do not these things, you demonstrate that you have "neither part nor lot" in the spiritual and eternal blessings of Christianity.

\* Church Articles, xxvii.



This point may receive apt, and I hope not unpardonably familiar, illustration, from an usage with which the greater part of my audience is conversant. Under the charter of this corporate town, numerous persons are *free-born*; but, unless, when grown up to maturity, they sue out, or, as it is termed, *take up*, their freedom, they can enjoy no benefit of this privilege. So you are admitted, in your infancy, into ‘a state of salvation;’ but you will, in the end, derive no advantage from that circumstance; unless you be afterwards careful to secure the blessings of salvation in the prescribed way,\*—repenting of your sins, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and yielding up yourselves to the service of God; through him. This is what we are continually urging you to do, in our preaching, and what you profess actually to do in confirmation. The church hopes you are sincere, when you make this profession; and, *in that hope and persuasion*,† again addresses God in your behalf, as having ‘regenerated you by water and the Holy Ghost, and forgiven you all your sins.’—Our heart’s desire and prayer to God for you is, that your whole future lives may shew, that she did not flatter herself with vain hopes, when she indulged this charitable supposition respecting you. Then

\* See answer in the Catechism to the question, ‘Why then are infants baptized?’ &c.

† This language of *charitable hope and supposition* appears to pervade all the services of the church: and no doubt this is the true key to the language of the baptismal offices.

your blessedness will be indeed great; you will live here in the favour of God; when death shall come, this his covenant will be "all your salvation and all your desire;" and, when "flesh and heart shall fail, God will be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever."

3. Let me then, in the last place, address a few directions to you, for your preparation for this solemnity.

I need not now say, Be serious in all that respects it: I need not say, Thankfully avail yourselves of the opportunity afforded you. I have been shewing you how much reason you have for this. But,

(1) Be careful to *understand* the engagements you are to enter into, the vows you are to make. I have already spoken of them to many of you, and purpose to enlarge upon them more hereafter. But consider them at home. Study the explanation of them given in the tract which has been put into your hands.\* You will find that they comprehend a great deal.

(2) *Examine your lives past*. Remember, you have always been under the obligation of the vows, which you are now called upon more solemnly to ratify. But how much, alas! have you failed of keeping them. How much have you yielded to sin, to the works and temptations of

\* 'The Parochial Minister's Address to all those persons under his care who are of a proper age to be confirmed by the Bishop: by the Rev. Thomas Robinson, A. M. Vicar of St. Mary's, Leicester. Fifth Edit.'

the devil! What wrong tempers and passions have you indulged! How much have your hearts been set upon the vanities of this life! How little have you known or thought of God, and your blessed Saviour? How little have you delighted in his service, or, indeed, at all studied to serve him! Compare your dispositions and your conduct with the summaries of duty to God and to your neighbour, given you in your catechism: and you will find that you have much, much indeed to repent of. Enter then upon your renewed consecration of yourselves to God, with humiliation, and confession of your past offences; and earnestly imploring his pardoning mercy through the great Redeemer. In this respect, as well as others, take for your example the Israelites spoken of in my text, who are described as "*going and weeping, to seek the Lord their God.*" Their tears of godly sorrow, we are assured, would soon be turned to joy. They are said, "to have asked the way to Zion, *with their faces thitherward.*"

(3) Be aware that you possess *an evil nature*, which will still carry you contrary to your duty, your resolutions, and your vows, unless it be thoroughly changed by divine grace. All your good purposes, therefore, will come to nothing, they will vanish as the "early cloud, and the morning dew," unless you call upon God, by earnest and frequent prayer, to enable you to keep them. Pray daily unto God, especially for these two blessings, *the pardon of your sins*, and

*a new heart*, a heart filled with love to God, and disposed to delight in his service. Remember the admonition in your Catechism, ‘ My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer.’ Remember the professions which you yourselves make in answer to the question, ‘ Dost thou not think, that thou art bound to believe and to do as thy God-fathers and God-mothers promised for thee?’ You reply, ‘ Yes verily, and by God’s help, so I will: and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.’ O do not say these things without doing them!

These then are my present admonitions to the young persons themselves. I now turn to others.

Some, probably, may think the views, which have been taken, both of baptism and of confirmation, much too solemn, or, as they may represent it, alarming. I ask, What is your reason for this opinion? Is it supported by *any* solid reason? Or do you form this judgment, only because our views are much more serious than you have been used to entertain, or than

the world in general entertains? There is no weight whatever in such a reason. I would only inquire, Whether our statements have not been sufficiently confirmed from scripture, and from the nature of the case. If so, oh beware, how you prefer to them the inconsiderate, the unfounded sentiments of a world, careless and self-flattering upon all spiritual subjects! On similar grounds, you might reject the belief of all the most important truths of scripture: nay, if fact had not extorted your assent, you might have disbelieved the possibility of all the awful indications of the divine displeasure against sin, which the state of the world, in so affecting a manner, exhibits to our view.

But, perhaps, you were confirmed years ago, and have never thought very seriously of the obligation which you then contracted. And this may prejudice you against the admission of such solemn views of the subject. You are unwilling to think yourselves criminal in having thus lightly regarded your engagements. But your unwillingness to feel your criminality, is no proof that it does not exist. Certainly you *are* deeply guilty, if you have trifled with the vows of God, which are upon you: and the only course of wisdom and duty, which lies open to you, is, humbly to acknowledge, and repent of your deceitful dealing with Him, who "searcheth all hearts," "whose you are, and whom you" ought ever to have "served." And if you do not take this course, He will one day discover to you your

dissembled guilt, in a manner which shall overwhelm you with terror and despair!

But I would again address myself to parents and sponsors. I call upon you, brethren, at this time, *to do your duty*. The church expects it, your ministers intreat it, Almighty God requires it of you. The office of sponsors is not, as it is sometimes ignorantly represented, to perform the duties, or to bear the sins, of the children for them: it was designed, to insure the baptized person's being instructed and admonished concerning his duty. Parents do naturally lie under every obligation to instruct and admonish their children; and, therefore, the church does not admit them as sponsors. They are already pledged as deeply as possible. But she requires additional sureties, lest parents should be removed or incapacitated, or should neglect their duty. The very nature of the office, therefore, shews how improper it is, that it should be undertaken lightly, or be committed to those who are themselves destitute of serious piety. At all times, it is the duty of you who hold it, to take care that the young persons, for whom you have engaged, grow not up without proper instruction. But especially on such occasions as the present, look diligently to your children and God-children. Affectionately converse with them: instruct them: admonish them: pray for them, and with them: and do all that in you lieth to prevail with them to keep the vows

which you, in their name, made for them, and which they are now about to renew, in their own name.

Finally, I call upon all serious Christians. *Assist us with your prayers.* Bear our young people continually upon your hearts before God. Consider their situation,—just entering upon a world, how dangerous! the importance of their conduct! the worth of their souls! Pray that the seed of divine truth, now sown among them, may find a prepared and fruitful soil! Pray that they may indeed yield themselves up unto God in their youth, and serve him all their days! How happy will this be for themselves: how happy for those who are connected with them: how happy for the church of God!—"Ye that make mention of the name of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest," till he thus bless and replenish his church—till he "pour his Spirit upon our seed, his blessing upon our offspring!"

## SERMON III.

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### ON THE VOWS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION.

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ECCLESIASTES, v. 4, 5.

*When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.*

**T**HE doctrine of the text is such as needs no arguments to confirm its truth and propriety. Whoever considers, what is implied in the awful name of GOD, must be deeply sensible how much it concerns us to be humble, reverent, and, above all, sincere, in our transactions with *Him*,—that great Being to whom we owe our very existence, and on whose favour our well-being is absolutely dependent.

Impressed with these sentiments, the wise and inspired King of Israel thus addresses his reader: “Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God: and be more ready to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of fools,” who mock the



most High with an outward service, from which the heart is absent. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few," or serious and well considered; not rash effusions, not "vain repetitions." "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow, and not pay."

How well these sentences apply to the subject on which we have of late been endeavouring to fix your attention, must be obvious.

We are all, in one way or other, bound unto God by solemn vows. Many are just about to bind themselves by the vows of Confirmation. Much does it behove us to be careful that we "pay," and that we "defer not to pay," that which we vow.

In order that we may pay our vows, it is, in the first place, necessary, that we should *understand* them. To assist you in this preparatory step, as, in my last sermon, I explained to you the nature of confirmation, I shall, in this and a following discourse, offer you some remarks on the vows ratified and renewed in that ordinance. The comment upon them, which our limits admit, must necessarily be general, and

somewhat superficial: yet I would hope, that, by the blessing of God, it may not be without its use to you.

The vows to be considered are those made for us in our baptism; which we, ‘with our own mouth and consent, openly, before the church, ratify and confirm,’ in what is, partly for this reason, called *Confirmation*.

They are three; ‘First, That we will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh: Secondly, That we will believe all the articles of the Christian faith: And, thirdly, That we will keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.’

I. On the first of these vows we may remark, that, when we are called to ‘renounce’ the devil, the world, and the flesh, it is implied, that these enemies of God, and of our souls, have obtained a great power over us. And little need be said to convince any seriously minded person, that this is the fact.

1. God originally “made man upright,” “after his own image,” and under no other control than the mild and gracious one of his Creator’s authority. But, ever since Satan seduced our first parents to take part in his rebellion, he has possessed such an influence over us, that he is styled in Scripture, “the god,” and “the prince,

“ of this world ;” and “ the spirit that now worketh  
“ in the children of disobedience.”

We are taught, that the devil, with “ his angels,” acts especially as the *tempter* of men : in which character he assailed “ the second Adam, the “ Lord from heaven ;” (Jesus Christ,) as he had done the first ; but, happily, with a very different issue. But so subtle are his devices, that he is said, “ to transform himself into an angel of “ light, to deceive ;” and so successful, that he is described as “ the old serpent, that deceiveth the “ whole world.”

And are there not facts in the history, and even in the general state, of mankind, which cannot be satisfactorily explained but by the acknowledgment of such an influence ? Look to the extreme wickedness of men, in every age and country, which has hitherto overborne all the obstacles that could be opposed to it, and all the means that have been used, to give the ascendancy to truth and righteousness in the earth. Look especially to this circumstance, that thoroughly ‘ to renounce’ the dominion of Satan by being strictly religious, and resolutely living as the ‘ servants of God,’ has ever been matter of ill-report in the world : has ever been singular, and *unfashionable* : has ever been so to such a degree, as, in all times and places, to be stigmatized by a still unexhausted series of terms of reproach :—to such a degree, as constantly to hold out to men the temptation to be “ ashamed of Christ and his words ;” ashamed of true religion, as an obnoxious peculiarity!

Does not this shew that we live in a world where another power, hostile to that of the Creator, has established its usurped dominion?

Can we, again, need more decisive proofs of the "energy of delusion" which is exerted upon the minds of mankind, than are exhibited in such facts as these: That men expect to find happiness in forsaking and disobeying their Maker! That they regard the service of God as gloomy, and as leading to melancholy! That they profess to believe in eternity, and never prepare for it! That they avow a conviction, that sin will lead them to hell, and yet live in sin without remorse! a persuasion that heaven is not to be obtained without holiness, and yet evince no desire to become holy!--a belief that the Son of God, in human nature, agonized and died for their redemption, and yet feel neither real gratitude to him, nor anxiety to secure their interest in his salvation!--With such preposterous contradictions the minds and conduct of men, alas! abound. Of such deep, such inveterate, and invincible delusions, the world is full.

Many persons, it may be apprehended, are under great mistakes respecting the *temptations* of the devil. These consist not, in general, in the sudden and terrifying injection of blasphemous thoughts; but, whenever any thing prohibited by God is made to appear (like the forbidden fruit to our first parents,) irresistibly inviting and desirable to our minds; or any thing commanded by God, to appear insuperably difficult, repulsive,

and disagreeable; then may we say, that we have "entered into temptation."

But we bind ourselves 'to renounce the devil:' to cast off his dominion, however firmly established: to serve God, openly and unreservedly, however unfashionable and singular this may be: to withstand every temptation, "steadfast in the faith:" unceasingly to oppose the influence of the powers of darkness and sin, in our own hearts, and in the world around us.

We also promise and vow to renounce 'all the works of the devil.' Every species of sin is to be ranged among 'the works of the devil.' But, where we have 'the pomps and vanity of this wicked world,' and 'the sinful lusts of the flesh,' separately enumerated, we are determined to a rather more strict interpretation of the term. 'The works of the devil,' then, are those sins which more peculiarly characterise fallen spirits. Such are, pride, malice, envy, wrath, hatred, revenge. If we carefully watch over our own hearts, we shall find all these evil passions, at one time or another, working powerfully within us: and, in many cases, the sentiments of mankind encourage the indulgence of them, under the names of *high spirit*, *a noble pride*, *a lofty sense of honour*. They are all, however, "abomination with God." These, even more than sensual lusts make man resemble the foul spirits of hell. We vow, remember, to oppose them, in their inward workings, as well as in their outward acts.

All *lying*, all slander and evil speaking, and especially all evil-speaking of religion, and of religious persons, from secret dislike to their religion, is a work of the devil: who is, therefore, called, "the father of liars," and "the accuser of the brethren."

All *profaneness* is a work of the devil: not only cursing and blasphemy, (which are the very language of hell,) but all scoffing at sacred things, and every exercise of wit to the disparagement of God's word, and of religion.

Very particularly, *tempting* and emboldening others to commit sin, or discouraging and hindering them in their duty, is the work of the devil. And, alas! how generally do men of every description yield themselves to Satan, as his instruments in this infernal service! How few, comparatively, associate together, without *corrupting* one another!

Finally, all *irreligion* is the work of the devil, whose great employment it is to oppose the authority, the honour, and service of God, in the world. As far, therefore, as we neglect religion, or go contrary to its obligations, or counteract its progress and influence, so far the work of the devil succeeds with respect to us, and is furthered by us.

2dly, The next things which we renounce are, 'the pomps and vanity of this wicked world.' The world is here denominated, 'this *wicked* world:' and the scriptures declare, that "the world lieth in wickedness." They affirm, that, "if any man will be the friend of the world," or

determine to stand fair in the opinion of the world, "he is the enemy of God." To be "of the world," therefore, is to be "not of God."\* I beseech you all seriously to reflect on this truth!

'Renouncing the world,' however, does not mean, refusing to take any part in the business of life, much less, omitting to serve and assist our fellow creatures. No: the Christian is conscientiously to fill up his place in society, and to render himself useful to mankind. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil," was our Lord's intercession for his disciples.

But every serious inquirer into the subject will be shocked to find, how much *the system* of this world is arranged in opposition to the revealed will of God: to how many cases that saying of our Saviour is justly applicable, "that which is *highly esteemed* among men is *abomination* in the sight of God." †

For example: "to seek great things" for ourselves in this life, is what the world not only practises, but applauds. On the contrary, "to set our affections on things above," "to lay up for ourselves treasures, not on earth, but in heaven," to be content with a moderate portion here, "to let our moderation be known unto all men;" in a word, "*not* to seek great things for ourselves" ‡ in this world, but to devote ourselves to higher pursuits: these are the injunctions of Scripture.

\* John xvii. 16. James iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. iv. 4-6. v. 19.

† Luke xvi. 15.

‡ Jer. xlv.

If we be not constantly on our guard, "watching" and praying lest we enter into temptation," we shall imbibe the spirit which is "of men, and not "of God," in this respect.—We vow to renounce 'the covetous desires of the world.'\*

Again, *Reputation* is the idol of the world. Nor is it to any man's honour to set the opinion of his fellow creatures absolutely at defiance. The profession of utter indifference to it, is, generally speaking, equally proud, foolish, and false.† The respect or esteem of mankind, as far as it may be had without any dereliction of duty, is desirable: and that we should follow those things which are "of good report," (provided, of course, that they be not contrary to the laws of God,) is a precept of inspiration. In short, the esteem of men is to be desired just for the same purposes, and within the same limitations, as is the possession of property; namely, as a means, under the providence and blessing of God, of comfort to ourselves, and of usefulness to others. But, just as mankind set an inordinate value on property, and seek it with undue eagerness, and by unlawful means, so do they also act by reputation. Not only is the pursuit of 'glory,' as our supreme or ultimate object, always a violation of our allegiance to the God *by* whom we do, and *to* whom we ought to live; but, in the more retired walks of life, the regard to

\* Bapt. Service.

† *Negligere quid de se quisque sentiat, non solum arrogantis est, sed etiam omnino dissoluti.* Cic. de Off. Lib. I. c. 23.—It is true, that our danger is commonly from the other extreme: but there are those who err on this side.



character, the desire of standing well in the estimation of men, is very commonly a most dangerous snare, withholding us from the service of God.

The world approves what is customary: what the laws of honour, of fashion, of general practice in *our* line of life sanction. Men cannot break through these rules without incurring censure, ridicule, reproach. Yet these rules are often at variance with the law of God. They enjoin what it forbids: they forbid what it enjoins.—For example: they will not allow a man to be strictly religious; to avow his religious principles; and to incite others to be, and to do, the same. In such a case, then, it is, that it becomes noble, that it is Christian, that it is our indispensable duty, to despise our character, to disregard the opinion of men, to say by word and deed, “Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.” Fear, and shame, and loss, must here go for nothing. For our blessed Saviour solemnly forewarns us, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed,” and shall disown him, “when he cometh in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels.”\* He taught us what to expect, when he pronounced, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of

\* Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26.

