Action Sermon at Ettrick, July 15, 1716.

CHRIST'S INVITATION TO HIS BRIDE.

SERMON IX.

SONG iv. 8.

Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

THIS world was never designed to be the fixed abode of the children of men, and therefore there was a restraint laid upon our first parents in paradise, as to the forbidden tree, shewing that they behoved to look to another world for their happiness. Man was once set fair on the way to the land where glory dwells, but he lost his way, and now poor sinners are found wandering on the mountains of vanity. The first Adam managed ill, and brought us into this condition. But behold, the second Adam came to gather the dispersed of Israel, and to lead them on their way to the better country. Hear his voice in the text, calling his people to leave the weary world and go homeward with himself.

The text is divided into two parts.

1. Christ's gracious call to his people to leave the world as mountains of vanity. And here is a double call which runs more emphatically in the original, thus, "With me from Lebanon, O spouse, with me come from Lebanon." In the first of these calls, observe the party to whom it is directed, namely to Christ's spouse. Those persons that are espoused to him by embracing him in the covenant. It is to be observed, that this is the first time that the church gets this name in this song. We read of the espousals before, chap. iii. 11. And here he begins to own the relation, for some special reason surely, which I conceive to be this, which may give us a just notion of the call. It was a custom among the Jews, that the Bridegroom took the bride out of the city into the fields, where they had their nuptial songs, and afterwards he brought her back again, leaning on him into the city to his father's house. To this custom there seems to be an allusion, chap. viii. 5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?" And here also in the text. And thus it is a call of Christ's bride to rise and come away with her Bridegroom to the city above to his Father's house. Observe also,

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The place from which she is to come, *from Lebanon.* It was a goodly pleasant mountain. It was a part of the good land that is beyond Jordan, even *that goodly mountain and Lebanon.* It was an odoriferous place, Hos. xiv. 6. and so may well represent the smiling world, which yet is only a bulky vanity, a place where Christ's spouse must not think to take up her abode. Observe also the company offered her in her journey home, *with me*, it is the society of her Bridegroom and Lord. In the world she cannot expect to have communion with him continued with her. So far as the deceitful world gains upon her heart, she loses of her communion with Christ. The manner of the call merits attention. It is an abrupt and hasty expression, intimating her great danger in sitting still, that therefore she must come away quickly, not lingering, and that he was very earnest to have her as it were plucked out of the fire. In the second of these calls, observe Christ's glory and excellency proposed to counterbalance all the ensnaring glory of the world. *With me, come with me.* And therefore in the former clause the offer of his society is supposed sufficient to draw her heart from the world. The world's glory dazzles the eyes, and arrests the hearts, even of the Lord's people, till they see the transcendent glory of their Lord, and this looses them from it, and makes them willing rather to go with Christ, than to sit still in the world's embraces.

Again observe that the call is fully expressed. *Come with me from Lebanon.* Come is an engaging word. The success of the Romans in their wars was ascribed to the word of command, which their military officers used. It was not go, but *come.* And how justly may it be expected that the hearts of the Lord's people at the hearing of that word from their Lord and husband. If the way be steep and difficult, he orders them not to go alone. Whatever they leave for him, they shall have himself in its stead.

2. Christ's gracious call to leave the world as mountains of prey, dangerous mountains. Observe here another emblem of the world. It is represented by three other mountains, Amana, Shenir, and Hermon, which two last some think to be but two tops of one mountain. We read of the pleasant dew of Hermon, Psal. cxxxiii. and it is likely all these mountains were pleasant ones as well as Lebanon. But yet they were indeed dangerous, for the lions had their dens there, and the leopards their haunts there. And thus the world is a dangerous place to Christ's spouse. She is in hazard while in it. Even in the midst of worldly felicity, there are fearful snares. The lions' dens are expressed emphatically, to strike her with a horror of the place, that she may haste away.

Observe also the duty to which the spouse is called, that is to

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look from them. This must be by an eye of faith, to look from these mountains to his Father's house, the sight of which would inflame her to go with him thither, even as Moses saw Canaan from Pisgah. It is surely a looking from them in order to leaving them: and indeed the word may signify to direct one's course, and this very word, Isa. lvii. 9. is rendered *thou wentest*, and implies a stateliness in going, agreeing well with the noble contempt of the height of worldly excellencies, arising in gracious souls, from their communion with their Lord in their way home.

