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## THE COVENANT OF GRACE

*by Charles H. Spurgeon*

*To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:*

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# THE COVENANT.

NO. 3261

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 3RD, 1911,

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“He will ever be mindful of his covenant.”-Psalm 111:5.*

*Another Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon, upon the same text, is No. 2,681 in Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, “Covenant Blessings.”*

IT is a wonderful thing that God should enter into gracious covenant with men. That he should make man, and be gracious to man, is easily to be conceived; but, that he should strike hands with his nature, and put his august majesty under bond to him by his own promise, is marvellous. Once let that God has made a covenant, and I do not think it wonderful that he should be mindful of it, for he is “God that cannot lie.” “Hath he said, and shall he not do it?” Hath he once given his pledge? It is inconceivable that he should ever desert from it. The doctrine of the text commends itself to every reasonable and thoughtful man: if God has made a covenant, he will ever be faithful of it. It is to that point that I would now call your attention with the desire to use it practically.

For God to make a gracious covenant with us is so great a boon that I hope every one here is saying within his heart, “Oh, that the Lord had entered into covenant with me!”

We shall practically look into this matter, first, by answering the question, What is this covenant? Secondly, by putting the enquiry, Have I any portion in it? And, thirdly, by bidding each one say, “If indeed I am in covenant with God, then every part of that covenant will be carried out, for God is ever mindful of it,”

**I.** First, then, WHAT IS THIS COVENANT?

If you go to a lawyer, and enquire how a deed runs, he may reply, "I can give' you an abstract, but I had better read it to you." He can tell you the sum and substance, of it; but if you want to be very accurate, and it is a very important business, you will say, "I should like to hear it read." We will now read certain parts of Scripture which contain the covenant of grace, or an abstract of it. Turn to Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house, of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Print every word of that in diamonds, for the sense is inconceivably precious. God in covenant promises to his people that, instead of writing his law upon tables of stone, he will write it an the tablets of their hearts. Instead of the law coming on a hard, crushing command, it shall be placed within them as the object of love and delight, written on the transformed nature of the beloved objects of God's choice: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; "-what a covenant privilege this is! ' And I will be their God." Therefore all that there is in God shall belong to them. "And they shall be my people." They shall belong to me; I will love them as mine; I will keep them, bless them, honor them, and provide for the as my people. I will be their portion, and they shall be my portion. Note the next privilege. They shall all receive heavenly instruction upon the most vital point: "They shall all know me."; There may be some beings they do not know, but "they shall all know me." They shall know me as their Father; they shall know Jesus Christ as their Brother; they shall know the Holy Spirit as their Comforter. They shall have intercourse and fellowship with God. What a covenant privilege is this! Hence comes pardon, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." What a clean sweep of sin! God will forgive and forget; the two go together. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no

more.” All gone,-all their transgression blotted out, never to be mentioned against thee any more, for ever. What an unutterable favor! This is the covenant of grace. I call your attention to the fact that there is no “if” in it, there is no “but” in it, there is no requirement made by it of man. It is all “I will” and “they shall.” “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” It is a charter written in a royal tone, and the majestic straining not marred by a “perchance” or a. “ may be, “ but dwells always on “ shall” and “ will. “ These are two prerogative words of the divine majesty; and in this wondrous deed of gift, in which the Lord bestows a heaven of grace upon guilty sinners, he bestows it after the sovereignty of his own will without, anything to put the gift in jeopardy, or to make the promise insecure.

Thus I have read the covenant to you in one form.

Turn over the pages a little, and you will come to a passage in Ezekiel. There we shall have the bright-eyed prophet-he who could live among the wheels and the seraphim-telling us what the covenant grace is. In Ezekiel the eleventh chapter, nineteenth and twentieth verses, we read: “ I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

You will find another form of it further on in the thirty-sixth of Ezekiel, beginning at the twenty-fifth verse. How intently ought you to listen to this! It is a deal better than hearing any preaching of mortal men to listen to the very words of God’s own covenant, a covenant which saves all those who are concerned in it. Unless you have an interest in it you are indeed unhappy. Let us read it: “ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out, of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them.... And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” This promise always come in at the close, “I will be your God.” In this form of the covenant, I call you again to witness that God demands nothing, asks no price, demands no payment, but to the people with whom he enters into covenant he makes promise after promise, all free, all unconditional, all made according to the bounty of his royal heart.

Let us just go a little into detail about this. God has made a covenant with certain people that he will do all this for them, and in each case it is of pure grace. He will take away their own hearts: it is clear from the promise that, when he began with them, they had stony hearts. He will forgive their iniquities: when he began with them, they had my iniquities. He will give them a heart of flesh: when he began with them, they had not heart of flesh. He will turn them to keep his statutes: when he began with them, they did not keep his statutes. They were a sinful, wilful, wicked, degenerate people, and he called to them many times to come to him, and repent, but they would not. Here he speaks like a king, and no longer pleads, but decrees. He says, I will do this and that to you, and you shall be this and this in return. Oh, blessed covenant! Oh, mighty, sovereign, grace!

How came it about? Learn the doctrine of the two covenants.

The first covenant of which we will now speak was that of works, the covenant made with our first father, Adam. This is not first in purpose, but it was first revealed in time. It ran thus: you Adam, and your posterity shall live and be happy if you will keep my law. To test your obedience to me, there is a certain tree; if you let that alone, you shall live: if you touch it, you shall die, and they shall die whom you represent.

Our first covenant-head snatched greedily at the forbidden fruit, and fell: and what a fall was there, my brethren! There you, and I, and all of us, fell down, while it was proven once for all that, by works of law no man can be justified; for if perfect Adam broke the law so readily, depend upon it, you and I would break any law that God had ever made. There was no hope of happiness for any of us by a covenant which contained an "if" in it. That old covenant is put away, for it has utterly failed. It brought nothing to us but a curse, and we are glad that it has waxed old and, as far as believers are concerned, has vanished away.

Then there came the second Adam. You know his name, he is the ever-blessed Son of the Highest. This second Adam entered into covenant with God somewhat after this fashion:-The Father says, I give thee a people; they shall be, shine: thou must die to redeem them, and when thou hast done this,-when for their sakes thou hast kept my law, and made it honorable, when for their sakes thou hast borne my wrath against their transgressions,-then I will bless them; they shall be my people; I will forgive their iniquities; I will change their natures; I will sanctify them, and make them perfect. There was an apparent "if" in this covenant at the first.

That “if” hinged upon the question whether the Lord Jesus would obey the law, and pay the ransom; a question which his faithfulness placed beyond doubt. There is no “if” in it, now. When Jesus bowed his head, and said, “It is finished,” there remained no “if” in the covenant. It stands, therefore, now as a covenant entirely of one side, a covenant, of promises, of promises which must be kept, because the other portion of the covenant having been fulfilled, the Father’s side of it must stand. He cannot, and he will not draw back from the doing of that which he covenanted with Christ to do. The Lord Jesus shall receive the joy which was set before him. “ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” By his knowledge shall the Christ who became God’s righteous Servant justify many, for hath he not borne their iniquities? How can it be otherwise than that they should be accepted for whom he was the Surety? Do you see why it is that the covenant, as I have read it, stands so absolutely without “ifs”, “buts”, and “peradventures”, and runs only on “ shells” and “ wills”? It is because the one side of it that did look uncertain was committed into the hand of Christ, who cannot fail or be discouraged. He has completed his part of it, and now it stands fast, and must stand fast for ever and ever. This is now a covenant of pure grace, and nothing else but grace: let, no man attempt to mix up works with it, or anything of human merit. God saves now because he chooses to save, and over the head of us all there comes a sound as of a martial trumpet, and yet with a deep, inner peaceful music in it: “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” God observes us all lost and ruined, and in his infinite mercy comes with absolute promises of grace to those whom he hath given to his Son Jesus’.

So much, then, with regard to the covenant.

**II.** Now comes the important question, “ HAVE I ANY PORTION IT?” May the Holy Ghost help us to ascertain this, truth on this point! You who are really anxious in your hearts to know, I would earnestly persuade to read the Epistle to the Galatians. Read that Epistle through if you want to know whether you have, any part or lot in the covenant of grace. Did Christ fulfill the law for me?” Are the promises of God, absolute and unconditional, made to me? You can know by answering three questions.

First, Are you in Christ? Did you not notice that I said that we were all in Adam, and in Adam we all fell? Now, “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one shall many be made

righteous.” Are you in the second Adam? You certainly were in the first; one, for so you fell. Are you in the second? Because, if you are in him, you are saved in him. He has kept the law for you. The covenant of grace made, with him was made with you if you are in him; for, as surely as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedek met him, so were all believers in the loins of Christ when he died upon the cross. If you are in Christ, you are a part and parcel of the seed to whom the promise was made; but there is only one seed, and the apostle tells us, “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” If, then, you are in Christ, you are in the seed, and the covenant of grace was made with you.

I must ask you another question, Have you faith? By this question you will be helped to answer the previous one, for believers are in Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, you will find that the mark of those who are in Christ is that they believe in Christ. The mark of all that are saved is not, confidence in work, but faith in Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul insists upon it, “ The just shall live by faith,” and the law is not of faith. Over and over again he puts it so. Come, then, do you believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart? Is he your sole hope for heaven? Do you lean your whole weight, the entire stress of your salvation, on Jesus? Then you are, in him, and the covenant is yours; and there, is not a blessing which God hath decreed to give but what he will give to you. There is not a boon which, out of the grandeur of his heart, he has determined to bestow upon his elect, but what he will bestow it upon you. You have the mark, the seal, the badge of his chosen if you believe in Christ Jesus.

Another question should help you; it is this, Have you been born again? I refer you again to the Epistle to the Galatians, which I would like every anxious person to read through very carefully. There you will see that Abraham had two sons: one of them was born according to the flesh; he was Ishmael, the child of the bondwoman. Though he was the firstborn son, he was not the heir, for Sarah said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.” He who was born after the flesh did not inherit the covenant promise. Is your hope of heaven fixed on the fact that you had a good mother and father? Then your hope is born after the flesh, and you are not in the covenant. I am constantly hearing it said that children of godly parents do not want converting. Let me denounce that wicked falsehood. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing

better. They that are born after the flesh, those are not the children of God. Do not trust in gracious descent, or in holy ancestors. Ye must be born again, every one of you, or you will perish for ever, whoever your parents may be. Abraham had another son, even Isaac: he was not born of the strength of his father, nor after the flesh at all, for we are told that both Abraham and Sarah had become old; but Isaac was born by God's power, according to promise. He was the child given by grace. Now, have you ever been born like that,-not by human strength but by power divine? Is the life that is in you a life given by God? The true life is not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of natural excellence; but it comes by the working of the eternal Spirit, and is of God. If you have this life, you are in the covenant, for it is written, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." The children of the promise, these are counted for the seed. God said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and that was because he meant to justify the Gentiles by faith, that the blessing given to believing Abraham might come on all believers. Abraham is the father of the faithful, or the father of all them that believe in God, and with such is the covenant established.

Here, then, are the test questions:-Am I in Christ? Am I believing in Jesus? Am I born by the power of the Spirit of God according to the promise, and not by the fleshly birth, or according to works? Then I am in the covenant; my name stands in the eternal record. Before the stars began to shine the Lord had covenanted to bless me. Or ever evening and morning made the first day, my name was in his book. Christ before the world's foundation struck hands with the Father in the council chamber of eternity, and pledged himself to redeem me, and to bring me and multitudes of others into his eternal glory; and he will do it, too, for he never breaks his suretyship engagements any more than the Father breaks his covenant engagements. I want you to get quite sure upon these points, for, oh, what peace it will breed in your soul, what a restfulness of heart to understand the covenant, and to know that your name is in it!

**III.** This is our last point. If indeed we can believe, upon the good evidence of God's Word, that we! are of the seed with whom the covenant was made in Christ Jesus, then EVERY BLESSING OF THE COVENANT WILL COME TO US. I will put, it a. Little more personally,-every blessing of the covenant will come to you.



The devil says, "No, it, won't." Why not, Satan? "Why," saith he, "you are not able to do this or that." Refer the devil to the text; tell him to read those passages which I read to you, and ask him if he, can spy an "if" or a "but"; for I cannot. "Oh!" says he, "but, but, but, but, but you cannot do enough, you can't feel enough." Does it say anything about feeling there? It only says, "I will give them a heart of flesh." They will feel enough then. "Oh, but!" the devil says, "you cannot soften: your hard heart." Does it say that you are to do so? Does it not say "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh"? The tenor of it is, -I will do it; I will do it. The devil dares not say that God cannot do it, he knows that God can enable, us to tread him under our feet. "Oh, but!" says he, "you will never hold on your way if you begin to be a Christian." Does it say anything about that in the covenant further than this, "they shall walk in my statutes"? What if we have not power in and of ourselves continue in God's statutes; yet he has power to make us continue in them. He can work in us obedience and final perseverance in holiness; his covenant virtually promises these blessings to us. To come back to what we said before; God does not ask of us, but he gives to us. He sees us dead, and he loves us even when we are dead in trespasses and sins. He sees us feeble, and unable to help ourselves; and he, comes in, and works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, and then we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The bottom of it, the very foundation of it, is himself; and he finds nothing in us to help him. There is neither fire nor wood in us, much less the lamb for the burnt offering, but all is emptiness and condemnation. He comes in with "I will," and "you shall," like a royal helper according free aid to destitute, helpless, sinners, according to the riches of his grace. Now be sure that, having made such a covenant as this, God will ever be mindful of it.

He will do so, first, because he cannot lie. If he says he will, he will. His very name is "God that, cannot lie." If I am in Christ, I must be saved: none can prevent it. If I am a believer in Christ, I must be saved; all the devils in hell cannot stop it, for God has said, "He that believeth in him is not condemned." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." God's word is not yea and nay. He knew what he said when he spake the covenant, and he has never changed it, nor contradicted it. If, then, I am a believer, I must be saved, for I am in Christ to whom the promise is made; if I have the new life in me, I must be saved, for is not this spiritual life the living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever? Did not Jesus say, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water

springing up into everlasting life”? I have drunk the water Christ gave me, and it, must spring up into everlasting life. It is not possible for death to kill the life that God has given me, nor for all the fallen spirits to tread out the divine fire which Christ’s own Spirit, has cast into my bosom. I must be saved, for God cannot deny himself.

Next, God made the covenant freely. If he had not meant to keep it, he would not have made it. When a man is driven up into a corner by someone who, says, “Now you must pay me,” then he is apt to promise more than he can perform. He solemnly declares, “ I will pay you this day fortnight.” Poor fellow, he has no money now, and will not have any then, but he makes a promise because he cannot help himself. No such necessity can, be imagined with our God. The Lord was under no compulsion: he might have left men to perish because of sin; there was no one to prompt him be make the covenant of grace, or even to suggest the idea. “With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him?” He made the covenant of his own royal will, and having made it, rest you sure that he will never run back from it. A covenant so freely made must be fully carried out.

Moreover, on the covenant document there is a seal. Did you see the seal? The grand thing in a deed of gift is the signature or seal. What is this,-this red splash at the bottom, of it? It is blood! Yes; it is blood. Whose blood? It is the blood of the Son of God. This his ratified and sealed the covenant. Jesus died. Jesus’ death, has made the covenant sure’. Can God forget the blood of his dear Son, or do despite to his sacrifice, Impossible. All for whom he died as a covenant Substitute he will save. His redeemed shall not be left in captivity, as if the ransom price had effected nothing. Hath he not said, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”? That covenant stands secure, though earth’s old columns bow, for despite to the blood can never be possible on the part of the Father.

Again, God delights in the covenant, and so we are sure he will not run back from it. It is the very joy of his holy heart. He delights to do his people good. To pass by transgression, iniquity, and sin is the recreation of Jehovah. Did you ever hear of God singing? It is singular that the Divine One should solace himself with song; but yet a prophet has thus revealed the Lord to us, “ He will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.” The covenant is the heart of God written out in the blood of Jesus; and since the whole nature of God runs parallel with the tenor of the

everlasting covenant. you may rest assured that even its jots and its tittles stand secure.

And then, last of all, O thou who art in the covenant, thou dost not doubt but that God will save thee, keep thee, bless thee, seeing thou hast believed on Jesus, and art in Jesus, and art quickened into newness of life! Thou darest not doubt if I tell thee one thing more: if your father, if your brother, if your dearest friend had solemnly stated a fact, would you bear for anybody to say that he lied? I know you would be indignant at such a charge; but suppose your father in the most solemn manner had taken an oath, would you for a minute think that he had perjured himself, and had sworn a lie? Now turn to the Word of God, and you will find that God, because he knew that an oath among men is the end of strife, has been pleased to seal the covenant with an oath. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us-" God has lifted his hand to heaven, and sworn that Christ shall have the reward of his passion, that his purchased ones shall be brought under his sway, that having borne sin, and put it away, it never shall be a second time charged on his redeemed.