“ man’s sake :—for in the like manner did their  
 “ fathers unto the prophets—But woe unto you  
 “ when all men shall speak well of you: for so  
 “ did their fathers to the false prophets.” \*

Once more, The world is dissipated, thoughtless, fond of pomp and display, and devoted to what it calls *pleasure*: and often it seeks its pleasure from what is fraught with wickedness. Yet it would veil all with the accommodating names of harmless gratifications, *innocent amusements*. All this is, at the best, ‘ the *pomps and vanity* of this wicked world:’ often it is much worse. The Christian renounces it all: it is all unfit for a rational being who has to provide, in the few short years of life, for *everlasting existence!* for a sinner “ preparing to meet his God!” He has no time for it: and, what is yet more, he has no heart for it. He ought to be, and he is, serious. He ought to be, and he is, diligent and watchful: “ not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving “ the Lord.” He is commanded “ whatever he “ does, to do all to the glory of God.” He is “ to “ deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and “ follow” his Lord and Master, on pain of being accounted “ unworthy of him.”

Nor is this a life barren of enjoyment. The possession of a taste, a relish for such a life, a preference of it, a delight in it, is the very thing which constitutes a Christian. And, for the man who is leading such a life, there are a thousand subsidiary pleasures, sober, tranquil, and cheer-

\* Luke vi. 22, 23, 26.

ing,—truly innocent and virtuous pleasures,—to be enjoyed. But pleasures which inflame the passions, which dissipate the thoughts, which rob the soul of its sobriety, its holy vigour and resolution in the great work of life, are intitled to any character, rather than that of *innocence*, “Let no man deceive you with vain words.”

3dly, ‘The sinful lusts of the flesh’ are renounced. The *flesh* is often in scripture put for the whole corrupt nature of fallen man. Even those evil passions which most entirely have their seat in the mind, are included under this name.\* But here, being distinguished from ‘the works of the devil,’ as well as from ‘the pomps and vanity of the world,’ ‘the lusts of the flesh’ may perhaps be most properly understood, of those sins in which the body is primarily concerned; and which consist in the inordinate indulgence of appetites, in themselves innocent and necessary. I shall not dwell upon this class of sins: they are sufficiently well known. The Apostle thus enumerates them: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, —drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” And he adds concerning them, “Of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” And again, in another passage, “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance

\* Gal. v. 20, 21.

“in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. *Let no man deceive you with vain words:* for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” \*

We should, however, observe, that all impurity of mind, of thought, of conversation, as well as outward acts of unchastity, comes under these heads, in the estimation of God, “who knoweth the heart.” † Sloth, love of ease, and fondness for indulgence, are also condemned, as well as gluttony and drunkenness.—“Flee, therefore, youthful lusts, which war against the soul!”

All these enemies, then, the devil, the world, and the flesh, which have obtained such fatal power over fallen man, we engage to renounce,

\* Gal. v. 19—21. Eph. v. 3—6.

† Matt. v. 27. 28.—What words can sufficiently reprobate the detestable custom, so generally prevalent, I am told, of mingling corruption with the cups which should only refresh and cheer the friendly party,—by drinking *obscene toasts*? What a sink of pollution does such a practice shew the minds of some men to be, who would pass for polite and refined!—“They are like unto whited tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness.” In the energetic language of Scripture, “Their throat is an open sepulchre,” emitting a poisonous steuch, to spread contagion and death all around them.—Young men, flee such companions! Cherish for them that loathing and disgust, which they deserve! The insidious decency of ambiguous language, in which they may sometimes envelope the foulness of their ideas, shews only the deeper corruption of their imaginations, which could dwell with pleasure on such sentiments, and studiously devise such modes of conveying them into the youthful mind, as should at once give them a faster hold of the memory, and screen them from that merited abhorrence, which their unveiled, native deformity must excite in all persons not utterly depraved.

and resist, all the days of our life. The language of this vow is, "Other Lords have had domination over us, but, henceforth, by thee," by thy grace, "will we make mention only of thy name," O Lord! Oh may we all, and, in particular, may you who are just entering upon life, and are about solemnly to make this vow, have grace to keep it! 'to fight manfully, under the banner of Christ, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to continue the faithful soldiers and servants' of the Redeemer, 'unto your life's end!'

'From all the crafts and assaults of the devil; from all blindness of heart; from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all the deceits of the world and the flesh; may the good Lord evermore deliver you,' and preserve you to his kingdom and glory!

## SERMON IV.



THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.



ECCLESIASTES, v. 4, 5.

*When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.*

**I**N a former discourse from these words, I endeavoured to explain to you the first of those vows, which are made in our name at our baptism, and are ratified by ourselves at our confirmation. I now proceed to the consideration of the two remaining vows. It will not be necessary to dwell quite so long upon them, as the catechism itself furnishes a more particular explanation of them, than it does of the preceding one.

II. The second vow is this, ‘That we will believe all the articles of the Christian faith.’

Before we can believe the articles of the Christian faith, it is necessary that we know them;

and they are to be known only from the sacred scriptures.

1. In the first place, then, this vow binds us to be serious and diligent readers of the word of God. And how reasonable a duty is this! Does the most High speak to us from heaven? Does he reveal to us, as his creatures, his laws and our duty; and, as sinners, the means of restoration to his favour, and of attaining everlasting life? Does he commission holy men to record this revelation, and authenticate the inspiration of their writings, by miracles, and prophecies, and “many infallible proofs?” And shall we not apply ourselves to the study of these writings, with hearts full of zeal and gratitude?

Alas! what contempt of God, and of everlasting salvation, is shewn by the multitudes, who having the scriptures in their hands, and acknowledging them to be divinely inspired, yet have time for any pursuit, any amusement, rather than for the study of the sacred oracles! Who content themselves with the most superficial, partial, and imperfect knowledge of their contents, acquired without any pains or study! Most justly will they be judged “unworthy of eternal life,” who thus despise the word of salvation, mercifully put into their hands!

My young friends! you bind yourselves to pursue a more rational and more virtuous course:—*to read the scriptures daily.* Not hurrying thoughtlessly over their sacred pages: but care-

fully perusing and devoutly meditating upon them, with prayer to God for the teaching and blessing of his Spirit, to unfold their truths to your understandings, and to give them their due effect upon your hearts. There is not one among you who may not find opportunity thus to store up some portion of them, daily, in his memory: and what an invaluable treasure would you thus amass, in a course of years! Oh begin the practice with this day! You will look back upon its commencement with pleasure for ever.

2. The next thing for which we engage, in this vow, is, simply and implicitly to receive whatever we find declared in the volume of revelation, upon the authority of God who declares it. He is too wise to err, and too good to deceive: the sacred scriptures are proved to be his word: whatever, therefore, they tell us, we are to believe without hesitation or wavering. "Whoever will not" thus "receive the kingdom of God," or submit to the gospel, "as a little child,"—with the humility and simplicity of such a character,—"he shall not enter therein."\*

But, 3dly, we are not merely to assent to what we read in the Bible, as true: we shall find that it is all important, all *interesting* to ourselves, in the highest degree. He alone, therefore, *believes* it rightly, whose heart is influenced and whose life is governed by it. Let this truth be ever in our thoughts.

To inform us of the principal 'articles of the

\* Matt. xviii. 1—4. Mark x. 15.



‘ Christian faith,’ the ‘ creed,’ or *belief*, is given in the catechism, where our baptismal vows are recorded. It is a very ancient and excellent composition, derived from the sacred scriptures, and teaches us, as we are further informed, ‘ to believe, ‘ first, in God the Father, who hath made us, and ‘ all the world; secondly, in God the Son, who ‘ hath redeemed us, and all mankind; and, thirdly, ‘ in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth us, and ‘ all the elect people of God.’

We are to believe in God, as almighty, all-wise, all-knowing, every where present; our creator, preserver, and continual benefactor; our governor, and judge:—as holy, and hating sin, with a perfect hatred: as just, and determined to punish it in all the impenitent: yet as merciful, and, through Jesus Christ, delighting to pardon and save the penitent sinner.—How ought we to be affected by such a faith? What! can we believe in God, with any true faith, while we live without serious regard to him? without prayer, without repentance, without obedience? Impossible!

We are to believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, as having, ‘ for us men and ‘ for our salvation, come down from heaven:’ as having humbled himself to sufferings and death, the most ignominious and excruciating, that he might “redeem us to God with his blood:” as having risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there ever living “to save to the “ uttermost all them that come unto God through

“him.” And can we truly believe in Jesus Christ, without ourselves “coming unto God “through him?” without “fleeing from the “wrath to come,” which our sins have deserved? without mourning for those sins, as the crucifiers of the Lord of Glory? without fervent love and gratitude to him? without “living to him who “died for us, and rose again?”

We believe that “this same Jesus,” who “once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice “of himself,” shall come again “the second “time,” to be ‘the judge of both quick and dead.’ And, oh what an event will that be! How do the scriptures describe it to us! “All that are “in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall “come forth; they that have done good, unto “the resurrection of life, and they that have “done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” “Before him shall be gathered all nations, and “he shall separate them one from another, as a “shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.— “Then shall the King say unto them on his right “hand, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit “the kingdom prepared for you from the founda- “tion of the world.” And unto “them on his “left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his “angels.’—And these shall go away into everlast- “ing punishment, but the righteous into life “eternal.” “WE must ALL appear before the “judgment seat of Christ, that every one may re-

“ receive the things done in his body, according to  
 “ that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”\*  
 Do we believe these things, and live without  
 thought of them? without preparation for “ judg-  
 “ ment to come?” Be astonished, O heavens,  
 at the stupidity and hardness of human hearts,  
 which are proof, alike, against “ the terrors of the  
 “ Lord,” and “ the tender mercies of our God!”  
 O ye sons of men, who in vain ‘ profess and call  
 yourselves Christians,’ how long will ye satisfy and  
 deceive your own souls, with a “ dead faith,”  
 “ with a name to live, while ye are dead?”  
 “ Awake, ye that sleep” in false security, “ and  
 “ arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you  
 “ light!”

Lastly, we learn to believe in God the Holy  
 Ghost, as the only *Sanctifier* of fallen men; as  
 ‘ the Lord and giver of’ spiritual ‘ life.’ His it  
 is to “ quicken” the sinner who was “ dead in  
 “ trespasses and sins:” to “ convince him of sin:”  
 to “ renew him unto repentance:” to lead him  
 unto faith in Christ: to “ shed abroad the love  
 “ of God in his heart:” and then, through the  
 use of the various ‘ means of grace,’ to form him  
 to all Christian tempers and practices, and to pre-  
 serve him unto God’s eternal kingdom and glory.  
 “ The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-  
 suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,  
 temperance.” †—This is *sanctification*: one of

\* John v. 28, 29. Matt. xxv. 31, &c. 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Gal. v. 22, 23.

those two great blessings (forgiveness of sins, and "the new heart") which, as you have often heard it repeated, are indispensably necessary to our salvation.

You avow the hope and belief that God the Holy Ghost 'sanctifieth *you*,' in common with 'all the elect people of God,'—all those to whom the redemption of Christ is effectually applied, and who shall attain unto everlasting life. Where then are the happy proofs, that this is indeed the case? Are you brought decidedly "to seek "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?" to be all alive to the concerns of your everlasting salvation, as the "one thing need-ful?" Have you been made to feel the guilt of your sins, as a 'burden too heavy for you to bear?''\* Do you "count all but loss for "Christ" as your only hope, your only Saviour,--- "that you may be found in him, not having your "own righteousness,---but that which is by the "faith of Christ?" Is the world become, through him, "crucified unto you?" Do you "live "the life which you now live in the flesh, by the "faith of the son of God," maintaining continual "communion" with him, and deriving from "his "fulness" all grace and strength, peace and consolation? Have you begun to hate and shun every sin, "to cease to do evil and learn to do "well?" Do you lament unfeignedly the imperfection and sin which still cleave to all you do? Are you continually, in the exercise of humble

\* See the Confession in the Office for the Holy Communion.

prayer, imploring the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit of God, "to fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness?" Do you love the holy word of God? Do you meditate thereon daily? Do you take it for "the light of your feet, and the lamp of your paths?" Are you constantly aiming to rule yourselves according to its directions? to cultivate whatever it enjoins? to avoid whatever it condemns?---Such are the aims and characteristic marks of 'the elect people of God,' whom the Holy Ghost 'sanctifieth.' Only by their being found in us, can it be known that we belong to that number.\* But if we bear no such characters, if we be strangers to such a purification of heart and life, in vain do we flatter ourselves that he 'sanctifieth us:': in vain do we hope, in our present state, or without a thorough and radical conversion, to attain the heavenly inheritance. "Marvel not that we say unto you, "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."†

III. We come now, finally, to the vow by which we engage 'to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of our life.'

This follows, we should observe, what is said of the Christian faith. It is the obedience of the sincere Christian believer, performed not as the

\* See 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, &c. † John. iii.

ground of his confidence, or the condition of his justification before God, but springing from faith, and love for his Redeemer, (in whom alone he trusts,) that is here promised. And indeed this is the only obedience that will be rendered conscientiously, cheerfully, and unreservedly by fallen man: or which can be accepted at his hands by a just and holy God. It cannot put away his sin, or contribute any thing towards his justification. Whoever expects his obedience and good works to answer any such end, is so far building upon a wrong foundation, and, it may be feared, has as yet rendered no Christian obedience, and performed no works truly good and acceptable to God.\* All right obedience follows after, not precedes, our justification,† and at the very best its imperfection needs forgiveness through the atonement of Christ. Yet is unreserved obedience absolutely necessary as the fruit of the renewed mind, and the evidence of our faith and love.

The divine commandments are dispersed throughout the scriptures, but the decalogue is given us as a concise summary of them all; and they are still further abridged in those two great precepts, of “loving God with all our heart,” and “our neighbour as ourselves.”

\* Church Article xiii.

† Ibid. xi, xii. This is not merely a doctrine laid down in our Articles: it is a principle which pervades the prayers of our Church. See, for example, the confession, where we pray for obedience as following our forgiveness, not as preceding, and contributing to procure it.

Let us observe, first, That our duty towards God is at least as much insisted on, as our duty towards our neighbour. This is manifestly just and right. Yet many, very many persons, almost wholly overlook this branch of their duty: and, in estimating their own character and conduct, inquire only how far they have performed their external social duties to mankind.

Secondly, The law of God is “spiritual,” and “exceeding broad.” They are not only outward actions which it forbids or commands: it extends to the whole state of the heart; to the thoughts, imaginations, desires, and all the dispositions, which work within us. The true rule of interpretation is furnished by our blessed Saviour’s comment on the sixth and seventh commandments, in his sermon on the mount: \* where he teaches us, that undue anger violates the law which says, “Thou shalt do no murder;” and a wanton desire, or unclean thought, that which enjoins, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Indeed, in one instance, the very letter of the decalogue exhibits all this strictness and spirituality. The seventh commandment prohibits impurity, and the eighth, injustice, but the tenth goes directly to the source of unholy and unjust actions, the concupiscence of the heart, and pronounces, “Thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbour’s house; thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his

\* Matt. v. 21, &c.

“ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.” Deeply had this commandment impressed the mind of St. Paul. It brought home to his conscience conviction of sin, as even abounding where he had not suspected it to exist: and went far towards overthrowing the whole fabric of his self-righteous confidence.\* And deeply ought the consideration, which we are now urging, to impress us *all*, causing us from the heart to adopt, and most earnestly offer up that petition, which our church puts into our mouths after the recital of each commandment, and by which we acknowledge ourselves guilty under every one, imploring forgiveness for the past, and grace for the future:—‘Lord have mercy upon us! and incline our hearts to keep this law!’

Thirdly, it is an established rule of interpretation, that, wherever any practice is forbidden in these laws, the contrary practice is enjoined. “Thou shalt have none other gods but me,” is not only a prohibition of idolatry, but a positive injunction, to take the Lord for our God, to submit to him, and to bear all those regards towards him, to which, in that character of unrivalled majesty, and most intimate relation to us, he is so justly intitled. And, in like manner, with respect to our neighbour, “Thou shalt not kill,” is an injunction to promote, by all means in our power, the personal safety, well-being, and comfort of every fellow-creature.

\* Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9, 10.



Upon these principles of interpretation do those excellent little summaries of duty to God and to our neighbour proceed, which, in the catechism, follow the commandments, and furnish a concise commentary upon them. Let me recal these to your remembrance, pointing out to you the explanation which they give of each commandment.

As we are here taught, the first commandment requires, that we ‘believe in God, fear him, and love him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength.’ The second, that we ‘worship him, give him thanks, put our whole trust in him, and call upon him,’ not with superstitious, not with merely external and formal worship, but “in spirit, and in truth.” The third, that we ‘honour his holy name, and his word,’ and treat every thing which relates to God and religion, with profound reverence. The fourth, prescribes the duties of the sabbath, and virtually enjoins us ‘to serve God truly all the days of our life.’ The six following commandments relate to our neighbour, and require us ‘to love him as ourselves, and to do unto all men, as we would they should do unto us.’ The fifth, in particular, commands us ‘to love, honour, and succour our father and mother: to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him; to submit ourselves to our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters; and to order ourselves lowly and

‘reverently to all our betters.’ The sixth, ‘to hurt nobody by word or deed,’ and to ‘bear no malice or hatred in our hearts.’ The seventh, ‘to keep our bodies in soberness, temperance, and chastity,’ and duly to govern all our animal appetites and passions, and the thoughts of our hearts with respect to them. The eighth, ‘to keep our hands from picking and stealing,’ and ‘to be true and just in all our dealings.’ The ninth, ‘to keep our tongues from evil-speaking, lying and slandering.’ The tenth, ‘not to covet nor desire other men’s goods, but to learn and labour truly to get our own living, and to do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us.’

