

am in death: O God, to thee only can I look for succour. And yet thou for my sins art justly displeas'd. But, O merciful Father, who hast declared in thy holy word, that thou dost not will the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and be saved, mercifully receive me. Spare me, good Lord. Enter not into judgment with me, a miserable sinner. Create and make in me a new and contrite heart; stir up in me a godly sorrow, that acknowledging my wretchedness, and truly lamenting my sins, I may obtain of thee perfect remission and forgiveness. Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is great; and after the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

DIALOGUE II.

THE PENITENT INSTRUCTED; *in a Dialogue between a Minister and his Parishioner.*

Minister. WELL, neighbour, have you examin'd those portions of the word of God which I selected for you?

Parishioner. I have done, Sir, what I was able.

M. And what do you think now of your state?

P. I will tell you, Sir: when I first read the promises to all that believe in Christ, I was ready to hope that I was safe; but when I read further, I found that it was as you had told me; that I am not a penitent convert, and, of course, not in a safe state. I now, therefore, beseech you, Sir, as you pity a poor sinner, to tell me what I must do to be saved.

M. Are you willing and resolved to do it if I tell it you, and prove it to you fully by the word of God?

P. By the grace of God I am resolved to do it, be it what it will; for nothing can be so bad as sin and death eternal.

M. You say well. I will first tell you this again in general, that your case is by no means remediless, but a full and sufficient salvation is purchased, and tendered in the Gospel to you—that Christ and his grace are all-sufficient; and

that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, but remaineth in his sin"—Christ having made himself a sufficient sacrifice for sins, and merited our pardon and salvation, hath conditionally made a covenant of grace with sinful man, by the promise of which he forgiveth us all our sins, and giveth us the hope of everlasting life—Christ's way of saving men from sin is by sending his ministers to preach his word, to call them to repentance, and to administer the ordinances by which he gives his Spirit to sanctify them. This Spirit is Christ's advocate to plead his cause, and do his work, and prepare us by holiness for the heavenly glory. And all the condition required of you, in order that you may have these blessings of the covenant of grace, is, sincerely give up yourself in covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and continue true to the covenant into which you have entered, by a course of active and faithful obedience.

Having well considered these points, tell me whether they be not glad tidings to such a miserable sinner as you now acknowledge yourself?

P. I have considered them: and I perceive that they are glad tidings of hope indeed. But truly, Sir, I have heard the Gospel so carelessly, that I do not thoroughly understand these things; and, therefore, I entreat you to explain them to me more fully and clearly.

M. I know you were baptized in your infancy. It was your great privilege that you were then admitted into covenant with God. This was, as the apostle says, (Titus iii. 5.) the "washing of regeneration," by which you were, as the Church

declares, "called into a state of salvation, made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." But that dedication would serve no longer than till you come to an age, and to a capacity to consent and undertake for yourself, and to be renewed by the Holy Ghost. Tell me, then, have you ever soberly considered what your baptism was, and what covenant was then made betwixt God and you? And have you seriously renewed that covenant yourself, and given up yourself to God in the holy ordinances of Confirmation, or "laying on of hands," reckoned by the apostle (Heb. vii. 12.) among "the principles of the doctrine of Christ?"

P. Alas! I never either seriously considered or renewed it; but I thought I was made a Christian by it, and was so regenerated, that my sins were done away, and that I was a child of God, and an heir of Heaven.

M. And how did you think all your sins, since your baptism, were forgiven you?

P. I confessed them to God, more particularly before I received the Lord's Supper; and trusted that then I was forgiven; though I fear confession alone may not have had its proper effect upon my heart and life.

M. What if you had never been baptized, and were now first to be baptized? What would you do?

P. I would endeavour to understand my duty better previous to my baptism.

M. Baptism, being a mean and pledge of the blessings of the Christian covenant, entitles the worthy receiver of it to the grace and favour of God; and if you had sincerely renewed and kept

the conditions of this covenant, you had needed no new conversion, but only a particular repentance for your sins committed since your baptism. Review, then, your baptismal covenant, and understand it well, and after the most serious deliberation make the same covenant with God, as if you had never made it before, or rather, as one that hath not kept the covenant which once you made.

