ON

AUTHORITY

IN THE

INSTITUTION OF ORDINANCES

AND THE

MINOR ARRANGEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BY

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ON AUTHORITY IN THE INSTITUTION OF ORDINANCES, AND THE MINOR ARRANGEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In the Canons, Decrees, Confessions of Faith, or Articles of Belief of all the leading Churches of Christendom, it is either asserted or implied that there is an Authority existing in the Church of Christ, distinct from the civil magistrate on the one hand and from the suffrages of the people on the other, and that this authority resides entirely in the Church's accredited office-bearers.* However much these Churches may differ in opinion as regards the *nature* and *extent* of that authority, or even as regards the particular office-bearers, or associations of them, who are ultimately to exercise it, if necessary, in a supreme manner, yet they all agree in this, that the

* The principles maintained in this essay do not exactly touch the controversy which raged in Scotland during the reigns of James I. of Great Britain, and his successors Charles I. and Charles II., because that was virtually a controversy between two forms of government *in* the Church—where Episcopacy, supported by royal authority and influence, opposed Presbyterianism, and where the clergy on both sides asserted their right to determine what should and what should not be the form of worship in the kingdom.

LORD JESUS CHRIST has invested those who hold office in His spiritual kingdom upon earth with a power which can neither be set aside nor infringed without transgressing, in a certain sense, divine, or at least ecclesiastical, law. Nor does this power spring from the fact that the Christian Church is a *society* composed of individuals and possessed of laws, which necessarily requires office-bearers to rule over the one and to administer the other. Although it be the case that the Church of Christ is a society *in* the world, and therefore entitled to all the privileges and powers which WORLDLY SOCIETIES have, yet the authority which its office-bearers possess and exercise is of a far more important description than that which is derived from any such source, because their authority is conveyed to them by the express language of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they enter upon its exercise when, by prayer and the laying on of hands, they are solemnly and publicly set apart to the sacred office by those who have been similarly consecrated. It is true, indeed, that the words of the Lord Jesus conveying this authority were originally addressed to men who have long since passed away from this scene of things, and who occupied a position of unapproachable dignity in the Christian Church; but it is no less true that if that Church is to be a perpetual institution in the world, and to descend through all coming ages, the authority which was originally given to apostles must necessarily, to a certain extent at least, descend to those who, under the influences of the Holy Ghost, are prepared and solemnly set apart as the religious and spiritual guides of mankind. It is not to be expected, indeed, that any office-bearer of the

Church can lay claim to that superhuman power which at times resided in the apostles, and which enabled them so successfully to stamp a divine character upon their mission and teaching, because the age and circumstances in which they lived were peculiar; but, nevertheless, every office-bearer in the Church of Christ, as occupying, to a certain extent, the position of the early preachers of the Cross, can lay claim to the authority which, proceeding originally from Christ, is conveyed in such language as this: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. xvi. 19. And to show that this authority was not confined to Peter, it was subsequently bestowed upon the other apostles after the resurrection of Christ. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," John xx. 22, 23. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising 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 alway, even unto the end of the world.* Amen." And to show that a descending authority was recognised by the apostles, after the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, Paul writes thus in his Epistles: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are *over you* in the Lord, and admonish you," 1 Thess. v. 12. "Let the elders that *rule* well be counted worthy of double honour," 1 Tim.

v. 17. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest *set in order the things that are wanting*, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee," Titus i. 5. (Titus received whatever authority he had from Paul.) "Remember *them which have the rule* over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 7, 8. Thus it appears that, independent altogether of the power which the office-bearers of the Church possess as the rulers and guardians of a great spiritual society, established upon earth for the very highest of ends, they have also an authority which came originally from the Lord Jesus Christ, which they enter upon at the solemn moment of ordination, and the record of which is preserved in the imperishable pages of the divine Word.