Now, not to burden your memories with any more elaborate explanation of your duty, let me intreat you only to bear in mind these short summaries: and, whenever you would form a judgment of your own characters, or estimate the number of your sins, to judge by these rules. Compare yourselves day by day with them. Surely such a practice would soon dissipate the delusions under which many labour. Surely it must soon convince you, that your iniquities are not few or small, counterbalanced by your virtues and good works, but that they are “more in number than the hairs of your head.” How have you forgotten God, and neglected or violated the duties which you owed to him! How far have you been from “setting him always before

“you;” from “loving him with all your heart;” from choosing him, and not the world, for your portion; from devoting your lives to his glory, and serving him with all the powers you possess! How little have you delighted in prayer, and praise, and devout meditation; in hallowing the sabbath, and studying the word of God! How far have you been from submitting patiently and thankfully to all the dispensations of his providence, and yielding a cheerful obedience to all his commands! On the contrary, have not your hearts often fretted against both the one and the other? Have you not thought his laws too strict; their penalty too severe; the duties of religion burdensome; the service of God “a hard service?” Nay, if you will honestly examine, will you not find, that the character of God itself, as delineated in the Scriptures,—a God of justice and holiness, as well as goodness,—of “purer eyes than to look upon iniquity,” and determined to cast the impenitent sinner into hell,—has been offensive to you? Has not your heart revolted at it? Have you not been unwilling to believe that such was indeed the character of God? You have wished the most High other than he is; that he would connive at sin; that he would forbear to punish it; that he would indulge you in your favourite transgression. Have you not thus proved, that what the Scriptures assert of the “carnal mind” is true of *your* mind,—that it is “enmity against God?” Oh awful thought!

Nothing is more rare among men than the true love of God. It has been, naturally, wanting in *you!* Have you not need "to abhor yourselves "and repent in dust and ashes?" Have you not need to pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, "and renew a right spirit within me!" Can you, without being made "new creatures," ever be fit for the kingdom of God?

In like manner if you will examine yourselves respecting your tempers and conduct towards your fellow creatures, how far will you find that you have been removed from 'original righteousness!' How much pride, how much selfishness, anger, envy, resentment, coveting, impurity, will you find has prevailed in your hearts! How much unkindness has often been shewn in your words and actions! How far have you been from "doing "unto all men as you would they should do to "you!" Oh know yourselves, and confess the truth, that you are "all as an unclean thing, and "all your righteousness," your supposed good works, so defective in their measure, so impure in their principle, as to be but "as filthy rags." Feel and acknowledge that there is 'no health in 'you.' The conviction may be painful, but it will be salutary. It need not lead you to despair. By no means. It should only lead you to value Jesus Christ, the Saviour of "lost" sinners, as you ought to do; to renounce all trust in yourselves, that you may be "justified by faith in his blood," which "cleanseth from all sin;" and sanctified by his

Spirit, who alone can restore you to the image of God. It will cause you to believe in him with a living, not a dead faith: and thus prove the first step in your way to everlasting life.

Such, then, are the vows by which all are bound, and which many of you have renewed, since you came 'to years of discretion.' Once more I ask, how have you kept them? May not this question well cover many of you with shame and confusion of face! many who have not only failed, as every humble mind must confess that it still does, of keeping them perfectly, but who have never tried to keep them at all! Oh dreadful impiety and mockery of God! If a man thus "sin," presumptuously, "against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep," for your horrible guilt and danger. Yet know that there is still forgiveness for you, if you earnestly seek it, in the Saviour's name. "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." But "*to-day*, if ye will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts." "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Such, again, are the vows, which many of you are now about 'to ratify and confirm.' Oh surely you have need to be serious in such a transaction! "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." We say it

for the warning of all. But we say it not to discourage and alarm the conscientious, the humble, those who feel the seriousness of the duty before them, their own weakness, and the deceitfulness of their hearts: who desire to devote themselves to God, but are ready perhaps, to tremble at the apprehension that they may not keep their vows. No: such are the very persons who ought to "join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, which shall not be forgotten." They alone are in the proper state of mind to make these vows. And let me remind all such persons, for their encouragement, that they are to make their vows, not in dependence upon their own strength for the keeping of them, but in humble dependence on God to enable them: and, while "even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, *they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*" \*

He who makes these vows lightly, and in self-confidence, "offers the sacrifice of fools." But he who feels the justness of the admonition, 'Know that thou art not able,' of thyself, 'to do these things, neither to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him;' and who therefore obeys the exhortation, 'at all times to call upon God for his special grace, by diligent prayer;' may

\* Is. xl. 28—31.

draw near with faith, not doubting that God will “accept his work,” and pardon its imperfection, for the Redeemer’s sake: that he will ‘lighten his ‘darkness,’ will strengthen his weakness, and will “confirm him unto the end.”

That you may all thus feel the humility, exercise the repentance and faith, and yield the obedience, of the gospel, and, ‘finally attain unto everlasting life,’ may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen.

## SERMON V.



### ON THE LORD'S SUPPER—ITS NATURE AND INTENTION.



I CORINTHIANS, X. 16.

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

**S**UCH is the constitution of man, in his present state, that his mind is accessible to external things only by the intervention, direct or indirect, of his bodily senses. Nay so much are we conversant with material objects, and so little with those which are purely intellectual, that we are apt to ascribe corporeal forms and qualities to spiritual beings. We have no names for the operations of our own minds, but what are derived from bodily actions: and we find it extremely difficult to conceive or retain lively impressions of any thing which is not, in some way, presented to our senses.

Sacred scripture condescends to this weakness of our nature, by representing to us spiritual sub-



jects under sensible images. In the infancy of the church, under the old dispensation, almost every thing belonging to religion was taught by type, and figure, and visible representation: and, under the new testament itself, the great mysteries of our redemption are exhibited, and impressed upon our minds, by the like means, in the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And, though the application of the baptismal water to our persons, and the offering of the symbols of the body and blood of Christ to our sight, our touch, and our taste, would be nothing, apart from the explanation which the word of God furnishes of the truths and blessings represented by these rites; yet, accompanied by those explanations, and coming in aid of them, these symbols are well suited to assist our conceptions, and awaken our feelings.

As, before the confirmation took place, I endeavoured to explain to you the sacrament of Baptism, I shall proceed now to treat of the Lord's Supper, to which confirmation is intended to introduce you. I shall, in the present discourse, speak of the nature and intention of this sacrament; and, in a subsequent one, of the benefits sought, the professions made, and the dispositions required, in attending upon it.

I. In speaking of the nature and intention of the Lord's Supper, we may,

1st, Consider it simply as a *commemoration* of the death of Christ. Even in this view alone it is highly interesting and important.

It was instituted under circumstances as affecting as can well be conceived. "The Lord Jesus, *the same night in which he was betrayed*, took bread, and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of me.*' After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as oft as ye shall drink it, *in remembrance of me.*'" As the Apostle observes, therefore, "As often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do *shew forth the Lord's death until he come.*"\*

When we approach the sacred table, and see there the consecrated elements placed before us, we should carry back our thoughts to the "upper room" at Jerusalem, and to all which passed there at the last paschal supper. We should realize the blessed Redeemer, whose heavenly discourses and beneficent actions we have traced with delight in the pages of the evangelists, now retired to take his last social meal (which was also a solemn religious feast,) with his disciples. He is surrounded only by his confidential friends, the partners of his labours and "temptations."† A solemn impression of what was so nearly approaching evidently rests upon his mind. He

\* 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

† Luke xxii. 28.

foresees it all. He alludes to it in no equivocal language: yet declares that he had looked forward to the time then arrived, with expectation and desire. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you *before I suffer.*"\* Hear him, "as they sat and did eat," after a solemn pause, utter the heart-piercing sentences, "Verily, I say unto you, one of *you*, that eateth with me, shall betray me!"—"Ye are clean, but *not all.*" "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." Hear him forewarn another of his disciples, "Verily, I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice:" and declare to them all, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.'" Yet see him, "having loved his own which were in the world, still love them unto the end."† Listen to his divine discourse, addressed to his disciples to prepare them for all that was before them, as recorded by St. John; and to his heavenly intercession for them, and for all who, to the end of time, "should believe on him through their word."‡ Then follow him to Gethsemane. Witness his agony in the garden—a scene to which no words, nor any human conceptions, can do justice. See him "begin to be sorrowful," and "sore amazed:" hear him exclaim, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" and

\* Luke xxii. 15. † John xiii. 1. ‡ John xiv—xvii.

then, withdrawn from his disciples, while his "sweat is like great drops of blood, falling to the ground," thrice reiterate the ardent supplication, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless not my will but thine be done." Behold this awful scene broken in upon, and the Son of Man "betrayed with a kiss," by Judas, "one of the twelve." Attend him to the palace of Caiaphas, to the judgment seat of Pilate, to the court of Herod, and finally to Golgotha. See him there nailed to the accursed tree, suspended between heaven and earth, "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men;"\* uttering the "exceeding great and bitter cry," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and at length "yielding up the ghost," amid the taunts and revilings of all orders of men. All this is what we commemorate in the Lord's supper. With all this before his eyes it was, that the blessed Redeemer, "the same night in which he was betrayed," with such calmness, such simplicity, and affection, took the bread and wine in his sacred hands, and said, "This is my body—This is my blood—This do in remembrance of me."—Most affecting subject of commemoration must this be, to every sincere Christian! The bread and wine, set forth on the sacramental table, should bring all these transactions fresh to our thoughts; should impress them all anew upon our hearts. Never would that bread and that

\* 1 Cor. iv. 9, and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

wine have stood before us, had not our Saviour suffered: had he not, the very night in which his sufferings began, given the command, "This do in remembrance of me."—In this ordinance, especially, "Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified, amongst us." Surely, as a mere commemoration, it is suited powerfully to affect our hearts.

2. "But there is something in this ordinance much beyond mere commemoration. Let us next consider it as giving *evidence* to Christianity at large, and particularly to certain important parts of that divine system."

Institutions like that of the Lord's supper, it has often been shewn, are of much importance in confirming those facts which constitute the evidence of revelation. Purporting to have taken their rise from the very period of the events which they commemorate, they could never be introduced in after ages, because mankind, at the same time that they admitted them, must have been induced to believe that they had always observed them; and, in the age to which they are referred, the commemoration could never have taken place, had not the event commemorated occurred. Accordingly, in this light, of an evidence to the truth of the gospel, the two sacraments seem to be viewed by St. John in his first Epistle: "There are three that bear record on earth, the Spirit," (the author of the miracles,) "and the water," or

baptism "and the blood," or the Lord's supper: "and these three agree in one."

But, as was shewn in a former discourse respecting baptism, so it is easy to shew here concerning the Lord's supper, that it not only bears witness to the truth of Christianity generally, but that it affords a very striking confirmation to certain fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

For what reason, it may fairly be asked, did our blessed Redeemer so particularly distinguish the sad and mournful scene of his sufferings, above all other events of his history, by an institution designed to keep it ever fresh in our remembrance? Why should not his followers rather celebrate his miraculous birth, his triumphant resurrection from the dead, or his glorious ascension into heaven, than his ignominious death? The inquiry, I conceive, would not readily receive a satisfactory answer from those, who see nothing in the design of Christ's death, beyond "bearing witness to the truth:" for certain it is, that his resurrection from the dead, rather than his crucifixion, is the event constantly and naturally appealed to, as the great proof of his divine mission. But, admit our Lord's own explanation of the design of his death, and of the view with which it is to be commemorated, and all is easy, all is reasonable. "This is my "body," he said, "which is given," and "broken

“for you.” “This is my blood of the new covenant which is *shed for you*,” and “for many, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.”\*

Only consider our blessed Saviour as, what all the sacrifices of the law prefigured, and what the forerunner who was sent expressly “to prepare his way,” and proclaim his character, declared him to be, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world:” Consider him as, what all the prophets “bore witness” that he would be, “wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,” having the iniquity “of us all,” and “the chastisement by which our peace” is effected, “laid upon him,” and “making his soul an offering for sin:” Consider him as, what he declared of himself, “giving *his life* A RANSOM for “many,” his blood to be “shed for the remission of sins;” and what his Apostles, after they were endowed with the abundant gifts and influence of the Holy Spirit, ever preached him,† “suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;” though he “knew no sin” of his own, yet made “sin,” or a sin-offering, “for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:” as

\* Matt. xxvi. 26-28. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23-25.

† If any reader is staggered by the confident tone in which the authority of the Apostolic Epistles is now disparaged, in comparison with that of the Gospels, let him carefully consider our Lord's words in his parting discourse with his disciples, John xiv. 16, 17. xvi. 12—14, and compare with them such passages as 1 Cor. ii. 1, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16. 1 Thess. iv. 1, 8. 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16, (“other scriptures,”) &c. &c.

“bearing our sins in his own body on the tree:” as, “by his one offering” of “himself,” “for ever” “putting away sin:” “as the propitiation for “the sins of the whole world,” and “washing “us from our sins in his own blood:” \*—Consider the death of Christ in this light, and the reason why “Christ and him crucified” should be the great theme of inspired apostles on earth, and of glorified saints in heaven, nay the grand central subject of divine revelation—why his *death*, especially, should be appointed to be had in constant and everlasting “remembrance,”—is too obvious to need pointing out. The sacrifice of the death of Christ is the most stupendous and interesting, the most awful, most delightful, and every way most memorable, event that ever occurred in the world, or of which any intimation is given to us. It, at once, brings “glory to God “in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will “towards men.” Herein the evil of sin is displayed to the whole universe, and yet the firmest foundation laid for the hopes of all penitent sinners: herein God appears to be “a just God and” yet “a Saviour:” and even “to the principalities and powers in heavenly “places,” new views of the “wisdom” and ma-

\* See Is. liii. Dan. ix. 24—27. Zech. xii. 10. xiii. 1, 7. John i. 29. iii. 14, 15. vi. 51—56. Matt. xx. 28. xxvi. 26—28. Acts x. 43. Rom. iii. 25, 26. v. 6—10. 1 Cor. i. 18, 23. ii. 2. xv. 3. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. vi. 14. Eph. i. 7. v. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. Heb. i. 3. ii. 9, 17, vii. 27. ix. 11—14, 15, 22—23. x. 4, 10, 12, 14, 19, 29. 1 Pet. i. 2. ii. 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 1, 2. iv. 9, 10. Rev. i. 5. v. 9—14. vii. 9—17.



nifold glories of God are disclosed, in the redemption of "the church" by the death of Christ. "Into these things angels desire to look down:" well, therefore, may we who are so much more nearly interested, dwell on them with delight, and keep them ever in our humble, affectionate, and devout remembrance.

3. But we may, further, consider this as a *social* ordinance, in which Christians hold "communion one with another." It is so in a much higher degree than baptism, which, being administered but once to the same individual, can in general be joined in by only a very small number at a time. But the Lord's supper is a standing ordinance in which Christians are continually to meet and profess their faith, present their united worship, receive the pledges of their Redeemer's love, and bind themselves one to another, in the closest and most endearing ties. And hence, in part, it derives its common name of 'the holy communion.'

In this view, also, it is a delightful institution; calculated to cherish every "fruit of the Spirit," and to extirpate every "root of bitterness," in the soul. How is it possible for Christian believers, meeting around the sacred board; together confessing their sins with contrite hearts; together acknowledging, and afresh applying for, all the infinite blessings of redemption; together commemorating their Saviour's dying love:—naturally companions in ruin, and now, by

divine grace, raised and united in one common and glorious salvation: partners of the same cares, sorrows, conflicts, temptations, hopes, joys; having the same infinite objects at stake, and the same enemies of their success to contend against; destined, if only they be preserved "faithful unto death," to spend an eternity of bliss together:—how is it possible for us to look round upon men, and to consider them, as, in any sense, associates and fellow candidates with us in such a cause, and not to feel for them a heart overflowing with tenderness? to find every rugged, resentful, selfish passion, gradually melt away, and give place to sympathy, benevolence, and intercession? Surely it is a most invaluable legacy, which our dying Redeemer hath bequeathed to his disciples, in this ordinance! one which most directly tends to bring about that blessed consummation, for which he poured forth such fervent supplication in his last prayer. "That they all may be one! "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, "that they also may be one in us!—that the "world may believe that thou hast sent me."\*

4. But the highest character of this ordinance remains yet to be considered. It is a medium of communion not only with our fellow Christians here upon earth, but with heaven itself, with God and our glorified Redeemer. And this it is, especially, in virtue of its nature as a *sacrament*.

\* John xvii. 11, 21. Compare xiii. 34, 35.

A sacrament, as our church teaches us, is ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us;’ which outward and visible sign is ‘ordained by Christ himself, as a *means* whereby we receive’ the inward and spiritual grace, ‘and a *pledge* to assure us thereof.’—‘The outward part, or sign, in the Lord’s supper,’ as she further observes, ‘is bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received. The inward part, or thing signified, is the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received *by the faithful*, in the Lord’s Supper:’ but, in what sense, she is careful to explain to us in her Article on the subject. ‘The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a *heavenly and spiritual manner*. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten, in the Supper, is *faith*.’\*

Before we proceed to the further explanation of this part of the ordinance, ‘the inward and spiritual grace,’ let me once more call your attention to the rite itself, ‘the outward and visible sign.’ I have before noticed it as remarkable that so particular a celebration of Christ’s death, rather than of any other event in his history, should be appointed. But certainly the *mode* of celebration is yet more surprising.