P. Truly, if conversion be no more than to do what I vowed to do, and to be a Christian seriously, which before I was only by name and outward profession, I have no more reason to object to it, than to be against baptism and Christianity itself. I only, therefore, beg you to help my understanding concerning it.

M. You must understand and believe the articles of the Christian faith, expressed in the common Creed, which you hear every day that you go to church; and to which you profess assent.

P. Alas! I hear it, and say it as it were by rote; but I never well considered it.

M. True religion consists of three principal parts: the assent of the understanding to the articles of the Christian faith; the consent of the will; and obedience or practice. In the first part; all the articles of the Christian faith must be understood and believed. That there is one only God, in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who is an infinite, eternal, perfect Spirit; perfectly powerful, wise, and good; the first, efficient, chief governing, and final cause or end of all; of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; the Creator, the Preserver, the Benefactor, and Governor of all things, especially of man. That this God made Adam and Eve in his own image,

under a perfect law of innocence, requiring perfect obedience, on pain of death. That they transgressed this perfect law by wilful sin, and thereby fell under the sentence of death, the displeasure of God, the forfeiture of his grace, and of all their happiness. That all of us having our nature from them and their successors, derive corruption also from them; and this corrupted nature being disposed to all actual sin, if not resisted, we should grow much worse and more miserable. That God, of his mercy and wisdom, overruled man's sin and misery to glorify his grace, promised man a Redeemer, and made a new law or covenant for his government and direction; forgiving him all his sins, and promising him salvation, if he believe and trust in God his Saviour, and repent of sin, and live in thankful and sincere, though imperfect obedience. That in the fulness of time, God sent his Son, his eternal Word, made man, to be our Redeemer; who was conceived in a Virgin by the Holy Ghost; and by perfect obedience fulfilled God's law, and became our example; and conquered all temptations; and gave himself a sacrifice for our sins; suffering, after a life of humiliation, an accursed, shameful death upon a cross; and being buried, he went into the place of departed spirits, where the souls of the departed abide between death and the resurrection; and arose again the third day; and having conquered death, assured us of our resurrection; and after forty days continuance upon earth, he ascended bodily in the sight of his disciples into Heaven; where he is the continual intercessor for the church with God; by whom alone we must come unto the Father; and

who prepares for us the heavenly glory, and us for it.

That before he ascended, he made a more full and plain publication of the law or covenant of grace; and gave authority to his chosen ministers, to go and preach it to every creature, and to ordain others to the ministry of reconciliation to the end of the world; and promised them the gift and assistance of his Holy Spirit. That he ordained baptism to be used as, the solemn initiation of all that will come into his church, and enter into covenant with God; in which covenant, God the Father consenteth to be our reconciled God and Father, to pardon our sins, for the sake of Christ, and give us his Holy Spirit, and glorify us in Heaven for ever; and God the Son consenteth to be our Saviour, our King and Head, our Teacher and Mediator, to reconcile us to his Father, and to justify us, and give us his Spirit and eternal life; and God the Holy Ghost consenteth to dwell in us as the Agent and Advocate of Christ, to be our Illuminator and Sanctifier, and the earnest of our salvation: and we on our part must profess unfeigned belief of this Gospel of Christ, and repentance for our former sins, and an hearty desire to receive these gifts of God; giving up ourselves, our souls and bodies, to him as our only God, our Saviour and our Sanctifier, as our supreme Lord, Ruler, and Benefactor; resolving to live as his own, as his subjects, and as his children, in entire resignation of ourselves to him, in true obedience, and thankful love; renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of our life; not in our own strength, but by the gracious help of the Spirit of God.

This is the baptismal covenant, the manner of the outward administration of which you have often seen.

