

**THOUGHTS ON THE
BAPTISMAL VOW. FOR
YOUNG CHRISTIANS**

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Thoughts on the Baptismal Vow. For Young Christians by Anonymous

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FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
'A GRAVE SUGGESTION TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS;
'A HELP TO DEVOTION.'



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THOUGHTS ON THE BAPTISMAL VOW.

THE duties to which we are bound by the Vow made in Baptism are such as can only be properly understood by earnest thought upon them. They open out to us as we meditate, and we lose more of their real meaning than we can tell by neglecting so to search into it. And if we do not *understand* them aright, it must follow that our *obedience* will be very imperfect. So, indeed, it is with too many of us. Though the highest aim is set before us, and every needful help and encouragement is offered in order to enable us to reach it, we fail, and that often very miserably. As a body of 'Christians,' followers of Him Who is perfect in all Goodness, we might show the world a far higher example than we do of all that is good and

lovely in human nature, as purified by union with Him; and it is greatly to our shame that we do not do so. This is seen by those who are out of the pale of Christian society, if not by ourselves; and is a far greater hurt to the Cause which we have at heart than can be known now. Let each of us do his best to wipe off the reproach against us; and let us learn to look more closely into our Duty, that we may do it in a manner more worthy of the name we bear.

Those who have not been used to exercise themselves in this way, must not expect to find it easy at first; but as they persevere it will become more so. Far more encouragement is given to us than we deserve. The few thoughts that are here set down are offered as a help to such as wish to make a beginning in the closer study of their vow, in the hope that they may at least *lead* to fuller and clearer views—such as open out upon all who give their minds in earnest to these things.

‘Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.’

IN Holy Baptism, our Godparents promised three things in our name.

First—‘ That I should renounce the devil and all his works.’

We do not know much of this Evil being—not more than God has seen fit to reveal to us for our warning; but what we do know is very awful. He is a spirit,—we cannot see him, but it is most certain that he *is*, and that he is continually on the watch to do us harm. ‘ Like a roaring lion ’ he ‘ walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.’ Many things which we know to be real, are invisible to us.* We cannot see them, but we are as sure of their being as if we did. We cannot see persons at a great distance from us—we may never see them all our lives, and yet we do not doubt that there are such persons. We cannot see the air which we breathe, and yet we could not live one minute without it. We cannot see our own souls, and yet we know that we have souls, and that they are more powerful than our bodies; for our hands and feet, and all our other members, can do nothing of themselves, or contrary to the will which directs them. The soul, though invisible, makes itself known by the power which it has over the body. We cannot see the holy

* In what follows, some thoughts and expressions have been adopted from ‘ The Child’s Manual.’ Other valuable help has been given, which can only be thus generally acknowledged.

angels, yet are they continually near us, though we may not be thinking of them.

So is Satan, our great spiritual enemy. We cannot see him, but he is very *real*, and, like our souls, is very active and powerful—far more so than we are *by ourselves*. He is, besides, very subtle, and full of malice and cunning—bent on doing all in his power to harm us, and bring us into sin and danger. For he is the enemy of our Lord, as well as of ourselves, and knows His love and care for us, and His will concerning our salvation. He would overthrow that Will if he could, and knows that the most effectual way of doing so would be to lead us to sin against it. He is not willing for that blessed time to come when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of Christ, for then his power will have come to an end, and he will be cast into the lake of fire. He therefore does all in his power to hinder the work of the Church, in which the foundations of the Kingdom of Heaven are laid. In the Holy Bible he is called ‘the prince of this world,’ for he is allowed to have some power over men now for a time. It was Satan who tempted our first parents, Adam and Eve, and caused mankind to fall from a state of purity and blessedness to a state of sin and misery. He it is who has tempted men, women, and children, to sin, ever since that sad time, and has caused all the pain, and grief, and wretchedness, that have ever been.

He wanders about the world, endeavouring to make men as wicked and miserable as possible. He wishes everybody to hate Religion, and to think that it will only cut them off from their worldly pleasures, instead of making them really happy and peaceful. He wishes to prevent us from *thinking* about it. He is glad when he sees people so busy in the way of money getting, or providing for their own pleasures, that they make no time for meditation and prayer; for he knows that they will never be really religious unless they do so. He is, doubtless, especially glad when those who have begun in a good course, get weary of trying to be good, fall into sin, and follow the ways of the world. But he is, surely, *best* pleased when he can make people think themselves religious, when they are not so. This is his greatest and most dangerous art. For what hope is there for those who fancy themselves too good or too wise to learn? Satan can make himself appear as 'an angel of light;' he can make his evil works seem right in the eyes of all those who do not sincerely endeavour to serve God with their whole heart. From him come all manner of opposition to God and goodness, as well as, more especially, all bad passions, unholy thoughts, and evil ways; and above all, falsehood, envy, hatred, and malice, cruelty, and pride. These are his 'works.' He was a liar and murderer from the beginning of the world. It was Satan who sought to lead the sin-