In the first place, it is by a *feast*, not by a fast. It is a celebration of praise and thanks-

\* Art. xxviii.

giving, not of mourning.---This is remarkable, if the death of our Saviour carried in it nothing of a higher nature, than the death of any other holy martyr.

But, secondly, of what *kind* is this feast? Of what *nature* is this celebration? It purports to be a feast upon the *body* and *blood* of Him, whose death is commemorated! "This is my body: Take, eat. This is my blood: Drink ye all of this." "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion of the blood of Christ*? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion of the body of Christ*? This, assuredly, is the most singular commemoration of a highly venerated deceased character, that was ever heard of in the world, much more that was ever practised among the civilized part of mankind! Familiarity with the *ceremony* has laid our attention to it asleep: otherwise it must certainly appear most extraordinary. Deny the great doctrines of the atonement, and of the communion of the soul with the Saviour by faith, and, I conceive, such an observance is absolutely inexplicable. But admit these doctrines, and all is easy, all is natural, all is, in the highest degree, significant. Admit that Christ hath "made reconciliation for iniquity," by "the sacrifice of himself," and "brought in everlasting righteousness," \* for the justification of every penitent believing sinner; and we may well celebrate his death, though with contrition for

\* Dan. ix. 24, 26.

our sins, yet with everlasting joy, and praises to him "who hath loved us" and "redeemed us to God with his blood." "Christ our pass-over is *sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.*"\*—Admit that the spiritual life of our souls is derived entirely from "Christ and him crucified," and that it can be supported only by communion with him, and the supply of his Spirit; † only 'by feeding on him in our hearts by faith;' and the figurative eating of his body and blood, is a most striking illustration of spiritual blessings by means of external signs.

And that this figure of "eating the flesh of Christ and drinking his blood," is no merely incidental one, but possesses all that significancy, which we might expect from its being, by express appointment, continually held up to our view in this most solemn sacrament, is made incontrovertibly evident by the whole of that remarkable discourse, delivered by our Lord in the synagogue of Capernaum, and recorded by St. John in the sixth chapter of his Gospel. The divine preacher there assumes the same figure, and presses it, and the truths intended by it, upon the attention of his hearers, with the utmost earnestness, and even with unwearied repetition.

\* 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. The Lord's supper, it will be remembered, was instituted after the paschal supper, and superseded the Jewish passover. Both represented,—the one prefiguring, the other commemorating,—"the Lamb of God," "slain from the foundation of the world," "to take away the sins" of mankind. John i. 29. Rev. xiii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

† See John xv. (parable of the vine and the branches.)

He speaks of himself as "the living bread, which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world:" and declares, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is *my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*—Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye *eat the flesh* of the Son of man, and *drink his blood*, ye have no life in you. Whoso *eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood*, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For *my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*. He that *eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood*, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that *eateth me* shall live by me."\*

\* See John vi. 27, to the end. In interpreting this discourse of our Lord's, we should set out with paying particular attention to the remark which he himself makes upon it: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life.*" The language which he uses is figurative in the highest degree: however significant the figure may be. By his own declaration, it is not any literal eating of his flesh and blood (such as the Papist's suppose in the Lord's supper,) that is intended. Even if this were possible, it alone would "profit us nothing." (ver. 63.) The *substance* of the instruction contained in this passage may, perhaps, be comprised in three or four particulars. 1. That all salvation is from Christ alone "coming down from heaven" to be our Saviour. 2. That it is from him in this particular way, of his "giving himself for the life of the world" his body to be broken, and his blood shed, as an atoning sacrifice for sin. 3. That in order to our partaking of his salvation we must be interested in him by a living faith. 4. That the communion established and carried on between the soul of the believer and his Saviour, by means of this faith, is of the most intimate and substantial kind. "He dwelleth in me and

It must be nearly superfluous to shew, that all this could not be spoken of merely receiving the Lord's supper. That sacrament was not then instituted. And, further, such a supposition would imply, not only that all who should partake of that ordinance, whatever their state and character might be, should "have eternal life;" but also that every one, who, by whatever means, failed of partaking of it, remained destitute of spiritual life, and would be excluded from heaven!

But the Lord's supper, in order indelibly to impress upon our minds the doctrine intended to be taught, *embodies*, if I may so speak, and gives *substance* to, the *figure* employed throughout the discourse referred to. It presents to all our other senses what that discourse addresses to our ears. The sermon and the sacrament both set before us the same thing: the one by description, the other by visible representation.—But what it is, that is thus proposed to us, requires to be more particularly explained.

This figure, then, draws our most marked attention to the doctrine of the atonement. But it does more. It implies and supposes, rather than directly teaches, that doctrine: and, the

"I in him." (ver. 56.) It is such that the soul is made alive and supported in (spiritual) life by virtue of this its *union* with Christ; (ver. 57.) and continually derives from him grace and strength for its support, as truly as the body derives nourishment and sustenance from its food. The same is implied in the parable of the vine and the branches, John xv. and is, no doubt, what is meant by St. Paul, Gal. ii. 20.

atonement being supposed, it goes on to instruct us concerning the effectual *application* of that and every other part of Christ's "great salvation" to our souls. The offering up of the human nature (the "body and blood") of Him, who was both God and man, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, is rather the *preparati...* of the heavenly feast: "eating and drinking his flesh and blood" represents our *participation* of it: it is a figurative description (but, doubtless, from all that we have seen, a description by a most proper and expressive figure,) of the means by which we must, individually, become interested in "the salvation which "is by Christ," and receive all the 'benefits' of 'his death and passion,' and of the whole of his mediation.—In short it is *the communion of the soul with the Saviour*, by which it actually receives the blessings which he died to obtain, and is now exalted to bestow upon every one "that cometh "to God by him," that is intended by "eating the "flesh of the Son of man, and drinking his blood;" and which constitutes 'the inward and spiritual 'grace of the Lord's supper.'

And this communion is maintained "by faith." Faith, or a reception of the Saviour in those characters which he sustains, and for those purposes for which he came into the world; a humble reliance upon him, upon his promises, his atonement, and intercession, accompanied by earnest persevering application to him for all the blessings of salvation: \*---this is, as a late

\* See the texts referred to at the foot of page 14.



eminent prelate has described it, ‘ the first principle of our communion’ with God: \* it is the great exclusive medium of our justification, and that by means of which our spiritual life, through the whole of its progress, is to be sustained, and our souls preserved unto everlasting life. “ We are kept,” saith St. Peter, “ by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” And St. Paul declares, “ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.* And the life which I now live in the flesh, *I live by the faith of the Son of God,* who loved me and gave himself for me.” And so our Lord affirms: “ He that eateth me shall live by me.” “ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” †

But let us not so leave this subject. Let us not content ourselves with a bare abstract account of what, however it may be regarded, not only by the profane, but even by many who “ *seem* to be religious,” is as serious and practical, and, we will be bold to add, as sober and rational an exer-

\* ‘ It is not by the *merit* of faith, more than by the merit of our works, that we are justified—That we are justified by faith is not on account of any merit in our faith, but because faith is *the first principle of that communion between the believer’s soul and the Divine Spirit, on which the whole of our spiritual life depends.*’ Bishop Horsley’s primary charge—(distributed by the Society for promoting Christian knowledge.)

† 1 Pet. i. 5. Gal. ii. 20. John vi. 56, 57.

cise of the mind, as any which comes within the circle of Christian duty. Let us attempt to describe this communion of the soul with its Saviour, this "coming unto Christ," this 'feeding upon him in our hearts by faith with thanks-giving,' from its first origin, and as it is actually maintained by the true Christian believer.

Take then a poor sinner, (we are all naturally such,) living "according to the course of this world," and consequently "dead in trespasses and sins."\* We need not assume him to be a *vicious* character. Let him be supposed a character respectable in society: but, as alas! many such characters are, lamentably forgetful of God, and of his high duties to him; occupied with the pursuits of the present life, and unsolicitous about the life to come. At length, however, by hearing or reading the word of God, or by means of some affliction, or other affecting occurrence, his attention is roused to things of everlasting importance: his mind is seriously impressed; his conscience is awakened to a before-unknown sense of sin; of its intrinsic evil, and the misery which must follow it; and of the criminality of that worldly, careless life which he has hitherto led, and even of that merely outward religion which is all that he has hitherto possessed. He finds himself guilty, and condemned by the holy law of God. He begins anxiously to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" He seriously studies the sacred Scriptures for an answer to that question. He hears

\* Eph. ii. 1--3, &c.

them reply to it, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." *He* hath died, "to make reconciliation for iniquity;" and he inviteth poor sinners unto him: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things." "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." The humbled sinner accepts the invitation, and obeys the command. He "flees for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him" in Christ. He comes unto God "through him:" he confesses his sins, he implores mercy. His earnest prayer is, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" no less than, "Blot out all mine iniquities!" He "commits" his soul into the hands of his Saviour: he places all his trust in him. He perseveres in this course. He finds "rest" and peace to his soul: he receives the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit: and becomes "in Christ a new creature;" he "walks in newness of life:" he "ceases to do evil, he learns to do well." "The life which he lives in the flesh, he lives by the faith of the Son of God:" and the change actually and evidently produced, by divine grace, in his dispositions and conduct, proves, that he deceives not himself with unfounded hopes when he concludes, that he "has passed from death unto life,"\* and cherishes the humble confidence, that his "end shall be

\* 1 John v. 24.

“everlasting life”—“the gift of God, through  
“Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Such is the nature, and such as this the usual commencement, of that communion of the soul with its Saviour which constitutes ‘the inward ‘part, or thing signified’ in the Lord’s Supper: the ‘eating of the body, and drinking of the ‘blood of Christ,’ whereby the soul is ‘strengthened and refreshed as our bodies are by bread ‘and wine.’ It is continued by the Christian, the same in substance, during all the remainder of his life. He daily needs, and, in the use of the various ‘means of grace,’ he daily seeks, and daily finds, pardon and peace, wisdom, and strength, and consolation. But among these ‘means of ‘grace,’ the Lord’s supper itself holds a most distinguished place, being at once a *means*, a *representation*, and a most solemn *pledge* and assurance, given by Christ himself almost in his dying moments, of such communion with him, and of the certainty of our receiving those blessings which we thus seek from him.—I earnestly exhort you all, most seriously to enquire whether you are, by your own experience, acquainted with the practice of thus “coming unto “Christ;” and whether you make your approaches to the Lord’s table for the purpose of thus, ‘after ‘a heavenly and spiritual manner,’ eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

In the progress of this discourse, our attention has, naturally, been much drawn to the great doc-

trine of the *atonement*: and I will here once more advert to it. Hardly any doctrine, I must confess, appears to me to stand upon firmer grounds of scriptural authority: none to be more uniformly interwoven with the whole system of revealed truth: nor any to be suited to raise in the mind more devout sentiments of reverence and holy awe, of admiration, gratitude, and humble confidence, towards God. I know, the numberless objections which are urged against it; the scorn and virulence with which it is often treated. But these objections appear to me *completely irrelevant*. They apply only to a distortion, a misrepresentation of the doctrine. Only let the atonement of Christ be considered in its true light, not as first *disposing* the eternal Father to shew mercy to us, but as, what it is in fact, the great fruit of his love and compassion for us,\* and only designed (as far as we are acquainted with its design) to shew his hatred of sin, and to assert the honour of his law and government, while he should exercise unbounded mercy towards a world of sinners—designed to render the exercise of mercy consistent with the display of justice: † only let the doctrine be thus considered, and every notion of its presenting an *unamiable* view of the divine character must vanish from the rightly-disposed mind, the mind to which the honour of the divine perfections is dear as it ought to be, and to which sin appears in its true colours, deserving every stigma that can be fixed upon it. Only,

\* John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9, 10. † Rom. iii. 25, 26.

again, let the blessed Redeemer be considered as “suffering for our sins” in such a sense, as to open the way for the pardon of every penitent sinner, consistently with the honour of the divine character; not in such a sense, as to rescue one impenitent transgressor from the just penalty of his offences: and all idea of men being, by this means emboldened to continue in sin, must in like manner vanish, or rather give way to the conviction, that, while this doctrine holds forth the most inviting encouragement to sinners “to forsake their evil ways and live,” it displays, more awfully than even the torments of hell itself, the intrinsic evil of sin, and the vengeance which Almighty God will take of every impenitent sinner.

With regard to the connexion between this doctrine and the Lord’s supper, or eucharist, I adopt the words of the excellent Doddridge: ‘I apprehend this ordinance of the eucharist to have so plain a reference to the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, and to do so solemn an honour to that fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that I cannot but believe, that, while this sacred institution continues in the church, (as it will undoubtedly do to the end of the world,) it will be impossible to root that doctrine out of the minds of plain humble Christians, by all the little artifices of such forced and unnatural criticisms, as those are by which it has been attacked. Unprejudiced and honest simplicity will always see the analogy this ordinance has, to “eating the flesh” of the Son

‘ of God, “ and drinking his blood ;” and will  
 ‘ be taught by it to feed on him, as “ the lamb”  
 ‘ that was slain by the gracious appointment of  
 ‘ God, “ to take away the sins of the world.”  
 ‘ The enemies of this heart-reviving truth might  
 ‘ as well hope to pierce through a coat of mail  
 ‘ with a straw, as to reach such a truth, defended  
 ‘ by such an ordinance as this, by any of their  
 ‘ trifling sophistries. \*

I conclude then, with pressing upon all serious Christians the *duty* of constantly attending upon that solemn and delightful ordinance which we have been considering.---How just a subject of lamentation is it, that such an ordinance, instituted under such affecting circumstances, and for such gracious purposes, should be so commonly neglected as it is! That multitudes, ‘ professing and calling themselves Christians,’ should be content to live almost all their days, without observing the express, the dying command of Him whom they call their Saviour! without ever coming to receive the gracious pledges of his love, or to apply for the ‘ inestimable benefits’ of his death and passion! Are they conscious that they have no true faith in, no love towards, the Redeemer? And does conscience compel them to avow this awful truth to the world?-- How strangely does it evince *custom* to be the great director of human actions, that, while

\* Family Expositor, on Matt. xxvi. 28.

almost all young persons are eager for confirmation, and their friends anxious to have them confirmed, so few, comparatively, have any inclination to partake of the Lord's supper; though the same professions, and the same vows, for substance, are made, and the same blessings sought; in the one ordinance as in the other!

Far be it from me to recommend an indiscriminate attendance at the Lord's table. Far be it from me to exhort all persons who have been confirmed to attend, without further inquiry. No: but I condemn the *profane indifference* with which the great mass of people absent themselves: their unconcern, their insensibility, their satisfaction with themselves, while they are living in the neglect of an acknowledged Christian duty, and the contempt of an invaluable Christian privilege. What I urge is, not that any should presume to come without preparation, but that *none should dare to live unprepared*; and that none, who possess the requisite preparation of a truly Christian state of mind, should ever, without a weighty reason, omit the performance of so delightful and beneficial a service.—What I say is, in the language of St. Paul, “*Examine yourselves, and so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*”

On the proper subjects of self-examination, and the state of mind which constitutes the proper *preparation* for this sacrament, I purpose to speak more at large in another discourse.



In the mean time, let me press the subject upon the serious attention of *you*, in particular, my dear young friends, who have been lately confirmed. Fain would we indulge the hope, that many of your number will henceforth enrol themselves among our communicants, not as mere receivers of the consecrated bread and wine,\* but as sincere and devout believers in Christ, 'feeding upon him in their hearts, by faith, with 'thanksgiving.'

\* Church Articles, xxix.

## SERMON VI.



ON THE LORD'S SUPPER—BENEFITS SOUGHT—PROFESSIONS MADE—DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED.



1 CORINTHIANS, XI. 28.

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

“**P**RIDE,” the wise king of Israel admonishes us, “goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall:” and the history of mankind bears ample testimony to the truth of the observation. When men, and particularly when men “seeming to be religious,” grow “wise in their own conceits,” there are no errors or follies too gross for them to run into. Of this the church of Corinth afforded a mournful example.

Soon after St. Paul had left that Christian society, (which had been formed by his ministry,) certain false teachers insinuated themselves into it, who undermined the Apostle’s authority, flattered the pride of the people, and professed to advance them in the knowledge of their Chris-

tian privileges, and of the sublime mysteries of the gospel, much beyond what he had done. The consequence was, that, while they were led to conceive of themselves as “full,” as “rich,” as “reigning as kings without” the Apostle,\* they were betrayed into errors of judgment and vices of practice, which would have disgraced those, who had been taught only “the first principles of the oracles of God,”

Let us “not be high-minded, but fear.” Let us “walk humbly with our God;” and, while we think we stand, “take heed lest we fall,”

Amongst the disorders of which the Corinthian church had been guilty, one was, such a profanation of the holy sacrament of the Lord’s supper, as we should have thought incredible, if we had not had the authority of the Apostle, for ascribing it to them. “In eating,” he says, “every one of you taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken!”

In opposition to so impious an abuse, he delivers a very simple, but affecting account, (which we have already considered,) of the institution of this sacrament: and then, in the text and some adjoining verses, urges the necessity of self-examination, and of the utmost seriousness, humility, and devoutness, in our attendance upon it.

Having, in my last discourse, spoken of the nature and intention of the Lord’s supper, I shall

\* Chap. iv. 8—10.

proceed, in the present, to speak more particularly of the benefits sought, the professions made, and the dispositions required, in it.

II. The *Benefits* sought in the Lord's supper are indeed implied in 'the inward and spiritual 'grace' of the ordinance: and have been, already, in some degree, considered by us in speaking on that subject. They are, however, mentioned separately in our catechism,\* and we may here advantageously introduce a more distinct, though brief, notice of them.