By this covenant, all that consent to give up themselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, receive the pardon of sin; and they have the promise of the Spirit, and of everlasting life, and of all the graces necessary thereunto.

The Holy Ghost, though given to all men in a sufficient degree to enable them to work out their salvation, is, in a peculiar manner, given to all who, by baptism, are admitted into the church, the mystical body of Christ. And in all who truly believe and consent to the baptismal covenant, the Holy Spirit dwells, and conforms them to the image of God; working in them a holy activity in their duty. A holy light and knowledge of God, a holy desire after God, are imparted to them. By this Spirit the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil, will be overcome. They that have not this renewing Spirit of Christ, are none of his.

At the end of this world, Christ will come in glory to judge mankind, and raise the dead, and recompense all the world according to their works; when they that have sincerely kept this covenant, shall be openly justified and glorified with Christ, among the blessed saints and angels; and they that have not performed this covenant, shall be forever deprived of this glory, and suffer everlasting misery.

These points must all be completely understood by you; or else you cannot understand what baptism, repentance, conversion, or Christianity is.

P. Alas! Sir, when shall I ever be able to understand and remember all this?

M. It is nothing more than the substance of what is taught in your Catechism; yea, it is a part of the Creed which you daily repeat, a little explained. But if you do not remember all these words; if yet you remember the sense and matter of them, it will suffice.

P. But you told me that besides understanding and belief, the will's consent is also necessary.

M. That is the second part of religion, and, indeed, the very substance of all; for what the will is, that the man is. But I need not use many words to tell you, that when you have considered the terms of the baptismal covenant, your full consent to it, is the condition upon which Christ taketh you as his own.

P. But hath my will no more to do but to consent to that covenant?

M. It is implied that your consent must still continue, and that it reach to the particular duties which Christ shall appoint you. And the Lord's Prayer is given as the more particular rule of all the desires of your will. Wherefore, you must well study the meaning of that prayer.

P. You told me also that practice is the third part of religion: how shall I know what that must be?

M. You must first know the rule of your practice; and your practice must then be according to that rule. The foundation and the end of all your practice has been already laid down.

The fundamental principle of obedience, is your relation to God according to this covenant. You are devoted to him as being totally his own: and, therefore, you must live to him, and seek his glory, and rest in his disposal of you. You are related

to him as his subject; and therefore must endeavour absolutely to obey him, above all the world. You are related to him, as his child; and therefore must live in faithfulness and love. And this is the foundation and sum of all your holy life.

The end of all your practice must be, that you may be delivered from all sin and misery, and be made more holy, and more serviceable to God, and profitable to men; and may glorify your Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, that you may be perfectly holy, and glorious, and happy in heaven; and may with saints and angels dwell with Christ, and know, and love, and praise, and serve the Lord of Glory, in perfect joy for evermore. These ends must be still in your view, as the great and constant motive of your practice.

As you are his subject, your obedience hath its rule; which is, the law of your Creator and Redeemer. Believe in him as your Saviour, and hope for life by his purchase and promise. We love God, as his goodness appeareth in the Gospel of his Son, and we love Christ's members for his sake; we pray for the Spirit of Christ, and obey him; and we observe that church-order, as to the ministry, the Lord's Prayer, the two sacraments, public worship and discipline, which Christ by himself, or his Spirit in his apostles, hath commanded us.

The degree of obedience necessary to your salvation, is, that it be sincere; that is, that as to the predominant inclination of your heart and life, you truly obey your Creator and Redeemer, and make this the chief business for which you live in this world.

I must also add that in all this you must still

remember, that the devil and the world, but above all, your own carnal mind and appetite, are the great enemies of all holiness and obedience. You must therefore be aware of their enmity, and the danger of it; and resolve, by God's grace, to renounce them, and resist them as your enemies to the last.

And though only sincerity is necessary to salvation, yet you must remember that you have not sincerity, unless you have a desire and endeavour after perfection; and that a great degree of holiness is necessary to an eminent degree of glory.

P. Alas! Sir, I fear I shall never remember all this.

M. You may see, then, how foolishly you have done, by losing your time in childhood and youth, which should have been spent in learning the will of God, and the way to your salvation. If you had frequently meditated on these things, and read God's word, and asked counsel of your teachers, and learned the catechism, and read good books; and if you had marked well what you heard at church, and had spent all the Lord's days in such work as this, which you spent in idleness and vain talk, you might have been acquainted familiarly with all this and more. But that which is past cannot be recalled. If you cannot remember all this, labour to understand it well; and remember that which is the sum of all.

P. What is that?

M. To believe in, and give up yourself to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, your Lord, your Governor, and your Chief Good; renouncing the flesh, the devil, and the world.

The summary which explains this more largely, is the Creed, which is the sum of what you must *believe*. The Lord's Prayer is the sum of what you must *desire*. And the sum of moral *obedience* is in the Ten Commandments. The laws of Christ, concerning the ministry, communion, sacraments, and worship, you will learn in the church by use, and daily teaching. Cannot you say the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments?

P. Yes; I learned the words, but I never laid the sense and substance of them much to heart.

M. All that I have said to you is but the sense of those three. Understand the exposition, and remember the forms or words themselves. But even your duty is yet more briefly summed up in that love, which is the fulfilling of the law. For justice is comprehended in love, which will teach you to do that to others which you would they should do to you.

P. What love is that you mean?

M. The love of God, the love of your neighbour, and the love of yourself, is the sum of all your duty.

P. This is a very reasonable duty, which no man can deny or speak against. And one part of it I shall easily keep, which is, to love myself.

M. Alas, poor man! have you kept it hitherto? What enemy have you had in all the world comparable to yourself? All that your enemies could do against you, is as nothing. What if they slander you, oppress you, imprison you, or otherwise abuse you; if you wrong not yourself, all this cannot hinder your salvation, nor make God love you the less, nor make death the more terrible; nor will it ever be your sorrow to think of it here

after. All your enemies in the world cannot force you without your own consent to commit one sin, nor make you displease God. But you yourself have committed thousands of sins, and made yourself an enemy to God. O the folly of ungodly men! They can hardly forgive another if he assault, or slander, or injure them in any way. And yet they can go on to abuse, undo, and destroy themselves; nor will they be restrained, nor persuaded to forbear, nor show any mercy to their immortal souls. I tell you, though the devil hate you, yet hath he not done so much against you as you have done against yourself. He only tempted you to sin, but never did nor could compel you; but you have wilfully bartered your soul, as Esau his birthright, for a morsel, for a pleasant gratification, or for sinful pleasure.

P. All this is too true; and yet I am sure that I love myself. How, then, comes this to pass?

M. You love yourself with a love which is influenced by sense, and guided little by reason, much less by faith. You love your appetite, but you have little care of your soul. You love yourself, but you love not that which is good for yourself; as a sick man loveth his life, but abhorreth his meat and medicines.

Indeed, God hath planted a love to ourselves so deep in our nature, that no man can choose but love himself. And, therefore, in the commandments the love of God and our neighbour only are expressed; and the love of ourselves is presupposed. But Christ, knowing what destroyers men are of themselves, and forsakers of their own salvation, calls upon sinners to love, care, and labour for their own souls.

These things altogether make up man's enmity against his own salvation. The soul hath lost much of the knowledge of its own excellence in its higher faculties. Its love to itself as rational, spiritual, is dull, and wanteth stirring up. It is inordinately fallen in love with its lower faculties. It doateth on sensual objects. It is dead and averse to those noble, spiritual, higher objects, in which it must be happy. And in this sense man is his own greatest enemy.

But act as a man that loveth himself, and you are safe. God entreateth you to have mercy on yourself. He hath resolved on what terms he will have mercy upon sinners: they are unchangeably set down in his Gospel. Yet sinners will not yield to his terms. All men might be holy and happy if they would; but most men will not. They will cry to God for mercy, when judgment cometh, and it is too late; and yet now no counsel, no reason, no entreaty will persuade them to accept it.

P. It is a sad condition that you describe, and yet it is too true. It is not salvation that men refuseth, but the straight gate and narrow way which leadeth to it.

M. There is some truth in what you say, that they are against the *means* of salvation; but you are mistaken in the rest. For holiness, which they refuse, is not only a mean, but it is much of salvation itself. To refuse holiness is to refuse health and heaven.

P. The Lord knows that this hath been my case, I have been my own most hurtful enemy; and done more against myself than all the world hath done. I understand now that it is not so easy a matter to love one's own soul aright as I had thought.

M. I confess it is far more difficult to love God truly than yourself. A want of love to God is the greatest sin that we can be guilty of, and the very source of all our other sins. We love God as he is the Maker and Preserver of the world; but we love him not as he is holy, and a righteous Governor, forbidding sin, requiring holiness, hating and punishing the ungodly, restraining fleshly lusts, and not forgiving nor saving the impenitent.

If you had hitherto loved God, you would have loved his word, and have loved to praise him and call upon his name, and you would have delighted to do his will and to please him.

You fancied you was a lover of God in your sinful state of life, and thought it easy to love him; but you then knew not God, you knew not yourself, you knew not the need or the nature of true conversion. Do you not know that you have heretofore been an enemy to God?

P. I know I have been an enemy to myself, but surely nobody can be an enemy to God.

M. Where there is an aversion to serve and obey, you will allow that there is enmity. The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. Rom. viii. 5, 6, 7. If there were no enmity between God and man, what need was there of a mediator or reconciler? And will you think so ill of the most gracious God, and so well of yourself, as to think that the enmity is only in God, and not in you? Is he an enemy to any man that is not first an enemy to him? "He hateth all the workers of iniquity," because they are all enemies to him, and as contrary to his holiness as darkness is to light. It is the very case of all ungodly persons,

that their hearts are turned away from God to this world, and to the pleasures of the flesh; and being in love with these, they love not that God, nor that holy word which condemneth them for their sinful pleasures and pursuits.

Let your conscience speak plainly. Had not the world more of your heart than heaven? Were you not a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God? Were not your thoughts at laying down and rising up, and all the day long, more readily directed towards your worldly concernments than towards God? And were not those thoughts more pleasing and welcome to you than any other? Was not your heart so backward to think of God with pleasure, that you never seriously set yourself to meditate on him and his heavenly glory? If you had no enmity to a holy and heavenly mind and life, why did you not choose it? And why could not all God's mercies invite you to it? Nor all teaching and entreaties ever persuade you to it? Why are you yet so backward to it? Is this no enmity? And if you were an enemy to holiness, and to the holy word and government of God, was not this to be an enemy to God?

P. I never considered this state of enmity till now. I knew that I was a sinner; but I knew not that I was an enemy to God, even when I began to fear that he was for my sin an enemy to me. But I find now that it hath been with me just as you say; and I perceive that all sin hath some enmity to God in it.

M. In reading the scripture and other history, you perceive that the world hath ever consisted of two contrary sorts of men; the wicked and the godly. Those that would not have Christ to reign

over them, and subdue their worldly minds and fleshly lusts, and make them holy, are his enemies. And hath not this been your case?

P. I cannot deny it; the Lord forgive me, I see now that it is not so easy a matter to love God truly, as I thought it was.

M. To love God as God, with all our mind, and heart, and might, is the sum of holiness, the proper fruit of the Spirit, and the surest evidence of his love to us, and the very beginning and foretaste of heaven. Faith working by love, is all our religion. Therefore if love to God were easy and common, all goodness, and even salvation itself, would be so.

But having said thus much of the love of your soul, and the love of God, what think you next of the love of others? Is that also easy to you?

