

Wilson, The Curate of Souls

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We plead with God for pardon, for *His Son's sake*, after a way which His Son Himself appointed:

We are hereby more firmly united to Christ our Head, and to the Church, which is His body, out of which there is no salvation.

And lastly we do hereby express our faith and hope of His coming again to reward His faithful servants.

Now, these being duties of the greatest concern to Christians, it is no wonder that the Church, directed by St Paul, very seriously exhorts all Christians to examine and to prepare themselves for this holy ordinance; for if a Christian should presume to come to the Lord's table without knowing what he is going to do, without *repentance*, without *purposes of leading a Christian life*, without *faith* in God's mercy through Christ, without a *thankful heart* and without *charity*, he will receive a *curse* instead of a *blessing*.

Because many Christians, therefore, especially the younger sort, may not know upon what heads and after what manner they ought to examine themselves, or lest they should do it by halves, or perhaps not at all, a faithful pastor will shew them the way, by examining them himself, after this, or *some such-like plain method*.

Concerning their repentance

Do you know that God will not accept of the service of such as live in the practice of any known sin?

Let me therefore advise you, as you love your soul, to consider seriously, whether you are subject to any evil habit, either of *lying*, or *swearing*, or *drinking*; or of any sin of *uncleanness*; or of an *idle life*, which will lead to these? And if you find you are, your duty is

to judge yourself, to beg God's pardon and to amend your life.

Will you do this, and in *obedience to God*, because He requires it?

Will you promise sincerely to avoid all occasions of sin, especially of such sins as you have been most apt to fall into?

If through weakness or temptation you commit any sin, will you forthwith confess your fault to God, ask His pardon, and be more careful for the time to come?

Will you endeavour to live in the fear of God, always remembering that a good life is the best preparation for this sacrament?

Will you constantly pray for God's grace and assistance, without which all your good purposes will come to nothing?

Will you strive to keep your conscience tender and awake, that you may know when you sin, and that your heart may not be hardened, which is the greatest judgment?

Lastly, Will you be careful to keep a watch over yourself, that you may not fall into the sins you have repented of?

And will you often examine into the state of your soul, especially before you go to the Lord's table, that you may see whether you grow in grace and get the mastery over your corruptions? For if you do so, you are certainly under the government of God's Holy Spirit.

Concerning a Christian's purposes of leading a new life, that is, a Christian life.

Do you sincerely purpose to make the law of God the rule of your life?

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