There is all of it. Dost thou believe in Christ? Then God will work in thee to will and do of his good pleasure; God will conquer thy sin; God will sanctify thee; God will save thee; God will keep thee; God will bring thee to himself at last. Rest thou on that covenant, and then moved by intense gratitude, go forward to serve thy Lord with all thy head, and soul and strength. Being saved, live to praise him. Work not that you may be saved, but because you are saved, the covenant has secured your safety. Delivered from, the servile fear which an Ishmael might have known, live the joyous life of an Isaac; and moved by love of the: Father, spend and be spent for his sake. If the selfish hope of winning heaven by works has moved some men to great sacrifice, much more shall the godly motive of gratitude to him who has done all this for us move us to the noblest service, and make us feel that it is no sacrifice at all. "We thus judge, that, if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." If you are saved under the covenant of grace, the mark of the covenanted ones is upon you, and the sacred character of the covenanted ones should be displayed in you. Bless and magnify your covenant God. Take the cup of

the covenant, and call upon his name. Plead the promises of the covenant, and have whatever you need. Amen.

## EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

### *JEREMIAH 31:1-22.*

Verse 1. At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

During the Israelites' banishment to Babylon, God's covenant with them had been as it were in abeyance, but in this promise of their restoration he brings it to the front again, and he gives a peculiarly gracious turn to it: "I will be the God of all the families of Israel." What a mercy it is to have a family God, and to have our whole family in Christ! Brethren, you have a family Bible, and you have, I hope, a family altar; may your whole family belong to God!

2. Thus saith the LORD, the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

Pharaoh tried to kill Israel; when he drew his sword, it looked as if the whole nation would be slain. But God got them away from Pharaoh into the wilderness, and there he caused them to rest. God still teas a people whom he will certainly save, and the adversary shall not be able to destroy them. Now comes this glorious verse:-

3,4. The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. *See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 1,914, "Secret Drawings Graciously Explained;" No. 2,149, "Everlasting Love Revealed;" and No. 2,880, "New Tokens of Ancient Love."* Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, Jerusalem was all broken down, her houses were vacant, and her palaces were in ruins, but God's promise to her was, "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built." If the preacher tries to rebuild those who are spiritually broken down, his work may be a failure; but when God does it, it is effectually done.

4. O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.

God can take away his people's sorrow, and fill them with exultant joy. Their flying feet shall follow the flying music, and they shall be exceeding glad. May the Lord make his people joyful now in his house of prayer!

**5.** Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.

God's people shall get to work again; and they shall have the fruit of their toil, and shall rejoice before God because they do not labor in vain nor spend their strength for nought.

**6** For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

The men of Ephraim did not go up to Zion to worship, they forsook the one altar at Jerusalem; but the day will come when they will turn again to the Lord. Watchmen have to be on the look-out for enemies, but the day will come when even they shall be able to leave their watch-towers and to say, "Let us go up to Zion unto Jehovah our God.' Are any of you watching just now with anxious eyes? Have you been watching all through the night? Well, you have not seen much, and your eyes ache with looking out for evil; so drop your watching now, and say one to another, "Let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God."

**7, 8.** For thus saith the LORD Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nation, publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them-

Notice the prayer and the answer. The prayer is put into our mouths, and before we hardly have time to utter it, the answer comes: "O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them"-

**8.** From the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame,

How can they come? Will they help one another? God himself will be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.

**8.** The woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

They were not fit for travelling, yet God in his great mercy can make the feeblest of his people strong, and when he means to bring them to himself, they shall come even though it looks as if they could not come.

**9.** They shall come with weeping,-

Never mind the weeping so long as they do but come, and remember that there is no true faith without the tear of repentance in its eye: “ They shall come with weeping;”-

**9.** And with supplications will I lead them:

The way of prayer is the way home to God.

**9.** I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble:

Happy are the people who have such precious promises as these. The way is to be straight, and their feet are to be so firmly planted in it that “ they shall not stumble.”

**9-11.** For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd cloth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob.

The secret of every other blessing is redemption. If God has redeemed he will save, depend upon it; the precious blood of Jesus shall ne'er be shed in vain.

**11, 12.** And ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come”-

If they are redeemed, “they shall come.” Christ did not die in vain; the redemption that he wrought must be effectual; “ therefore they shall come “-

**12.** And sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the good ness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd:

These are all temporal mercies, and it is a great blessing to see God's goodness in them. If God blesses common mercies, they are blessings

indeed; but without his blessing they may become idols, and so may become curses.

**12.** And their soul shall be as a watered garden;

What a delightful simile! It is of little use for the body to be fed unless the soul also is well nourished: “ Their soul shall be as a watered garden; “

**12-14.** And they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness,

God will give the spiritual leaders of his people enough and more than enough, more than they can take in, he will satiate them with fatness.

**14.** And my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

What a delightful promise this is! Listen to it and carry it home, all of you who are truly the Lord’s people.

**15.** Thus saith the LORD A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

There is here a prophetic allusion to the massacre of the infants by Herod at the time of the birth of our Lord. It was a time of sorrow indeed.

**16, 17.** Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and shine eye from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD: and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in shine end, saith the LORD that thy children shall come again to their own border.

As Rachel is represented as weeping for her children, so is she represented as mourning for the tribes that were carried away into captivity, yet is she comforted with the Lord’s gracious assurance, ‘ they shall come again from the land of the enemy.’ So they did, and there is to be a glorious future yet for the people of God of the ancient race of Abraham.

**18.** I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; *See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 743, “Ephraim Bemoaning himself.”*

There is never a penitent in this world bemoaning himself without God hearing him. Do not think that a single penitential cry ever rises unheeded from a contrite heart. That cannot be; God has a quick ear for the vies of penitents.

**18.** Thou hast chastened me, and I was chastened, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke:

“I bore the chastisement, but derived no benefit from it. I have not repented of my sin, I have not turned unto thee.”

**18.** Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; *See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 2,104, “The Inner Side of Conversion.”* for thou art the LORD my God.

If the Lord undertakes to turn us, we shall be truly turned, that is, converted.

**19.** Surety after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

Are there any here recollecting the past with terror, and lamenting before God because of their sins? Then hear what God says. He seems to echo the voice of Ephraim. As Ephraim bemoans himself, God bemoans him:-

**20.** Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?

You might expect the answer to be, “No, he has lost the rights of childhood; he has been unpleasant and provoking to God, “ yet God does not give such an answer as that to his own questions, but he says:-

**20.** For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still;

Notwithstanding that the Lord threatened him, and sent prophets to foretell evil to him because of his sin, yet he says, “ I do earnestly remember him still; “-

**20.** Therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him saith the LORD.

What a wonderful speech for God to make! Even the infinitely-blessed God represents himself as in trouble concerning penitent sinners, remembering them in pity, and longing to have mercy upon them.



**21.** Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

In crossing the desert, travelers raise little cairns of stone that they may be directed on a future occasion, across that pathless sea of sand; and so Cod bids them set up waymarks, and make high heaps, that they may know how to come back to him.

22 How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter?

God still asks in pity, “flow long will you seek here and there for comfort? “ You will never find it till you come back to your God. Emptiness is written upon everything till the heart comes to its Savior and Lord.

# GOD IN THE COVENANT.

NO. 93

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
AUGUST 3RD, 1856,

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

*“I will be their God.” — Jeremiah 31:33.*

“WHAT a glorious covenant the second covenant is! Well might it be called a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” Hebrews 8:6. It is so glorious that the very thought of it is enough to overwhelm the soul, when it discerns the amazing condescension and infinite love of God, in having framed a covenant for such unworthy creatures, for such glorious purposes, with such disinterested motives. It is better than the other covenant, the covenant of works, which was made with Adam; or that covenant which is said to have been made with Israel, on the day when they came out of Egypt. It is better, for it is founded upon a *better principle*. The old covenant was founded on the principle of merit; it was, “Serve God and thou shalt be rewarded for it; if thou walkest perfectly in the fear of the Lord, God will walk well towards thee, and all the blessings of Mount Gerizim shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be exceedingly blessed in this world, and the world which is to come.” But that covenant fell to the ground, because, although it was just that man should be rewarded for his good works, or punished for his evil ones, yet man being sure to sin, and since the fall infallibly tending towards iniquity, the covenant was not suitable for his happiness, nor could it promote his eternal welfare. But the new covenant, is not founded on works at all, it is a covenant of pure unmingled grace; you may read it from its first word to its last, and there is not a solitary syllable as to anything to be done by us. The whole covenant is a covenant, not so much between man and his Maker, as between Jehovah and man’s representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. The human side of the covenant has been already fulfilled by Jesus,

and there remains nothing now but the covenant of giving, not the covenant of requirements. The whole covenant with regard to us, the people of God, now stands thus: "I will give this, I will bestow that; I will fulfill this promise; I will grant that favor." But there is nothing for us to do; he will work all our works in us; and the very graces that are sometimes represented as being stipulations of the covenant, are promised to us. He gives us faith; he promises to give us the law in our inward parts, and to write it on our hearts. It is a glorious covenant, I say, because it is founded on simple mercy and unmixed grace; quite irrespective of creature-doings, or anything that is to be performed by man: and hence this covenant surpasses the other in stability. Where there is anything of man, there is always a degree of mutability; where you have anything to do with creatures, there you have something to do with change; for creatures, and change, and uncertainty always go together. But since this new covenant hath now nothing whatever to do with the creature, so far as the creature has to do anything, but only so far as he is to receive: the idea of change is utterly and entirely gone. It is God's covenant, and therefore it is an unchanging covenant. If there be something which I am to do in the covenant, then is the covenant insecure; and although happy as Adam. I may yet become miserable as Satan. But if the covenant be all on God's part, then if my name be in that covenant, my soul is as secure as if I were now walking the golden streets; and if any blessing be in the covenant, I am as certain to receive that blessing as if I already grasped it in my hands; for the promise of God is sure to be followed by fulfillment; the promise never faileth; it always bringeth with it the whole of that which it is intended to convey, and the moment I receive it by faith, I am sure of the blessing itself. Oh! how infinitely superior is this covenant to the other in its manifest security! It is beyond the risk or hazard of the least uncertainty.

But I have been thinking for the last two or three days, that the covenant of grace excels the other covenant most marvellously in the *mighty blessings* which it confers. What does the covenant of grace convey? I had thought this morning of preaching a sermon upon "The covenant of grace; what are the blessings it gives to God's children?" But when I began to think of it, there was so much in the covenant, that if I had only read a catalogue of the great and glorious blessings, wrapped up within its folds, I should have needed to occupy nearly the whole of the day in making a few simple observations upon each of them. Consider the great things God has given in the covenant. He sums them up by saying he hath given "all things." He

has given you eternal life in Christ Jesus; yea, he has given Christ Jesus to be yours; he has made Christ heir of all things, and he has made you join their with him; and hence he has given you everything. Were I to sum up that mighty mass of unutterable treasure which God has conveyed to every elect soul by that glorious covenant, time would fail me. I therefore commence with one great blessing conveyed to us by the covenant, and then on other Sabbaths I will, by Divine permission, consider separately, one by one, sundry other things which the covenant conveys.

We commence then by the first thing, which is enough to startle us by its immense value; in fact, unless it had been written in God's Word, we never could have dreamed that such a blessing could have been ours. God himself, by the covenant becomes the believer's own portion and inheritance. "I will be their God."

And now we shall begin with this subject in this way. We shall show you first that this is a *special blessing*. God is the special possession of the elect, whose names are in the covenant. Secondly, for a moment or two we shall speak of this as being an *exceedingly precious blessing*, "I will be their God." Thirdly, we shall dwell upon the *security of this blessing*, "I will be their God." And fourthly we shall endeavor to stir you up to *make good use of this blessing*, so freely and liberally conveyed to you by the eternal covenant of grace; "I will be their God."

Stop just one moment and think it over before we start. In the covenant of grace God himself conveys himself to you and becomes yours. Understand it: God — all that is meant by that word — eternity, infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, perfect justice, infallible rectitude, immutable love — all that is meant by God — -Creator, Guardian, Preserver, Governor, Judge, — all that that great word "GOD" can mean all of goodness and of love, all of bounty and of grace — all that, this covenant gives you, to be your absolute property as much as anything you can call your own: "I will be their God." We say, pause over that thought. If I should not preach at all, there is enough in that, if opened up and applied by the all-glorious Spirit, to excite your joy during the whole of the Sabbath-day. "I will be their God."

***"My God I — how cheerful is the sound!  
How pleasant to repeat!  
Well may that heart with pleasure bound,  
Where God hath fixed his seat."***

**I.** HOW IS GOD ESPECIALLY THE GOD OF HIS OWN CHILDREN? For God is the God of all men, of all creatures; he is the God of the worm, of the flying eagle, of the star, and of the cloud; he is God everywhere. How then is he more my God and your God than he is God of all created things? We answer, that in some things God is the God of all his creatures; but even there, there is a special relationship existing between himself and his chosen creatures, whom he has loved with an everlasting love. And in the next place, there are certain relationships in which God does not exist towards the rest of his creatures, but only towards his own children.

**I.** First then, God is the God of all his creatures, *seeing that he has the right to decree* to do with them as he pleases. He is the Creator of us all: he is the potter, and hath power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. However men may sin against God, he is still their God in that sense — that their destiny is immovably in his hand; that he can do with them exactly as he chooses; however they may resent his will, or spurn his good pleasure, yet he can make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he can restrain. He is the God of all creatures, absolutely so in the matter of predestination, seeing that he is their Creator, and has an absolute right to do with them as he wills. But here again he has a special regard to his children, and he is *their* God even in that sense; for to them, while he exercises the same sovereignty, he exercises it in the way of grace and grace only. He makes them the vessels of mercy, who shall be to his honor for ever; he chooses them out of the ruins of the fall, and makes them heirs of everlasting life, while he suffers the rest of the world to continue in sin, and to consummate their guilt by well “deserved punishment, and thus, while his relationship is the same, so far as his sovereignty is concerned and his right of decree, there is something special in its loving aspect towards his people; and in that sense he is *their* God.

Again: he is the God of all his creatures, *in the sense that he has a right to command obedience of all*. He is the God of every man that was ever born into this earth, in the sense that they are bound to obey him. God can command the homage of all his creatures, because he is their Creator, Governor, and Preserver; and all men are, by the fact of their creation, so placed in subjection to him, that they cannot escape the obligation of submission to his laws. But even here there is something special in regard to the child of God. Though God is the ruler of all men, yet his rule is

special towards his children; for he lays aside the sword of his rulership, and in his hand he grasps the rod for his child, not the sword of punitive vengeance, While he gives the world a law upon stone, he gives to his child a law in his heart. God is my governor and yours, but if you are unregenerate, he is your governor in a different sense from what he is mine. He has ten times as much claim to my obedience as he has to yours. Seeing that he has done more for me, I am bound to do more for him; seeing that he has loved me more, I am bound to love him more. But should I disobey, the vengeance on my head shall not fall so heavily as on yours, if you are out of Christ, for that vengeance incurred by me has already fallen upon Christ, my substitute, and only the chastisement shall remain for me; so that there again you see where the relationship to all men is universal, there is something special in it in reference to God's children.

Again: God has a universal power over all his creatures *in the character of a Judge*. He will “judge the world in righteousness *and his people with equity*.” He will judge all men with equity it is true, but, as if his people were not of the world, it is added afterwards, “his people with equity.” God is the God of all creatures, we repeat, in the sense that he is their Judge; he will summon them all before his bar, and condemn or acquit them all, but even there, there is something peculiar with regard to his children, for to them the condemnation sentence shall never come, but only the acquittal. While he is Judge of all, he especially is *their* judge; because he is the judge whom they love to reverence, the judge whom they long to approach, because they know his lips will confirm that which their hearts have already felt — the sentence of their full acquittal through the merits of their glorious Savior. Our loving God is the Judge who shall acquit our souls, and in that respect we can say he is *our* God. So, then, whether as Sovereign, or as Governor enforcing law, or as Judge punishing sin; although God is in some sense the God of all men, yet in this matter there is something special towards his people, so that they can say, “He is our God, even in those relationships.”

**2.** But now, beloved, there are points to which the rest of God's creatures cannot come, and here the great pith of the matter lies; here the very soul of this glorious promise dwells. God is our God in a sense, with which the unregenerate, the unconverted, the unholy, can have no acquaintance, in which they have no share whatever. We have just considered other points with regard to what God is to man generally; let us now consider what he is to us, as he is to none other.

First then, God is my God, seeing that he is *the God of my election*. If I be his child, then has he loved me from before all worlds, and his infinite mind has been exercised with plans for my salvation. If he be my God, he has seen me when I have wandered far from him, and when I have rebelled, his mind has determined when I shall be arrested — when I shall be turned from the error of my ways. He has been providing for me the means of grace, he has applied those means of grace in due time, but his everlasting purpose has been the basis and the foundation of it all; and thus he is my God as he is the God of none else beside his own children. My glorious gracious God in eternal election, for he thought of me and chose me from before the foundation of the world, that I should be without blame before him in love. Looking back, then, I see election's God, and election's God is my God if I be in election. But if I fear not God, neither regard him, then he is another man's God and not mine. If I have no claim and participation in election, then I am compelled to look upon him as being in that sense the God of a great body of men whom he has chosen, but not my God. If I can look back and see my name in life's fair book set down, then indeed he is my God in election.

