

with the Church implies, they keep themselves free from responsibility, and will escape the punishment of broken vows and engagements.

But it requires very few words to shew, how erroneous and how dangerous such a sentiment is. At best, in avoiding such profession, men class themselves with heathens and unbelievers; they put themselves upon a level with that large portion of mankind, which have never heard of a Saviour. And if this be a safe condition, then Christ must have died in vain; it would be useless, in that case, to preach the Gospel, or to try to convert the infidel and idolater. But if they would shrink from such a sentiment as this, and admit that out of Christ there is no salvation, they must avail themselves of it by the appointed means. The promise and profession, however weighty and solemn, must be made and kept up, if they would obtain pardon of their sins, and be received at last into God's kingdom of glory.

This being the case, it should, my brethren, be a matter of deep concern and anxious inquiry with us, whether the spiritual society in which *we* are enrolled, is really the one which can be traced out, and proved, to have been constituted by our Lord in the beginning. This we confess to be a delicate inquiry. The Christian world is much split up into sects and parties; and each of these would claim to be right. Divisions of this sort, in the face of scriptural precept and Apostolic practice, we must confess to be unfortunate, hard as it may have been in some cases to avoid them; and possibly a sort of justification is pleaded by such sects and parties, because our own Church of England is accused of having herself the aspect of a sect or divided part of Christianity, inasmuch as, at the Reformation, she departed from what was then recognized as the universal Catholic Church.

But let us try to fix the truth of this matter in our understandings, and graft it amongst our unalterable principles.