But this authority, to which, in certain circumstances, even office-bearers themselves are subject, as well as people, and which, during so many ages of the Church's history, has been so much perverted and abused, is both *peculiar* in its *nature* and *limited* in its *extent*. It is not an authority, for example, over men's persons or properties, such as resides in the civil authorities of the land (even civil authority is sanctioned by the divine Word), but an authority over their consciences and hearts, and the other spiritual elements of their nature—those elements on which the truth of God operates; and even this power is limited by the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience on the one hand, and the beneficent spirit and precepts of Christianity on the other. In regard

to doctrine, for instance, one great field in which this authority is exercised, it is not absolute or infallible, but subject to the opinion which each individual Christian may have as to the harmony of any particular dogma with the Word of God. Then again, in regard to discipline, it is an authority to be exercised, not in the spirit of anger, malice, or revenge, but with prudence and love; not for men's destruction, but for their reformation and improvement, that their souls may be saved in the great day of the Lord. Whilst as regards WORSHIP—the ordinances and other rites and ceremonies of the Church—it is an authority of order, for the decency and propriety of the Christian service, and the regular and proper administration of all the means of grace.

Having made these preliminary remarks on authority in general, I purpose now to apply it to the CHURCH'S MEANS OF GRACE.

It is to be observed, first of all, that there is an important distinction among the ORDINANCES OF RELIGION as regards authority, which the office-bearers of the Church ought at all times to bear in mind — and it is this, namely, that some are of higher authority, and consequently of greater importance, than others. Some are Scriptural; others purely Ecclesiastical. Some, such as Prayer, Praise, the reading and preaching of the Word, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, derive their existence from the express letter and positive precepts of the divine Word; while others are called into existence by the sanctified wisdom and prudence of men—men who, however, occupy authoritative positions in the

Church, and who act under the general rules which the Word of God lays down for the proper observance of the Christian service. And thus it is that the Church of Christ in all ages of its history has, as regards not merely the administration, but the very existence, of some of its forms of worship, been dependent entirely upon the judgment and good sense of its office-bearers. And this is necessarily so. Because, as there is no prescribed form of Church government laid down in the New Testament, and as Christ has given no special rules for the exercise of discipline — so neither has He revealed to His Church any distinct and complete ritual for that Church's constant and undeviating observance. Whilst the great truths of salvation, and unquestionable principles in morals, as well as certain essential ordinances of religion, are laid down with a distinctness which command the homage and obedience of all the Churches of Christendom, as well as the approval of the human conscience, yet the lesser and non-essential, but most important details are left entirely to the wisdom and prudence of the Church's recognised and duly appointed office-bearers. And hence it is, that in these matters the Church of Christ in its various denominations, from apostolic times downwards, has presented to the world—and to many even of her own members—a perplexing and misunderstood diversity in the services of the house of God. Not to speak of the various forms of buildings, external and internal, the different hours of worship, the different religious seasons, and the like, the clergy have their different dresses, the people their various postures and books of service, whilst in no two countries of the world is the order of service entirely

the same. This want of uniformity in the Church catholic—a uniformity which is regarded of so much importance in particular Churches—is no doubt designed by Christ, the Church's great Head, who has withheld from it a complete and perfect ritual, for the purpose of allowing our holy Christianity to adapt itself to the habits and customs of the various communities to which it goes, and the various climates on the earth's surface where it exists. Nor is this other important element perhaps awanting in such an arrangement—namely, that it calls into exercise a spirit of mutual forbearance on the part of Christians towards each other in these matters where forbearance ought to be shown, but where, alas! as experience tells us, there is often the greatest intolerance. And it shows us, moreover, the elastic and comprehensive character of our holy religion in thus not merely carrying over the wide earth truths that are adapted to every heart, but also, in its mode of ordinance and service, suiting itself to the varied forms of humanity with which it comes in contact.

The ordinances and rites of the Christian religion, therefore, may be said to be of two kinds—namely, those which have been fixed by the Word of God, and those which have been appointed or which are appointed by the constituted authorities of the Church. The one is an essential service of the house of God—one of its vital organs—which cannot be set aside or altered in any way without violating the express command of God; the other is only accidental, and may be changed or even abrogated if necessary, by authority existing in the Church. The one derives its existence from that highest of all authorities, the Word of God, and