Furthermore, the Christian can call God his God, from the fact of his *justification*. A sinner can call God — God, but he must always put in an adjective, and speak of God as an angry God, an incensed God, or an offended God. But the Christian can say, "my God," without putting in any adjective except it be a sweet one wherewithal to extol him, for now we who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, we who were enemies to God by wicked works are his friends and looking up to him, we can say, "my God," for he is my friend, and I am his friend. Enoch could say, "my God," for he walked with him. Adam could not say, "my God," when he hid himself beneath the trees of the garden. So that while I, a sinner, run from God, I cannot call him mine; but when I have peace with God, and am brought nigh to him, then indeed is he my God and my friend.

Again: he is the believer's God by *adoption*, and in that the sinner hath no part, I have heard people represent God as the Father of the whole universe. It surprises me that any reader of the Bible should so talk. Paul once quoted a heathen poet, who said that we are his offspring; and it is true in some sense that we are, as having been created by him. But in the high sense in which the term "childhood" is used in the Scripture to express the holy relationship of a regenerate child towards his Father, in that sense none can say, "Our father," but those who have the "Abba Father" printed

on their hearts by the spirit of adoption. Well, by this spirit of adoption, God becomes my God, as he is not the God of others. The Christian has a special claim to God, because God is his Father, as he is not the Father of any else save his brethren. Ay, beloved, these three things are quite enough to show you, that God is in a special sense the God of his own people; but I must leave that to your own thoughts, which will suggest twenty different ways in which God is specially the God of his own children, more than he is of the rest of his creatures. “God,” say the wicked, but “*my* God,” say God’s children. If then God be so specially your God, let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun, put on the Lord Jesus. The king’s daughter is (and so let all the king’s sons be) all glorious within; let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility, put on love, bowels of compassion, gentleness, meekness; put on the garments of salvation. Let your company and converse be according to your clothing. Live amongst the excellent, amongst the generation of the just; get you up to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just men made perfect. Live in the courts of the great King, behold his face, wait at his throne, bear his name, shew forth his virtues, set forth his praises, advance his honor, uphold his interest let vile persons and vile ways be contemned in your eyes: be of more noble spirits than to be companions with them. Regard not their societies, nor their scorns, their flatteries or their frowns; rejoice not with their joys, fear not their fear, care, not their care, feed not on their dainties; get you up from among them, to your country, your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy Live by faith, in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the Gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence, and yet the humility of the children of the great King.

**II.** Now, for a moment, let us consider THE EXCEEDING PRECIOUSNESS OF HIS GREAT MERCY, “I will be their God.” I conceive that God, himself, could say no more than that. I do not think if the Infinite were to stretch his powers, and magnify his grace by some stupendous promise which could outdo every other, I do not believe that it could exceed in glory this promise, “I will be their God.” Oh! Christian, do but consider what it is to have God to be thine own; consider what it is, compared with anything else.



*“Jacob’s portion is the Lord;  
What can Jacob more require?  
What can heaven more afford —  
Or a creature more desire?”*

*Compare this portion with the lot of thy fellow-men!* Some of them have their portion in the field they are rich and increased in goods, and their yellow harvests are even now ripening in the sun, but what are harvests compared with thy God the God of harvests? Or, what are granaries compared with him who is thy husbandman, and feeds thee with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city; their wealth is superabundant, and in constant streams it flows to them, until they become a very reservoir of gold, but what is gold compared with thy God? Thou couldst not live on it, thy spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Apply it to thy aching head, and would it afford thee any ease? Put it on a troubled conscience, and could thy gold allay its pangs? Put it on thy desponding heart, and see if it could stay a solitary groan, or give thee one grief the less? But thou hast God, and in Him thou hast more than gold or riches ever could buy, more than heaps of brilliant ore could ever purchase thee. Some have their portion in this world, in that which most men love, applause and fame, but ask thyself, is not thy God more to thee than that? What, if a thousand trumpets should blow thy praise, and if a myriad clarions should be loud with thine applause; what would it all be to thee if thou hadst lost thy God? Would this allay the turmoils of a soul ill at ease with itself? Would this prepare thee to pass the Jordan, and to breast those stormy waves which ere long must be forded by every man, when he is called from this world to lands unknown? Would a puff of wind serve thee then, or the clapping of the hands of thy fellow-creatures bless thee on thy dying bed? No, there are griefs here with which men cannot intermeddle, and there are griefs to come with which men cannot interfere to alleviate the pangs, and pains, and agonies, and dying strife. But when thou hast this — “I will be thy God” — thou hast as much as all other men can have put together; for this is all they have, and more. How little ought we to estimate the treasures of this world compared with God, when we consider that God frequently gives the most riches to the worst of his creatures! As Luther said, God gives food to his children, and husks to his swine, and who are the swine that get the husks? It is not often that God’s people get the riches of this world, and that does but prove that riches are little worth, else God would give them to us. Abraham gave the sons of Keturah a portion and sent them away; let me be Isaac and have my Father, and the

world may take all the rest. Oh! Christian, ask for nothing in this world, but that thou mayest live on this and that thou mayest die on this, "I will be their God. This exceedeth all the world besides.

*But compare this with what thou requirest, Christian.* What dost thou require? Is there not here all that thou dost require? To make thee happy thou wanted something that shall satisfy thee; and come I ask thee, is not this enough? Will not this fill thy pitcher to its very brim, aye, till it runs over? If thou canst put this promise inside thy cup, will not thou be forced to say, with David, "My cup runneth over. I have more than heart can wish?" When this is fulfilled, "I am thy God," let thy cup be ever so empty of earthly things, suppose thou hast not one solitary drop of creature joy, yet is not this enough to fill it until thy unsteady hand cannot hold the cup by reason of its fullness? I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine. Dost thou want anything but God? If thou thinkest thou dost, it were well for thee still to want, for all thou wantest save God, is but to gratify thy lust. Oh! Christian, is not this enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail?

But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction, thou desirest, sometimes rapturous delight. Come, soul, is there not enough here to delight thee? Put this promise to thy lips; didst ever drink wine one-half so sweet as this, "I will be their God?" Didst ever harp or viol sound half so sweetly as this, "I will be their God?" Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, could ever give such melody as this sweet promise, "I will be their God." Oh! here is a very sea of bliss, a very ocean of delight, come, bathe thy spirit in it, thou mayest swim, ay, to eternity, and never find a shore, thou mayest dive to the very infinite and never find the bottom, "*I will be their God.*" Oh! it this does not make thine eyes sparkle, if this make not thy foot dance for joy, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state.

But then thou wantest something more than present delights, something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more dost thou ever hope to get than the fulfilment of this great promise, "I will be their God?" Oh! hope, thou art a great-handed thing; thou layest hold of mighty things, which even faith hath not power to grasp; but though large thine hand may be, this fills it, so that thou canst carry nothing else. I protest, before God, I have not a hope beyond this promise. "O," say you, "you have a hope of heaven." Ay, I have a hope of heaven, but this is heaven —

“I will be their God.” What is heaven, but to be with God, to dwell with him, to realize that God is mine, and I am his? I see I have not a hope beyond that, there is not a promise beyond that, for all promises are couched in this, all hopes are included in this, “I will be their God.” This is the master-piece of all promises; it is the top-stone of all the great and precious things, which God has provided for his children, “I will be their God.” If we could really grasp it, if it could be applied to our soul and we could understand it, we might clap our hands and say, “Oh! the glory, oh! the glory, oh! the glory of that promise!” it makes a heaven below, and it must make a heaven above, for nothing else will be wanted but that, “I will be their God.”

**III.** Now, for a moment, dwell on the CERTAINTY OF THIS PROMISE; it does not say, “I *may* be their God;” but “I *will* be their God.” Nor does the text say, “Perhaps I shall be their God;” no, it says, “I *will* be their God.” There is a sinner who says he won’t have God for his God. He will have God to be his preserver, to take care of him, and keep him from accident. He does not object to having God to feed him, to give him his bread, and water, and raiment, nor does he mind making God somewhat of a showthing, that he may take out on Sunday, and bow before it, but he will not have God for his *God*, he will not take him to be his all. He makes his belly his God, gold his God, the world his God. How then is this promise to be fulfilled? There is one of God’s chosen people there; he does not know that he is chosen yet, and he says he will not have God; how then is the promise to be carried out. “Oh!” say some, “if the man wont have God, then, of course, God cannot get him;” and we have heard it preached, and we read it frequently that salvation entirely depends upon man’s will — that if man stands out and resists God’s Holy Spirit, the creature can be the conqueror of the Creator, and finite power can overcome the infinite. Frequently I take up a book and I read “Oh! sinner, be willing, for unless thou art, God cannot save thee;” and sometimes we are asked, “How is it that such an one is not saved?” And the answer is “He is not willing to be; God strove with him, but he would not be saved.” Ay but suppose he had striven with him, as he did with those who are saved, would he have been saved then? “No, he would have resisted.” Nay, we answer, it is not in man’s will, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of the power of God; and we never can entertain such an absurd idea as, that man can conquer Omnipotence, that the might of man is greater than the might of God. We believe indeed that certain usual influences of the Holy Spirit may

be overcome; we believe that there are general operations of the Spirit in many men's hearts which are resisted and rejected, but the effectual working of the Holy Ghost with the determination to save, could not be resisted, unless you suppose God overcome by his creatures, and the purpose of Deity frustrated by the will of man, which were to suppose something akin to blasphemy. Beloved, God has power to fulfill the promise, "I will be their God." "Oh!" cries the sinner, "I will not have thee for a God." "Wilt thou not?" says he, and he gives him over to the hand of Moses; Moses takes him a little and applies the club of the law, drags him to Sinai, where the mountain totters over his head, the lightnings flash, and thunders bellow, and then the sinner cries? "O God, save me!" "Ah! I thought thou wouldst not have me for a God?" "O Lord, thou shalt be my God," says the poor trembling sinner, "I have put away my ornaments from me; O Lord, what wilt thou do unto me? Save me! I will give myself to thee. Oh! take me!" "Ay," says the Lord, "I knew it, I said that I will be their God, and I have made thee willing in the day of my power." "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

**IV.** Now, lastly, I said we would conclude, by **URGING YOU TO MAKE USE OF GOD**, if he be yours. It is strange that spiritual blessings are our only possessions that we do not employ. We get a great spiritual blessing, and we let the rest get on it for many a day. There is the mercy seat, for instance. Ah, my friends, if you had the cash box as full of riches as that mercy seat is, you would go often to it; as often as your necessities require. But you do not go to the mercy seat half so often as you need to go. Most precious things God has given to us, but we never over-use them. The truth is, they cannot be over-used; we cannot wear a promise thread-bare; we can never burn out the incense of grace; we can never use up the infinite treasures of God's loving kindness. But if the blessings God gives us are not used, perhaps God is the least used of all. Though he is our God, we apply ourselves less to him, than to any of his creatures, or any of his mercies, which he bestows upon us. Look at the poor heathen; they use their gods, though they be no gods. They put up a piece of wood or stone and call it God, and how they use it! They want rain: the people assemble and ask for rain in the firm but foolish hope that their god can give it. There is a battle, and their god is lifted up; he is brought out from the house, where he usually dwells, that he may go before them, and lead them on to victory. But how seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business without asking his guidance! In

our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that he may sustain us! And this is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, "I am thine, soul, come and make use of me as thou wilt thou mayest freely come to my store, and the oftener the better welcome." Have thou not a God lying by thee to no purpose; let not thy God be as other gods, serving only for a show: have not a name only that thou hast a God. Since he allows thee, having such a friend, use him daily. My God shall supply all your wants: never went whilst thou hast a God, never fear or faint whilst thou hast a God, go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest; there is bread, and clothes, and health, and life, and all that thou needest. O Christian, learn the divine skill to make God all things, to make bread of thy God, and water, and health, and friends, and ease; he can supply thee with all these; or what is better, he can be instead of all these, thy food, thy clothing, thy friend, thy life of thee. All this he hath said to thee in this one word, I am thy God; and here-upon thou mayest say, as a heaven-born saint once did, "I have no husband, and yet I am no widow, my Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend, and yet I am neither fatherless nor friendless, my God is both my father and my friend. I have no child, but is not he better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home, I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but yet I am not alone, my God is good company for me; with him I can walk, with him I can take sweet counsel, find sweet repose; at my lying down, at my rising up, whilst I am in the house, or as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me; with him I travel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live for ever." Oh! child of God, let me urge thee to make use of thy God. Make use of him in prayer; I beseech thee, go to him often, because he is *thy* God. If he were another man's God, thou mightest weary him; but he is *thy* God. If he were my God and not thine, thou wouldst have no right to approach him, but he is *thy* God; he has made himself over to thee, if we may use such an expression, (and we think we may) he has become the positive property of all his children, so that all he has and all he is, is theirs. O child, wilt thou let thy treasury lie idle, when thou wantest it? Go; go and draw from it by prayer.

***"To him in every trouble flee,  
Thy best, thy only friend."***

Fly to him, tell him all thy wants. Use him constantly by faith, at all times. Oh! I beseech thee, if some dark providence has come over thee, use thy God as a sun, for he is a sun. If some strong enemy has come out against

thee, use thy God for a shield, for he is a shield to protect thee. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use him as a guide, for the great Jehovah will direct thee. If thou art in storms, use him for the God who stilleth the raging of the sea, and saith unto the waves “Be still.” If thou art a poor thing, knowing not which way to turn, use him for a shepherd, for the Lord is thy Shepherd, and thou shalt not want. Whate’er thou art, where’er thou art, remember God is just what thou wantest, and he is just where thou wantest. I beseech thee, then, make use of thy God; do not forget him in thy trouble, but flee to him in the midst of thy distresses, and cry,

*“When all created streams are dried  
Thy fullness is the same;  
May I with this be satisfied,  
And glory in thy name!*

*No good in creatures can be found  
But may be found in thee;  
I must have all things, and abound,  
While God is God to me.”*

Lastly, Christian, let me urge thee again to use God to be thy delight this day. If thou hast trial, or if thou art free from it, I beseech thee make God thy delight; go from this house of prayer and be happy this day in the Lord. Remember it is a commandment, “Rejoice in the Lord, always, and again I say, rejoice.” Do not be content to be moderately happy; seek to soar to the heights of bliss and to enjoy a heaven below, get near to God, and you will get near to heaven. It is not as it is with the sun here, the higher you go the colder you find it, because on the mountain there is nothing to reflect the rays of the sun; but with God, the nearer you go to him the brighter he will shine upon you, and when there are no other creatures to reflect his goodness, his light will be all the brighter. Go to God continually importunately, confidently; “delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall bring it to pass,” “commit thy way unto the lord, and he shall “guide thee by his counsel and afterwards receive thee to glory.”

Here is the first thing of the covenant; the second is like unto it. We will consider that another Sabbath-day. And now may God dismiss you with his blessing. Amen.

# CHRIST IN THE COVENANT.

NO. 103

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
JULY 18, 1856,

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

*“I will give thee for a covenant of the people.” — Isaiah 49:8.*

We all believe that our Savior has very much to do with the covenant of eternal salvation. We have been accustomed to regard him as the Mediator of the covenant, as the surety of the covenant, and as the scope or substance of the covenant.” We have considered him to be the *Mediator* of the covenant, for we were certain that God could make no covenant with man unless there were a mediator — a days-man who should stand between them both. And we have hailed him as the Mediator, who with mercy in his hands, came down to tell to sinful man the news that grace was promised in the eternal counsel of the Most High. We have also loved our Savior as the *Surety* of the covenant, who, on our behalf, undertook to pay our debts; and on his Father’s behalf, undertook, also to see that all our souls should be secure and safe, and ultimately presented unblemished and complete before him. And, doubt not, we have also rejoiced in the thought that Christ is the *sum and substance* of the covenant; we believe that if we would sum up all spiritual blessings, we must say, “Christ is all.” He is the matter, he is the substance of it; and although much might be said concerning the glories of the covenant, yet nothing could be said which is not to be found in that one word, “Christ.” But this morning I shall dwell on Christ, not as the Mediator, nor as the surety, nor as the scope of the covenant, but as one great and glorious article of the covenant which God has given to his children. It is our firm belief that Christ is ours, and is given to us of God; we know that “he freely delivered him up for us all,” and we, therefore, believe that he will, “with him freely give us all things.” We can say with the spouse, “My beloved is mine.” We feel that we have a

personal property in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and I will therefore delight us for a while, this morning, in the simplest manner possible, without the garnishings of eloquence or the trappings of oratory, just to meditate upon this great thought, that Jesus Christ in the covenant is the property of every believer.

First, we shall *examine this property*, secondly we shall notice the *purpose for which it was conveyed to us*; and thirdly, we shall give *one precept*, which may well be affixed upon so great a blessing as this, and is indeed an inference from it.

