

individual, let us suppose, was formerly profane; now, having made a profession of faith, he sets a guard upon his lips; but was it not as much his duty to observe the third commandment then, as it is now? Was it not criminal then? Has his confession of its criminality increased it? Has he really such a power over right and wrong?

This is perhaps an extreme case. Let us attend to a more common one. There are those, who, without having ever been notoriously bad, who indeed have gone along through life commendably and with fair reputations, have nevertheless refused to come to the communion table, because they have no idea of giving up a certain way of living; which so long as they abstain from a profession of religion, they pursue without scruple, as being perfectly harmless, but which they regard, and which is generally regarded, as inconsistent with such a profession. They like to be gay, gay in spirit, and gay in external appearance; they are passionately fond of dancing; they delight in going to splendid entertainments, and in splendidly entertaining their friends in return, and they will not accept the invitation of their Saviour, because they conceive that by so doing they render that course criminal, which, till they do so, is perfectly safe. Now, I presume not to say, that the way of life which they love is not innocent; it may, or it may not be so, according as certain rules are observed or transgressed, which it would not be in place to discuss here; but I say, that if their way of life is innocent before they become visible members of a church, it will also be innocent after that connexion is formed; and if, on the other hand, it would be criminal then, it is assuredly criminal now. What is