is, moreover, supported and confirmed by apostolic practice, as well as by unchanging usage; the other springs from the Church's office-bearers, acting upon the authority adhering in their office, and guided by those general Scriptural laws which are laid down for their guidance,—"Let all things be done decently and in order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40; "Lay hands suddenly on no man," 1 Tim. v. 22. Both classes of ordinances, therefore—the essential and accidental—may in a sense be said to be divine, inasmuch as both derive their existence, either directly or indirectly, from the divine Word. But while the essential ordinance is clearly marked out and expressed in the Word of God, and cannot be altered or interfered with in any way, the accidental or non-essential derives its divine element from (1) the Scriptural authority existing in the office-bearer, and (2) the Scriptural law, which, however, ecclesiastical authority may rightly or wrongly interpret. Then again, the essential ordinances are binding upon all Christians throughout the world—and Christians, too, of every age. The accidental may vary with the circumstances in which Christians are placed, or the times in which they live, according as the Church to which they belong in its wisdom shall determine. Hence it has been found, with regard to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, that what is suitable in one age, country, or society, may not be suitable in another. What may seem becoming, edifying, and impressive in the minor arrangements of the Church in one community, may be thought unbecoming and frivolous in others. In hot climates, for instance, in former times, the Church may have thought it necessary to baptise by immersion, but in colder climates and large Christian

communities, such a practice would be considered dangerous and unbecoming. And hence, with the authority inhering in the office-bearers of the Church, and guided by general Scriptural laws, most Churches have adopted another method—namely, that of sprinkling or aspersion. There is no such thing now as the "kiss of peace," which was common enough in apostolic times, because it would be considered improper. Neither do Christians now recline on couches in receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—which in all probability was the manner in which Christ appointed it, and the apostolic Church administered it—because custom has suggested and perpetuated another way. So also leavened bread has superseded unleavened bread in the celebration of this ordinance; whilst the Agapæ or Love-feasts, which were added to it by the primitive Church, have long since been given up. And in like manner, orders of Deaconesses have disappeared from many of our Churches, because they might create scandal. So that whilst these and other non-essential rites and ceremonies were common enough in former days, the authorities of most Churches have laid them aside, and created others, while the essential and unchanging ordinances of religion remain in all their efficacy and power.

Nor is this practice of a varying ritual and changing services in connection with the minor arrangements of the Church confined to New Testament times. Such a thing was common enough also in the previous dispensation, and received the sanction of the Saviour Himself. The whole synagogue institution, for instance, with its services and officers, and which moreover existed not only within but beyond the Holy

Land, is not once alluded to in the Old Testament writings, and receives no direct authority from them. As a mode of worshipping God, it sprang into existence after the Captivity, evidently from motives of expediency on the part of Church rulers; and yet this institution was often recognised by Christ, and is associated with some of the most important events of His ministry. There was a baptism in our Lord's days also, for which there is no sanction in the Holy Scriptures, and rites were added to the Paschal service other than those mentioned in Exodus xii. And yet Jesus engaged in those services. He and His apostles went to the synagogues and conformed scrupulously to all their arrangements, and to the various forms of service that were in existence in that day. And although the divine founder of Christianity reproved the Jews, and especially the Jewish rulers, for their superstitious regard for rites, and for over-estimating their importance in the then religious system, yet He does not condemn their use. On the contrary, He borrowed some of those ceremonies, and made them the federal rites of His own pure and more spiritual dispensation; and whilst He pronounced woes on the Pharisees and Scribes for neglecting the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith—and said, "These ought ye to have done," yet He added, in regard to the rites and lesser matters—the paying of tithe, and anise and cummin—"and not to leave the other undone." So that, according to our Lord's example and teaching, the non-essential rites of religion —those services which derive their existence, not from the express letter of Scripture, but from the acknowledged authorities of the Church—become bind-

ing and obligatory upon all Christians within their respective denominations, until these authorities think it proper to set them aside.