The Lord's supper, saith the catechism, was 'ordained for the continual remembrance of the 'sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the 'benefits which we receive *thereby*.' And accordingly, in the prayer immediately after communicating, we implore, 'that we, and all God's 'whole church, may obtain *remission of our sins*, 'and all other *benefits of Christ's passion*.'

It is, then, for the 'innumerable benefits, 'which, by his precious blood shedding, Christ 'hath obtained' for all those who truly believe in him, that we apply in this sacrament.

They are such as these: the forgiveness of all our sins—that great 'preliminary blessing' to fallen man; reconciliation and peace with God; "the adoption of children" unto him; the gift of his Holy Spirit to "dwell in us," as our teacher, comforter, and sanctifier; as "the Spirit of adoption," inspiring us with filial confidence,

\* 10th and 11th Questions on the Sacraments.

and all the dispositions of dutiful children towards our heavenly Father, and *thus* “bearing witness with our spirits that we are the “children of God.” Finally, all the inconceivable blessings of “everlasting life:” for “if “we be children, then are we heirs, heirs “of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so “be we suffer with him, that we may be also “glorified together.”\* What astonishing language is this! What blessings are these to be conferred on ‘us miserable sinners, who lay in ‘darkness and the shadow of death,’—that we should be ‘made the children of God, ‘and exalted to everlasting life!’ What other account can we give of them than this, “He “that spared not his own Son, but delivered “him up for us all, how shall he not with him “freely give us all things?” All consideration of the merits, say rather the demerits, of the receivers, must utterly vanish from the mind when such blessings are contemplated. They are worthy of the end they are destined to answer, which is, to glorify “the RICHES OF “GOD’S GRACE;” to reward the “obedience “unto death” of his “only-begotten Son;” and to do honour to the Mediation of him, in whom the Father is “always well pleased.”

These ‘*inestimable* benefits,’ so surely promised in the word of God to every penitent, believing sinner, are in this sacrament ‘visibly ‘signed and sealed,’ yea actually conveyed, to all

\* See Rom. v. and viii.

such characters. It is ‘a *means* whereby we ‘receive the same, and a *pledge* to assure us ‘thereof:’ to engage to us, that, as surely as we eat that bread, and drink of that cup, so surely if we place a true, lively faith in Christ, we shall receive remission of our sins, and obtain everlasting salvation through his name. Herein, therefore, the soul of the believer is ‘strengthened and refreshed:’ his faith, his hope, his love, and all his christian graces are exercised and increased.

III. Such being the blessings sought, let us next consider the *Professions* made, and the *Dispositions* required in this sacrament:—for we may unite these two branches of our subject together.

It is evident that in this, as well as in the other sacrament, we profess our belief of the gospel, and of all its great fundamental truths. But on this consideration we will not further insist.

More particularly, then, he who approaches the Lord’s table, to commemorate his Saviour’s death, and to seek all ‘the benefits of his passion,’ acknowledges himself a miserable sinner, justly exposed to perdition, and having no hope towards God, but through the mediation and atonement of Christ. He professes to “receive” Christ as his Lord and Saviour, in all those characters which he sustains for our benefit.

Consequently, he professes to return unto God,

and yield up himself to the service of God through him, as "no longer his own," but "bought "with a price to glorify God with his body and "spirit which are *His*."

Further: he, who joins in this ordinance of Christian communion and fellowship, professes "to come out from" an evil world and "be "separate;" to unite himself to "the people of "God;" to cast in his lot among them, being ready "to suffer affliction with them" in this life, so that he may be 'numbered with them in glory 'everlasting.'

Finally, he professes to look for the second coming of his Lord; to live in expectation of that great event, and to be making continual preparation for it. "As often as ye eat this "bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the "Lord's death, *until he come*."

What *Dispositions* of mind should characterise him who seeks such benefits, and makes such professions, it will not be difficult to determine.

He who seeks the forgiveness of his sins, must necessarily do it in a spirit of humility and *repentance*.—He who seeks that blessing through 'the sacrifice of the death of Christ,' must have a lively "*faith* in his blood," and trust to his atonement alone to put away his sin, to his intercession as his only recommendation to the favour of God. He must "count all things but "loss for Christ, that he may win Christ, and "be found in him."—He who professes that all

his hopes arise from this source; that his sins are such as justly expose him to the wrath of God and everlasting damnation, and could never have been put away by any means which he himself could have devised or adopted; ought certainly to *renounce*, from his heart, all confidence in his own righteousness, and every attempt to palliate his sins, to excuse his conduct, or to justify himself before God.—He who believes that blessings of infinite value have been procured for him by Christ, and that at the price of his own most precious blood, should certainly come entertaining a deep sense of his obligations, and with a heart overflowing with lively *gratitude*.—He who believes himself to have been involved with his fellow-communicants in one common ruin, and now to be associated with them in one common salvation: redeemed by the same Saviour; sanctified by the same divine Spirit; engaged in the service of the same God; and tending with them to the same heaven; should certainly feel his heart knit to them, and to all his fellow Christians in *love*. He, who hopes for so great forgiveness from God, should certainly be found “from his heart *forgiving*” every man his trespasses against him.

Accordingly these are the dispositions, of the necessity of which our church admonishes us. In answer to the question, ‘What is required of them who come to the Lord’s supper?’ she replies in her catechism: ‘To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former



‘ sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life;  
 ‘ have a lively faith in God’s mercy through  
 ‘ Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his  
 ‘ death; and be in charity with all men.’

And, brethren, it is in this state of mind, in these dispositions, implanted and cherished in our hearts by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that the true *preparation* for receiving the holy communion consists. He, who is habitually exercising such dispositions, and expressing them before God in his prayers, and before men in his actions, is ready, even at the most unexpected opportunity, to approach the Lord’s table with propriety and benefit: though he will find it highly expedient, on all ordinary occasions, to take time, previously, to examine into the state of his soul, to search out his sins that he may exercise explicit repentance of them, and that he may, with fresh zeal and gratitude, renew his acceptance of Christ and his salvation. But vain indeed, is it for the man who is a stranger to all right knowledge of himself, to all just sense of his sins, and of his need of that “great salvation” which the gospel proposes: for the man who is living habitually devoted to the world, destitute of deep repentance, destitute of lively faith in Christ, destitute of real love to God and his service; and who entertains no sincere ‘ purpose of leading a new life,’ nor indeed any conviction of the necessity of so doing:—vain beyond expression is it, for such a man to think of becoming *prepared* for the sacrament,

by a temporary abstinence from some customary indulgences, after which his heart still hankers; and by going through a prescribed course of devotion, in which he takes no pleasure, unless from the prospect of its termination. No: he forgets that God must be worshipped "in spirit and in truth:" that nothing which is a mere force put upon nature, and against which the heart revolts, can be pleasing to *Him*: and that all religious ordinances are valuable only as the means of leading us to serve God habitually, and, if used as *substitutes* for a devout temper, and for unreserved obedience, become abomination in his sight. No: the preparation which such a man wants is, "a new heart and a right spirit." He "must be born again," or he can neither worship God acceptably in this life, nor "see the kingdom of heaven" hereafter.

But I propose to illustrate to you the professions made, and the dispositions required, in the Lord's supper, more at large, from the service provided by our church for the occasion. This I the rather do, first, because it is the service which is in use among us; and therefore it ought to be attended to, and well understood: secondly, because it is so excellent that I cannot convey to you the sentiments which I wish you to entertain, so well as by its words: and, thirdly because you all have this service in your prayer-books, and by reviewing it at home, may refresh your remembrance of what you hear. And this

I earnestly recommend it to you all to do. I cannot give a better direction to any person, who would learn the nature of the Lord's supper, and would properly prepare for it, than that he should *carefully study the Communion Service* of our church, comparing the sentiments and desires of his own heart, with those which are there expressed. It is much indeed to be preferred to almost any of those preparatory formularies which are in use: and some of which, I fear, proceed upon principles even opposite to those of this service.—He whose feelings are in unison with the prayers and professions here put into his mouth, is a proper person to communicate at the Lord's table. He who is a stranger to such desires and purposes, whatever other preparation he may have made, is not an acceptable communicant.

1st, Then, as *Repentance* is so essential, the church leads us up to the altar with confession of sin in our mouths. 'Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins—draw nigh—and make your humble confession to Almighty God.'—And here let it be observed, that we are taught not only to confess, in general, that we have sinned, (such confessions the most impenitent sinners will readily make,) but 'to acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins:' to confess that they 'most justly provoke God's wrath against us:' and to express our sense of them as, in the highest degree, 'grievous unto us.' 'We acknowledge and bewail our mani-

‘ fold sins and wickedness, which we from time  
 ‘ to time most grievously have committed, by  
 ‘ thought, word, and deed, against thy divine  
 ‘ Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and  
 ‘ indignation against us. We do earnestly repent,  
 ‘ and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;  
 ‘ the remembrance of them is grievous unto us,  
 ‘ the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy  
 ‘ upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful  
 ‘ Father; for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ’s  
 ‘ sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that  
 ‘ we may ever here after serve and please thee, in  
 ‘ newness of life.’

2. In the next place, as *Faith* is requisite, she  
 exhorts us to ‘ draw near with faith:’ assures  
 us, in the Absolution, of the mercy of God to  
 ‘ all such as truly turn to him;’ and, to confirm  
 her doctrine, and the faith of all humble and  
 contrite spirits, she recites several most com-  
 fortable promises of God’s word. “ Come unto  
 “ me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I  
 “ will refresh you.—So God loved the world,  
 “ that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end  
 “ that all that believe in him should not perish,  
 “ but have everlasting life.”

3. Further, as it is necessary that we *renounce*  
 all confidence in ourselves, our own virtues, or  
 merits, or righteousness, she teaches us to come  
 solemnly declaring before Almighty God: We do  
 ‘ not presume to come to this thy table, O mer-  
 ‘ ciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness,  
 ‘ but in thy manifold and great mercies. We

‘ are not worthy so much as to gather up the  
 ‘ crumbs under thy table. But thou art the  
 ‘ same Lord, whose property is always to have  
 ‘ mercy.’ And again, after we have communi-  
 cated: ‘ O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy  
 ‘ humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly  
 ‘ goodness, mercifully to accept this our sacrifice  
 ‘ of praise and thanksgiving—And, although we  
 ‘ be unworthy through our manifold sins to offer  
 ‘ unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to  
 ‘ accept this our bounden duty and service, not  
 ‘ weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences,  
 ‘ through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

4thly, As praise and *thanksgiving* are peculiarly proper for the occasion, (which is a joyful as well as a solemn one,) she teaches us to acknowledge this, and to express our gratitude, saying: ‘ It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, ‘ that we should, at all times, and in all places, ‘ give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, ‘ almighty, everlasting God. Therefore, with ‘ angels and archangels, and with all the com- ‘ pany of heaven, we laud and magnify thy ‘ glorious name, evermore praising thee, and ‘ saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, ‘ heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory ‘ be to thee, O Lord most high.’ And, after the communion, “ Glory be to God on high, and in ‘ earth peace, good will towards men. We praise ‘ thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give ‘ thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, ‘ heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.’

5. And, again, as *love* and charity for men are tempers most becoming this service, she teaches us repeatedly to pray for our fellow-worshippers, for our fellow Christians at large, and for all mankind: particularly in the prayer ‘for the whole state of Christ’s church militant ‘here in earth.’

6. Finally, as it is most necessary, that, trusting to the grace of God to enable us, we ‘steadfastly purpose to lead a new life, keeping the ‘commandments of God, and walking from ‘henceforth in his holy ways,’ she leads us, in the concluding prayer, to avow such a purpose; to *devote* ourselves to God’s service; and to seek his grace that we may keep our vows, ‘Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ‘ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; ‘humbly beseeching thee, that all we who are ‘partakers of this holy communion may be fulfilled ‘with thy grace and heavenly benediction!’

Having thus reviewed the benefits sought, the professions made, and the dispositions required in the Lord’s supper, I shall now notice some improper purposes for which many persons receive this sacrament, and some improper reasons for which others abstain from it.

1. It would seem that some persons, from time to time, attend the Lord’s supper, and other religious ordinances, and join in the confessions and prayers there used, as a sort of compensa-

tion for their sins; for the careless, negligent, worldly life which they habitually lead. These persons confess their sins *instead* of forsaking them. They "make Christ the minister of sin:" hoping to be saved by him from the punishment of transgressions, in which they still allow themselves to live. The gross self-delusion implied in such conduct needs hardly to be shewn. It may deserve, however, to be remarked, that more persons are guilty of it, than suspect themselves to be so. In fact, all those persons are guilty of this sin and folly, who quiet their consciences by occasional religious acts, while they are strangers to true repentance and faith, to the love of God, and unreserved obedience to his will.

In like manner many who have lived irreligiously, send for a minister at the approach of death, anxious to receive the sacrament from his hands, putting, it is to be feared, the 'outward and visible sign,' in the place of the 'inward and spiritual grace,' and of that "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," without which it can profit them nothing. Thus does "their very table become a snare to them, and that which should have been for their health an occasion of falling."

2. But where the Lord's supper is not so grossly abused, yet to make it one means among many of supporting a self-righteous confidence is a fatal perversion of it. The hopes of many persons rest upon such a basis as this: They lead a better life

than many around them: they flatter themselves that they 'do nobody any harm:' they give alms: they pray: they attend the church: they receive the sacrament: they trust they are, at least, comparatively 'innocent' characters: on these grounds they expect eternal life. But these persons have never yet attained any just knowledge of themselves: they understand not the strictness of the law of God; and they totally misapprehend the gospel of Christ, and the way of salvation. Indeed they feel no need of *salvation* for themselves. They are "the whole" who have "no need of the physician." They are in their own esteem "rich and increased with goods:" and "know not that they are," indeed, "poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked." With what sincerity can they use the humble confessions which the church puts into their mouths?—'We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness,' which 'most justly provoke thy wrath and indignation against us!' 'The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us: the burden of them is intolerable!' With what truth can they declare, that 'they do not presume to come' before God, 'trusting in their own righteousness?' No: were they really the characters they suppose themselves to be, Christ need never have died for them. With their present sentiments, their communicating at the Lord's table is inconsistent and improper: it is an addition to the number of their sins, not of their righteous deeds.

3. There is another case to which it may be



proper to advert. The reception of this sacrament, according to the rites of the church of England, is the *test* required in order to our admission to various offices: but the *test* of what? Of our attachment at once to the Christian faith, and to the civil and religious establishments of our country. And, to *testify* such an attachment, by communicating at the Lord's table, with a proper state of mind in other respects, cannot be wrong: but to use this sacrament as a *mere* qualification for office, "not discerning the Lord's body"—not regarding the solemn transactions commemorated, nor possessing the repentance, the faith, the piety, professed, in it,—is an impious profanation, and heinous wickedness. It comes nearer, probably, to the criminal conduct of the Corinthians, than any thing else that exists amongst us.

But as many persons come to the Lord's supper for wrong purposes, so others absent themselves from it for improper reasons.

1. Some, who would gladly communicate, think themselves 'unworthy.'—Nothing can be a more insufficient reason for abstaining, than this. We read, indeed, of 'eating and drinking *worthily* or *unworthily*:' but this means no more than *suitably* or *unsuitably*; with reverence, penitence, faith, love, or the contrary. This sacrament itself, is the strongest possible confession of utter unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, on the part of those who receive it. Like the salvation of which it is means and a pledge, it is

calculated entirely for the relief and benefit of those, who feel themselves to be unworthy and miserable sinners. If any man is not of this character, he *needs* it not. If any man imagine himself possessed of merit before God, he is, in the worst sense of the word, an *unworthy* communicant: he is not only a sinner, but an impenitent sinner: he who most deeply feels his own unworthiness, and most earnestly desires the blessings of Christ's salvation, will be the most acceptable communicant.

2. Some persons fear, lest by a well-meant, but unsuitable, approach to the Lord's table, they should 'eat and drink their own damnation,' and be guilty of an 'unpardonable sin.' Persons of this humble, timid character certainly will not commit such a sin. But their fears are raised by the misapprehension of a *word*.—No doubt any *unrepented* sin will expose us to *damnation*: but not an improper reception of the sacrament more than other sins. But let such persons carefully observe the passage in which the alarming term occurs. It is that from which our text is taken. They will find, that even the Corinthians, who so impiously profaned this ordinance, and of whom the expression is used, are declared, so far from having their eternal damnation sealed, to be "chastened of the Lord," and visited with temporal judgments, *to prevent* their being "condemned with the world." We may also remark, that the word rendered *damnation*, in the twenty-ninth verse, is radically the same with that rendered

*judged* in the thirty-second: while another, in the same verse, translated *condemned*, is a compound of it, bearing a stronger meaning.

3. Others again fear, lest, by falling into sin, after receiving the Lord's supper, they should be involved in hopeless ruin. Let them watch and pray that they may be preserved from sin: but let them chase away their groundless apprehensions, by reflecting, that, though the dreadful fall of Peter almost immediately succeeded his reception of the Lord's supper, from the hands of Christ himself, yet he repented, and was restored both as a Christian, and an apostle.

4. Some sincere Christians omit their accustomed attendance, from time to time, because they are not in what they term 'a good frame of mind.' Do they then come to the sacrament, because they *have* grace, or that they *may receive* grace? because they *are* what they should be, or that they may be *made* so? Will they shun the physician because they are diseased? Let them draw near with faith, that they may "obtain mercy, and find grace to help them in the time of need."

