

rite, by which the convert formally consecrated himself to it. The drunkard does not become at once a temperate man by signing a pledge of total abstinence ; but he sets his face at once in that direction, and he does it by an instantaneous effort of the mind ; and there are many remarkable cases of entire reformation consequent on that effort. Every resolution to do otherwise than we have done, — otherwise than by long habit and settled bias we incline to do, — is a leap, a new birth, a new creation.

While, therefore, your domestication in the kingdom of heaven is a gradual process, your acceptance of the offer which invites you there must be instantaneous, — a sudden lift within the mind, by which you are raised above yourself into newness of life. It is an effort of the will by which we accept the call of God to lead a religious life, to sit down in his kingdom, to come to the marriage and partake of the feast ; — an effort without which nothing worthy was ever accomplished.

The call does not take us from our accustomed pursuits. The farm and the merchandise furnish no excuse for neglecting it. Religion is not an employment by itself, but a principle consecrating all employments to high and worthy ends. To every pursuit which is innocent and lawful in itself, it gives a new impulse, breathes into it a new spirit, and secures for it a better success. The feast to which we are called is not provided in a separate and solitary place, but the table is spread in the midst of the world. This visible world contains the topics about which we are to be principally employed. We must look to another for light, and strength, and motive ; but it is here that we are to look for the chief topics of our duty ; it is here that we are to live and to labor. There is no lawful