But although there is thus an element of authority pervading all the prescribed services of the House of God, assuredly those are most important and most binding which are essential—that is to say, those which have the express letter of the divine Word for their existence. And foremost among these is the PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL — a great moral and spiritual institution, founded by Christ, practised by Himself, enjoined on His apostles and their legitimate successors, the ministers of the Gospel in all ages and countries, and accompanied with the promise of His presence to the end of time. Then again, there are the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the federal and symbolic rites of the Christian religion —instituted directly by Christ in moments of great sublimity and impressiveness, and binding on every Christian throughout the world. Then again there is the reading of the divine Word; Prayer—the suppliant attitude of the Church militant; Praise—the joyful utterances of hopeful, believing men in a world of sin, suffering, and death; the Sabbath—that weekly contribution which time makes to the spiritual life and energies of mankind. These are Christianity's essential ordinances, her great means of grace, by which uncounted generations have held communion with God, and drawn down priceless blessings upon their souls. And they are, moreover, Christianity's perpetual, universal, and abiding ordinances. No human power can set them aside. They are supremely authoritative and necessarily permanent. Other rites and

ceremonies may be added to them or taken from them in the onward progress of the Church, but these essential means of grace, like the unchanging constellations in the heavens, remain for ever in the Church, claiming the homage of all its office-bearers, and the unmurmuring recognition of all its people. And since the Divine Being in His government of the world ever accompanies each great agency, whether material or spiritual, with a proportionate degree of power and blessing, so must it be with the essential ordinances of religion; and those Churches that employ them most regularly and sincerely, in perfect harmony with the letter and spirit of the divine Word, will assuredly present to the world, and to the eye of an all-seeing God, the largest number of true and genuine Christians; whilst, on the other hand, those Churches that conceal or pervert them must present to every onlooker the starved and beggared aspects of an imperfect Christianity.

Nevertheless it must not be supposed that, because the *minor* services and other arrangements of the Church have not the same high authority for their existence which the *essential* ordinances have, that they are without all authority and of comparatively little importance. On the contrary, these minor services, though differing, it may be, in different countries and Churches, are absolutely necessary for the decency and order of Christian worship. Christ has not prescribed them by special rule—that is to say, by one applicable to each case—but He has done so by general precept, requiring order and decency, and all that is becoming, in the Christian service. "Let all things be done decently and in order." "Lay hands suddenly on no

man." And the general precept or rule, though liable to be perverted or abused by applications of it that may be wholly unwarrantable, or by stretching it beyond its scope, is nevertheless divine, carrying along with it the authority and presence of that Holy Spirit of God, that gives such sacredness and importance to all revealed truth. Therefore when the properly constituted office-bearers of a Christian Church proceed to lay down rules for the minor arrangements of that Church—to determine, for instance, in such matters as to the style, or furniture, or ornamentation of churches, the dresses of the clergy, the hours and seasons and order and mode of worship, or any of the other matters that are necessary for a right and proper performance of the ordinances of religion, unless what they do is plainly opposed either to the letter or spirit of the Christian writings, or the simplicity and spirituality that should characterise all our approaches unto God—then their doings are unquestionably authoritative, and, moreover, binding upon all the members of the Church over whom these office-bearers rule. And although, in virtue of that right of private judgment and liberty of conscience which each individual Christian possesses, especially in all Protestant Churches, some one may not be quite satisfied with the propriety of some of these minor details, yet, recognising the authority which the office-bearers of the Church possess, and the necessity of order and law in every Christian Church, and bearing in mind, moreover, the humble and submissive spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, he will, if not from compulsion, yet from a spirit of Christian charity, endeavour to yield up his own notions on these indifferent matters to the gen-

eral laws of the Christian society, and act in accordance with that precept of Christ uttered at His baptism by John, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

As history and experience, however, tell us, the authorities of the Church of Christ have often, either consciously or unconsciously, abused their powers, and erred grievously at times, in the imposition of rites and ceremonies in the respective Christian communities over which they bear rule. And they have done this by not attending to the great distinctive feature of Christianity—namely, its *spirituality;* that, above every other system that has, rightly or wrongly, assumed the name of religion, it is essentially spiritual in its nature, modes of administration, and aims. And because of this very circumstance, the Divine Being, in His wisdom, has not intrusted it to the infant state of the world's history, for which in all probability it would have been found wholly unsuited, but has cast it upon the most thoughtful and reflective ages. Christianity, with its revealed truth, its abiding God, and the Holy Spirit, its weekly Lord's Day, its numberless churches and preachers, its holy services and Communion-seasons, its high aims and aspirations, is the heaven-appointed nursery of man's spiritual nature, intended to prepare that nature for the pure joys and unending activities of a better world. It is a school of comfort to the sorrowing, a refuge for the erring and sinful, and a field of discipline for all, tutoring man to abiding faith in God through Christ, and to a right performance of all earth's duties, in the sure and certain hope of a great and enduring reward. Now it has often happened that the rulers of