**I.** In the first place, then, here is a GREAT POSSESSION — Jesus Christ by the covenant is the property of every believer. By this we must understand Jesus Christ is many different senses; and we will begin, first of all, by declaring that Jesus Christ is ours, *in all his attributes*. He has a double set of attributes, seeing that there are two natures joined in glorious union in one person. He has the attributes of very God, and he has the attributes of perfect man; and whatever these may be, they are each one of them the perpetual property of every believing child of God. I need not dwell on his attributes as God; you all know how infinite is his love, how vast his grace, how firm his faithfulness, how unswerving his veracity; you know that he is omniscient I you know that he is omnipresent, you know that he is omnipotent, and it will console you if you will but think that all these great and glorious attributes which belong to God are all yours. Has he power? That power is yours yours to support and strengthen you; yours to overcome your enemies, yours to keep you immutably secure. Has he love? Well, there is not a particle of his love in his great heart which is not ours; all his love belongs to you; you may dive into the immense, bottomless ocean of his love, and you may say of it all, “it is mine.” Hath he justice? It may seem a stern attribute; but even that is yours for he will by his justice see to it, that all which is covenanted to you by the oath and promise of God shall be most certainly secured to you. Mention whatever you please which is a characteristic of Christ as the ever glorious Son of God, and, O faithful one, thou mayest put thine hand upon it and say, “it is mine.” Thine arm O Jesus, upon which the pillars of the earth do hang, is mine. Those eyes, O Jesus which pierce through the thick darkness and behold futurity — thine eyes are mine to look on me with love. Those lips, O Christ, which sometimes speak words louder than ten thousand thunders, or whisper syllables sweeter than the music of the harps of the glorified — those lips are mine. And that great heart which beateth high with such disinterested,



pure, and unaffected love — that heart is mine. The whole of Christ, in all his glorious nature as the Son of God, as God over all, blessed for ever, is yours, positively, actually, without metaphor, in reality yours.

Consider him as man too. All that he has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man he stood before his Father, “full of grace and truth,” full of favor, and accepted by God as a perfect being. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is thine acceptance; for knowest thou not, that that love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, he sets on thee now? For all that Christ did is thine. That perfect righteousness which Jesus wrought out, when through his stainless life he kept the law and made it honorable, is thine. There is not a virtue which Christ ever had, that is not thine; there is not a holy deed which he ever did which is not thine, there is not a prayer he ever sent to heaven that is not thine; there is not one solitary thought towards God which it was his duty to think, and which he thought as man serving his God, which is not thine. All his righteousness, in its vast extent, and in all the perfection of his character, is imputed to thee Oh! canst thou think what thou hast gotten in the word “Christ?” Come, believer, consider that word “God,” and think how mighty it is; and then meditate upon that word “perfect man,” for all that the Man-God, Christ, and the glorious God-man, Christ, ever had, or ever can have as the characteristic of either of his natures, all that is thine. It all belongs to thee; it is out of pure free favor, beyond the fear of revocation, passed over to thee to be thine actual property — and that for ever.

**2.** Then, consider believer, that not only is Christ thine in all his attributes, but he is thine *in all his offices*. Great and glorious these offices are, we have scarce time to mention them all. Is he a prophet? Then he is *thy* prophet. Is he a priest? Then he is *thy* priest. Is he a king? Then he is *thy* king. Is he a redeemer? Then he is *thy* redeemer. Is he an advocate? Then he is *thy* advocate. Is he a forerunner? Then he is *thy* forerunner. Is he a surety of the covenant? Then he is *thy* surety. In every name he bears, in every crown he wears, in every vestment in which he is arrayed, he is the believer’s own. Oh! child of God, if thou hadst grace to gather up this thought into thy soul it would comfort thee marvellously, to think that in all Christ is in office, he is most assuredly thine. Dost thou see him yonder, interceding before his Father, with outstretched arms? Dost thou mark his ephod — his golden mitre on his brow, inscribed with “holiness unto the Lord?” Dost see him as he lifts up his hands to pray? Hearest thou not that marvellous intercession such as man never preyed on earth; that

authoritative intercession such as he himself could not use in the agonies of the garden? For

*“With sighs and groans, he offered up  
His humble suit below  
But with authority he pleads  
Enthroned in glory now.”*

Dost see how he asks, and how he receives as soon as his petition is put up? And canst thou, darest thou believe that that intercession is all thine own, that on his breast thy name is written, that in his heart thy name is stamped in marks of indelible grace, and that all the majesty of that marvellous, that surpassing intercession is thine own, and would all be expended for thee if thou didst require it, that he has not any authority with his Father, that he will not use on thy behalf, if thou dost need it, that he has no power to intercede that he would not employ for thee in all times of necessity? Come now, words cannot set this forth; it is only your thoughts that can teach you this; it is only God the Holy Spirit bringing home the truth that can set this ravishing, this transporting thought in its proper position in your heart, that Christ is yours in all he is and has. Seest thou him on earth? There he stands, the priest offering his bloody sacrifice; see him on the tree, his hands are pierced, his feet are gushing gore! Oh! dost thou see that pallid countenance, and those languid eyes flowing with compassion? Dost thou mark that crown of thorns? Dost thou behold that mightiest of sacrifices, the sum and substance of them all? Believer, that is *thine*, those precious drops plead and claim *thy* peace with God, that open side is *thy* refuge, those pierced hands are thy redemption; that groan he groans for thee, that cry of a forsaken heart he utters for thee, that death he dies for thee. Come, I beseech thee, consider Christ in any one of his various offices; but when thou dost consider him lay hold of this thought, that in all these things he is thy Christ, given unto thee to be one article in the eternal covenant — thy possession for ever.

**3.** Then mark next, Christ is the believer's in every one of his *works*. Whether they be works of suffering or of duty, they are the property of the believer. As a child, he was circumcised, and is that bloody rite mine? Ay, “Circumcised in Christ.” As a believer he is buried, and is that watery sign of baptism mine? Yes, “Buried with Christ in baptism unto death.” Jesus' baptism I share when I lie interred with my best friend in the selfsame watery tomb. See there he dies, and it is a master work to die. But is his death mine? Yes, I die in Christ. He is buried, and is that burial mine? Yes,

I am buried with Christ. He rises. Mark him startling his guards, and rising from the tomb! And is that resurrection mine? Yes, we are “risen together with Christ.” Mark again, he ascends up on high, and leads captivity captive. Is that ascension mine? Yes, for he hath “raised us up together.” And see, he sits on his Father’s throne is that deed mine? Yes, he hath made us, “sit together in heavenly places.” All he did is ours. By divine decree, there existed such an union between Christ and his people, that all Christ did his people did: and all Christ has performed, his people did perform in him, for they were in his loins when he descended to the tomb, and in his loins they have ascended up on high, with him they entered into bliss, and with him thou sit in heavenly places. Represented by him, their Head, all his people even now are glorified in him even in him who is the head over all things to his church. In all the deeds of Christ either in his humiliation or his exaltation, recollect, O believer, thou hast a covenant interest, and all those things are thine.

**4.** I would for one moment hint at a sweet thought, which is this, you know that in the person of Christ “dwelleth *all the fullness of the Godhead* bodily.” Ah! believer, “and of his fullness have we received, and grace for grace.” All the fullness of Christ and do you know what that is? Do you understand that phrase? I warrant you, you do not know it, and shall not do just yet. But all that fullness of Christ, the abundance of which you may guess of by your own emptiness — all that fullness is thine to supply thy multiplied necessities. All the fullness of Christ to restrain thee to keep thee and preserve thee; all that fullness of power, of love, of purity, which is stored up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is thine. Do treasure up that thought, for then thine emptiness need never be a cause of fear; how canst thou be lost whilst thou hast all fullness to fly to?

**5.** But I come to something sweeter than this, *the very life of Christ* is the property of the believer, Ah! this is a thought into which I cannot dive, and I feel I have outdone myself in only mentioning it. The life of Christ is the property of every believer. Canst thou conceive what Christ’s life is? “Sure,” you say, “he poured it out upon the tree.” He did, and it was his life that he gave to thee then. But he took that life again; even the life of his burly was restored, and the life of his great and glorious Godhead had never undergone any change, even at that time. But now you know he has immortality: “he only hath immortality.” Can you conceive what kind of life that is which Christ possesses? Can he ever die? No; far sooner may the harps of heaven be stopped, and the chorus of the redeemed cease for ever;

far sooner may the glorious walls of paradise be shaken, and the foundations thereof be removed; than that Christ, the Son of God, should ever die. Immortal as his Father, now he sits, the Great Eternal One. Christian that life of Christ is thine. Hear what he says: "Because I live ye shall live also." "Ye are dead; and your life" — where is it? It is "hid with Christ in God." The same blow which smites us dead, spiritually, must slay Christ too; the same sword which can take away the spiritual life of a regenerate man, must take away the life of the Redeemer also; for they are linked together — they are not two lives, but one. We are but the rays of the great Sun of Righteousness, our Redeemer, — sparks which must return to the great orb again. If we are indeed the true heirs of heaven, we cannot die until he from whom we take our rise dieth also. We are the stream that cannot stop till the fountain be dry; we are the rays that cannot cease until the sun doth cease to shine. We are the branches, and we cannot wither until the trunk itself shall die. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The very life of Christ is the property of every one of his brethren.

**6.** And best of all, *the person of Jesus Christ* is the property of the Christian. I am persuaded, beloved, we think a great deal more of God's gifts than we do of God; and we preach a great deal more about the Holy Spirit's influence than we do about the Holy Spirit. And I am also assured that we talk a great deal more about the offices, and works, and attributes of Christ than we do about the person of Christ. Hence it is that there are few of us who can often understand the figures that are used in Solomon's Song, concerning the person of Christ, because we have seldom sought to see him or desired to know him. But, O believer, thou hast sometimes been able to behold thy Lord. Hast thou not seen *him*, who is white and ruddy, "the chief amongst ten thousand, and the altogether lovely?" Hast thou not been sometimes lost in pleasure when thou hast seen his feet, which are like much fine gold, as if they burned in a furnace? Hast thou not beheld him in the double character, the white and the red, the lily and the rose, the God yet the man, the dying yet the living; the perfect, and yet bearing about with him a body of death? Hast thou ever beheld that Lord with the nail-print in his hands, and the mark still on his side? And hast thou ever been ravished at his loving smile, and been delighted at his voice? Hast thou never had love visits from him? Has he never put his banner over thee? hast thou never walked with him to the villages and the garden of nuts? Hast thou never sat under his shadow? hast thou never found his fruit sweet unto thy taste? Yes, thou hast. His *person* then is thine. The wife loveth her

husband; she loveth his house and his property; she loveth him for all that he giveth her, for all the bounty he confers, and all the love he bestows; but his person is the object of her affections. So with the believer: he blesses Christ for all he does and all he is. But oh! it is Christ that is everything. He does not care so much about his office, as he does about *the Man* Christ. See the child on his father's knee — the father is a professor in the university; he is a great man with many titles, and perhaps the child knows that these are honorable titles, and esteems him for them; but he does not care so much about the professor and his dignity, as about the person of his father. It is not the college square cap, or the gown that the child loves; ay, and if it be a loving child it will not be so much the meal the father provides, or the house in which it lives, as the father which it loves, it is his dear person that has become the object of true and hearty affection. I am sure it is so with you, if you know your Savior; you love his mercies, you love his offices, you love his deeds, but oh! you love his person best. Reflect, then that the person of Christ is in the covenant conveyed to you: "I will give thee to be a covenant for the people."

## II. Now we come to the second: FOR WHAT PURPOSE DOES GOD PUT CHRIST IN THE COVENANT?

1. Well, in the first place, Christ is in the covenant in order *to comfort every coming sinner*. "Oh," says the sinner who is coming to God, "I cannot lay hold on such a great covenant as that, I cannot believe that heaven is provided for me, I cannot conceive that that robe of righteousness and all these wondrous things can be intended for such a wretch as I am." Here comes in the thought that Christ is in the covenant. Sinner, canst thou lay hold on Christ? Canst thou say,

*"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling?"*

Well, if thou hast got that, it was put in on purpose for thee to hold fast by God's covenant mercies all go together, and if thou hast laid hold on Christ, thou hast gained every blessing in the covenant. That is one reason why Christ was put there. Why, if Christ were not there, the poor sinner would say, "I dare not lay hold on that mercy. It is a God-like and a divine one, but I dare not grasp it; it is too good for me. I cannot receive it, it staggers my faith." But he sees Christ with all his great atonement in the covenant; and Christ looks so lovingly at him, and opens his arms so wide, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest,” that the sinner comes and throws his arms around Christ, and then Christ whispers, “Sinner, in laying hold of me, thou hast laid hold of all.” Why, Lord, I dare not think I could have the other mercies. I dare trust thee, but I dare not take the others. Ah, sinner, but in that thou hast taken me thou hast taken all, for the mercies of the covenant are like links in the chain. This one link is an enticing one. The sinner lays hold of it; and God has purposely put it there to entice the sinner to come and receive the mercies of the covenant. For when he has once got hold of Christ — here is the comfort — he has everything that the covenant can give.

**2.** Christ is put also *to confirm the doubting saint*. Sometimes he cannot read his interest in the covenant. He cannot see his portion among them that are sanctified. He is afraid that God is not his God, that the Spirit hath no dealings with his soul; but then,

*“Amid temptations, sharp and strong,  
His soul to that dear refuge flies;  
Hope is his anchor, firm and strong,  
When tempests blow and billows rise.”*

So he lays hold of Christ, and were it not for that, even the believer dare not come at all. He could not lay hold on any other mercy than that with which Christ is connected. “Ah,” saith he, “I know I am a sinner, and Christ came to save sinners.” So he holds fast to Christ. “I can hold fast here,” he says, “my black hands will not black Christ, my filthiness will not make him unclean.” So the saint holds hard by Christ, as hard as if it were the death-clutch of a drowning man. And what then? Why, he has got every mercy of the covenant in his hand. It is the wisdom of God that he has put Christ in, so that a poor sinner, who might be afraid to lay hold of another, knowing the gracious nature of Christ, is not afraid to lay hold of him, and therein he grasps the whole, but of oftimes unconsciously to himself.

**4.** Again, it was necessary that Christ should be in the covenant, because there *are many things there that would be nought without him*. Our great redemption is in the covenant, but we have no redemption except through his blood. It is true that my righteousness is in the covenant, but I can have no righteousness apart from that which Christ has wrought out, and which is imputed to me by God. It is very true that my eternal perfection is in the covenant, but the elect are only perfect in Christ. They are not perfect in themselves, nor will they ever be, until they have been washed, and

sanctified, and perfected by the Holy Ghost. And even in heaven their perfection consists not so much in their sanctification, as in their justification in Christ.

*“Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus the Lord their righteousness.”*

In fact, if you take Christ out of the covenant, you have just done the same as if you should break the string of a necklace: all the jewels, or beads, or corals, drop off and separate from each other. Christ is the golden string whereon the mercies of the covenant are threaded, and when you lay hold of him, you have obtained the whole string of pearls. But if Christ be taken out, true there will be the pearls, but we cannot wear them, we cannot grasp them; they are separated, and poor faith can never know how to get hold of them. Oh! it is a mercy worth worlds, that Christ is in the covenant.

**4.** But mark once more, as I told you when preaching concerning God in the covenant, *See New Park Street Pulpit, No. 93*. Christ is in the covenant *to be used*. God never gives his children a promise which he does not intend them to use. There are some promises in the Bible which I have never yet used; but I am well assured that there will come times of trial and trouble when I shall find that that poor despised promise, which I thought was never meant for me, will be the only one on which I can float. I know that the time is coming when every believer shall know the worth of every promise in the covenant. God has not given him any part of an inheritance which he did not mean him to till. Christ is given us to use. Believer, use him! I tell thee again, as I told thee before, that thou dost not use thy Christ as thou oughtest to do. Why, man, when thou art in trouble, why dost thou not go and tell him? Has he not a sympathising heart, and can he not comfort and relieve thee? No, thou art gadding about to all thy friends save thy best friend, and telling thy tale everywhere except into the bosom of thy Lord. Oh, use him, use him. Art thou black with yesterday's sins? Here is a fountain filled with blood; use it, saint, use it. Has thy guilt returned again? Well his power has been proved again and again; come use him! use him! Dost thou feel naked? Come hither, soul, put on the robe. Stand not staring at it; put it on. Strip, sir, strip thine own righteousness off, and thine own fears too. Put this on, and wear it, for it was meant to wear. Dost thou feel thyself sick? What, wilt thou not go and pull the night-bell of prayer, and wake up thy physician? I beseech thee go and stir him up betimes, and he will give the cordial that will revive thee. What! art



thou sick, with such a physician next door to thee, a present help in time of trouble, and wilt thou not go to him? Oh, remember thou art poor, but then thou hast “a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth.” What! wilt thou not go to him and ask him to give thee of his abundance, when he has given thee this promise, that as long as he has anything thou shalt go shares with him, for all he is and all he has is thine? Oh, believer, do use Christ, I beseech thee. There is nothing Christ dislikes more than for his people to make a show-thing of him and not to use him. He loves to be worked. He is a great laborer; he always was for his Father, and now he loves to be a great laborer for his brethren. The more burdens you put on his shoulders the better he will love you. Cast your burden on him. You will never know the sympathy of Christ’s heart and the love of his soul so well as when you have heaved a very mountain of trouble from yourself to his shoulders, and have found that he does not stagger under the weight. Are your troubles like huge mountains of snow upon your spirit? Bid them rumble like an avalanche upon the shoulders of the Almighty Christ. He can bear them all away, and carry them into the depths of the sea. Do use thy Master, for for this very purpose he was put into the covenant, that thou mightest use him whenever thou needest him.

**III.** Now, lastly, here is A PRECEPT, and what shall the precept be? Christ is ours; then *be ye Christ’s*, beloved. Ye are Christ’s, ye know right well. Ye are his by your Father’s donation when he gave you to the Son. You are his by his bloody purchase, when he counted down the price for your redemption. You are his by dedication, for you have dedicated yourselves to him. You are his by adoption, for you are brought to him and made one of his brethren and joint-heirs with him I beseech you, labor, dear brethren, to show the world that you are his in practice. When tempted to sin, reply, “I cannot do this great wickedness. I cannot, for I am one of Christ’s.” When wealth is before thee to be won by sin, touch it not; say that thou art Christ’s, else thou wouldst take it; but now thou canst not. Tell Satan that you would not gain the world if you had to love Christ less. Are you exposed in the world to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are one of Christ’s. Are you in a field where much is to be done, and others are sitting down idly and lazily, doing nothing? Go at your work, and when the sweat stands upon your brow and you are bidden to stay, say “No, I cannot stop; I am one of Christ’s. He had a baptism to be baptised with, and so have I, and I am straitened until it be accomplished. I am one of Christ’s. If I were not one of his, and purchased



by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens; but I am one of Christ's." When the syren song of pleasure would tempt thee from the path of right, reply, "Hush your strains, O temptress; I am one of Christ's. Thy music cannot affect me; I am not my own, I am bought with a price. When the cause of God needs thee, give thyself to it, for thou art Christ's. When the poor need thee, give thyself away, for thou art one of Christ's. When, at any time there is ought to be done for his church and for his cross, do it, remembering that thou art one of Christ's. I beseech thee, never belie thy profession. Go not where others could say of thee, "He cannot be Christ's;" but be thou ever one of those whose brogue is Christian, whose very idiom is Christ-like, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see thee may know that thou art one of the Savior's and may recognize in thee his features and his lovely countenance.

And now, dearly beloved hearers, I must say one word to those of you to whom I have not preached, for there are some of you who have never laid hold of the covenant. I sometimes hear it whispered, and sometimes read it, that there are men who trust to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Let me solemnly assure you that there is now no such thing in heaven as uncovenanted mercy; there is no such thing beneath God's sky or above it, as uncovenanted grace towards men. All ye can receive, and all you ever ought to hope for, must be through the covenant of free grace, and that alone.

Mayhap, poor convinced sinner thou darest not take hold of the covenant to day. Thou canst not say the covenant is thine. Thou art afraid it never can be thine; thou art such an unworthy wretch. Hark thee; canst thou lay hold on Christ? Darest thou do that? "Oh," sayest thou, "I am too unworthy." Nay, soul, darest thou touch the hem of his garment to day? Darest thou come up to him just so much as to touch the very skirt that is trailing on the ground? "No," sayest thou "I dare not," Why not, poor soul, why not? Canst thou not trust to Christ?

***"Are not his mercies rich and free?  
Then say, poor soul, why not for thee."***

"I dare not come, I am so unworthy," you say. Hear, then; my Master bids you come, and will you be afraid after that? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world

to save sinners. Why dare you not come to Christ? Oh, you are afraid he will turn you away! Hark ye, then, what he saith; “Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” Thou savest, “*I know he would cast me out.*” Come, then, and see if thou canst prove him a liar. I know thou canst not, but come and try. He has said “whosoever.” “*But I am the blackest.*” Nevertheless, he has said “whosoever “come along, blackest of the black. “*Oh, but I am filthy.*” Come along, filthy one, come and try him, come and prove him; recollect he has said he will cast out none that come to him by faith. Come and try him. I do not ask thee to lay hold on the whole covenant, thou shalt do that by-and-bye; but lay hold on Christ, and if thou wilt do that, then thou hast the covenant. “*Oh, I cannot lay hold of him,*” saith one poor soul. Well then, lie prostrate at his feet, and beg of him to lay hold of thee. Do groan one groan, and say, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!” Do sigh one sigh, and say, “Lord, save, or I perish.” Do let thy heart say it, if thy lips cannot. If grief, long smothered, burns like a flame within thy bones, at least let one spark out. Now pray one prayer and verily I say unto thee, one sincere prayer shall most assuredly prove that he will save thee. One true groan, where God has put it in the heart, is an earnest of his love; one true wish after Christ, if it be followed by sincere and earnest seeking of him, shall be accepted of God, and thou shalt be saved. Come, soul, once more. Lay hold on Christ. “*Oh, but I dare not do it.*” Now I was about to say a foolish thing; I was going to say that I wish I was a sinner like thyself this moment, and I think I would run before, and lay hold on Christ, and then say to you, “Take hold too.” But *I am* a sinner like thyself, and no better than thyself; I have no merits, no righteousness, no works; I shall be damned in hell unless Christ have mercy on me, and should have been there now if I had had my deserts. Here am I a sinner once as black as thou art; and yet, O Christ, these arms embrace thee. Sinner, come and take thy turn after me. Have not I embraced him? Am I not as vile as thou art? Come and let my case assure thee. How did he treat me when I first laid hold of him? Why he said to me, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Come, sinner, come and try, If Christ did not drive me away, he will never spurn you. Come along, poor soul, come along —

*“Venture on him, (tis no venture,) venture wholly,  
 Let no other trust intrude;  
 None but Jesus  
 Can do helpless sinners good.”*

He can do thee all the good thou wantest: oh! trust my Master, oh! trust my Master, he is a precious Lord Jesus, he is a sweet Lord Jesus, he is a loving Savior, he is a kind and condescending forgiver of sin. Come, ye black; come, ye filth; come, ye poor; come, ye dying; come, ye lost — ye who have been taught to feel your need of Christ; come, all of you — come now for Jesus bids you come; come quickly. Lord Jesus, draw them, draw them by thy Spirit! Amen.

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE COVENANT.

NO. 3048

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 11TH, 1907,

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,

*“And I will put my spirit within you.” — Ezekiel 36:27.*

THE Holy Spirit is the third Person in the covenant. We have considered “God in the Covenant;” and “Christ in the Covenant;” and now, this morning, we have to consider the Holy Spirit in the covenant. For, remember, it is necessary that the Triune God should work out the salvation of the Lord’s people, if they are to be saved at all; and it was absolutely requisite that, when the covenant was made, all that was necessary should be put into it; and, among the rest, the Holy Spirit, without whom all things done even by the Father and by Jesus Christ would be ineffectual, for he is needed as much as the Savior of men, or the Father of spirits. In this age, when the Holy Spirit is too much forgotten, and but little honor is accorded to his sacred person, I feel that there is a deep responsibility upon me to endeavor to magnify his great and holy name. I almost tremble, this morning, in entering on so profound a subject, for which I feel myself so insufficient. But, nevertheless, relying on the aid, the guidance, and the witness of the Holy Spirit himself, I venture upon an exposition of this text “I will put my Spirit within you.”

The Holy Spirit is given, in the covenant, to all the children of God, and received by each in due course; and yet, upon our Lord Jesus Christ did the Spirit first descend, and alighted upon him as our Covenant-head, “like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments.” The Father hath given the Holy Spirit without measure unto his Son; and from him, in

measure, though still in abundance, do all “the brethren who dwell together in unity” (or union with Christ) partake of the Spirit. This holy anointing flows down from Jesus, the anointed One, to every part of his mystical body, to every individual member of his Church. The Lord’s declaration concerning Christ was, “I have put my Spirit upon HIM;” and he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted.” The Spirit was first poured upon Christ, and from him descends to all those who are in union with his adorable person. Let us bless the name of Christ if we are united to him; and let us look up to our covenant Head, expecting that from him will flow down the heavenly unction which shall anoint our souls.

My text is one of the unconditional promises of Scripture. There are many conditional promises in the Word of God, given to certain characters; although even these promises are in some sense unconditional, since the very condition of the promise is by some other promise secured as a gift; but this one has no condition whatever. It does not say, “I will put my Spirit within them, if they ask for him;” it says plainly, without any reservation or stipulation, “I will put my Spirit within them.” The reason is obvious. Until the Spirit is put within us, we cannot feel our need of the Spirit, neither can we ask for or seek him; and, therefore, it is necessary that there should be an absolutely unconditional promise, made to all the elect children of God, that they should have given to them the waiting grace, the desiring grace, the seeking grace, the believing grace, which shall make them pant and hunger and thirst after Jesus. To everyone who is, like Christ, “chosen of God, and precious,” to every redeemed soul, however sunken in sin, however lost and ruined by the Fall, however much he may hate God and despise his Redeemer, this promise still holds good, “I will put my Spirit within you;” and, in due course, every one of them shall have that Spirit, who shall quicken them from the dead, lead them to seek pardon, induce them to trust in Christ, and adopt them into the living family of God.

The promise is also concerning an internal blessing to be bestowed: “I will put my Spirit *within* you.” Remember, we have the Spirit of God in his written Word, and with every faithful minister of the gospel, the Spirit is likewise vouchsafed to us in the ordinances of Christ’s Church. God is perpetually giving the Spirit to us by these means. But it is in vain for us to hear of the Spirit, to talk of him, or to believe in him, unless we have a

realization of his power within us; here, therefore, is the promise of such an internal blessing: "I will put my Spirit within you."

We come now to consider this promise in all its comprehensiveness; may the Holy Spirit himself assist us in so doing! We shall take the various works of the Holy Ghost, one by one, and shall remember that, in all the works which he performs, the Spirit is put in the covenant to be possessed by every believer.

**1. In the first place,, we are told by Christ, "IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT QUICKENETH."**

*Until he is pleased to breathe upon the soul, it is dead to any spiritual life.* It is not until the Spirit, like some heavenly wind, breathes upon the dry bones, and puts life into them, that they can ever live. You may take a corpse, and dress it in all the garments of external decency; you may wash it with the water of morality; ay, you may bedeck it with the crown of profession, and put upon its brow a tiara of beauty, you may paint its cheeks until you make it like life itself. But remember, unless the spirit be there, corruption will ere long seize on the body. So, beloved, it is the Spirit who is the Quickener; you would have been as "dead in trespasses and sins" now as ever you were, if it had not been for the Holy Ghost, who made you alive. You were lying, not simply "cast out in the open field," but, worse than that, you were the very prey of mortality; corruption was your father, the worm was your mother and your sister; you were noxious in the nostrils of the Almighty. It was thus that the Savior beheld you in all your loathsomeness, and said to you, "Live." In that moment, you were "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Life entered into you at his bidding; then it was that the Spirit quickened you. The words of Jesus, so he told his disciples, "They are spirit, and they are life." You were made alive entirely through the might of the quickening Spirit.

***"The Spirit, like some heavenly wind  
Blows on the sons of flesh;  
Creates a new — a heavenly mind,  
And forms the man afresh."***

If, then, you feel at any time death working in you, as doubtless you will, withering the bloom of your piety, chilling the fervor of your devotions, and quenching the ardor of your faith, remember that *he who first*

*quicken*ed you must keep you alive. The Spirit of God is the sap that flowed into your poor, dry branch, because you were grafted into Christ; and as, by that sap, you were first made green with life, so it is by that sap alone you can ever bring forth fruit unto God. By the Spirit you drew your first breath, when you cried out for mercy, and from the same Spirit you must draw the breath to praise that mercy in hymns and anthems of joy. Having begun in the Spirit, you must be made perfect in the Spirit. “The flesh profiteth nothing;” the works of the law will not help you; the thoughts and devices of your own hearts are of no avail. You would be cut off from Christ, you would be more depraved than you were before your conversion, you would be more corrupt than you were previous to your being regenerated, — “twice dead, plucked up by the roots,” if God the Holy Ghost were to withdraw from you. You must live in his life, trust in his power to sustain you, and seek of him fresh supplies, when the tide of your spiritual life is running low.

## 2. WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS AN ASSISTANT SPIRIT, IN ALL THE DUTIES WE HAVE TO PERFORM.

The most common Christian duty is that of *prayer*; for the meanest child of God must be a praying child. Remember, then, that it is written, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought.” The Spirit of God is in the covenant, as the great aid to us in all our petitions to the throne of grace. Child of God, thou knowest not what to pray for; rely, then, on the Spirit, as the Inspirer of prayer, who will tell thee how to pray. Sometimes thou knowest not how to express what thou desires; rely upon the Spirit, then, as the One who can touch thy lips with the “live coal from off the altar,” whereby thou shalt be able to pour out thy fervent wishes before the throne. Sometimes, even when thou hast life and power within thee, thou canst not express thine inward emotions; then rely upon that Spirit to interpret thy feelings, for he “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When, like Jacob, thou art wrestling with the angel, and art nearly thrown down, ask the Holy Spirit to nerve thine arms. The Holy Spirit is the chariot wheel of prayer. Prayer may be the chariot, the desire may draw it forth, but the Spirit is the very wheel whereby it moveth. He propels the desire, and causeth the chariot to roll swiftly on, and to bear to heaven the supplication of the saints, when the desire of the heart is “according to the will of God.”

Another duty, to which some of the children of God are called, is that of *preaching*; and here too we must have the Holy Spirit to enable us. Those whom God calls to preach the gospel are assisted with might from on high. He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is a solemn thing to enter upon the work of the ministry. I will just make an observation here; for, in this place, there are young men, who are striving to enter into the ministry before they scarcely know the alphabet of the gospel; they set themselves up as preachers of God's Word, when the first thing they ought to do is to join the infant class in a school, and learn to read properly. I know there are some, to whom God has given the desire thus to seek the glory of his name and the welfare of souls, and who humbly wait till he has opened the way; God bless them, and speed them! But — would you believe it? — a young man was baptized, and received into the church one Sunday, — and he positively went off to a College on the Monday or Tuesday, to ask if they would receive him! I asked him whether he had ever preached before, or addressed half-a-dozen Sunday scholars; he said, "No." But what surprised me most was, that he said he was collect to the work before he was converted! It was a call from the devil, I verily believe; — not a call from God in the least degree. Take heed that ye touch not God's ark with unholy fingers. You may all preach if you can, but take care that you do not set yourselves up in the ministry, without having a solemn conviction that the Spirit from on high has set you apart; for, if you do, the blood of souls will be found in your skirts. Too many have rushed into the holy place, uncalled of God; who, if they could have rushed out of it on their dying beds, would have had eternal cause for gratitude. But they ran presumptuously, then preached unsent, and therefore unblessed; and, when dying, they felt a greater condemnation from the fact that they had taken on themselves an office to which God had never appointed them. Beware of doing that; but if God has called you, however little talent you may have, fear not anyone's frown or rebuke. If you have a solemn conviction in your souls that God has really ordained you to the work of the ministry, and if you have obtained a seal to your commission in the conversion of even one soul, let not death or hell stop you; go straight on, and never think you must have certain endowments to make a successful preacher. The only endowment necessary for success in the ministry is the endowment of the Holy Ghost. When preaching in the presence of a number of ministers, last Friday, I told the brethren there, when one of them asked how it was God had been pleased to bless me so much in this place, "There is not one of you whom God could not bless ten



times as much, if you had ten times as much of the Spirit.” For it is not any ability of the man, — it is not any human qualification, — it is simply the influence of God’s Spirit that is necessary; and I have been delighted to find myself abused as ignorant, unlearned, and void of eloquence, all which I knew long before; but so much the better, for then all the glory belongs to God. Let men say what they please, I will always confess to the truth of it. I *am* a fool: “I have become a fool in glorying,” if you please. I will take any opprobrious title that worldlings like to put upon me; but they cannot deny the fact that God blesses my ministry, that harlots have been saved, that drunkards have been reclaimed, that some of the most abandoned characters have been changed, and that God has wrought such a work in their midst as they never saw before in their lives. Therefore, give all the glory to his holy name. Cast as much reproach as you like on me, ye worldlings; the more honor shall there be to God, who worketh as he pleaseth, and with what instrument he chooseth, irrespective of man.

Again, dearly-beloved, whatever is your work, *whatever God has ordained you to do in this world, you are equally certain to have the assistance of the Holy Spirit in it.* If it be the teaching of an infant class in the Sabbath-school, do not think you cannot have the Holy Spirit. His succor shall be granted as freely to you as to the man who addresses a large assembly. Are you sitting down by the side of some poor dying woman? Believe that the Holy Spirit will come to you there, as much as if you were administering the sacred elements of the Lord’s supper. Let your strength for the lowliest work, as much as for the loftiest, be sought from God. Spiritual plowman, sharpen thy plowshare with the Spirit! Spiritual sower, dip thy seed in the Spirit, so shall it germinate; and ask the Spirit to give thee grace to scatter it, that it may fall into the right furrows! Spiritual warrior, whet thy sword with the Spirit; and ask the Spirit, whose Word is a two-edged sword, to strengthen thine arm to wield it!

**3.** The next point we advert to shall be that THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD AS A SPIRIT OF REVELATION AND OF INSTRUCTION.

He brings us “out of darkness into marvellous light.” By nature, we are ignorant, extremely so; but the Holy Spirit teaches the family of God, and makes them wise. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One,” said the apostle John, “and ye know all things.” Student in the school of Christ, wouldst thou be wise? Ask not the theologian to expound to thee his

system of divinity; but, sitting down meekly at the feet of Jesus, ask that his Spirit may instruct thee; for I tell thee, student, though thou shouldst read the Bible many a year, and turn over its pages continually, thou wouldst not learn anything of its hidden mysteries without the Spirit. But mayhap, in a solitary moment of thy study, when suddenly enlightened by the Spirit, thou mayest learn a truth as swiftly as thou seest the lightning flash. Young people, are you laboring to understand the doctrine of election? It is the Holy Spirit alone who can reveal it to your heart, and make you comprehend it. Are you tugging and toiling at the doctrine of human depravity? The Holy Spirit must reveal to you the depth of wickedness of the human heart. Are you wanting to know the secret of the life of the believer, as he lives by the faith of the Son of God, and the mysterious fellowship with the Lord he enjoys? It must always be a mystery to you unless the Holy Spirit shall unfold it to your heart. Whenever thou readest the Bible, cry to the Spirit, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The Spirit gives eye-salve to the blind; and if thine eyes are not now open, seek the eye-salve, and so thou shalt see, — ay, and see so clearly that he, who has only learned in man's school, shall ask, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Those who are taught of the Spirit often surpass those who are taught of man. I have met with an entirely uninstructed clod-hopper, in the country, who never went to school for one hour in his life, who yet knew more about the Holy Scriptures than many a clergyman trained at the University. I have been told that it is a common practice for men in Wales, while they are at work, breaking stones on the road, to discuss difficult points in theology, which many a divine cannot master: for this reason, that they humbly read the Scriptures, trusting only to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and believing that he will lead them into all truth; and he is pleased so to do. All other instruction is very well; Solomon says, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good;" we should all seek to know as much as can be known: but let us remember that, in the work of salvation, real knowledge must be obtained by the teaching of the Holy Ghost; and if we would learn in the heart, and not merely in the head, we must be taught entirely by the Holy Spirit. What you learn from man, you can unlearn; but what you learn of the Spirit is fixed indelibly in your heart and conscience, and not even Satan himself can steal it from you. Go, ye ignorant ones, who often stagger at the truths of revelation; go, and ask the Spirit, for he is the Guide of benighted souls; ay, and the Guide of his own enlightened people too; for, without his aid, even when they have been "once

enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift," they would not understand all truth unless he led them into it.

#### 4. I desire further to mention that GOD WILL GIVE THE SPIRIT TO US AS A SPIRIT OF APPLICATION.

Thus it was that Jesus said to his disciples, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." To make the matter still more plain, our Lord added, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Let me remind you how frequently Jesus impressed on his disciples the fact that he spake to them the words of his Father: "My doctrine," said he, "is not mine, but his that sent me." And again, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." As Christ thus made known the will of God the Father to his people, so the Holy Ghost makes known to us the words of Christ. I could almost affirm that Christ's words would be of no use to us unless they were applied to us by the Holy Spirit. Beloved, we need the application to assure our hearts that they are our own, that they are intended for us, and that we have an interest in their blessedness; and we need the unction of the Spirit to make them bedew our hearts, and refresh our souls.

Did you ever have a promise applied to your heart? Do you understand what is meant by *application* as the exclusive work of the Spirit? It is, as Paul says the gospel came to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Sometimes it cometh of a sudden; your heart may have been the scene of a thousand distracting thoughts, billow dashing against billow, till the tempest rose beyond your control. Anon, some text of Scripture, like a mighty fiat from the lips of Jesus, has stilled your troubled breast, and immediately there has been a great calm, and you have wondered whence it came. The sweet sentence has rung like music in your ears; like a wafer made of honey, it has moistened your tongue; like a charm, it has quelled your anxieties, while it has dwelt uppermost in your thoughts all the day long, reining in all your lawless passions and restless strivings. Perhaps it has continued in your mind for weeks; wherever you went, whatever you did, you could not dislodge it, nor did you wish to do so, so sweet, so savory was it to your soul. Have you not thought of such a text that it is the best in the Bible, the most precious in all the Scriptures? That was because it was so graciously applied to you.

Oh, how I love applied promises! I may read a thousand promises as they stand recorded on the pages of this Sacred Volume, and yet get nothing from them; my heart would not burn within me for all the richness of the store; but one promise, brought home to my soul by the Spirit's application, hath such marrow and fatness in it that it would be food enough for forty days for many of the Lord's Elijahs. How sweet it is, in the times of deep affliction, to have this promise applied to the heart: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"! Perhaps you say, "That is all enthusiasm." Of course it appears so to you, if, as natural men, ye discern not the things of the Spirit; but we are talking about spiritual things to spiritual men, and to them it is no mere enthusiasm, it is often a matter of life or death. I have known numerous cases where almost the only plank on which the poor troubled saint was able to float was just one text, of which, somehow or other, he had got so tight a grasp that nothing could take it away from him.

Nor is it only his Word which needs to be applied to us. "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you," may be referred likewise to our Savior's precious blood. We sometimes sing, —

*"There is a fountain filled with blood," —*

and we talk of bathing in it. Now, faith does not apply the blood to the soul; that is the work of the Spirit. True, I seek it by faith; but it is the Spirit who washes me in "the fountain opened.... for sin and for uncleanness." It is the Spirit who receives of the things of Christ, and shows them unto me. You would never have a drop of blood sprinkled on your heart unless it was sprinkled by the hand of the Spirit. So, too, the robe of Christ's righteousness is entirely fitted on us by him. We are not invited to appropriate the obedience of Christ to ourselves; but the Spirit brings all *to* us which Christ has made *for* us. Ask, then, of the Spirit that you may have the Word applied, the blood applied, pardon applied, and grace applied, and you shall not ask in vain; for Jehovah hath said, "I will put my Spirit within you."

**5. But now we have to mark another very important point. WE MUST RECEIVE THE SPIRIT AS A SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.**

Perhaps this is one of the greatest works of the Holy Ghost, — sanctifying the soul. It is a great work to purge the soul from sin; it is greater than if one should wash a leopard till all his spots were obliterated, or an Ethiopian till his sable skin became white; for our sins are more than skin-deep, — they have entered into our very nature. Should we be outwardly washed white this morning, we should be black and polluted before tomorrow; and if all the spots were taken away today, they would grow again tomorrow, for we are black all through. You may scrub the flesh, but it is black to the last; our sinfulness is a leprosy that lies deep within. But the Holy Spirit sanctifies the soul; he enters the heart, beginning the work of sanctification by conversion; he keeps possession of the heart, and preserves sanctification by perpetually pouring in fresh oil of grace, till at last he will perfect sanctification by making us pure and spotless, fit to dwell with the blest inhabitants of glory.

The way the Spirit sanctifies is this: first he reveals to the soul the evil of sin, and makes the soul hate it; he shows it to be a deadly evil, full of poison; and when the soul begins to hate it, the next thing the Spirit does is, to show it that the blood of Christ takes all the guilt away, and, from that very fact, to lead it to hate sin even more than it did when it first knew its blackness. The Spirit takes it to “the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel;” and there he tolls the death-knell of sin as he points to the blood of Christ, and says, “He shed this for you, that he might purchase you unto himself, to be one of his peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Afterwards, the Holy Spirit may, at times, allow sin to break out in the heart of the child of God that it may be more strongly repressed by greater watchfulness in future; and when the heir of heaven indulges in sin, the Holy Spirit sends a sanctifying chastisement upon the soul, until, the heart being broken with grief, by the blueness of the wound, evil is cleansed away; and conscience, feeling uneasy, sends the heart to Christ, who removes the chastisement, and takes away the guilt.

Again, remember, believer, *all thy holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit*. Thou hast not a grace which the Spirit did not give thee; thou hast not a solitary virtue which he did not work in thee; thou hast no goodness which has not been given to thee by the Spirit; therefore, never boast of thy virtues or of thy graces. Hast thou now a sweet temper, whereas thou once wast passionate? Boast not of it; thou wilt be angry yet if the Spirit leaves thee. Art thou now pure, whereas thou wast once unclean? Boast not of thy purity, the seed of which was brought from heaven; it never grew

within thy heart by nature; it is God's gift alone. Is unbelief prevailing against thee? Do thy lusts, thine evil passions, and thy corrupt desires, seem likely to master thee? Then I will not say, "Up, and at 'em!" but I will say, — Cry mightily unto God, that thou mayest be filled with the Holy Spirit, so shalt thou conquer at last, and become more than conqueror over all thy sins, seeing that the Lord hath engaged to put his Spirit "within you."

**6.** When I have spoken of two more points, I shall conclude. **THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS PROMISED TO THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN AS DIRECTING SPIRIT**, to guide them in the path of providence.

If you are ever in a position in which you know not what road to take, remember that your "strength is to sit still," and your wisdom is to wait for the directing voice of the Spirit, saying to you, "This is the way, walk ye in it." I trust. I have proved this myself, and I am sure every child of God, who has been placed in difficulties, must have felt, at times, the reality and blessedness of this guidance. And have you never prayed to him to direct you? If you have, did you ever find that you went wrong afterwards? I do not mean the sort of prayers that they present who ask counsel, but not of the Lord; "who walk to go down into Egypt, . . . to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh," and then ask God to bless them in a way that he never sanctioned. No; you must start fairly by renouncing every other trust. It is only thus that you can make proof of his promise, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Take with you, then, child of God, an open confession; say, "Lord, I desire, like a sheet of water, to be moved by the breath of the Spirit; here I lie, 'passive in thy hand;' fain would I know no will but thine: show me thy will, O Lord! Teach me what to do, and what to refrain from doing."

To some of you, this may seem all fanaticism; you believe not that God the Holy Spirit ever guides men in the way they should take. So you may suppose, if you have never experienced his guidance. We have heard that, when one of our English travelers, in Africa, told the inhabitants of the intense cold that sometimes prevailed in his country, by which water became so hard that people could skate and walk upon it, the king threatened to put him to death if he told anymore lies, for he had never felt or seen such things; and what one has never seen or felt is certainly fit subject for doubt and contradiction. But, with regard to the Lord's people, who tell you that they are led by the Spirit, I advise you to give heed to

their sayings, and seek to make the trial for yourselves. It would be a good thing if you were just to go to God, as a child, in all your distresses. Remember that, as a solicitor whom you may safely consult, as a guide whose directions you may safely follow, as a friend on whose protection you may safely rely, the Holy Spirit is personally present in the Church of Christ, and with each of the disciples of Jesus; and there is no fee to pay but the fee of gratitude and praise, because he has directed you so well.

#### 7. Just once more, — THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE GIVEN TO GOD'S CHILDREN AS A COMFORTING SPIRIT.

This is peculiarly his office. Have you never felt that, immediately before a great and grievous trouble, you have had a most unaccountable season of joy? You scarcely knew why you were so happy or so tranquil, you seemed to be floating upon a very Sea of Elysium; there was not a breath of wind to ruffle your peaceful spirit, all was serene and calm. You were not agitated by the ordinary cares and anxieties of the world; your whole mind was absorbed in sacred meditation. By-and-by, the trouble comes, and you say, "Now I understand it all; I could not before comprehend the meaning of that grateful lull, that quiet happiness; but I see now that it was designed to prepare me for these trying circumstances. If I had been low and dispirited when this trouble burst upon me, it would have broken my heart. But now, thanks be to God, I can perceive through Jesus Christ how this 'light affliction, which is but for a moment,' worketh for me, 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'" "But, mark you, I believe that it is worthwhile to have the troubles in order to get the comfort of the Holy Spirit; it is worthwhile to endure the storm in order to realize the joys.

Sometimes, my heart has been shaken by obloquy, shame, and contempt; for many a brother minister, of whom I thought better things, has reviled me; and many a Christian has turned on his heel away from me, because I had been misrepresented to him, and he has hated me without a cause; but it has so happened that, at that very time, if the whole church had turned its back on me, and the whole world had hissed me, it would not have greatly moved me; for some bright ray of spiritual sunshine lit up my heart, and Jesus whispered to me those sweet words, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." At such times, the consolations of the Spirit have been neither few nor small with me. O Christian, if I were able, I would bring thee yet further into the depths of this glorious passage; but, as I cannot, I

must leave it with you. It is full of honey; only put it to your lips, and get the honey from it. "I will put my Spirit within you."

In winding up, let me add a remark or two. *Do you not see here the absolute certainty of the salvation of every believer?* Or rather, is it not absolutely certain that every member of the family of God's Israel must be saved? For it is written, "I will put my Spirit within you." Do you think that, when God puts his Spirit within men, they can possibly be damned? Can you think God puts his Spirit into them, and yet they perish, and are lost? You may think so if you please, sir; but I will tell you what God thinks: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Sinners are far from God by wicked works, and they will not come unto him that they may have life; but when God says, "I will put my Spirit within you," he compels them to come to him.

*What a vain pretense it is to profess to honor God by a doctrine that makes salvation depend on the will of man!* If it were true, you might say to God, "We thank thee, O Lord, for what thou hast done; thou hast given us a great many things, and we offer thee thy meed of praise, which is justly due to thy name; but we think we deserve more, for the deciding point was in our free will." Beloved, do not any of you swerve from the free grace of God, for the babblings about man's free agency are neither more nor less than lies, right contrary to the truth of Christ, and the teachings of the Spirit.

How certain, then, is the salvation of every elect soul! It does not depend on the will of man; he is "made willing" in the day of God's power. He shall be called at the set time, and his heart shall be effectually changed, that he may become a trophy of the Redeemer's power. That he was unwilling before, is no hindrance; for God giveth him the will, so that he is then of a willing mind. Thus, every heir of heaven must be saved, because the Spirit is put within him, and thereby his disposition and affections are molded according to the will of God.

Once more, *how useless is it for any persons to suppose that they can be saved without the Holy Spirit!* Ah, dear friends! men sometimes go very near to salvation without being saved; like the poor man who lay by the side of the pool of Bethesda, always close to the water, but never getting in. How many changes in outward character there are which very much resemble conversion; but, not having the Spirit in them, they fail after all!



Death-bed repentances are often looked upon as very sincere, although too frequently, we fear, they are but *the first gnawings of the worm that never dies*. I have read, this week, an extraordinary anecdote, told by Dr. Campbell, of a woman who, many years ago, was condemned to death for murdering her child, and was hung in the Grass Market at Edinburgh. She very diligently improved the six weeks allowed her by the Scotch law, previous to her execution, and the ministers who were with her continually gave it as their opinion, that she died in the sure and certain hope of salvation. The appointed day came; she, was hung; but, it being very rainy, and no awning having been prepared, those who had the charge of her execution were in a great hurry to complete it, and get under shelter, so she was cut down before the legal time, and, as the custom is, the body was given up to her friends to be buried. A coffin was provided, and she was removed in it to East Lothian, where her husband was going to bury her. They stopped at a public-house, on the road, to refresh themselves, when, to their great surprise and alarm, in rushed a boy, and said he heard a noise in the coffin. They went out, and found that the woman was alive; the vital powers had been suspended, but the life was not extinct, and the jolting of the cart had restored her circulation. After a few hours, she became quite well; they removed their residence, and went to another part of the country. But the sad part of the tale is this, that the woman was as bad a character afterwards as she ever was before, and, if anything, worse. She lived as openly in sin, and despised and hated religion even more than she had previously done. This is a most remarkable case. I believe that you would see that the great majority of those who profess to repent on their deathbeds, if they could rise again from their graves, would live a life as profane and godless as ever. Rely on this; it is nothing but the grace of the Spirit of God that makes sure work of your souls. Unless he shall change you, you may be changed, but it will not be a change that will endure. Unless he shall put his hand to the work, the work will be marred, the pitcher spoiled on the wheel. Cry unto him, therefore, that he may give you the Holy Spirit, that you may have the evidence of a real conversion, and not a base counterfeit. Take heed, sirs, take heed! Natural fear, natural love, natural feelings, are not conversion. Conversion, in the first instance, and by all subsequent edification, must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and of him alone. Never rest comfortable, then, until you have the Holy Spirit's operations most surely effected in your hearts!

# THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.

NO. 1186

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING,  
AUGUST 2ND, 1874,**

*BY C. H. SPURGEON,*

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”  
— Hebrews 13:20-21.

WHAT we ask others to do we should be prepared to do ourselves. Precept fails unless it be followed up by example. The apostle had exhorted the Hebrew believers to pray for him in the words, “Pray for us;” and then, as if to show that he did not ask of them what he was not himself. Willing to give, he utters this most wonderful prayer for them. He may confidently say to his congregation, “Pray for me” who does unfeignedly from his soul pray for them. The prayer of the apostle, as you observe, is tinged with the subject upon which he had been writing. This Epistle to the Hebrews is full of distinctions between the old covenant and the new, the gist of it being to show that the former covenant was only typical of that abiding dispensation which followed it; for it had only the shadow, and not the very image of heavenly things. His subject had been the covenant, and when he prayed his garments were sweet with the myrrh and aloes and cassia among which his meditations had conducted him. According to the manner of his thoughts was the expression of his desires. He weaved into the texture of his prayer the meditations of his heart. And this is a very right method, especially when the prayer is public, for it ensures variety, it assists others to unite

with us, and it tends to edification; in fact, as the bee gathers honey from many flowers, and the honey is often flavored with wild thyme or some other special flower which abounds in the region from which it collects its sweets, so doth our soul gather dainty stores of the honey of devotion from all sources, but that upon which she longest tarries in her meditations yields a paramount savor and flavor to the expression and the spirit of her prayer. What was more natural than that a discourse upon the covenant should be followed by this covenant prayer: “The God of peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will”?

The subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews is deep, for it passes on from the superficial rudiments to those underlying truths which are more mysterious and profound. It is a book for the higher classes in Christ’s school; and hence this prayer is not for babes, but for men of understanding. We could not say to all the saints, “after this manner pray ye,” for they would not know what they were asking; they have need to begin with something simpler, such as that sweet “Our Father, which art in heaven,” which suits alike all believers. Full grown men feed on strong meat, think sublime thoughts, and offer mighty prayers. As we may admire in the prayer of the babe its simplicity, and in the prayer of the young man its vivacity, so in the prayer of one who has become a father in Christ, and feeds upon the covenant, we rejoice in its depth, compass, and sublimity. All these we find here. I invite those who would understand the deep things of God to ask the Holy Spirit’s assistance while we follow the apostle in this his covenant prayer, a prayer of which the covenant is the thread, the substance, and the plea.

**I.** The subject of our discourse this morning, therefore, is the covenant of grace, as it is here spoken of; and I shall begin by noticing, first, THE COVENANT NAMES which the apostle uses. He calls the ever-blessed Father “*the God of peace;*” and to the Redeemer who has taken the other side of the covenant, he gives the title, “*Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.*” Dear friends, as many of us as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are in Christ, and he is our Head and Representative, our Shepherd and Sponsor. On our behalf he made a covenant with the Father upon this tenor, that we having sinned, a full recompense should be made to injured justice, and the law of God should be fully honored; the Father on his part stipulating to grant full pardon, acceptance, adoption, and eternal life to us.

Now, the covenant has been kept on Christ's side. The text assures us of that, for Jesus has according to his promise shed his blood, and now the covenant stands only to be fulfilled on the side of the eternal Father, and under that aspect of the covenant the apostle calls the Father "the God of peace." What a precious name! Under the covenant of works he is the God of vengeance; to sinners he is the thrice Holy God, terrible out of his holy places. Even our God is a consuming fire; and yet to us, seeing that the covenant has been fulfilled on our side by our great Head and Representative, he is only "the God of peace." All is peace between you and God, Christian; there is no past ground of quarrel remaining, nor any fear that a new one can arise; the everlasting covenant secures everlasting peace. He is not the God of a hollow truce, not the God of a patched-up forgetfulness of unforgiven injuries, but the God of peace in the very deepest sense; he is himself at peace, for there is a peace of God that passeth all understanding; and, moreover, by reason of his mercy his people are made to enjoy peace of conscience within themselves, for you feel that God is reconciled to you, your hearts rest in him, your sins which separated you have been removed, and perfect love has cast out the fear which hath torment. While the Lord is at peace with himself, and you are made to enjoy inward peace through him, he is also at peace with you, for he loves you with a love unsearchable; he sees nothing in you but that which he delights in, for in the covenant he does not look at you as you are in yourself, but in your Head, Christ Jesus, and to the eye of God there is no sight in the universe so lovely as his own dear Son, and his people in his Son. There is beauty enough in Jesus to make him forget our deformities, merits enough in Jesus to swallow up our demerits, and efficacy sufficient in the atoning blood of our great High Priest to wash away all our transgressions. As for us, our soul recognizing that blood, and perceiving the love of God towards us, feels now no war with God. We did rebel once, for we hated him, and even now, when the old nature champs the bit, and the Lord's will runs cross to our desires, we do not find it easy to bow before him and say, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because it seemed good in thy sight": but yet the new nature which comes to the front does rule and govern, and all heart-contest between our soul and God is at an end. To us the Lord is in the widest and most perfect sense the God of peace. Oh, how I love that name; himself the peaceful, happy God, unruffled, undisturbed; ourselves within ourselves made to enjoy a peace that passeth all understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds. God at peace with us, declaring that he will never be wroth with us

nor rebuke us, and ourselves rejoicing in him, delighting in his law, and living for his glory. Henceforth be it ours in every troubled hour to look to the Lord under this cheering name, “the God of peace,” for as such the covenant reveals him.

The apostle had a view of the other great party to the covenant, and he names him “Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.” We must view our Redeemer in the covenant first as *Jesus* the Savior who leads us into the Canaan which has been given to us by a covenant of salt, even the rest which remaineth to the people of God; he is also *the Lord* Jesus, in all the dignity of his nature, exalted far above all principalities and powers, to be obeyed and worshipped by us; and *our* Lord Jesus — ours because he has given himself to us, and we have accepted and received him with holy delight to be the Lord whom we cheerfully serve. Our Lord *Jesus* because he saves us; our *Lord* Jesus because by bringing us under his kingdom he rescues us; and *our* Lord Jesus because we have a special relation both to his sovereignty and his salvation. We are not generally observant of the appropriateness of our Lord’s names, we do not notice the instruction which is intended by the writers who use them, nor do we exercise discretion enough ourselves in the employment of them; yet is there great force in these titles when appropriately employed. Other names may have small significance, but in the titles of Jesus there is a wealth of meaning.

Further, our Lord is called “that great Shepherd of the sheep.” In the covenant we are the sheep, the Lord Jesus is the Shepherd. You cannot make a covenant with sheep, they have not the ability to covenant; but you can make a covenant with the Shepherd for them, and so, glory he to God, though we had gone astray like lost sheep, we belonged to Jesus, and he made a covenant on our behalf, and stood for us before the living God. Now, I have aforetime explained to you that our Lord Jesus in his death is the *good* Shepherd — the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, and so shows his goodness; that in his rising again he is the *great* Shepherd, as we have it in the text, for his resurrection and return to glory display his greatness; but in his second advent he is the *chief* Shepherd — “when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye also shall appear with him in glory” — there he shows his superior sovereignty. Our Lord was *good* in laying down his life for the sheep, and there are other shepherds whom he makes good, who in his name feed his lambs and sheep. When he comes again the second time he will appear with others, the *chief* among them all; but in his resurrection for our justification, in connection with the covenant, he is

alone, and bears the name of *the* or “*that* great Shepherd,” — that great Shepherd of whom all prophecy has spoken, in whom all the divine decrees are fulfilled, before whom all others shrink away, who stands alone, as in that covenant capacity the sole and only Shepherd of the sheep.

It is very beautiful to trace the shepherds through the Old Testament, and to see Christ as Abel, the witnessing shepherd, pouring out that blood, which crieth from the ground; as Abraham, the separating shepherd, leading out his flock into the strange country where they dwelt alone; as Isaac, the quiet shepherd, digging wells for his flock, and feeding them in peace in the midst of the enemies; as Jacob, the shepherd who is surety for the sheep, who earns them all by long toils and weariness, separates them, and walks in the midst of them to Canaan, preserving them by his own lone midnight prayers. There, too, we see our Lord as Joseph, the shepherd who is head over Egypt for the sake of Israel, of whom his dying father said, “From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel.” Head over all things for his church, the King who governs all the world for the sake of his elect, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who for their sakes has all power committed unto his hands. Then follows Moses, the chosen shepherd, who led his people through the wilderness up to the Promised Land, feeding them with manna and giving them drink from the smitten rock, — what a wide theme for resection here! And then there is David, the type of Jesus, as reigning in the covenanted inheritance over his own people, as a glorious king in the midst of them all. All these together enable us to see the varied glories of “that great Shepherd of the sheep.”

Beloved, this is a great subject, and I can only hint at it. Let us rejoice that our Shepherd is *great*, because he with his great flock will be able to preserve them all from the great dangers into which they are brought, and to perform for them the great transactions with the great God which are demanded of a Shepherd of such a flock as that which Jesus calls his own. Under the covenant, Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King — a shepherd should be all this to his flock; and he is great in each of these offices. While we rest in the covenant of grace we should view our Lord as our Shepherd, and find solace in the fact that sheep have nothing to do with their own feeding, guidance, or protection; they have only to follow their Shepherd unto the pastures which he prepares, and all will be well with them. “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters.”

**II.** Secondly, the apostle mentions THE COVENANT SEAL. “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd, of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*” The seal of the covenant is the blood of Jesus. In olden times when men made covenants the one with the other, they generally used some ceremony to bind the bargain, as it were. Now, under the old dispensation covenants with God were always confirmed with blood. As soon as ever blood was shed, and the victim died, the agreement made was established. Now, when our heavenly Father made a covenant with Jesus Christ on our behalf, that covenant was true and firm, “according to the sure mercies of David,” but to make it stand fast there must be blood. Now, the blood ordained to seal the covenant was not the blood of bulls or of goats, but the blood of the Son of God himself; and this has made the covenant so binding that sooner may heaven and earth pass away than one Little of it fail. God must keep his own promises. He is a free God, but he binds himself; by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for him to lie, he has bound himself to bestow covenant blessings upon the flock which the great Shepherd represented. Brethren, you and I, as honest men, are bound by our word. If we took an oath, which I trust we would not, we should certainly feel doubly bound by it; and if we had lived in the old times, and blood had been sprinkled on an agreement which we had made, we should regard the solemn sign and never dream of running back from it. Think, for a moment, how impossible it is that the Lord should ever break that covenant of grace, which he spontaneously made with his own Son, and with us in him, now that it has been sprinkled with blood from the veins of his own well-beloved Son No; the covenant is everlasting. It stands fast for ever, because it is confirmed by blood which is none other than the blood of the Son of God.

Remember, too, that in our case that blood not only confirmed the covenant, but actually fulfilled it; because the covenant stipulation was on this wise: — Christ must subtler for our sins and honor the divine law. He had kept the law in his life, but it was necessary to the complete fulfilling of the covenant on his part that he should also be obedient to death, even the death of the cross. The shedding of his blood therefore was the carrying out of his promised obedience to its extremity. It was the actual fulfillment of Christ’s side of the covenant on our behalf; so that now the whole covenant must stand firm, for that upon which it depended is finished for ever. It is not only ratified with that bloody signature, but by that blood it is

actually carried out on Christ's part, and it cannot be that the eternal Father should start back from his side of the compact since our side of it has been carried out to the letter by that great Shepherd of the sheep who laid down his life for us.

By the shedding of the blood the covenant is turned into a testament. In some Bibles, the margin puts it "testament," and often in other cases we scarcely know how to translate the word, whether to say the new testament or the new covenant; certainly it is now a testament, for since Christ has kept his part of the covenant he wills to us what is due to him from God, and he makes over to us by his death all that comes to him as his reward, making us his heirs by a testament which is rendered valid by his death. So you may say "testament" if you please, or "covenant" if you will, only forget not that the blood has made both testament and covenant sure to all the sheep of whom Jesus is the shepherd.

Dwell with pleasure upon that word "*everlasting covenant.*" Certain men in these days declare that "everlasting" does not mean everlasting, but indicates a period to which an end will come sooner or later; I have no sympathy with them, and feel no inclination to renounce the everlastingness of heaven and other divine blessings in order to gratify the tastes of wicked men by denying the eternity of future punishments. Human nature leans in that direction, but the word of God does not, and following its unerring track we rejoice in the *everlasting* covenant, which will abide for ever and ever. The covenant of works is gone; it was based on human strength, and it dissolved as a dream; in the nature of things it could not be everlasting. Man could not keep the condition of it, and it fell to the ground. But the covenant of grace depended only upon the power and love and faithfulness of Christ, who has kept his part of the covenant, and therefore the covenant now rests only upon God, the faithful and true, whose word cannot fail.

*"As well might he his being quit,  
As break his promise, or forget."*

"His mercy endureth for ever, and his truth throughout all generations." He has said, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good," and therefore do them good he must, for he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. So, then, the covenant seal makes all things sure.



**III.** We have now to notice THE COVENANT FULFILMENT, for the Lord has commenced to fulfill it. “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” See, then, Jesus Christ has been brought back again from the dead through the blood of the covenant. Here is the story. He was the covenantor on our behalf; he took our sin upon himself, and undertook to suffer for it. Having been crucified he yielded up his life, and from the cross he was taken to the grave, and there he lay in durance vile. Now, it was a part of the covenant on God the Father’s part that he would not leave Christ’s soul in Hades, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption; this agreement has been faithfully kept. Christ on the cross represented all of us who believe in him — we were crucified in him: Jesus in the tomb also represented us, for we are buried with him. Whatever happened to him happened also to the flock. Now, then, what will occur to the body of Jesus? Will God keep his covenant? Will the worm devour that lovely frame, or will it defy corruption? Will it come to pass that he who has descended into the earth shall never return? Wait. It is the third morning! The promised time has come. As yet no worm has dared to feed upon that God-like form, yet it lies among the dead; but on the third morning the slumberer awakes like one that has been refreshed with sleep. He rises. The stone is rolled away. Angels escort him to liberty. He comes into the open air of the garden, and speaks to his disciples. Jesus who bled has left the dead, no more to die. He waits for forty days that he may let his friends see that he is really risen, but he has to rise higher yet to be fully brought back to his former honors. Will God be faithful to him and bring him back from the dead all the way he once descended? Yes, for on the Mount of Olives, when the time is come, he begins to ascend; cleaving the ambient air he mounts from amidst his worshipping disciples, till a cloud receives him. But will he rise fully to the point from which he came? Will he in his own person gain for his church a full recovery from all the ruin of the fall? Ah, see him as he enters the gates of pearl! How he is welcomed by the Father! See how he climbs aloft, and sits upon the Father’s throne, for God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Now note by what means our Lord returned from the dead to all this glory. It was because he had presented the blood of the everlasting covenant. When the Father saw that Jesus had kept all his part of the covenant even to death, then he began to fulfill his portion of the contract by bringing

back his Son from the grave to life, from shame to honor, from humiliation to glory, from death to immortality. See where he now sits expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Now, what has been done to Jesus has been virtually done to all his people, because, you observe, the Lord “brought again from the dead,” not the Lord Jesus as a private person only, but “Our Lord Jesus,” as “that great Shepherd of the sheep.” The sheep are with the Shepherd. Shepherd of the sheep, where is thy flock? We know that thou hast loved them even to the end; but thou art gone; hast thou left them in the wilderness? It cannot be, for it is written, “Who can separate us from the love of Christ? “Hear the Shepherd say, “I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” “Because I live ye shall live also.” “Where I am there also shall my servant be.” Beloved, the sheep never are away from that great Shepherd of the sheep, they are always in his hand, and none can pluck them thence. They were on earth with him, and they are risen with him. If Jesus had remained in the grave there must all his sheep have perished; but when the Father brought him back by the blood, he brought us back by the blood, and gave us for our souls a lively hope that they shall never die, and for our bodies the expectation of resurrection.

*“For though our inbred sins require  
Our flesh to see the dust,  
Yet as the Lord our Shepherd rose,  
So all his followers must.”*

Jesus in heaven is only there as our representative, and his flock is following him. I wish you could get a picture in your eye of the hills of heaven rising up from these lowlands. We are feeding here awhile under his watchful eye, and yonder is a river which runs at the foot of the celestial hills, and parts us from heavenly pasturage. One he one our beloved ones are being called across the flood by the Good Shepherd’s voice, and they cross the river pleasantly at his bidding, so that a long line of his sheep may be seen going over the stream and up the hillside to where the Shepherd stands and receives them. This line joins the upper flock to the lower, and makes them all one company. Do you not see them continually streaming up to him, and passing again under the hand of him that telleth them, to be fed by the Lamb and made to lie down for ever where wolves can never come? Thus the one flock is even now with the Shepherd, for it is all one pasture to him, though to us it seems divided by Jordan’s torrent. Every one of the sheep is marked with the blood of the everlasting covenant;

every one of them has been preserved, because Jesus lived; and as he was brought again from the dead by the blood, even so must they be, for so the covenant stands.

Remember, then, dear friends, that the punishment of the flock was borne by the Shepherd, that the flock died in the Shepherd, and that the flock now live because the Shepherd lives; that their life is consequently a new life; that he will bring all his sheep that as yet are not called, out of their death in sin, even as he has been brought out of his own death; that he will lead onward and upward those that are called, even as he went onward and upward from the grave to the throne; that he will preserve them all their journey through, even as he was preserved by the blood of the everlasting covenant; and that he will perfect them even as he is perfect. Even as the God of peace has glorified his Son, so also will he bring all his chosen to eternal glory with him.

**IV.** Fourthly, we will view THE COVENANT BLESSING. What is one of the greatest of all the covenant blessings? The writer of this epistle here pleads for it. "Now," saith he, "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, *make you perfect in every good worry to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.*" Notice that one of the chief blessings of the covenant is power and will to serve God. The old covenant said, "There are the tables of stone, mind that you obey every word that is written thereon: if you do you shall live, and if you do not you shall die." Man never did obey, and consequently no one ever entered heaven or found peace by the law. The new covenant speaketh on this wise, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. I will write my law in their hearts, and on their minds will I write them. I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." The prophets enlarge most instructively upon this new covenant. It is not a covenant of "if you will I will," but it runs thus, "I will and you shall." As a covenant this exactly suits me. If there were something to be performed by me I could never be sure, but as it is finished I am at rest. God sets us working, and we work; but the covenant itself dependeth wholly upon that great promise, "I will not turn away from them to do them good." So that it was right of Paul to pray that God would make us meet in every good work to do his will, because of old this was the master promise, that those for whom Jesus died should be sanctified, purified, and made meet to serve

their God. Great as the prayer is, it is asking what the covenant itself guarantees.