P. I am sometimes angry when I am wronged, or provoked, but I know no one in the world that I wish ill to.

M. So far it is well. But do you love your neighbour as yourself? I pray you understand the matter right. God must be first and principally loved, as the chief and infinite good. He must be loved for himself, as being goodness itself, and most amiable in himself; and that with all the soul. And they must be most loved who have most of the image of God, in wisdom, righteousness, and holiness. The godly must be loved as godly, with a special love. Professed Christians must be loved as such. All men, even our enemies, must be loved as men, with a common love. And all this for God's sake, and in obedience to our Saviour's will and command.

But a carnal man, loving himself more than God

makes himself the standard of his love to others. He loveth not those best who are most holy, or serviceable to God, and the public good; but those who love and honour himself most; and those who are most of his opinion, who do most for him, and are most profitable to him. Have you not loved a profane derider of holiness, who loved you, and spake well of you, and perhaps did you now and then a friendly office, better than a wise and godly person that never did any thing for you, or that had a low opinion of your sense and honesty, though not a lower or worse perhaps than you deserved?

P. I cannot deny but you describe me rightly.

M. And did you never dishonour your governors or parents? Did you never seek to hurt another, nor desire revenge? Did you never deceive your neighbour, nor wrong him any way in his estate? Did you never slander him, nor falsely accuse him, nor seek to make him contemptible to others? Did you never envy him, nor covet his estate or honours, nor seek to draw any thing from him to yourself? If you did, what love was in all this but self-love? How easily can you bear your neighbour's wrongs, reproaches, slanders, poverty, sickness, in comparison of your own? You can aggravate his faults, and extenuate your own; and judge him very culpable, and even punishable, for that which you make nothing or very light of, in yourself.

P. I must confess I have sinned against the love of God, of myself, and of my neighbour. And I see that I must have a better heart, before I can truly love either as I ought to do for the time to come.

M. I have plainly showed you the nature of true conversion, even faith and repentance; that is, the nature of the covenant made at your baptism in your name, to be sincerely renewed afterwards by yourself. What say you now to it, upon consideration of the whole? Can you heartily consent to it, and thus give up yourself to the service of God and of his Son Jesus Christ?

P. O, Sir, it is a great business; I must have many a thought of it yet, before I shall understand it well; and many a thought more, to overcome all the backwardness of my heart. Such a work is not to be so rashly done.

M. I like your answer, if it come not from unwillingness, nor imply a purpose of delay. That which must needs be done, or you are for ever undone, cannot be done too soon, so it be done well. But tell me, were you never confirmed by a Bishop, by the laying on of his hands?

P. Yes.

M. The Bishop, before he gave his blessing to those who presented themselves for confirmation, and implored upon them the Holy Ghost, put this question to them: "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 yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you?" And you were every one to say, "I do." And it is ordered that "none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion till such time as he or she be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

P. But if I must make the same preparation and covenant as if I were newly to be baptized, had it not been better to have forborne my baptism till now?

M. Certainly not. All who are to be entered into Christ's church as its members and his disciples, must enter by baptism; and this can never be done too soon. Christ saith, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." Baptism, then, is made the door of entrance into the Christian church; and there is no authority, nor example of entering any other way.

The infants of believers are to be admitted into Christ's church as its infant members and disciples; for Christ came not to destroy church privileges, but to enlarge them. Circumcision admitted the Jews' children; and though circumcision cease, the church-membership of infants ceaseth not.

God joined the children with the parents in promises and threats, blessings and cursings, in all ages before circumcision. There is no proof that ever God had any church on earth, of which infants were not members.

God hath by nature and institution made it the duty of parents to admit their children into his covenant. But under the Gospel there is no appointed way of doing this but by baptism. If God commands us to dedicate them to him, he will certainly receive them.