5. Finally, some persons decline to communicate because they are unwilling to bind themselves to a strict and holy life, a life of true religion; which they do not intend, at present, to lead! This is infinitely the worst case, and, though, alas! a very *sufficient* reason, yet infinitely the *worst* reason, of all. But, let me ask these persons, Can they suppose that, by not

obeying *this* command of Christ, they in any degree release themselves from their obligation to obey all his other commands? that, by *this* instance of disobedience, they at all excuse their disobedience in other particulars?

Further, it seems that they only decline, *for the present*, to bind themselves to a holy life. They *dare* not but purpose and promise sometime to lead such a life. But how often, do they suppose, are such purposes and promises of obedience, to be rendered at a future time, fulfilled? They are nothing more than the impositions by which a wicked heart attempts to silence an accusing conscience. They have little other effect than to smooth the down-hill "road which leadeth to destruction." "To-day, if *ever* ye will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath, that ye shall never enter into his rest!"

Let then sincere Christians consider their dying Saviour's command, "This do in remembrance of me."

Let all who would come to the Lord's table, use "self-examination." Let them pray for repentance and faith, and to be *taught* and *enabled* to come aright. Let them study our Communion service, as well as the sacred Scriptures: and, if they feel the need of further assistance, let them have recourse to some truly 'discreet and learned minister of God's word,' who will find greater pleasure in nothing, than in leading

forward the humble and conscientious mind, by the divine blessing, to establishment, "peace, and joy in believing."

But let those who still turn their backs upon the table of the Lord, conscious that they are unprepared for it, remember, that, if they are unprepared for the Lord's supper, they are unprepared to "eat bread in the kingdom of God"—unprepared for heaven—unprepared for death. Alas! my friends, by your own confession, *you* are unconverted, impenitent, unpardoned. "The wrath of God abideth on you!" But oh! will you continue in so sad a state? The mercy of God invites you to deliverance. The dying Saviour stretches forth the arms of his grace to welcome you, if you will come unto him. He cries, "Turn ye at my reproof, I will pour out my Spirit unto you!" Oh hear ye his voice and live! Remember his dying love, and be moved by it to repentance;—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: call ye upon him while he is near! Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon!"

# SERMON VII.

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## ON THE SABBATH.

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ST. MARK, II. 27.

*And he said unto them, the Sabbath was made for man.*

**O**NE important work which our blessed Saviour had to perform, in his capacity of “*a teacher sent from God,*” was, to restore to the divine law that extensive meaning, and that paramount authority, of which it had been despoiled by the manners of a corrupt age, and the doctrines of corrupt interpreters.

In doing this, it was necessary to rescue it from the mass of pernicious or frivolous “*commandments of men,*” \* with which it had been blended and overwhelmed, by the punctilious diligence of the Jewish elders, scribes, and pharisees.

\* Matt. xv. 1—9. Take an example of their frivolous reasonings concerning the sabbath. ‘It is not lawful to *sow*, and therefore neither is it, to walk in ground *newly sown*: because the seed may stick to the feet, and so be *carried from place to place*, which is in some sort *sowing*.’ *Beausobre’s Introduction.*

By these, amongst other evils which they produced, the wise and beneficent institution of the SABBATH had been transformed into a burdensome observance, "grievous to be borne."

The traces of this fact are often apparent in the histories of our Lord. His disciples following him through the corn-fields, rub out some grains with their hands, to satisfy the cravings of hunger: the pharisees exclaim, "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day!"\* not in taking the corn, (for this the law expressly allowed to one passing through a field,†) but in the labour of gathering and rubbing it. Nay, did Jesus himself, but by a word spoken, on that day miraculously invigorate a withered hand, restore a decrepit woman, or give sight to a man who had been born blind, immediately he was reproached and persecuted as a sabbath-breaker.‡

Such a censorious scrupulosity about trifles is but too sure an indication of hypocrisy, and can often combine with the grossest wickedness. These men, whose strictness was so much offended by our Lord's exertions in "saving men's lives," on the day of sacred rest, hesitated not, at the very same moment, to be plotting his destruction.§

Their perverse inconsistency appeared, likewise, in numberless inferior instances. As our

\* Matt xii. 1—8.

† Deut. xxiii. 25.

‡ Matt. xii. 10—13. Luke xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—6. John v. 15, 16. vii. 21—23. ix. 14—16.

§ Matt. xii. 14. John v. 16.

Lord reminded them, none of them would scruple "to loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and "to lead him away to watering," or to raise a poor sheep out of a pit, on the sabbath-day. How much more then was it fit, that the sons of men should be "loosed from their infirmities" on that day?

It is highly requisite that we bear in mind this overstrained scrupulosity of the pharisees and their adherents, when we read the remarks which our Lord addressed to them relative to the present subject. It has very commonly been taken for granted, that, in replying to their cavils, he took occasion to intimate a design of relaxing the divine law of the sabbath, under the Christian dispensation. But this must appear very improbable, in itself, when we reflect on the important nature of the institution, and especially when we consider what anxious care our Lord manifested, in precluding the idea that he came to destroy even "one jot or one tittle" of the law.\* And how little ground his replies actually furnish for the supposition, must become evident, if we carefully consider their nature, and the circumstances under which they were delivered. The conduct, which he undertook to vindicate, was that of persons placed under the Jewish, not under the Christian, dispensation. He speaks of what was then, and at all times, lawful; not of

\* Matt. v. 17, 18, 19. That the moral law, as contained in the ten Commandments, was intended, appears clear from the examples in the following verses, 21, 27, &c.



what was to be so only at a future period. And his appeal is made expressly to the Jewish law,—to the labours of the priests in the temple, to the case of circumcision on the sabbath-day, and to the history of David,—not to some new law afterwards to be promulgated.

No: what he would correct is, not any excessive strictness of the divine law itself, but the self-righteous follies of men, who preferred insignificant ceremonies before moral duties; who sacrificed the spirit to the letter of divine commands; who reversed the maxims of scripture: and made “the law of God of none effect through their traditions.”\* He reminded them, therefore, that God would have “mercy rather than sacrifice:” that works of necessity, of *real* necessity, and of charity, were perfectly allowable, as well as works of piety, on the holy day. In short, he admonished them, “*The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:*” it was appointed to advance all

\* As “Lord of the Sabbath,” ‘I. He rectified the superstitious abuse of the institution, ‘and reduced it to the original standard.—He reformed the traditionary corruptions of many of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation. But of all others most signally, remarkably, and constantly, by words and by deeds, at the hazard of his life, he reformed the abuse of the fourth commandment: which he never would have done, had the sabbath been an ordinance that was to die in a little time, with the Jewish dispensation. On the contrary, this demonstrates, that he regarded the just sanctification of the sabbath as of perpetual obligation, and as of very great importance in religion.—II. He removed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week.’  
Dr. John Taylor.

his best interests; not to engage and engross him in an unmeaning, unprofitable, or even injurious, service.

In interpreting this large and liberal principle of our Lord's, let us, however, be careful not ungratefully to abuse it. Let us not suppose it to authorize our employing the sacred hours in whatever manner a perverse and wayward inclination may dictate, or even as a petty temporal interest may seem to require. No: but let us ever remember, that man is an immortal and accountable being, and that nothing can really be his interest, which obstructs his preparation for heavenly bliss.

It is not my intention to enter, at all at large, into the question concerning the perpetual and universal obligation of the sabbath, as founded on express divine appointment. I trust the institution is still generally acknowledged to possess this authority. Indeed, the very writer\* who, while he himself maintains the observation of the day to be a duty '*binding upon the conscience* of every individual, of a country in which a weekly sabbath is established,' has, I fear, done much, to unsettle the minds of others upon the subject,—expressly acknowledges, that, if the command, in the second chapter of Genesis, (verses 2. and 3,) '*was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species*

\* Dr. Paley.

‘ alike; and continues, unless repealed by some  
 ‘ subsequent revelation, binding upon all who  
 ‘ come to the knowledge of it.’

On the ground of this concession, I feel convinced, every advocate for the divine authority of the Sabbath may boldly take his stand. For could it ever enter into the mind of any man of plain sense, that when, after reading of the works performed on each of the six days of creation, in their order, he went on to read, “ And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made: and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,\* because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made:”—could any intelligent and unprejudiced reader of this narrative, I ask, ever suppose it to be meant, that the sanctification of the seventh day did not take place till five-and-twenty hundred years afterwards, when the law

\* ‘ *Sanctified it*: that is, he set it apart for holy purposes; for such is the meaning of the word *sanctified* in the old testament, when applied to inanimate things;’ and ‘ in no other sense can it be understood with relation to the seventh day, without forsaking the scriptural meaning of the term, and falling into absurdity.’ *Christian Observer*.—I gladly embrace the opportunity of directing the reader’s attention to four very valuable papers, on the subject of the sabbath, which appeared in that highly respectable publication, for June, July, August, and September, 1802, pp. 351, 417, 489, 559. The last of them has a particular claim to the study of every person who has read *Dr. Paley’s* chapters on Sabbatical Institutions.—The name of the venerable writer of these papers would strongly recommend them to notice, were I at liberty to disclose it.

was delivered at mount Sinai? Yet such is the hypothesis of those who deny that it took place at the creation! \*

Still less could this be believed, when evident traces are discovered of the division of time into terms of seven days, at the period of the deluge, and on other occasions prior, by several hundreds of years, to the giving of the law: † and when, in particular, the law of the sabbath is found to have existed among the Israelites, and to have been observed by them in the wilderness, some time before their arrival at Sinai. ‡

\* The supposition that Moses, in Gen. ii. 2, 3, speaks by anticipation, is a fiction without any foundation in the text. *Dr. Taylor.*

† Gen. vii. 4. 10. viii. 6—12. xxix. 27, 28. i. 10.—  
‘This septenary division of time has been, from the earliest ages, uniformly observed over all the eastern world. The Israelites, Assyrians, Egyptians, Indians, Arabians, and Persians, have always made use of a week, consisting of seven days. Many vain attempts have been made to account for this uniformity; but a practice so general and prevalent could never have taken place, had not the septenary distribution of time been instituted from the beginning, and handed down by tradition.’ Homer, Hesiod, and Linus, among the Greeks, all allude to somewhat sacred as characterising the seventh day. ‘The knowledge of the transactions at the creation, though much perverted, was never entirely lost’ among the heathen. *Encycl. Britannica.*

‡ Exod. xvi. 5, 22—30. ‘The incidental manner,’ in which the Sabbath is here mentioned, ‘is a convincing proof that the Israelites were no strangers to the institution: for had it been a new one, it must have been enjoined in a positive and particular manner, and the nature of it must have been laid open and explained, otherwise the term would have conveyed no meaning.’ *Encycl. Britannica.*

‘Note—The restoring and ascertaining the sabbath was the first point of religion that was settled after the chil-

The appointment of the sabbath, then, from the beginning of the world, being established, no serious reader can fail to be struck with the immense importance given to this institution throughout the scriptures. It holds a most prominent place, and is enforced with peculiar energy, among the ten commandments of the moral law, engraven by the finger of God on the two tables. Throughout the writings of Moses and the Jewish prophets, no precept is more frequently brought forward, or more earnestly enforced; with their observation of none is the welfare of the people of Israel, as well as the blessing of God upon individuals, represented as more inseparably connected.\*

‘dren of Israel came out of Egypt, as being of the greatest moment; and this in relation to the original institution, ‘for the law at mount Sinai was not then given.’ *Dr. Taylor.*

\* It may not be useless, perhaps, to subjoin a reference to the principal passages of the old testament relating to the sabbath, from which may be seen the importance given to it. Gen. ii. 2, 3, and Exod. xvi. 5, 22—30, above referred to.

Exod. xx. 8—11, “Remember the sabbath-day to keep it “holy:” &c.—the fourth commandment,—Repeated Deut. v. 12—15. with another reason for the observation of it, appropriate to the Israelites.

—xxiii. 12, and xxxiv. 21. “Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day shalt thou rest, *that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thine handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed:*” even “in earing time and “in harvest shalt thou rest.”

—xxxv. 14—18. xxxv. 2. “The seventh day is the sabbath, “holy to the Lord,” “every one that defileth it shall surely “be put to death.” “It is a sign between me and the “children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord “made heaven and earth, &c.”

Lev. xix. 3, 30. “Ye shall fear every man his mother “and his father, and keep my sabbaths.”

And how pure and spiritual, how every way worthy of the Gospel itself, are the illustrations which we may derive from these scriptures, of the duty of "hallowing the sabbath," and of the

Lev. xxiii. 3. "A holy convocation" that day.

Num. xv. 32—36. The sabbath-breaker put to death.

—xxviii. 9. 10. Peculiar sacrifices appointed for the day.

Nehem. ix. 13, 14. "Thou camest down upon mount Sinai—and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath."

—x. 31. xiii. 15—23. His zeal against the profanation of the sabbath—"There dwelt men of Tyre therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them,—Did not our fathers thus, and did not God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." He commanded the gates to be shut, and threatened those who still lodged about them with merchandise.

Ps. xcii. intitled, "A Psalm or Song for the sabbath-day."

Is. lvi. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, "Blessed is the man—that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it." "Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, &c. to them will I give in my house—a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, &c. Also the sons of the stranger—every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it; &c. even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer." &c.

—lviii. 13, 14, above quoted.

Jer. xvii. 19—27. A very striking passage, ascribing God's vengeance upon the Jews mainly to their neglect and violation of the sabbath, (as the inlet of all other crimes,) and promising preservation and prosperity to them in case they would duly observe it.

Ezek. xx. 12—14. In like manner lays great stress upon it.

—xxii. 8, 26. xxiii. 33. "Thou hast profaned my sabbath," &c.

Amos viii. 5. "When will—the sabbath—be gone, that we may set forth wheat?" (The demand of the wicked.)

The observation of the day by our Lord, and those with whom he associated, is obvious in the Gospels.

temper with which it should be performed! Take for an example the following passage of Isaiah: (ch. lviii.) “ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call *the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will—feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.*” \* As we have received no new instructions upon the subject from the gospel, so neither are we left in want of any.

Under the new testament, indeed, we are released from the prescriptions of the Jewish ceremonial law, and from the regulations of their civil code, which punished the profanation of the sabbath with death. A change has also been introduced of the day, from the seventh to the first; in honour, no doubt, of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead, and of the blessings, superior to those of creation, sealed to us by that event. But this change is merely circumstantial: it affects not the substance of the institution, which consists in the more especial consecration of the seventh part of our time to God.†

\* See also Psalm xcii, entitled, ‘ A Psalm or Song for the sabbath-day.’

† ‘ The last day of the week, was, undoubtedly, appropriated by the fourth Commandment; but it is remarkable, that the words may be applied to any of the seven,’ *Christian Observer* for 1802, p. 499.

Accordingly we find the apostles, and the primitive Christians of all countries, holding their assemblies for religious worship on the first day of the week, and devoting it to works of piety and charity.\* St. John, in particular, dignifies it with the title of "*the Lord's day*," †—the day dedicated to God our Saviour: and Irenæus,

That the observation of one day of the week, rather than of another, concerned only the circumstances and not the essence of the institution, receives confirmation from the fact, that it is left extremely doubtful whether the day observed by the Jews was calculated from the creation, and not rather from their redemption from Egyptian bondage, or even from some other era. See *Scott* on Exod. xvi. 4, 5.—*Dr. Taylor* remarks, 'The Israelites indeed, during their long continuance and servitude in Egypt, upwards of 200 years, seem to have lost their reckoning of the sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile labour to neglect the observance of it. However it certainly was the appointment of God, that they should begin a new reckoning of the day, and form a new epocha, namely the falling of the manna.' Some have been of opinion, that one day was dropped in this reckoning, and is replaced by the substitution of the first day for the seventh, under the Christian dispensation; and that, consequently, we do now actually observe the seventh day computed from the creation. But no certainty is, I apprehend, either attainable or at all necessary upon these points.

The appropriation of some part of our time to the worship of God is, undoubtedly, of moral and indispensable obligation: the proportion and the exact period must necessarily be of positive institution. But the seventh part is that which it hath pleased the wisdom of God, under all dispensations, to appoint.

\* John xx. 19, 26. Acts xx. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.—This universal observation of the first day of the week, at so early a period, can be accounted for only upon the supposition of the apostles, and first preachers of the gospel, having prescribed or introduced it wherever they went.

† Rev. i. 10. [It admits not, I conceive, of a doubt what day he means.



one of the earliest and most venerable of the Fathers still applies to it the original appellation of the sabbath, and, in forcible language, describes the manner in which it was observed by the primitive Christians. ‘ Each of us,’ saith he, ‘ spends the sabbath in a spiritual manner, meditating on the law of God with delight, and contemplating his workmanship with admiration.\*

But the principal view which I would take of the sabbath, in this discourse, and that to which the text more especially directs our attention, regards the benevolence and utility of the institution,—*its importance to mankind*. “ The Sabbath,” we are ready to imagine, “ was made” for God, for his service and glory. And this is true: but it is not the whole truth. It was made, not less, “ for man,” for his comfort and benefit.

Let me call your attention to the great benefits which it is calculated to produce.

First, as *a day of rest*. “ Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger

\* Unusquisque nostrum sabbatizat spiritualiter, meditatione legis gaudens, opificium Dei admirans.—Irenæus was instructed by Polycarp, the disciple of St. John.

“ that is within thy gates ; that thy man-servant,  
 “ and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.”  
 —Even in this view, though but a subordinate  
 one, the sabbath is a most merciful institution.  
 Without some such interruption of their toil,  
 without some such opportunity of reposing in  
 the bosom of their families, there to repair their  
 broken strength, to recruit their exhausted spi-  
 rits, and to cherish some of the best affections of  
 our nature, the sympathies of domestic life, the  
 labouring classes would pass their days in one  
 unvaried scene of abject drudgery: \* their spirit  
 would be lost, and they would be prepared to  
 receive again, from any, or from every hand, the  
 yoke of bondage.

