

A FORM

OF RENEWING COVENANT WITH GOD,

AT

THE LORD'S TABLE.

.....

BY HUGH KNOX, D. D.....IN ST. CROIX.

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MOST great and adorable **JEHOVAH!** Behold! a poor, insignificant guilty worm of the dust, here prostrate before thee, as it were on the bended knees of my soul, acknowledging thy glorious majesty and divine perfections, thine eternal duration, infinity, self-sufficiency, all-sufficiency, unchangeableness, and incomprehensibility..... thine almighty power, all penetrating knowledge, unerring wisdom, un-bounded goodness, unfailling faithfulness, impartial justice, and undissembled truth.

I desire to rejoice (and O! that the whole world would rejoice!) that there is *such a* God, and that this God ruleth in the heaven and in the earth, and doeth according to his most sacred, sovereign and holy will throughout the universe.

LORD, I acknowledge with *gratitude and joy*, that I am thy *creature* and thy *servant*, thy *subject*, under infinite and unchangeable obligations to *know, serve, honour, fear, reverence,* and *obey* thee; yea, to *be* and to *do* just what thou pleasest. And I would for ever adore thee, that thou hast so closely connected *my duty* with *thine own glory*, and *my highest interest*: that although my foundation is in the dust; all my original shame, and my nature sin.....yet thou art giving encouragement to such a *base, guilty wretch* as I am and *have been*, to approach thee the *eternal all*, the fountain of all being, holiness and happiness through **JESUS CHRIST**, the eternal Son of thy love, with hopes of being pardoned, accepted and saved by his most precious merit and mediation! **LORD,** what am I: what is my *original, lineage, descent* and *nature*? what my *conduct, merit,* and *desert*, that thou shouldst once condescend to look down from the throne of thy majesty and holiness upon such a creature as I *have been,* and *still am*: that thou shouldst once permit me to name thy

venerable name with my guilty lips....much more, that thou shouldst stoop to enter into covenant with me, or cause me to hope for any blessing from thee!

Verily, O LORD, I *blush*, am *ashamed* and even *confounded*, at the very thoughts of this matchless grace and condescension!—And were it not that thou LORD, hast spoken it; that it is thine own revealed, declared will, to regard such sinners through Christ, and that thou canst never *change*, *lie*, nor *repent*, I should even now despair of any mercy at thy hands: for, I must confess in the presence of the all-seeing, heart-trying God, whom the closest hypocrisy cannot deceive, that I have been an *unprofitable servant*, a *prodigal son*, a *wandering sheep*, a *barren, fruitless tree*, a *cumberer of the ground*, a *vile, obstinate rebel*, who by ten thousand aggravated sins, have deserved the hottest hell! How often hast thou called thy back-sliding creature, while I have refused?—How often hast thou stretched out thy gracious hand and merciful sceptre, while I have disregarded?—What *commandment* of thine have I not broken?—What *talent* or *ordinance* have I not misimproved?—What *mercy* have I not slighted—What instance of thy grace and favour; what gift of thy providence, have I not turned into wantonness?—How far have I been from using this world so as not to abuse it?—How many duties have I neglected through *sloth* and *vanity*, and other *base, low, unworthy* motives?—How many sins have I committed against light, knowledge, and conscience of duty?—How many of my poor fellow-creatures (those immortal souls for whom Christ died!) have I tempted and drawn into sin, by evil example, wicked solicitations, and foolish, light, vain, unchristian behaviour?—And therefore have *their* guilt to answer for as well as *my own*!—How unwatchfully, uncircumspectly, and unlike a child of light, and a disciple of Christ, I have walked, LORD, thou knowest? How many *foolish, idle words* and *vain, sinful jests* have proceeded out of my mouth—and how little of that which was good for the use of edifying, or that might minister grace to the hearers? How many of my poor fellow-creatures have I *corrupted* and *defiled*; but how few have I *edified* and *profited*?—How little have I watched over my *heart* my *thoughts*, my *lips*, my *passions*, my *temper* and *spirit*? How easily have I been provoked to *anger*, to *revenge*, to *envy*, to *slander*, to *rash* and *uncharitable*

judging, and to *injurious* and *abusive language* against my neighbours, yea, against my dear christian brethren, whom I should love in the LORD *fervently* and *unfeignedly*, and to whom I should do good and not evil, all the days of my life ! How unthankful, ungrateful, impatient, undutiful, unhumble have I been ; how shamefully defective and wanting have I been, in all the relative and social duties of life, as a child, a parent, a neighbour, a friend, a husband, a wife, a subject, a Christian !—O, alas ! How cold and stupid in prayer ! How inconstant and indevout in my attendance on holy ordinances and holy duties ! How careless in reading thy holy word, and treasuring it up in my memory !

O LORD, thou knowest these things altogether, and now they lie as a heavy burden upon my soul ! Now I see their folly and their baseness ; their *guilt*, and their *treachery* ! And O ! that I might see them clearer and clearer, until the sight might pain my very heart, and make my soul sink in humility, and overflow with the tears of sincere, unfeigned contrition and repentance ! Behold, LORD, I am vile ! What shall I answer before thee ? I put my hand on my mouth, and my mouth as it were in the dust, and cry out unclean before thee. My sins against *light* and *love* ; against *mercies* and *corrections* ; against *advices* and *reproofs* ; against *vows*, *promises*, *resolutions*, and *covenant engagements* ; against God the *Father*, God the *Son*, and God the *Holy Ghost* ; against God, my neighbour and myself. My sins of omission and commission ; of thought, word, and deed ; known and unknown ; remembered and forgotten ; of childhood, youth, and manly age :—My sins against reason and conscience ; against the *law* and the *gospel*—are next to an infinite sum ; they are far beyond my numbering ; they are in number more than the hairs on my head, or than the sands on the sea shore, which cannot be reckoned :—They have gone over my head ; they have ascended up even unto heaven, and bear witness against me, crying for vengeance, like the blood of righteous *Abel*. And whereas the very smallest of this number is sufficient to sink me into hell, and forever to separate me from thy gracious presence—yet, O LORD, they are all ever before thee and in the light of thy countenance, accompanied with every circumstance of their guilt and aggravation : for there never has been a

thought in my heart, a word in my mouth, or an action in my life, but thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether.—Although I have often studied to conceal and forget my sins, yet they are ever in the light of thy countenance, and recorded in the book of thine infinite knowledge and remembrance, as though they had been but just now committed!

LORD, be thou therefore merciful unto me a *sinner*; a *great* and *guilty* transgressor! *Mercy, mercy* is my only suit; my only plea! *Mercy* and *pardon*, through the blood of Christ, is *all my hope*, and *all my salvation*!

O let the King this day at his table grant me the forfeited life of my soul at my request, of *mere undeserved mercy*: for what profit is there in my blood, O thou God of salvation?

I have no righteousness of my own to plead, wherefore I should be *pardoned, justified*, and *accepted* of thee to mercy! All my righteousnesses, even the whole sum of them taken together, are but *filthy rags*! They need pardon, but cannot deserve favour. I do, therefore, from my very heart, *renounce and disclaim* every kind and degree of *trust* and *dependence* on my *prayers, tears, charities, repentances, good frames, holy duties*, and *all my other best works*, for pardon and justification with thee, my GOD. Every duty which I have done since I was born, has been mixed with so much *sin, infirmity, and imperfection*, that they are utterly unworthy to be accepted and rewarded by a holy GOD; unless it be through the merit, and for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. I therefore put my whole trust in CHRIST the MEDIATOR, as my *surety* and *atoning sacrifice*; as my *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification* and *redemption*; as my LORD and REDEEMER; my Prophet, Priest and King; for *pardon, salvation, and glory*: for I know of no other name given under heaven whereby I can be saved.

I bless thee, O LORD of heaven and earth, that thou art well pleased with sinners, in him the Son of thy love; that, in him, thou art reconciling a guilty world unto thyself, not imputing their tresspasses to them;—that through him sinners have access unto thee the Father;—that thou hast exalted him by thy right hand, to be a

Prince and a Saviour, to *give repentance and remission of sins* ; that whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life ;—that through his blood we have remission, even the full forgiveness of all sin ; that whosoever cometh unto him by faith, he will in no wise cast out—and that I, even I, have liberty to enter into an everlasting covenant with thee, through him, who is the *way, the truth, and the life* ; the *truc and living way* unto thee the Father.

Behold, therefore, with an eye of compassion thy *returning prodigal*, thy *lost sheep*, desiring to come unto thee *in this way*, which thou thyself hast appointed. I desire to *come*, LORD draw me by thy holy Spirit ! I desire to *believe*, LORD help thou mine unbelief ! I desire to come *wearry and heavy laden* under the burden of my sins ; LORD increase a sense of their insupportable weight, and give me *that rest*, which thou hast graciously promised ! I desire to surrender my soul and body to thee, with all their powers and faculties—all that I *am, have, and can do*, sensible of thy right to them by creation, preservation and redemption ; and sorry, heartily sorry, that I ever strayed from thee in any instance, or ever served Satan or my own lusts. LORD, do thou graciously accept the surrender through CHRIST, and make me in all things just what thou wouldst have me to be. Make me *worthy of thee*, and *fit for thy enjoyment*.

I call heaven and earth, thyself, thy holy angels, and my fellow-communicants, to witness *this day*, that *here*, over the memorials of thy Son's sacrifice, I do *take and avouch* thee, O thou eternal God, to be my covenant God, and my heavenly Father through Christ. O save thy creature, thy servant, thy subject, thine unworthy child, who putteth his trust in thee, and chuseth thee as his chief good and everlasting portion ! O lift upon me the light of thy countenance ; be reconciled unto me through Christ ; manifest thyself unto me, so as thou dost not unto the world : let all thy divine perfections be engaged for my protection, support, comfort and direction, through the straits and difficulties, the dangers and temptations of this wicked world ; through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and into thy blissful and happy presence, in the world of spirits above. Let no

evil spirit, or evil lust, be ever permitted to pluck me out of thy gracious hands; but lead me by thy counsel here, and afterwards receive me to glory. And now, O God, that I am *thine*, by this *express self-dedication*, employ me wholly in thy service, and use me as an instrument of thy glory. Make me faithful unto the death, and give me a crown of life. Not *my will*, but *thy will* be done, both by me, in me and concerning me. I trust thy wisdom and mercy with my temporal and eternal *all*, and only desire a will to submit and resign to thee in all things, and to acquiesce in all thy dealings and dispensations, as knowing them to be infinitely the wisest and the *best*.

I call heaven and earth to witness *this day*, over these solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the second person of the blessed Trinity, to be my LORD and SAVIOUR; my *head and husband*; my *surety, propitiation and advocate*; my *prophet, priest, and king*; my *righteousness and strength*; my *mediator, example, and almighty friend*! O blessed Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy upon me! I desire to commit and betrust my guilty, precious, perishing soul, with all its everlasting concerns, into thy *faithful, powerful, compassionate* hands; and would desire above all things, a further and more experimental knowledge of thy *power and grace*, whom I thus trust with mine eternal *all*, that so my faith and hope may be yet stronger, and my doubts and fears fewer in number, and of less strength. LORD I believe; help thou mine unbelief;—I know that the Father hath committed *all power* to thee; hath made thee head over all things for the good of the church; hath constituted thee a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins: I also *know and believe*, that thou thyself art the *all-sufficient God*; and as mediator, art *perfect God and perfect man*, and therefore art every way qualified to be a Saviour for lost and undone sinners:—and as thou art *perfectly qualified*, so thou hast often declared thy *great willingness to seek and to save* those that are lost.—LORD, save me, thy *lost sheep*.—Save me from my sins, which are many, and from thy fearful divine judgments which they have deserved; for thou, LORD, art mighty, and able to save unto the uttermost, all sinners that

come unto God by thee. I take and avouch thee for my prophet ; O reveal thy word in my heart—write thy law there—put thy fear there, and give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of thyself and of thy Father.

I take thee for my priest : O plead the everlasting merit and efficacy of thy sacrifice and of thy blood with the Father, on my behalf, who have no merit of my own. O thou beloved *SON of GOD*, thou *Lamb of GOD*, who takest away the sin of the world, whom the Father always heareth, and who never prayest in vain—intercede for me with thy Father, that my sins may be pardoned for the sake of what thou hast done and suffered, and that I may be clothed with thy most perfect and spotless righteousness. I would receive thee this day, O thou *bleeding Lamb of GOD*, into a *broken and bleeding* heart ;—a heart pierced with sorrow for my sins, and flaming with gratitude for the precious fruits of thy dying love.

I take and avouch thee this day, O blessed Jesus, for my *King and Lawgiver* : LORD, take the possession and dominion of my heart ;—rule supreme there ;—cast out all thine enemies, my lusts, my evil and ungoverned thoughts and passions ; bring my will and every affection under the authority and direction of thy laws and thy Spirit.

I take thee, O blessed Jesus, this day for my *head and husband* : O make me a living member of thy mystical body. May I daily and hourly derive strength, vigour, spiritual nourishment and growth in grace from thee, the living head of divine influences. Let this be the day of my spiritual espousals. Betroth me unto thyself : adorn me with the wedding garment of thy righteousness : let me, with the king's daughter, be all glorious within ; clothed with the garment of holiness, even that white raiment of needle-work, which is the righteousness of the saints, that my soul may be as a bride, adorned to meet her husband : take me into thy banqueting house, and let thy banner over me be love.—“ Awake, “ O north wind ; come thou south, and blow upon my “ garden, that the odorous spices of divine grace may “ flow forth ; and then let my beloved come into his “ garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Kiss me with the

“ kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine !” Prepare me for thine eternal embraces ; and make me a welcome and happy guest at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

I do this day take thee, O blessed JESUS, for my *elder brother* and *forerunner*, who hast taken possession of the promised inheritance, in the name of all thy followers : O do thou prepare a place, even one of the lowest and humblest mansions in my Father’s house for me ; that I may be forever with thee, to see thy glory and be a humble and thankful partaker of thy happiness.

I *vouch* thee this day for mine *almighty* and *everlasting friend* ; as a friend who art here giving me an amazing and astonishing proof, both of the reality and greatness of thy friendship, in these memorials of thy *bitter passion*, and *bleeding, dying love* : O do thou enkindle in my heart suitable returns of love and friendship. Let me die, rather than not to love thee. Let me be annihilated, rather than be thine enemy. Stand by and support me, in a course of faithful, persevering obedience. Stand by and support and comfort me, when all my earthly friends must leave me, and when all their kindest wishes and warmest affections, can afford me no succour or relief. Stand by, O almighty friend, in the chilling hour of death. Let thy staff and thy rod then comfort me ; and do thou who hast the keys of death and of the invisible world, be my gracious guardian and conductor, in the cloudless regions of *joy, serenity, peace and glory*.

I do call heaven and earth, and all my Christian brethren to witness this day, over these dear and solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the HOLY GHOST, the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity, to be my *sanctifier*, my *enlightener*, my *renewer*, my *guide* and *comforter* ; praising God for the inestimable gift of his holy Spirit : O thou *heavenly Dove*, do thou descend upon my soul, as a *fuller’s soap* and *refiner’s fire* :—descend, bearing the olive branch of peace, love, joy and comfort. Make thine abode in my soul, as in thy spiritual temple : shed abroad thy divine influences in my heart : banish every lust thence ; renew, sanctify, quicken comfort and seal it, to the day of redemption : be in me a Spirit of peace, love, joy, and of a sound mind ;

and do thou, I humbly beseech thee, never be provoked to leave or forsake me, until thou hast sanctified me throughout, and fitted me for heavenly glory.

And now, O blessed LORD, behold I am *thine* ! *Thine* by *creation, preservation, and redemption* ! *Thine* by this express covenant engagement, which I desire, in the most serious, solemn and affectionate manner to renew at thy table, over the dear pledges of that blood, by which it was ratified and sealed on thy part ! I would now embrace the *precious promises* of it, and chuse them for my portion. I would now resolve, in thy strength, to perform the duties and conditions of it ; and to wait upon thee day by day, for fresh supplies of this strength. I wait, O LORD, for thy salvation ! I crave not great things in this world. Order all things relating to my body and temporal concerns, just as thy wisdom and goodness will judge most meet for me ; only let my soul be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And as, after I have renewed this my covenant at thy table, I am again to go forth into a *sinful, deluding* world, where I shall be surrounded with fresh temptations : O let me ever bear this solemn covenant transaction in my mind, that I may not prove treacherous to my *dearest* LORD ; that I may not add the guilt of perjury to that of unfaithfulness. O ! let me ever bear about with me such a sense of the dying love of my dear Redeemer, as may engage me to the most cheerful and universal obedience to his laws. Let me never prove a scandal and disgrace to the Christian name, by apostacy, or infidelity ; and to thy name shall be the praise and glory, through eternal ages. Amen.

OUR DUTY

IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. WE should retire as soon as possible to examine ourselves, of our frames and exercises of mind at this holy ordinance.

2. If we find that we have had lively exercises of the sacramental graces, we should humbly and heartily thank GOD for the aids of his Spirit, and importunately

beseech him to continue these gracious frames, and preserve us from forfeiting them by fresh acts of sin.

3. If we find that our frames and affections have been dull, dead, or trifling, we ought attentively to consider from whence this may have proceeded. If we are conscious that we have been at due pains to prepare our hearts, and that we have indulged no willful sin; and if we find that our dullness and coldness was matter of grief to us at the ordinance, we ought not to be overmuch dejected, but hope that it may have proceeded from bodily indisposition, and that we may have nevertheless been accepted. We should also beseech God to vouchsafe those comforts now, which were withheld from us at his table, and that he would enable us perseveringly to seek them. But,

4. If we find that this uncomfortable frame has been owing to carelessness, and a want of due preparation on our part, or has proceeded from a consciousness of guilt from some indulged iniquity or unmortified lust, we should deeply lament such a criminal circumstance before God, apply earnestly to the blood of sprinkling for cleansing, and implore the divine pardon and mercy through Christ.

5. It becomes us immediately after this ordinance, to renew our holy resolutions, and to call up all our vigilance, for the two following reasons:—*First*. Satan is peculiarly busy, after sealing ordinances, in endeavouring to rob us of the comforts of religion; to undo what was done at the ordinance; and either to cajole us into *security*, or to drive us into *despair*; and, generally speaking, the greater sensible comfort we have had in the ordinance, the greater danger shall we be in of falling into *spiritual pride*, or *fatal security* after it. It has been also observed, that men are liable to fall into the heaviest temptations immediately after sacraments. *Satan's* most violent assaults upon our Saviour happened immediately after his baptism, the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, and that signal honour done him, by a voice from the excellent glory;* and it was on the back of his first sacrament, and after the most confident and sanguine resolutions of *Peter*, that he was tempted

* *Luke* iii. 21, 22.—iv. 1, &c.

to deny his Lord and Master, and so scandalously yielded to the temptation.*—*Second.* It becomes us to renew and strengthen our resolutions, that our Christian profession may be adorned, and that Christianity may not suffer by our follies and indiscretions.

6. These good resolutions should be formed *wholly and only* in the strength of Christ; and indeed, *this itself* ought to be one of our most solemn resolutions, that *we will live wholly by faith on the Son of God.* This is that all-important doctrine of humility and self-denial which is inculcated upon us, throughout the whole gospel, and which is indeed the very *spirit and genius* of the gospel itself, that, renouncing all self-righteousness and self-dependence, we are to rely wholly on the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer: going forth to perform all duty, and to encounter all temptation, only in his strength and in the power of his might; casting all our cares upon him who careth for us, and desiring to be found only in him, clothed with his righteousness.—Had *Peter's* good resolutions been formed in this manner, he could never have fallen: the arm of omnipotence would have been his sure defence, and his head would have been shielded in the day of battle.

7. If our souls have been properly exercised at this sacrament, our conduct and conversation will shine afterwards with a peculiar lustre. Holy exercises will probably shew themselves by their natural fruits. Our faces will shine like that of *Moses* when he returned from conversing with God on the mount; and we shall give the world occasion to *take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus.*†

8. It will be advantageous after sacraments, expressly to mention our sacramental engagements in all our prayers, as an expedient to keep a solemn sense of them alive on our minds.

9. When we are called out in the course of providence to encounter any trial, temptation, or difficult and self-denying duty (which must frequently be the case with every Christian) we should call to remembrance this our solemn covenant, so publicly transacted, and so lately renewed; and ask our consciences what conduct will best become us as communicants, who have bound ourselves

* *Mark* xiv. 29—71.

† *Acts* iv. 14.

by solemn and public vows to be the Lord's, and to live wholly to his honour and glory.

10 That course of life by which we may best honour our Christian profession after this sacrament, seems to be the following. 1. Our conversation ought in all things to be such as becometh the gospel of Christ.* 2. We should have a constant eye to the example of Christ, and carefully study it, as laid down in the gospel, with a particular design of being conformed to it.† 3. We should endeavour to shew the world by our outward deportment, that we enjoy a serene, cheerful, and happy state of mind: yet at the same time we should guard in a particular manner, against discovering a relish for *sensual, sinful indulgences*, or a disposition to levity, trifling and vanity. 4. It is of the utmost importance to the honour of our profession, that we *govern our passions*; as Christian professors, who indulge *anger, malice, envy, covetousness, revenge*, or the like, are the foulest blots and scandals of religion. 5. If communicants would not be guilty of crucifying their Lord afresh, let them be careful of truth in their words, faithfulness in their promises, honesty in their dealings, modesty, sobriety and temperance in their lives, and that on all occasions they speak honourably of religion.

* *Phillip. i. 27. Eph. iv. 1, &c. Col. i. 10. 1 Thees. ii. 12.*

† *Matt. xvi. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. Rom. viii. 29.*

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