the Church, in their zeal and anxiety to set spiritual things before the mind, have often, by their arrangements, done the very reverse; for they have given such an importance and impressiveness to material things used as symbols, as to make the worshipper's mind stop short at the symbol, and obscure altogether the spiritual thing which it was intended to portray. And thus, in the progress of ages, they have created a Christian idolatry, or idolatrous Christianity. For instance, the apparently harmless pictures and images of the Saviour and His cross, the use of signs and symbolic actions in worship, the various parts of the robes of the clergy invested with a symbolic meaning, and suchlike, intended to lead the mind of the worshipper to spiritual things, have, when indulged in for a time, by the wonderful power of habit, absorbed the feelings and emotions of the heart, which should have gone up like incense to God. It is true, indeed, that the world of humanity is not in that infant state as regards spiritual things in which it was when the Jewish religion, with its many ceremonies, was founded; but, nevertheless, the mind of man is constitutionally the same; and therefore, wherever there is a profusion of material objects used as symbols, the tendency will be to give a spirituality and mystery to the symbol, so that, instead of its being a help to the worshipper, as perhaps it was intended to be, it will be an effective and degrading barrier between the soul and God, and will ultimately bring the individual into a state of bondage—a bondage of reverence and superstition for mere symbols, which is wholly inconsistent with true worship and Christian liberty. This has been the case, alas! in the sad experience of millions in former ages

who have borne the Christian name, but who, it is to be feared, never tasted the sweets of Christian liberty and spiritual freedom. The cross, by long usage and frequent observation—not as an object of ornamentation of the person, but as a religious symbol—has drawn the piety and reverence of the Christian heart to itself, and ultimately failed to convey to the mind, as it was intended to do, any idea whatever of the great sacrifice of Calvary, and the perfect atonement for sin that was made there. And so, too, the extravagant use of music in churches—not the use, but the *extravagant use*—has tended rather to soothe and lull the soul into a spiritual torpor, and to confine its thoughts to the occasion or the performers, than raise the desires and aspirations to that God who demands the homage and love of every heart. The rich dresses of priests, the incense rising from altars, the processions of white-robed choristers, the lights and draperies and burnished ornaments, and other attractive objects and mysterious utterances of a superstitious and sensuous worship, have pleased the eye and the ear, and, it may be, gratified and impressed the æsthetic feelings, but they have frequently done nothing else, because worship, and such worship as Christ requires His people to give, has been thereby completely sacrificed. The soul has throughout the whole, in all probability, never been near to God. The heart, with its sins and sorrows, has never been moved, and the conscience, instead of being roused and quickened in all its sensibilities, has only been the more lulled into a slumber. This is not worship, but a perversion of worship, and must be most detrimental to all the powers and susceptibilities of the human mind. There can be no true worship where the wor-

shipper's soul is not impressed with the majesty, purity, and holiness of God, the grandeur of the heavenly world, the seraphic glory and happiness of all its denizens; and therefore, when a showy and sensuous ritual takes away the mind from these, and concentrates it on mere sensible things, the most licentious profligate may indulge in such a service without being even made to feel what a sinner he is before high heaven, or what need he has of the pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace of God.