Doctrine.—It is Christ's call to his bride, to come away home with him to his Father's house, from out of the deceitful and dangerous world.

For the illustration and improvement of this doctrine, I shall

I. Take notice of some things supposed in this kind call and invitation.

II. I shall explain this coming from the world.

III. I will shew the import of coming away with Christ from the world. I am then,

I. To take notice of some things supposed in this kind call and invitation to come away from out of the deceitful and dangerous world.

1. It supposeth that Christ's bride is yet in the world. She is not yet carried home to his Father's house, where the marriage is to be consummated. Our Lord in his prayer for himself and his people takes notice of this. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee." Christ's bride is yet in a state of imperfection. Though brought out of Egypt, yet not come to Canaan, but still in the willderness.

2. Though she be there, and perhaps has been there many years since she was united to Christ, yet he has not forgot her, but kindly remembers her still, whatever she may think otherwise. "But Zion, said the Lord, hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Neither distance of place betwixt the mountain of myrrh, and the mountains of vanity, nor length of time, wears out Christ's kindly remembrance of those who have once given themselves to him.

3. The world is not a place for Christ's spouse to rest in, she is in great danger there. The lions have their dens there, and leopards are ranging there. Though she must walk through it in her journey to Immanuel's land, she must not be much delighted with the deceit-

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ful mountains that may please the eye, or lay herself down to be solaced with them, for she may get a fearful rising, as Samson did out of Delila's lap. The Philistines be upon thee.

4. Yet sometimes the foolish creatures lie down even among the lions' dens, and being charmed with the deceitful mountains is averse to come away. She hugs the serpent in her arms, not considering the sting, and like the silly dove, nestles where she has been many times robbed. "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria." Perhaps when the soul first engaged with Christ, she could have been well pleased, there had been but one step betwixt the tent of the espousals and the marriage chamber in the Bridegroom's Father's house. But now that desire is away, she has taken up a dangerous lodging by the way, and can hardly be prevailed on to rise and open the door to her beloved, Song v. 3.

5. Our Lord takes notice of and is concerned for the soul's danger from the deceitful world. And therefore he cries with earnestness to come away. Though you sleep in dangerous places, *He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.* He knows that there is danger in places in which our eyes can discern none; and he shews a concern that we may be delivered from it, and therefore he calls and excites us to come away from it. We proceed,

II. To explain this coming from the world, or shew what is implied in it.

There is a twofold coming away from the world.

1. There is a natural coming out of it. By the course of nature, we are all on our way out of it. *One generation passeth away, and another cometh.* In this respect there is no abiding in it. Time runs with a rapid course, and whether we sleep or wake, it carries us down the stream, and will ere long waft us all into the ocean of eternity: and then farewell for ever the deceitful world. We are done with it for ever.

2. There is a spiritual coming out of it, namely, in heart and affection. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And thus believers in the exercise of grace are making away out of it. *They are coming up from the wilderness leaning upon their beloved.* When though they be in the world, yet they are living like people of another world; when though their bodies be on the earth, yet their hearts are in heaven. This is what Christ is calling you to this day. The substance of which you may take up in these few things. Christ is saying to you,

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1. Take your last look, the parting look of the world by faith even as Moses did of the profits and pleasures of Egypt. "He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." You looked with an unwary eye and lay down; look again where you are lying among the lions' dens, and rise up, and haste away. Take a believing look of the world as it is represented in God's word, deceitful and dangerous to the soul, as that which has wounded many, yea, and slain its ten thousands. Do as he, who upon awakening finds himself at the mouth of a lion's den, he looks to it with horror and runs away. Till you see your danger, you will never come away.

2. Turn your backs then upon the things of the world. Be mortified to them. Say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Our hearts are naturally glued to the world. Now let the bond be effectually loosed at Christ's call, that you may mount upwards. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant." Alas! how like are we to the bird that has a stone fixed by a cord to its foot, rising to fly it cannot because of the weight. "Let us then lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Lift up your hearts this day from the world's smiles, resolving through grace never to be again beguiled with them as you have been. "There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." You have lain long enough among the pots, and sure I am, you cannot but say, though you have been smoked sufficiently there, yet you have never been satisfied.—Come then let us break the world's silver cords of death; stop our ears at its siren songs, that have been bitterness already, and will be bitterness in the end, if we do not give them over.

The smiling world is meeting and embracing some. It is casting into their lap plentifully, and still they have prospect of more. But O! take heed to the dangerous embraces, lest it hug you to death, as surely it will, if you do not shake yourselves loose of it, "For the turning away of the simple, shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." I would therefore say to you in the words of Solomon, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an

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adder." The world is fleeing away from others, yet they are still following the bulky vanity, crying who will shew us any good? But O! give over the chase lest you fall on the mountains of vanity, and injure your souls, while pursuing shadows, which, if you had them, would not fill your hand. "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Regard not the world's frowns. "By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." Resolve through grace this day, to live above them, to set your face against the storm, and blow what weather it will, to be forward. Whatever may befall us, let us say with Habakkuk, "Yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation." O what a shame is it to see Christ's spouse always hanging down her head, when the world twists its brows. The clouds will return after the rain in these lower regions, and there is no correcting of the bad air that blows in the weary land. Let us resolve to take it as it comes, as those who are not to stay with it, who have business in another world, and must needs be forward, be it foul, be it fair.

3. Give up this day with the men of the world, never more to mix with the natives of the weary land; who labour for nothing but the entertainment of Lebanon, and who have taken up their home among the lions' dens. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." You have sported long enough with them, about the hole of the asp and the cockatrice den, and have seen many of them fall in, yet you are preserved. Now come away and leave them, lest you fall in next. Be exhorted "to save yourselves from this untoward generation."

Give up with the way of the men of the world. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away." Give over their fashions, though they be fashions with which you have been bred. *Forget also thine own people and thy Father's house.* If you have a mind to come away with Christ, you must this day commence nonconformists to the world. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Resolve henceforth to seek another portion, than that with which they take up. To follow higher and more noble designs than they do; and that your joys and sorrows shall run in another channel than theirs do.

Give up with their company. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." If you

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are resolved to come away with Christ, then they are not going your way, therefore you must forsake them. Why should you live with them when you would not desire to die with them. Evil company has ruined many, it has been the grave of their convictions, the pit in which good purposes and resolutions have perished, the wall of separation betwixt God and many a soul, and so in the end the absolute destruction of many for eternity. Let us now proceed,

III. To shew the import of coming away with Christ from the world.

I. Our Lord has a better place for your reception, than the world can be in its best dress. "But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath provided for them a city." This is the new Jerusalem. There his Father's house stands. And in that house are many mansions. If you ask where the city is situated? It is in the better country, Immanuel's land, the land that is blessed with an eternal spring, in which are no clouds, no night but an eternal day. If you enquire after the profits of the house? There is in it an eternal weight of glory. The possessor of it *shall inherit all things*. Rivers of pleasure are there. As to the dignity of the house, the inhabitants are all Kings and Priests unto God. The society of saints, angels, and to be ever with the Lord, constitute the felicity of the place.

2. Our Lord can assuredly bring you into this glorious and happy place. But O! will I obtain admission? Why, come with me says Christ, there will be no hinderance if you enter along with me. His Father has made him Lord of the land. Lord high steward of the house. "All power, saith Jesus, is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He has purchased the house, the country by his own blood, and he must either lose his expensive property, or have it peopled with the sons of fallen Adam.

3. That place is his own choice. It is long since he gave orders to tell his people where he was going. "Go, said he, to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." Now, says he, come with me. When he was in the world he never intended to stay for he despised it. He regarded not the smiles and flatteries of the world. A crown here he did not value. He despised the frowns of the world, and endured the cross. Well may he say come, he says not go, for he orders you to ride no ford, but what he himself hath passed before you.

4. Christ is in his way thither, out of the world to his Father's house, the better country. What, is not Christ there already?

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True, Christ personal is there, but Christ mystical is not there yet. There is a ravishing sight in the wilderness, if you could see it. There is a march sounded in the wilderness, and Christ's camp is lifted, and the fair army is upon their march to Immanuel's land, and they are so far advanced in their march, that their Forerunner, the General, and the van have already got over Jordan, and the rear is coming up with displayed banners, and they will be there too ere long. What means the sleeping world, that they do not see how they are left behind, that they do not hear the General's voice, saying, *come away with me.*

5. Our Lord is very desirous of your company by the way, yes, and to have you away with him for altogether. Come, enlist yourselves ye natives of the mountains, and leave the lions' dens. Come up ye stragglers, keep up your ranks. Our Lord loves to have you direct at his back, so as you may receive the word of command and encouragement, that is always going through the army. Is there any poor fool broken off and skulking among the lions' dens? He is crying to you come away. Is there any poor soul fallen back and hiding itself in some hole, as ashamed to look their Captain in the face, or to shew their head among the fair company? To such he says come away; come away forward, onward, homeward. Yes, home, for he will have you home. "Father I will, says he, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

6. Our Lord displays his glory to you in the gospel, to win your hearts and get you away with him. Come, says he, *with me, with me.* As if he had said, will you look to me, that will cure the madness and frenzy into which a look of the bewitching world hath cast you. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." As when the sun appears, the stars hide their heads, and have no beauty by reason of that which excelleth; so the glory of the Son of God, discerned by faith, will make all the glory of the world like a small candle before the sun, going out with smoke.

7. Our Lord offers you, not only better in hope, but better in hand than the world can give you. Come *with me.* Do not complain that he would pluck you off the breasts, it is only to pluck you off the dry the foulsome breasts of the world, to set you upon better; "That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."

He knows the frame of our hearts, they must always have something to feed upon, and that they will never part with the world,

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but for something that is better. "Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." You shall be with him, with him at home, that is heaven. With him in the way, that is heaven on the earth. Communion with him. Habitual communion in fellowship with him in his righteousness, death, Spirit, purchase. Actual communion in the communications of his grace and manifestations of himself.

8. If you will come away, you shall go as he goes, you shall go together. Go as he goes in point of duty. Esteem all things as he does. Let his choice be your choice. Rejoice in those things in which he rejoices; and be grieved for what grieves his Spirit. Love what he loves, and hate what he hates. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* And you shall go as he goes in point of privilege. You shall have your lot with him. Always take his side, whoever oppose him, and you shall share in all the advantages which his friends shall have of the world here or hereafter. Wherever the world may drive you, he will be with you.

9. He will lead you and support you through the whole of the way. You are now in the fields of the world, and there will be difficult steps in your way to the city; these will not be easily discerned, but come with him, he will keep you from stumbling on the dark mountains. And "I will bring, says he, the blind by a way which they knew not; I will lead them in paths which they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." He will bear you up and bear you through with all the weight of your guilt, duties, and afflictions, for you must come with him leaning as the Bride upon the Bridegroom.

Lastly, He will be all to you in all. Leave all the world and come *with me*, for all, as the espoused bride goes with her husband. Whatever comfort, pleasure, and delight you drew out of the muddy streams, you may now draw in a far superior manner from the fountain. Thus it shall be your duty and privilege too, to live as people of another world. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." To maintain a heavenly frame, will make your whole conversation heavenly. To be frequent and fervent in duties, will lead you to fellowship with him in providences and ordinances. And that will make a pleasant sight. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"

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Uses of Improvement.

Hearken, O sinners! to this call, which Christ gives to his church. Come away with him, you that are espoused to him, and even you that are not so, but are in the visible church, where he seeks his Bride. Come away to him, come with him from out of this world and the lions' dens. Take your parting look of the mountains of vanity, and come away. For motives,

1. Consider that these mountains are certainly to be laid waste. A fire will devour them as Sodom. "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up with fire." Christ calls all for whom he has a kindness to make haste from these mountains, as Lot did out of Sodom, and this is a certain evidence that they are devoted to destruction. Therefore come away and look not back. And if his own were once freely out, then the pillars are removed and this weary world falls into the fire.

Motive 2.—Is it not the place of lions' dens? How then can you be safe in it. Has not the great roaring lion his den in it? And does he not go about catching his prey in every part of it? 1 Pet. v. 8. Is it not full of wicked men who are young lions? May not the yellings which you hear in their blasphemies against God and religion, their roarings against the church and the work of God, and the devouring work which they frequently make upon their fellow creatures, may not all these make it a weary land in your eyes.