Men of business, too, would be debased in mind,  
 and wholly swallowed up in ‘ low-thoughted  
 ‘ cares.’

And the Sabbath is infinitely preferable to  
 any other of those holidays, which have been  
 devised to prevent such effects. By constantly  
 recurring, it ‘ relieves the six days’ labour with  
 ‘ the prospect of a day of rest always ap-  
 ‘ proaching.’ Other holidays coming seldom and  
 irregularly, come ‘ unprovided with any duty or

\* Hail, SABBATH ! thee I hail, the poor man’s day :

On other days, the man of toil is doomed  
 To eat his joyless bread, lonely, the ground  
 Both seat and board, screened from the winter’s cold,  
 And summer’s heat, by neighbouring hedge or tree ;  
 But on this day, embosomed in his home,  
 He shares the frugal meal with those he loves ;  
 With those he loves he shares the heart-felt joy  
 Of giving thanks to God——. *Grahame’s ‘ Sab bath.’*

‘ employment; and the manner of spending them  
 ‘ being regulated by no public decency or estab-  
 ‘ lished usage, they are commonly consumed in  
 ‘ rude, if not criminal, pastimes; in stupid sloth,  
 ‘ or brutish intemperance.’\* But the sabbath,  
 while it releases from fatiguing labour, and op-  
 pressive care, leaves not the mind unoccupied:  
 it brings with it its proper employments, every  
 way suited to benefit and bless the well-disposed  
 spirit, and to restore it, refreshed and invigorated,  
 not relaxed and unsettled, to the duties of the  
 succeeding week.

The Sabbath should ever be, in an especial  
 manner, dear to the poor, the laborious, and the  
 busy. Nor should such persons ever imagine, that  
 it obstructs their interest. If, indeed, one man  
 should labour, while his neighbours rested, he  
 might earn another day’s wages: but, if the  
 sabbath were abolished, and all worked, the con-  
 sequence would be, that, there being the same  
 work to be done, and more time to do it in, labour  
 would become cheaper, and for seven days’ work  
 no more than the present six days’ wages could  
 be paid.†

\* Paley.

† ‘ Nor is there any thing lost to the community by the  
 ‘ intermission of public industry one day in the week. For,  
 ‘ in countries tolerably advanced in population and the  
 ‘ arts of civil life, there is always enough of human labour,  
 ‘ and to spare. The difficulty is not so much to procure  
 ‘ as to employ it. The addition of the seventh day’s  
 ‘ labour to that of the other six would have no other effect  
 ‘ than to reduce the price. The labourer himself, who  
 ‘ deserved and suffered most by the change, would gain  
 ‘ nothing.—Paley.

But, secondly, the sabbath is supremely valuable, as *a day of moral and spiritual improvement*.

The great mass of mankind are, necessarily, so much occupied with the business of the world; that, even if desirous of doing it, they can find, during the six days of the week, but little opportunity, in proportion to the magnitude of the object, for sober thought, and serious reflection; for acquiring, what it is of so much importance that all should possess, the knowledge of themselves, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of their duty.

But the sabbath comes in to their relief. On that day, at least, undisturbed by the fear that they may be neglecting any duties which have a more immediate claim to their attention, they may suspend their worldly occupations, banish their worldly cares, and apply their minds to what concerns them as rational and immortal creatures.

And that they should do this, is, in all views, of the highest importance.

It is important to society.—A people sunk in ignorance, swallowed up in the pursuit of private interest, insensible of moral obligation, uninformed in their duty, unacquainted with whatever has a tendency to humanize, and purify, and elevate the mind, can never be expected to prove other than a vicious and untractable people; a people not to be trusted; fickle, headstrong, and ungovernable but by the iron hand of force.

It is impossible to express, how much society owes to the Bible, (hated and despised although it be by modern pretenders to wisdom,) for the light and knowledge, suited to the capacity and the situation of every man, which it has so widely diffused among all ranks of the community.\* But this could not have been effected, without the aid of those opportunities which the sabbath affords. And therefore, observes the eminent writer before alluded to, ‘Whoever considers how much sabbatical institutions conduce—to the happiness and civilization of the labouring classes of mankind, and reflects how great a majority of the human species these classes compose,—will perceive it to be every man’s duty to uphold the observance of Sunday, when once established.’†

But it would be very unworthy in one, speaking from this place, and bearing the office of a Christian minister, to rest the importance of the sabbath, considered as affording the opportunity and the means of moral and spiritual improvement, solely or mainly on any temporal effects, however great and good, which it may produce.

\* In all Protestant and in most Christian countries, the elements of natural religion, and the important parts of the evangelic history, are familiar to the lowest of the people. This—general diffusion of religious knowledge amongst all orders of Christians, will appear a great thing when compared with the intellectual condition of barbarous, and it may be added, of all other than Christian nations.—*Paley*.

† *Idem*.

It is as conducive and as requisite to the *salvation of the soul*, that such improvement is supremely important, and the sabbath superlatively valuable.

On this ground Christianity herself founds her sovereign claim to our regard, and we are faithless advocates of her cause if we are content to found it, ultimately, or any lower ground than this, that she, and she alone, "shews unto us the way of everlasting salvation." "There is no other name given under heaven, whereby we may be saved, than that of Jesus Christ." Only "his blood cleanseth from sin."

But that *our* sins may be washed away by him, it is absolutely necessary that we, personally and individually, "believe in his name," with a penitent and living faith. In order to *our* being saved by him, we must become thoroughly acquainted with ourselves and with the Redeemer; we must "come unto God by him;" "the life which we live in the flesh," we must "live by the faith of the Son of God;" continually deriving from him pardon, peace, and grace,—all our strength, and all our consolation. By the aids and influence of his Spirit, we must fully inform ourselves in the truths and duties of his religion; must heartily embrace it, and give up ourselves to live according to its blessed rules. We must have our hearts drawn off from the present world, and learn "to set our affections upon things above:" we must mortify our sins, and cultivate Christian graces: we must "put off the old man," and "be renewed in the spirit of our minds:" we must become humble,

and meek, and patient, and contented, and disinterested, and kind, and useful, as well as pure and devout : we must, on earth, acquire “ a meetness “ for the inheritance of the saints in light.” And can all this be done without any pains? without any cost of time and labour? without any diligence in using ‘ the means of grace?’ Can it be done, if all our days and all our hours be spent in hurry and bustle? Can we become “ dead to “ the world,” while we live only to the pursuits of the world? \* No: it is impossible. We must take time: we must reflect: we must meditate on “ the word of God:” we must pray: we must examine into the state of our souls. *We must do these things in some degree every day*, if we would maintain any pretensions to “ seeking first “ the kingdom of God and his righteousness;” any, to being true Christians.

But the sabbath, the blessed sabbath, is the especial opportunity which God himself, in compassionate regard to our situation and our wants, has given us for performing these great works, in the most deliberate manner, and with diligence proportioned to their importance. And, duly improved, not only shall it conduce, eminently, to our future salvation, but it shall bring down a present blessing upon our souls, and even upon all our affairs, beyond what he who has not proved

\* ‘ We toil on in the vain pursuits and frivolous occupations of the world, die in our harness, and then expect, ‘ if no gigantic crime stands in the way, to step immediately into the kingdom of heaven: but this is impossible.’ *Soame Jenyns: Internal Evidence.*

its effects can conceive. ‘ I have ever found, by a ‘ strict and diligent observation,’ says the great Lord Chief Justice Hale, ‘ that a due observance ‘ of Sunday has ever had joined to it a blessing ‘ upon the rest of my time; and the week that ‘ has been so begun has been blessed and prosperous to me: and, on the other side, when I ‘ have been negligent of the duties of this day, the ‘ rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments. So that I ‘ could easily make an estimate of my successes ‘ the week following, by the manner of my passing ‘ this day. *And (he adds) I do not write this ‘ lightly, but by long and sound experience.*’

A well-spent sabbath has a natural tendency to moderate our eager desires of the world; to calm the passions, to cheer the spirits, to sweeten the tempers: while it solemnizes the mind to piety, it softens and expands the heart to pure and benevolent affections. And that a peculiar blessing of heaven should attend the observance, and a peculiar curse the profanation, of the sabbath,\* will not even in this age of unbelief, appear

\* It is a fact which challenges serious consideration, that so many, who have paid their lives a forfeit to the injured justice of their country, have, in their last moments, expressly traced back their career of vice to *its commencement in the neglect and profanation of the Sabbath*. The extraordinary number of fatal accidents also, which befall persons engaged in pursuing “ their own pleasure on God’s “ holy day,” will not escape the observation of him who “ wisely considereth of God’s doings.”—Nor ought it at all to weaken the impression of the fact, that certain natural causes may contribute to it, such as the intoxication of the parties, their trusting themselves to vehicles, whether by



the sentiment of weakness and superstition, to any one who has justly appreciated the importance of the institution.

To the last view of its importance we proceed: namely, as it is *necessary to the due celebration of public worship*,—which cannot take place without the general intermission of labour and business, during times previously set apart. And the importance of such worship, I presume, none will call in question. It is expressly appointed by God himself: it is but rendering him “the honour due unto his name:” it forms a noble and animating avowal of that faith, which is dearer to every true Christian than his life: it affords an invaluable opportunity of instruction: \*

land or water, which they are not competent to manage, &c. &c. Natural causes are the order which the God of nature has established, and by which, rather than by direct interpositions, he commonly executes his purposes, whether of mercy or of judgment.

\* The ‘general diffusion of religious knowledge amongst all orders of Christians,’ mentioned in a former note, ‘can fairly, I think, be ascribed to no other cause, than the regular establishment of assemblies for divine worship; in which either portions of scripture are recited and explained, or the principles of Christian erudition are so constantly taught in sermons, incorporated with liturgies, or expressed in extempore prayer, as to imprint, by the very repetition, some memory of these subjects upon the most unqualified and careless hearer.’ *Paley*.

I cannot but remark, that it must appear, to every considerate and impartial observer, a strong recommendation of the services of the established church, that such large portions of the sacred scriptures are interwoven and publicly recited in them. Multitudes owe more to this circumstance, than they will ever, in this world, be aware of.

and it is necessary to the preservation of any remembrance of God, and any regard for religion among men,—‘ the greater part of whom would ‘ exercise *no* religious worship at all without it,”\*

The same eminent writer, whom I have before quoted, has some reflections upon the benefits, even temporal benefits, of public worship, so beautiful that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of reciting them.

‘ So many pathetic affections,’ he says, ‘ are ‘ awakened by every exercise of social devotion, ‘ that most men, I believe, carry away from ‘ public worship a better temper towards the ‘ rest of mankind, than they brought with them. ‘ Sprung from the same extraction, preparing ‘ together for the period of all worldly distinctions, reminded of their mutual infirmities and ‘ common dependency, imploring and receiving ‘ support and supplies from the same great source ‘ of power and bounty; having all one interest ‘ to secure, one Lord to serve, one judgment, ‘ the supreme object of all their hopes and fears, ‘ to look towards; it is hardly possible, in this ‘ position, to behold mankind as strangers, competitors, or enemies: or not to regard them as ‘ children of the same family assembled before ‘ their common parent, and with some portion of ‘ the tenderness which belongs to the most endearing of our domestic relations. It is not to be ‘ expected that any single effect of this kind ‘ should be considerable or lasting: but the fre-

\* *Paley.*

‘quent return of such sentiments, as the presence  
 ‘of a devout congregation naturally suggests, will  
 ‘gradually melt down the ruggedness of many  
 ‘unkind passions, and may,’ with the blessing of  
 God, ‘generate in time a permanent and produc-  
 ‘tive benevolence.’

And again: ‘If ever the poor man holds up  
 ‘his head’—not with the pride of insubordination,  
 but with the elevation of cheerfulness and hope—  
 ‘it is at church: if ever the rich man views him  
 ‘with respect, it is there: and both will be the  
 ‘better, and the public profited, the oftener they  
 ‘meet in a situation in which the consciousness of  
 ‘dignity in the one is tempered and mitigated,  
 ‘and the spirit of the other erected and con-  
 ‘firmed.’

In fine, then, the sabbath is an institution em-  
 phatically “made for man;” fraught with the  
 richest blessings, temporal and eternal, to the  
 human race. The comforts, the liberties, the  
 civilization of the world are influenced by it, more  
 than can be described: the very existence of true  
 religion among men, and, by consequence, the sal-  
 vation of their immortal souls, seems essentially to  
 depend upon it.

The infidel philosophers of modern times, who  
 have with so much subtilty plotted, and with such  
 malignant confidence anticipated, the extirpation  
 of the religion of Jesus from the earth, have duly  
 estimated its importance. The sabbath, they have  
 pronounced, is THE PALLADIUM OF CHRIS-

TIANITY: the two must subsist or perish together. Accordingly they have laboured, by new divisions of time, and the introduction of novel calendars, to obliterate the remembrance of it from the world. But here, as in other instances of their hostility to religion, "He that sitteth in heaven hath laughed them to scorn." By a series of crimes and miseries, worthy to mark the age and nation which had disavowed all faith in God, they have been compelled to proclaim anew to all the world, the old, but by them exploded, truth, that society cannot subsist without religion; to restore a form, though alas! a corrupted form, of Christianity; and, with it, to revive the sabbath.\*

And oh let us never forget of *what* a religion it is, that the sabbath is made, and by its enemies thus acknowledged to be, the impregnable bulwark. It is a religion which brings "glory to God in the highest," and diffuses on earth "peace, goodwill among men." It 'insures respect and obedience to the civil magistrate. It will have a good influence on those who govern, and on those who obey. It will teach the former to rule over men in the fear of God: it will teach the latter to obey not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. Parents, instructed in this religion, will bring up their

\* See Portalis' official speech on presenting the *Concordat* to the Legislative body.—I intend not to represent the destruction of the sabbath as the *only* reason for the adoption of the new calendar in France: that this was *one* great object in view is sufficient for my purpose.

‘ children in the nurture and admonition of the  
 ‘ Lord: and children, thus brought up, will  
 ‘ honour their fathers and their mothers. Ser-  
 ‘ vants will obey their masters, and masters will  
 ‘ give unto their servants that which is just and  
 ‘ equal. Christianity strengthens the bonds of  
 ‘ civil society and social order: it humanizes our  
 ‘ nature, and cherishes all those charities of life  
 ‘ which endear us to each other; and, finally,  
 ‘ it opens to our view the boundless prospects of  
 ‘ eternity.’ It discloses the way of everlasting  
 salvation: it pacifies the conscience, and purifies  
 the heart: it cheers the righteous, it awes the  
 wicked, it supports the afflicted, it exhilarates the  
 dying saint with “ a hope full of immortality.”

From this review, then, of the importance and  
 the proper uses of the sabbath, it will be easy  
 to discern both what practices are inconsistent  
 with the due sanctification of the day, and the  
 high degree of criminality, which attaches to every  
 disrespect shewn to so sacred and invaluable an  
 institution.

And here I must remark, that, in estimating  
 the evil of any profanation of the sabbath, we  
 are not to contemplate the act simply in itself,  
 and merely as it effects the immediate perpetra-  
 tor: we must take into the account all the  
 tendency it may have to destroy in others also a  
 proper reverence for the day; and must allow for  
 the depression which the public regard for it must

actually have suffered, before that particular abuse could be tolerated and esteemed venial.

That all transaction of worldly *business*, not only openly with others, but privately in the retirement of the closet, in writing letters, arranging accounts, or forming plans, is a violation of the sacred rest, need not be said. The express design of the day is, to call off our minds from worldly cares, that they may be occupied, without distraction, in higher pursuits.

*Travelling* on the sabbath is proclaiming our disregard, if not contempt, for the day, through whole districts, to every village that we pass, to every rustic whom we meet. It is contriving to violate every branch of the divine precept at once, as it respects "ourselves, our servants, and our cattle."

That the indolent and trifling *waste* of the sacred hours is an inexcusable profanation of them, must be very obvious. What, do six days afford time little enough, in our esteem, for the pursuit of the world, for making provision for our bodies, and is one day so far too much for the service of God, for the care of our souls, and for preparation for an everlasting existence, that we must pass away its tedious hours in listless inactivity, in vacuity of thought, in sordid sloth, and sensual indulgence, or complain of the sabbath, "What a weariness is it!" Oh deplorable contempt of whatever is most sacred!

'But,' it is asked, 'is it inconsistent with the

‘ duties of the sabbath, cheerfully to entertain ‘ our friends on that day?’—Answer the question to yourselves.—Is your intercourse with your friends, on these occasions, such as promotes the great end for which the sabbath was instituted, the religious improvement of all parties? Need I urge the inquiry any further? What, is your conversation, ye who make the sabbath the leisure-day for the entertainment of your friends, is your conversation with them suited “to “ minister grace unto the hearers?” Is it studiously calculated to cherish devout and holy affections in your minds? to raise you above the present world, to strengthen your faith, and hope, and love of God, and to advance your preparation for eternity? What, do you recur to your Bibles, and unite your prayers to God, on these occasions? Are the hopes, the doctrines, the promises, and the duties of Christianity, the delightful subjects of your communications together? Do you converse upon what you have heard at the church in the morning, and then “ go up again to the house of God in company” in the afternoon?—Go on, then, to enjoy your Sunday parties, “ no man forbidding you,” if they are thus conducted! This is indeed maintaining “ the communion of the saints” here upon earth, and growing up together for the inheritance of the heavenly bliss! One caution only let me just hint to you,—that you remember your domestics. Be careful that what conduces so much to your own edification, as well as pleasure, may not encroach.

upon that relaxation and those religious privileges, which it was designed that they should enjoy on this day: may not prevent the repeated attendance of your servants upon public worship, or interfere with your diligent care in instructing them at home.