To obviate, then, all abuse or perversion of the rites and ceremonies of the Church, it ought to be the constant aim of all Church rulers to keep as near as possible to the essential ordinances of religion and the Christian services, or at least to give them that place and prominence in the worship of God which their character evidently demands, and which God intended them to occupy when He specially prescribed them in His holy Word. In this way Church rulers will be adhering closely to divine law, and taking the best means of securing the divine blessing. For it is well known that, both in natural and spiritual things, a rigid compliance with divine law never fails to bring a sure reward. As men in ordinary circumstances are made strong, and kept strong, by attending carefully to the ascertained laws of health; as a compliance with Nature's processes in applied science invariably brings Nature's help;—so a rigid compliance with undoubted Gospel ordinances—ordinances that have on them the stamp of heaven and the testimony of ages — will assuredly bring Gospel blessings. The ark—God's ordinance to Noah—did not fail him or his family in the hour of need, nor the brazen serpent the

wounded Israelites, nor the waters of Jordan the leprous Naaman; and so Gospel preaching, prayer, praise, the reading of the Bible, the administration of the Sacraments, and all those ordinances that are founded upon the sure and authoritative letter of the divine Word, will assuredly bring salvation to men, and enrich with divine grace the individuals, families, and nations that go to make up and represent the living Christianity of the world.

But whilst it is possible for Church rulers to err in the imposition of rites and ceremonies, it is no less possible for ordinary worshippers to pervert and abuse all the ordinances of the house of God; and therefore, in seeking to render as perfect as possible the services of the sanctuary, it will not do to eliminate from our calculations the conduct of the worshipper. Indeed, all arrangements will be comparatively worthless where the worshipper supposes himself to be a mere machine or automaton, and is not sensible, not merely of his privileges, but of the great burden of responsibility as regards preparation and devout bearing that rests on him as a member of a Christian community. Although results are with God, both in nature and religion, yet a right use of the means is required of all who call themselves by the Christian name. Every one, therefore, who enters a sanctuary, when that most sacred of all days comes round, should strenuously endeavour to make religion tell upon his nature, character, and life. The very existence of a house of God, not to speak of the solemnity of its services, should remind the worshipper as he enters it that now the most sacred of all earthly duties are to be performed by him; and just, therefore, as the husbandman does not trifle with

the productive capacity of the earth, but earnestly uses it, and as the physician applies himself with all his skill to cure disease by taking advantage of the curative and sanative powers of the human body—so ought every professing Christian honestly and earnestly to use those great, powerful, divine, spiritual agencies that God has established in His Church for the promotion of the divine glory, and the temporal and eternal wellbeing of mankind. And, indeed, not only has the Almighty instituted those laws in His spiritual kingdom upon earth for the most beneficent of purposes, but throughout every day and every age He wants to bless them. Although the whole universe of created beings and things is dependent upon His almighty arm, yet wherever, in lowly cottage or in vaulted cathedral, those spiritual laws are put in operation, there is the Divine Being present to give pardon to the sinful, comfort to the sorrowing, and grace and strength and joy to all, that their lives, notwithstanding cares, anxieties, sins, and disquietudes, may be all the more happy, and their deaths peaceful and triumphant. And, moreover, what a grandeur of freedom and beauty is there in this service of the house of God! What a spectacle for the hosts of heaven to witness! It is not necessary that all in a Christian assembly should be animated at all times with one thought as the service proceeds, any more than it is necessary that all the flowers of a garden should be of one fragrance or one hue, or all the instruments of music give forth one sound. On the contrary, it is the very glory and charm of this spiritual system, the liberty which it affords to each worshipper; allowing the unfettered spirit that ought not to

be trammelled with a profusion of symbols to soar away up to its God, in the way of its own eager wants, to tell to Him its sorrows, and to draw from Him its graces and inspirations; so that whilst in a Christian congregation, by the mind's power of concurrent thought, the child may be secretly breathing its prayers or hymns, and the mourner recounting his sorrows, and the penitent seeking pardon and peace, and the weary and unsatisfied seeking rest, and the whole hallowed assembly full of life and thought and love, yet at the same time this divine machinery may be so acting as to give a unity and impetus to the heart's cravings and the soul's utterances, each one breathing the pious exclamations, "It is good for me to be here!" "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." For next to the promotion of God's glory, the other great end which Christian ordinances serve is the benefit of mankind; and if they succeed in both these results—as succeed they must, wherever they are humbly and sincerely engaged in—then their objects will be gained. Like all things mundane, indeed, they must pass away,—religious places, persons, seasons, services, and other means of grace; and well will it be for Christians if to their souls they not only adumbrate to some extent the *employments* of heaven, but if they also fit them for that eternal world where no temple is seen, but where "THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT."