

guage so common in the mouths of those who approach for the first time, or who are about to approach for the first time, the communion table of our Saviour. They say that they are going to take on themselves new and solemn obligations. Others, in speaking of the act, express themselves in the same manner. In short, there is no phrase more common. In my opinion, there is none more unmeaning; and I shall continue to think so, till it can be shown to me how it is possible that a creature of God can take on himself a *new* religious obligation; how it is possible that by professing his intention to obey the divine commandments, he has added a single one to the list which already existed, and which had bound him down from his cradle with the adamant strength of condition and necessity.

To say, that this person has just begun to entertain a proper sense of his obligations; that he has received new impressions of his duty, is perfectly correct. He may in time past have scoffed at virtue and religion, and held his own pleasure to be his only law and guide; and now he may see the folly of such a course, and repent of it, and turn to the Lord his God, humbling himself before him, and resolving to keep his commandments. But still he has taken on himself no new obligations. He was as much obliged to perform all his duty before this change of feeling, as he is now. The obligations were always upon him, every one of them; but instead of being treated, as before, with neglect and contumely, they are now soberly and rightly apprehended. What I mean to say, is, that though to acknowledge is infinitely better than to slight them, neither their nature nor their number, their strength nor their degree, is altered in the least. The