But if it be another sort of entertainment of your friends which you intend, you cannot surely mean to ask, whether what keeps your servants from church, occupied and hurried in their common employments; what excludes all family religion, and consigns one half of your sabbath to luxury and animal indulgence, or at best to ordinary conversation; whether this be compatible with the sanctification of the day, you can never seriously mean to ask.

In the same manner would I treat the subject of *Sunday excursions*. If our situation be such as to admit of a retired and contemplative walk, it is a happy circumstance, and a portion of the Sabbath may be profitably employed in taking advantage of it.\* But if we cannot go forth

\* Hail, SABBATH! thee I hail, the poor man's day:  
 The pale mechanic now has leave to breathe  
 The morning air, pure from the city's smoke,  
 While, wandering slowly up the river side,  
 He meditates on HIM, whose power, &c.  
 ——— and while he thus surveys,  
 With elevated joy, each rural charm,  
 He hopes, yet fears presumption in the hope,  
 That Heaven may be one SABBATH without end.

But now his steps a welcome sound recalls:  
 Solemn the knell, from yonder ancient pile,  
 Fills all the air, inspiring joyful awe: &c.

\* \* \* \*



from our doors unless mingled with the crowds of the gay, the thoughtless, and the giddy, what might otherwise well subserve the purposes of the sabbath, becomes a dissipation directly obstructing them.

Again, the *neglect of public worship*, when we can possibly attend upon it, is a violation of the duties of the sabbath. What has already been said of the importance of public worship must sufficiently evince this; and, at the same time, expose the extreme futility of the plea which is sometimes urged for neglecting it, 'that our prayers will be equally acceptable and efficacious at home, and that we already know, or can more advantageously learn from books, the truths which the sermon will inculcate.' Both parts of this position, when all circumstances are taken into the account, may, I am confidently persuaded, be denied. But waving that argument for the present, I would say with the writer to whom I have

————— much I love thy tranquil dales;  
 But most on Sabbath eve when low the sun  
 Slants through the upland copse, 'tis my delight,  
 Wandering, and stopping oft, to hear the song  
 Of kindred praise arise from humble roofs;  
 Or, when the simple service ends, to hear  
 The lifted latch, and mark the grey-haired man,  
 The father and the priest, walk forth alone  
 Into his garden-plot, or little field,  
 To commune with his God in secret prayer:  
 To bless the Lord that in his downward years  
 His children are about him——  
 Nor is the contrast between youth and age  
 To him a painful thought; he joys to think  
 His journey near a close; heaven is his home,  
 More happy far that man, though bowed down, &c. &c.  
*Grahame's Sabbath.*

already repeatedly referred, ‘ They whose qualifi-  
 ‘ tions and habits best supply to themselves all the  
 ‘ effect of public ordinances, will be the last to  
 ‘ prefer this excuse, when they advert to the general  
 ‘ consequence of setting up such an exemption, as  
 ‘ well as when they consider the *turn* which is  
 ‘ sure to be given in the neighbourhood to their  
 ‘ absence from public worship:’ and, surely we  
 might add, when they consider the promises  
 and express injunctions of scripture upon the  
 subject. ‘ You stay from church,’ we will suppose,  
 ‘ to employ the sabbath at home in exercises and  
 ‘ studies suited to its proper business: you next  
 ‘ neighbour stays from church, to spend the seventh  
 ‘ day less religiously than he passed any of the six,  
 ‘ in a sleepy, stupid rest, or at some rendezvous of  
 ‘ drunkenness and debauchery; and yet thinks  
 ‘ that he is only imitating you, because you both  
 ‘ agree in not going to church.’\*

Nor do these arguments apply less forcibly to  
 the neglect of public worship in the afternoon,  
 than in the forenoon. He, who has any proper  
 love for the house and the service of God, will  
 never be content to attend them once only, in the  
 day, when another opportunity is afforded him.

But, finally, there is much more to be done,  
 much more for ourselves, and much more for our  
 families, than can be done in public, if we would  
 not grievously and very criminally fail of discharg-  
 ing the duties of the sabbath. This too must suf-

\* Paley.

ficiently appear from what we have already said, in speaking of the uses of the day, and I will not enlarge upon it. I will only observe, that we ought to make a conscience of consecrating the *whole* day to devout and benevolent purposes, to the glory of God, to the good of our fellow creatures, and to the improvement of our own hearts. \*

And here, I am afraid, even persons professing greater religious strictness are often much in fault; either spending all their time in public and social exercises, or wasting large portions of it in unprofitable, even though not, it may be, altogether irreligious company; doing little for their families, and little in private for their own souls.

\* ‘ Surely an entire day should not seem long amidst these various employments. It might well be deemed a privilege thus to spend it in the more immediate presence of our heavenly Father, in the exercises of humble admiration, and grateful homage; of the benevolent, and domestic, and social feelings, and of all the best affections of our nature, prompted by their true motives, conversant about their proper objects, and directed to their noblest end; all sorrow mitigated, all cares suspended, all fears repressed, every angry emotion softened, every envious, or revengeful, or malignant passion expelled; and the bosom, thus quieted, purified, enlarged, ennobled, partaking almost of a measure of the heavenly happiness, and become for a while the seat of love, and joy, and confidence, and harmony.’—See an exquisite piece on the Sabbath, the proper and the common modes of spending it, in *Mr. Wilberforce’s Practical View*, p. 193---199---If we are disposed to complain of the gloom and dulness of a Sabbath spent as here recommended, let us confess, and ‘ tremble at the confession,’ that we have no taste for spiritual pleasures, and are utterly unqualified for that *eternal sabbath*, the keeping of which “ remaineth for the “ people of God.” See *Cooper’s Sermons*, vol. i. p. 266, &c.

And, oh! can even this cursory review be taken of the sabbath, of its duties, and the violations of them, without bringing home to every heart the consciousness of guilt,—of great and heinous guilt? of transgressions “more in number than “the hairs of our head?” Oh let us not stifle the conviction! Let us not call in, let us not admit, the aid of delusive arguments, with which to persuade ourselves that the rule of duty cannot be so strict, that our offences cannot be so numerous. Let conscience speak, and let her voice be heard, if we would ever save our souls. Her wounds, though painful for the time, will prove “the faithful wounds of a friend.” She smites but to heal. To our cordial, our effectual reception of the gospel, that sense of our need of its remedies, is absolutely requisite, which nothing but deep conviction of guilt can produce. Without this, Christ will remain to us as “the physician to them that are whole;” “a Saviour” to those who know not that they are “lost.” Let us welcome and cherish whatever would affect us with a humbling apprehension of our sins, and excite us “to flee from the wrath to come.” Let us know our guilt and danger, that we may confess the one with truly contrite hearts, and betake ourselves for refuge from the other to “the hope “set before us” in Christ. Without this we may ‘profess and call ourselves Christians,’ but we shall continue strangers to the repentance, the faith, the hope, and the salvation of the gospel.

The subject of the sabbath is one, which the circumstances of our times particularly require to be brought forward. No one can open his eyes to what is passing on every side, without being witness to the great, the growing, the unblushing profanation of the Lord's day, which prevails amongst us.

Among *remedies* for the profanation of the sabbath, and means of promoting a more just regard for it, I would especially insist upon the necessity of *family religion*, maintained *every day*, but on this day above all others. What can be so proper, so natural, (one would think) so evidently obligatory, so serviceable, as this, alas! neglected duty?

Much has been done of late years, and much is doing, for the better education of the lower orders; and, heedless of all the absurd objections which are urged against the instruction of the poor, I must maintain that the tendency of these efforts is eminently beneficial: I ever must maintain, that he who, from his youth, is informed in his duty, and taught to exercise his faculties, is vastly more likely to prove a good member of the family and the community, than he who wants these advantages; that the child who is "trained up in the way wherein he should go," is incomparably more likely to walk in it, than one who grows up without instruction.

Yet, notwithstanding all that has been done, it must be granted, I fear, that we are not a more

virtuous people than we were; and one great reason, which, in connection with our national circumstances, I would assign for this, is—*the decline of family order and family religion*, throughout, I may say, all classes of society.

Masters and Mistresses! you complain of your servants: but what have you done, what are you doing, to improve those servants in the knowledge of their duty, to instil into their minds just principles, and a proper sense of religion? Nay is it not little indeed that you do for your own children, beyond sending them to school, and, perhaps once only on the Sunday, to church? What hear they from you at home, what see they in your example, that indicates the Christian parent and head of a family? Honourable exceptions, I know, there are to the censure here conveyed: but does not that censure too justly apply to the great majority?

There is one prevalent evil which belongs to this head, so gross, and productive of such fatal consequences, that I cannot but notice it in the most serious and pointed manner. The Sunday evening is very commonly allowed, as if by common consent, to servants, apprentices, and young persons of every description, as their time of visiting and amusement; and the great bulk of them, as observation may convince any one, spend the evening in the streets! Far, far be it from me to inculcate any thing inconsistent with the liberal and indulgent treatment of persons in the subordinate situations of life. They, as well as their

superiors, ought to be allowed seasons of relaxation, and opportunities of visiting their friends. But thus to fix upon *one time*, when such numbers shall together be released from all restraint, is highly impolitic and unwise; and to make that one time the evening of the Lord's day, is contrary to all decency, good order, and religion. Let any one look abroad into our streets on the Sunday evening, and say, whether that be the season when any head of a family, who has the least regard for the virtue and the safety of his domestics, would choose to trust them abroad. We complain of the corrupt state of our female servants; and no wonder, with such a practice as this in existence. More young women probably are ruined, first or last, by this one cause, than by any other that can be named. Not only for religion's sake, but for the sake of good morals, yea, for the sake of self-interest, let every householder determine to put a stop to the custom in his own family: and, if the inveteracy of the evil require, let all respectable persons make a common cause, and hold themselves pledged to one another to bring it to an end.

But another means of the highest importance is, that our superior people, 'the makers of our manners,' should consider it as binding upon their consciences, to spend the sabbath much more strictly than they usually do. There is one law, both of God and of man, to them and to their inferior brethren. They have no exemptions to plead. Rather, a greater re-

sponsibility lies upon them; arising from the powerful influence of their example: for in vain shall we expect the lower orders of men to “hallow the sabbath,” if the higher classes neglect and profane it.

What then shall we say to the fact, that so few of these classes are ever seen in our churches on the sunday afternoon? that so many are seen hurrying into the country, as soon as the morning service is over, to waste the remainder of the day in self-indulgence, in unprofitable conversation, and amusement; their closets forsaken, their Bibles neglected, their families deserted? that many more have no better method of employing their time at home, than in learning and discussing the news of the day, or in ‘reading books which bear no relation to the business of religion?’ \* Alas! such persons may scorn the

\* ‘The duty of the day is violated by—applying ourselves to studies, or the reading of books, which bear no relation to the business of religion.’ *Paley*.—Surely NEWS-PAPERS are books of this description.—I subjoin from the same distinguished writer some further remarks, well deserving attention. They are made in reply to the demands of those who are prone to ask, ‘What harm in this or the other little deviation from strict rules?’ To this question ‘under a variety of forms,’ says he, ‘we return the following answer:—‘That the religious observance of Sunday, if it is to be retained at all, must be upheld by some public and visible distinctions; that, draw the line of distinction where you will, many actions which are situate on the confines of the line, will differ very little, *and yet lie on the opposite sides of it*; that every trespass upon that reserve, which public decency has established, breaks down the fence by which the day is separated to the service of religion;—that these liberties, however intended, will certainly be considered by those who observe them, not only as disrespectful to the day



reproofs of the pulpit: but let them know, that they have to do with One who is "higher than they;" and He will another day exact from them an awful account of all their unhallowed sabbaths, their wasted opportunities, their mis-used talents.

In the third place, The laws against immorality and profaneness should be more strictly put in force: or, rather, it should be made so certainly known that they would be put in force against offenders, as to prevent the commission of offences.

And here I would address myself rather to the respectable part of the community, at large, than to the Magistrates, in particular. We are often ready to complain of the remissness of those who are entrusted with the execution of the laws, when we should rather chide our own. Our Magistrates, I trust, are ready to do their duty; and they will, I hope, increase their activity with the growing exigencies of the times: but cases must be brought before them: information must be given them. And here, from negligence, from love of ease, from the fear of odium, we shrink from the part which properly devolves upon us. To us, also, it belongs, therefore to increase our activity.

' and institution, but as proceeding from a secret contempt  
' of the Christian faith; that consequently they diminish  
' a reverence for religion in others, so far as the authority  
' of our opinion, or the efficacy of our example, reaches:  
' or rather, so far as either will serve for an excuse of  
' negligence to those who are glad of any.'

Finally, I will state my clear conviction, that the establishing of *Sunday evening Lectures*, in our large towns, would be productive of eminently good effects.—I know the objections which are urged against this measure. If all, or if the greater part of our population, were able and willing to improve their Sunday evenings at home, I would recommend nothing that should tempt them to do otherwise. But this is the case with comparatively, *very few*.—To some persons such a measure appears to approximate too much to the customs of dissenters and separatists. But shall we never learn, that, if we would wish our establishment to be utterly distanced by her competitors in the race for public estimation, the very plan to be pursued is, thus haughtily and systematically to reject or reverse every more popular and attractive expedient, which they may have adopted? I plead for none of the mean and unworthy arts, by which the favour of the populace has sometimes been courted: I recommend no dereliction of the spirit or manners, much less any deviation from the excellent prescribed forms, of our church; no accommodations which can be shewn to be really exceptionable: but only such as, innocent or laudable in themselves, and consonant to the principles of the church, are called for by the altered state of society.—Hundreds, and even thousands, I am persuaded, who now spend their Sunday evenings in idle company, and in the streets, would, were the opportunity thus afforded them, spend it in the

house of God. Numbers also, who are detained from public worship, during other parts of the day, would then be able to attend upon it; and not a few, who have too little regard for divine ordinances, to sacrifice to them the indulgences of the afternoon, would be present at them in the evening, and might gradually, perhaps, be recovered to more devout habits.

It is said, indeed, that evening lectures afford facilities to viciously disposed persons, in the pursuit of their criminal gratifications. But, not to urge how little regard is paid to this consideration when other meetings, not of a religious kind, are concerned, I am convinced that, with proper precautions, the evil would be found to a great degree imaginary. Never, at least, let this objection be heard from the mouth of any one man, who sends forth his domestics, on the Sunday evening, to seek their amusement wherever they may think fit.

But, whatever may be thought of any particular provision which I have presumed to recommend, I must earnestly call upon every individual to co-operate, to the utmost of his power, in promoting the great end in view—the due observation of the Lord's day. Every consideration demands it of you. Regard for the authority and the honour of God; regard for the happiness of individuals; regard for the interests of religion and good morals; regard for the welfare of society; regard, in the awful times in which we live, for

the well-being, for the safety, for the preservation of our beloved country. If there be indeed "a God that judgeth the earth," that "observeth the ways" of men, that "loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity," the continuation of his favour to us, and the consequent "prolongation of our tranquillity," must stand in close connection with our discharge of this duty. It must do so, even without supposing any extraordinary interposition of divine providence to punish our disobedience,\* simply according to that settled order of causes and effects which God hath established, and which we call the natural course of things. This is such as makes it the doctrine of reason and experience, no less than of revelation, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people:" and the state of our public morals, our righteousness or depravity as a nation, is most essentially dependent upon our observance or violation of the sabbath. Improved, that sacred day powerfully promotes every thing that is virtuous and good among men: but abused, it becomes the occasion of spreading vice and wickedness, with ten-fold rapidity, among those who are guilty of the profanation.

I call then upon all orders of men, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." I call upon the poor and the busy. It has been shewn,

\* It is often rather in the way of a gradual decline, than of violent and sudden shocks, that national crimes are punished. Vid. plura, *Wilberforce's Letter on the Slave trade*, Conclusion.

how much your happiness is consulted in this sacred institution: Oh be not so ungrateful as to despise, to reject, to abuse the gracious boon of heaven! Spend not the day of God in business; spend it not in sloth, in disorder, and carnal pleasure. Love and hallow the sabbath, that you may reap the blessings which it was intended to yield you.—I call upon the rich. Remember your responsibility for your influence. You too are deeply interested in the observation of the sabbath, at once from its effects on the behaviour of your dependents, and from its connexion with your own eternal salvation.—I call upon Magistrates. Diligently use your power in restraining the profanation of the sabbath, and every other immorality.—I call upon all the respectable part of society. Render to the Magistrate the aid that is indispensably needful. Especially, *Support the laws by your manners.*—I call upon heads of families. Rule your households in the fear of God. Enforce the sanctification of the Sabbath. Remember, the command is immediately addressed to you, and with express reference, *through you*, to “your sons, and your daughters, your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the stranger this is within your gate.”—Finally, I call upon young persons. O begin your days with hallowing the Sabbath. Make a conscience of this duty from your youth. It will bring the blessing of God upon *all* your days. Many of you have lately been solemnly

renewing and ratifying your vows to God, 'that you will keep his holy will and commandments all the days of your life.' Oh remember how prominent a place the law of the Sabbath holds among 'the commandments of God.' By this then shall your obedience, your regard to your vows, be proved. Here you can plead no ignorance of duty. Implore the grace of God to aid you in performing it. **REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.**

**THE END.**