Scripture assures us, that Christ would not have cast off the Jewish nation, and consequently their children, from their church-state, if their own unbelief and rejecting of him had not done it. Matt. xxiii. 38. "O Jerusalem! how oft would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth

her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" They were broken off, because of unbelief: and the gentiles are grafted into the same olive; are taken into the same church-state.

Christ tells us, Matt. xxviii. 19, that nations are capable of being discipled. And "the kingdoms of the world are to be the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ:" but there is no nation or kingdom of which infants are not a very considerable part.

Again, Christ himself was angry with his disciples, that would have kept little children from him; and said, "Forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And therefore he is still ready to receive them when dedicated to him.

And the apostle tells us, that "our children are holy;" which must needs signify more than legitimate, for such are all heathens' children.

The apostles baptized whole households: and the universal church, in all ages, hath observed infant baptism.

Infants have a visible way of sin and misery, by natural descent. And if there were no visible way of their recovery by forgiveness, what hope could we have for the salvation of any of our infants?

P. But they believe not.

M. Nor do they sin; and yet, on account of their original corruption, they need a Saviour. Yet though they believe not actually, faith is promised for them by their sponsors.

P. But what good doth it to those that understand not?

M. Is it no good to have a sealed pardon of original sin? And a covenant-relation to God the

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? And a visible title to the blessings of the covenant? And to be "no more strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the church or household of God;" and if they die, to be rendered capable of life eternal; and thus to be regenerated, and, from being "children of wrath, to become children of grace:" all which are the benefits of baptism?

P. Have you any more to say to me on this subject?

M. Yes: I must let you know in what manner this covenant must be made. If you will be a Christian indeed, and have the benefit of it, you must consent to the whole covenant of God, and not to some part only. You must be devoted to your Creator, your Redeemer, and your Sanctifier: you must take him for your Lord, your Ruler, and your Saviour: you must be willing to be sanctified as well as pardoned, and to be saved from sin, and not only from punishment.

You must be ready to take up the cross, and deny yourself for Christ. You must take God and Heaven for your portion, and resolve to cleave to God, if you meet with ever so much tribulation in the world.

You must enter into covenant with God absolutely, without any secret exception or reserve. If you secretly keep a reserve in your heart, that you will come to Christ but upon trial; and that you will be religious as far as will consist with your prosperity and safety in this world; if you secretly except either honour, estate, or life, resolving not to lay it down though Christ require it; you then play the hypocrite, and will lose all.

Lastly; you must, without delay, give up your-

self to God, and not profess that you will do it some time hereafter. If you only consent to repent and be converted at some distant period, this is no repentance, conversion, nor true covenant with God. All this you must understand and do.

And now I will give you time to learn and resolve on all that I have said to you. Read over and over the exposition which I have given you, and ask the meaning of what you do not understand: and when you have done all, come to me and tell me your resolution.

Prayer suited to the Condition of a Penitent Christian.

(In the Language of the Book of Common Prayer.)

O Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal church, by the precious blood of thy dear Son; I heartily thank thee, that by baptism I have been admitted into this thy family, and called into a state of salvation. But, O merciful Father, I have erred and strayed from thy ways. I have done the things which I ought not to have done, and have left undone the things which I ought to have done; and here is no health in me. In thought, in word, and in deed, I have most grievously offended thy divine Majesty; and have justly provoked thy wrath and indignation against me. But, O Lord, who art a merciful God, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity; who sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy; spare me, good Lord, spare me;

enter not into judgment with me a miserable sinner. Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed me, save me and help me. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant me thy peace. Christ, have mercy upon me. Lord, have mercy upon me. O most merciful God, who dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more; impute not unto me my former sins; for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past; and strengthen me with thy blessed Spirit, that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life. Grant that I may both perceive and know what things I ought to do, and may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same. Lord of all power and might, of thee only it cometh, that I can render unto thee true and laudable service; let thy grace always direct and follow me, that my heart and all my members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will; may truly and faithfully serve thee; and thus keeping thy commandments both in will and deed, may finally obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partaker of thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.