3. Is there any among us all, to whom it has not been a place of lions' dens? Let your conscience speak, and say, has it not been in many instances an unkind world to you? How often has it touched you in the sore heel, and given you a blow where you were least able to bear it? How often have lions and leopards as it were started out upon you from places where you expected nothing but to have been in ease and safety. And will you yet hug the serpent, and dandle that which has so often bruised your bones. Do it no longer, but come away with Christ. For,

4. In the enjoyment of Christ, you will not be grieved with disappointments as you have been from the world. Worldly things are fairest afar off, greater in expectation than in enjoyment. But the enjoyment of Christ will far surpass your most elevated expectation. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The treasure of the gospel will endure through all the ages of eternity. How often have you put out your hand to take up what you needed from the world, and behold you have had no-

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thing. Every disappointment from the world with which you meet, says for Christ, come away.

5. He will not reward your love with hatred as the world has done a thousand times. "I love them, says he, that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." Have you not heartily stretched yourself down on the deceitful mountains, and ere you were aware, a serpent has bit you, and sent you away wounded? Have you not found your greatest cross one way or another in your greatest comfort, either in the possession of it, or in the loss of it? Have you not, where you pressed hardest for sweet, wrung out blood, instead of milk, and striking at the rocky mountains for water, all you have got was fire flashing in your faces.

6. You will get a surer hold of Christ, than ever you could get of the world. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." How oft have you thought yourselves sure of the creature, but you have been deceived? You have dreamed, and behold you were full, but awakening you found yourself empty. All worldly things are uncertain in life, and at death they will leave you altogether. None of them will go with you to the other world.

7. Christ is altogether lovely, and this the world never was to you, nor to any of Adam's sons. Did you ever lie down on any place of the deceitful mountains, but there was a thorn under you? Got you ever that good thing yet but it had a want? The fairest rose has its prickles. And thorns and briers come up by the side of the sweetest earthly comforts.

8. If you will come away from the world with Christ, you will need care the less what weather blow upon the mountains. Shaking storms use to be there, and for as fair as it is now, you know not how soon the storm may rise, and the lions and leopards be let loose. Wo to the natives then, the inhabiters of the world, that have all their stock on the mountains. But if you be on your way with Christ, he will take care of you, and be the blast as bitter as it will, it will be on your back, and speed you on your way.

Lastly, He will fill and satisfy the desires of your hearts, which the world never could and never shall. *Open thy mouth*, says he, *wide, and I will fill it.* All things which grow on the mountains, are but husks to the soul. And if you had the whole world at your beck, it would leave you with a breast full of unsatisfied desires. Come then restless creature. Come and rest in Jesus Christ. Comply with the call now. You will wish you had done it at death, when you are driven out of the world, and at the judgment

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when driven from Christ. He is now willing to receive the worst of you into his blessed train. "Behold, says he, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Amen.

Ettrick, July 22, 1716.

[Being the first Sabbath after dispensing the Lord's Supper.]

CAUTIONS AGAINST QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

SERMON X.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 19.

Quench not the Spirit.

IT may be reasonably thought, that it was not without some design, that God sent us the solemn ordinance, which we observed last Sabbath; and that the Spirit of the Lord was not idle among us, while the arrows of the word were flying in such numbers, along with the sacrament. Surely several were touched in one way or another. And if these things were rightly managed they might come to a good account. But alas! some as they get touches of the Spirit lightly without seeking, so they let them go as lightly. Others are at pains to earn something, and when got they put into a bag with holes. But whoever would have any lasting good in religion would do well to hearken to this exhortation. *Quench not the Spirit.* In these words, there is, 1. A holy fire supposed to be kindled in the souls of men. In Matthew iii. 11. John said of Jesus, *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* Here the Spirit is compared to fire, and in other places to water. This is not meant of the person of the Spirit who cannot be quenched, but of his gifts, operations, and motions, which are often quenched. It is thus expressed because the injury redounds to the Spirit himself.

2. Our duty with respect to this holy fire. Quench it not. Do not put it out or weaken it in the soul. More is understood. Cherish the Spirit, give fuel to this sacred fire, maintain and keep it in, and blow it up. Be concerned kindly to entertain the operations, and motions of the Spirit.

Doctrine.—It is the duty of all to take heed that they quench not the holy fire of the Spirit kindled in the soul, but that they nourish

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