Taking the text word by word, I perceive that the first blessing asked for by the apostle is *meetness for the divine service*, for the Greek word is not “Make you *perfect*,” but *meet*, “fit,” “prepared,” “able for.” I have no reference to the discussion upon the doctrine of perfection in this observation. No one text would decide that controversy; I simply make the observation because it is matter of fact. The expression should be rendered, “Make you fully complete,” or “fully fitted” to do his will. We ought to request earnestly that we may be qualified, adapted, and suited, to be used of God for the performance of his will. After the man once dead in sin is made alive again, the question arises, who shall be his master? We having died in our great Shepherd, and having been brought again from the dead, to whom shall we yield ourselves? Certainly unto God alone. Our prayer is that we may be made meet to do his will. Our Shepherd did his Father’s will, for he cried, “I delight to do thy will, O God,” “by the which will we are sanctified,” and sanctified to the doing of that will each one of us thenceforth. It is a grand desire, but it burns in every Christian heart, that now he may be meet to serve his God, may be a vessel such as God can use, an instrument fit for the divine hand; weak and feeble, but not impure, unsuitable by reason of want of native strength, but suitable through having been cleansed by the blood of the covenant. Dear brothers and sisters, ask for meetness for service; pray day and night that you may be fully fitted for every good work.

But the apostle asked for *an inward work of grace*, not merely meetness for service, but an operation felt — “Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.” I long above everything to possess in myself the inworking of the Holy Ghost more and more clearly. There is so much superficial religion, and we are so apt to be contented with it that it becomes us to pray for deep heart-work. We need to have our affections elevated, our will subdued, our understanding enlightened, and our whole nature deeply spiritualized by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Now this is the promise of the covenant: “I will dwell in them and walk in them.” Remember, God worked in Christ in the grave by quickening his body into life, and he must work in us according to the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Ask the Lord to do it. Do not be satisfied with a little, weak, almost imperceptible, pulse of religion, of which you can hardly judge whether it is there or not;

but ask to feel the divine energies working within you, the eternal omnipotence of God, struggling and striving mightily in your spirit until sin shall be conquered, and grace shall gloriously triumph. This is a covenant blessing. Seek ye for it.

But we need *outward* as well as inward work. Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight — no small matter when you remember that nothing but perfect holiness can please God. Paul would have us made fit for every good work, wanted us to be many-sided men who could do every good work, just as Jesus did. He wished us to be qualified for any station and every position. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead he was seen; there was not merely a secret quickening in him, but a visible life, he was seen of angels and of men, and here below he lived for a period of time the observed of all observers. So, dear brethren, there ought to be in us not only an inner resurrection which we feel, but such a quickening that we shall be manifestly alive to newness of life. We must know the power of our Lord's resurrection, and exhibit it in every action of our lives. May God grant us this. There is much upon this point which time does not permit me to enlarge upon. May you know it all by experience.

Observe, once more, the *completeness* of this covenant blessing. Just as Jesus is fully restored to the place from which he came, and has lost no dignity nor power by having shed his blood, but rather is exalted higher than ever, so God's design is to make us pure and holy as Adam was at the first, and to add to our characters a force of love which never would have been there if we had not sinned and been forgiven, an energy of intense devotion, an enthusiasm of perfect self-sacrifice, which we never could have learned if it had not been for him who loved us and gave himself for us. God means to make us the princes of the blood royal of the universe, or, if you will, the body guards of the Lord of Hosts. He desires to fashion an order of creatures who will come very near to him, and yet will feel the loveliest reverence for him. He will have them akin to himself, partakers of the divine natures and yet the most obedient of servants, perfectly free agents, and yet bound to him by bonds which will never let them disobey in thought, or word, or deed. And this is how he is fashioning this central battalion who shall wait upon his eternal marchings for ever — he is forgiving us great sins, he is bestowing upon us great blessings, he is making us one with his dear Son; and when he has entirely freed us from the cerements of our spiritual death he will call us up to where Jesus is, and we shall serve him with an adoration superior to all the rest of his

creatures. Angels cannot love so much as we shall, for they have never tasted redeeming grace and dying love. This high devotion is the Lord's aim. He did not bring up the Lord Jesus from the dead that he might live a common life. He lifted him up that he might be head over all things to his church, and that all things might be under his feet; even so the destiny of Christians is mysteriously sublime: they are not lifted up from their native death to a mere morality. They are destined to be something more than philanthropists and men esteemed by their fellows, they are to exhibit to angels, and principalities, and powers, the wonderful grace of God, showing in their own persons what God can do with his creatures through the death of his Son. I do but touch like a swallow with my wing where it were delightful to dive.

**IV.** We conclude with THE COVENANT DOXOLOGY, "*To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*" If anything in the world can make a man praise his God it is the covenant, and the knowledge that he is in it. I will leave off preaching and ask you to think over the love of God in the covenant. It does not belong to all of you. Christ is not the Shepherd of the whole herd of men; he is only the Shepherd of the sheep, and he has not entered into any covenant for all mankind, but for his sheep alone. The covenant is for his own people; if you believe in him it is a covenant for you, but if you reject him you can have no participation in that covenant; for you are under the covenant of works, which condemns you. But now, believer, just sit down for a moment and think over this exceeding mercy. Your God, the everlasting Father, has entered into a solemn compact with Christ on your behalf; that he will save you, keep you, and make you perfect. He has saved you; he has performed a large part of the covenant in you already, for he has placed you in the way of life and kept you to this day; and if, indeed, you are his, he will keep you to the end. The Lord is not as the foolish man who bedpan to build and was not able to finish. He does not commence to carry out a design, and then turn from it. He will push on his work till he completes it in you. Can you really believe it? With you, a poor puny mortal, who will soon sleep in the grave — with you he has made an everlasting covenant! Will you not say with our text, "*To whom be glory.*" Like dying David you can say, "*Though my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.*" I am sure you will joyfully add, "*Glory be to his name.*"

Our God deserves *exclusive* glory. Covenant theology glorifies God alone. There are other theologies abroad which magnify men; they give him a

finger in his own salvation, and so leave him a reason for throwing up his cap and saying, “Well done I;” but covenant theology puts man aside, and makes him a debtor and a receiver. It does, as it were, plunge him into the sea of infinite grace and unmerited favor, and it makes him give up all boasting, stopping the mouth that could have boasted by filling it with floods of love, so that it cannot utter a vainglorious word. A man saved by the covenant must give all the glory to God’s holy name, for to God all the glory belongs. In salvation wrought by the covenant the Lord has exclusive glory.

He also has *endless* glory. “To whom be glory for ever and ever.” Have you glorified God a little, dear brethren, because of his covenant mercy? Go on glorifying him. Did you serve him well when you were young? Ah, not so well as you wish you had: then serve him better now in these riper days. Throw yourself into the glorifying of God. The task of saving yourself is not yours, Jesus has done it all. You may sing,

*“A charge to keep I have,  
A God to glorify;”*

But you will not need to add —

*“A never-dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky,”*

For that soul of yours is saved; “he hath saved us and called us with a holy calling,” and you are fitted for the sky by the blood of the ever lasting covenant, for Paul says, “Thanks be unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” All you have to do is to glorify the Lord who has saved you and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings. Now, go at it with all your might. Are you getting grey, dear brother? With all your experience yore ought now to glorify the Lord more than ever. You will soon be up yonder in the land of the living. Do not praise the Redeemer any longer at a poor dying rate, for you have but a short time to tarry here. And, oh, when we ascend above these clouds, how we will magnify our covenant God! I am sure I shall not feel my powers capacious enough, even in heaven, to express my gratitude for his amazing love. I do not wonder that the poet says —

*“Eternity’s too short  
To utter half his praise.”*

People find fault with that expression, and say it is an exaggeration. How would you have the poets talk? Is not hyperbole allowable to them? I might even plead that it is not an hyperbole, for neither time nor eternity can utter all the praises of the infinite Jehovah.

***“On, for a thousand tongues to sing  
Our great Redeemer’s praise.”***

This shall be the sweetest note of all our music, — *the covenant*, “the covenant made with David’s Lord, in all things ordered well,” the covenant with that great Shepherd of the sheep by which every sheep was preserved and kept, and brought into the rich pastures of eternal glory. We will sing of covenant love in heaven. This shall be our last song on earth and the first in Paradise — “The covenant, the covenant sealed with blood.” How I wish Christ’s ministers would spread more and more of this covenant doctrine throughout England. He who understands the two covenants has found the marrow of all theology, but he who does not know the covenants knows next to nothing of the gospel of Christ. You would think, to hear some ministers preach, that salvation was all of works, that it was still uncertain who would be saved, that it was all a matter of “ifs,” and “buts,” and “peradventures” and if you begin to give them “shells,” and “wills,” and purposes, and decrees, and pledges, and oaths, and blood, they call you Calvinistic. Why, this doctrine was true before Calvin was born or thought of! Calvin loved it as we do, but it did not come from him. Paul had taught it long before; nay, the Holy Ghost taught it to us in the word, and therefore we hold it. The bringing back of this truth to the front will be a grand thing for the church. From the mouth of this cannon the Lord will blow the Pope and all his myrmidons into a thousand shivers, but no other doctrine will do it. By God’s good grace, we must live this doctrine as well as preach it, and may he that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will. Then will he have glory through the covenant and through you, both now and for ever. Amen and amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON — Hebrews 13.***

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK” — 412, 1054, 317.**



# TWELVE COVENANT MERCIES

NO. 2316

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 9TH, 1893,**

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,**

**ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 30TH, 1889.**

“Incline your ear, and come unto me: bear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” — Isaiah 55:3.

I GOT so far this morning as to plead with men to come to God to hear what he had to say, to give diligent and earnest heed to his teaching about their souls and about salvation; and while I pleaded, I can truly say, with all the strength I had, I made this one of the master arguments that, in hearing, their soul would live, and in coming to God, they would find him ready to enter into covenant with them, “an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.”

That seemed to me to be one of the most astonishing truths that was ever given to man to preach, that God would be a high contracting party with poor insignificant and guilty man, that he would make a covenant with man; yes, with you and with me; that he would bind himself by a solemn promise, give his sacred pledge, and enter into a holy contract of mercy with the guilty sons of Adam. I thought that, if men were in their right minds, and God had taught, their reason to be reasonable, they would be drawn to the Lord by such a wonderful promise as this, “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

Remember that there was a covenant of old, which men broke; the covenant of works, “This do, and thou shalt live.” Keep such and such

commands, and thou shalt be rewarded. That covenant failed because man did not keep God's commands, and so did not earn the promised reward. We broke the terms of that contract, and it is no longer valid, except that we come under penalty for the breach of it; and that penalty is, that we are to be cast away from God's presence, and to perish without hope, so far as that broken covenant is concerned.

Now, rolling up that old covenant as a useless thing out of which no salvation can ever come, God comes to us in another way, and he says, "I will make a new covenant with you, not like the old one at all." It is a covenant of grace: a covenant made, not with the worthy, but with the unworthy; a covenant not made upon conditions, but unconditionally, every supposed condition having been fulfilled by our great Representative and Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ; a covenant without an "if" or a "but" in it; "ordered in all things, and sure;" a covenant of shalls and wills, in which God says, "I will, and thou shalt;" a covenant just suited to our broken-down and helpless condition; a covenant which will land every one who is interested in it in heaven. No other covenant will ever do this. I tried to expatiate upon that covenant this morning; and I thought that I would close the day by showing to any who desire to be in this covenant of grace what the blessings are that God promises to give to guilty men when they come to him, when they accept his love and his mercy. What are these blessings?

I have little else to do to-night but to refer you again, as I did this morning, to God's Word. Beloved, if you had met together, after the death of some wealthy relative, and his will was about to be read to you, you would not require an eloquent lawyer, you would all be very attentive, and some of you who are a little deaf would recover your hearing. An important question would be, "What has he left?" A still more important enquiry would be, "What has he left to me?" Well, I want you to feel to-night that you do not want an eloquent preacher; I am only going to read God's will to you, his covenant, which is virtually the testament or will of Christ, and all that you have to do is to listen, and say, "What has he left? What has he bequeathed to me? What does he covenant to give to me?" And remember that, whoever you may be, if you are willing to be saved by grace, you may be saved by grace. If you give up all hope of being saved anyhow else, you may be saved by the free mercy and love of God. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." If you come and take Christ to be your Savior, then all the promises of God, which in him are yea, and in

him Amen, are made to you. If you take him, you take all that is in the covenant, for he is the covenant. Embodied in himself is the whole covenant of grace, and he who hath Christ hath all it contains.

I am going to point you to some of the passages in which we have this covenant written out at length. I shall not say much upon any item; but I shall refer you to twelve wonderful mercies of the covenant of grace. Will you kindly look in your Bibles at the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter thirty-one, verse thirty-four? There is no music more sweet to me than the rustle of your Bibles. I sometimes preach, nay, I frequently preach when I may read what I like, and nobody follows me to see if I quote correctly. I have been inclined to buy you wheelbarrows, so that you may bring your Bibles to chapel in them, since many of you do not seem to have any here. What is the best way of hearing the Word? Is it not to search and see whether what the preacher says is really according to the Word of God?

**I.** One of the first mercies of the covenant is SAVING KNOWLEDGE. Turn to Jeremiah thirty-one, and let us begin to read at verse thirty-one: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” There is one of the first blessings of the covenant of grace, saving knowledge.

Man by nature knows not God. He does not want to know God; and when he is aroused to think of God at all, God seems a great mystery, a being invisible, unreachable; and the man says, “Who shall make me to know God?” He reads his Bible, it may be; and even that he does not understand. He hears the preacher; but the Lord’s servant seems to talk a jargon which the unconverted man cannot comprehend. Brethren, there is no knowing God except through God. The man’s neighbor cannot teach him, even though he may attempt it. Though he may say, “Know the Lord,” yet he cannot give knowledge of God. By nature, our eyes are blinded; we cannot

see. You may hold even the electric light to a blind man's sightless orbs, but it will not give him sight. Blind Bartimaeus saw no light till Jesus spoke to him. Saul of Tarsus was blind enough, by his bigotry and self-righteousness, until God gave him a glorious light to shine into his soul.

Now, here is a covenant that God will give the knowledge of himself to the lost, and the guilty, and the ruined, to those who have provoked him, and gone astray from him. Where are those to whom this covenant shall be fulfilled to-night? I cannot tell you, save by marks and tokens; and this is one of the marks. Do you know that you are blind? Do you know that you cannot see apart from divine grace? Do you long to see? He is not totally blind, in a spiritual sense, who knows that he is so. He is not in the dark who feels that he is in the dark; there is already some degree of light that makes him perceive the darkness visible. O soul, if thou desirest to know God, here is the covenant, "They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"! All God's chosen shall know him; they shall not abide in ignorance; they shall not die in ignorance; they shall come to know the Lord; and they shall grow in the grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Oh, what a privilege this is! "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." If any man is ignorant of his God, let him hear the Word of the Lord, and let him seek the Lord, and God will give him instruction concerning himself, and make him to know the great Jehovah, the Father of our spirits, who passeth by iniquity, transgression, and sin.

**II.** But I must not linger on any one blessing. The first covenant mercy is saving knowledge; the next is, **GOD'S LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART**. Let me read you verse thirty-three again: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." You know that the Law of Moses was written on two tablets of stone. Wonderfully precious those two slabs of marble must have been when the divine finger had traced the solemn lines. Moses had a great charge to keep when he had those two divinely-written tablets; but he broke them because the people had in spirit broken them; it could not be that such divine writing should ever be handled or looked at by such an unholy people. Now, brethren, it was of no use writing the Law on tablets of stone except for the condemnation of the people; but when God comes in the covenant of grace, he does not merely give us the Law in a Book, the Law written in legible characters; but he comes and writes on the fleshy tablets of our heart. Then the man knows

the Law by heart. What is better, he loves the Law. That Law accuses him; but he would not have it altered; he bows and confesses the truthfulness of the accusation. He cries,

“Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep thy Law.” And this is the covenant blessing. God makes men to love his commandments, and to delight themselves in truth, and righteousness, and holiness.

A very wonderful thing is this writing in our heart; nobody but God can write in human hearts. We can write certain thoughts upon your minds as we appeal to your ears; but to get at the heart is another thing. He that hath the keys of heaven, he that hath the keys of the heart, he that shuts and no man opens, or opens and no man shuts, can really get at the human heart; but he does so get at it that he writes there his commandments; and this he does to men who formerly hated those commandments; he makes them love them. Men who despised his commandments, he makes to honor them. As for men who forgot his commandments, he writes them in their hearts, so that they cannot get away from them. As for men who would have changed the commandments, he changes their hearts instead; and then their hearts and the commandments agree together.

This is a second covenant blessing. Do any of you want these blessings? Would you like to know the Lord? Do you wish to have the Law written on your hearts? Be it unto you according to your faith. Believe that God can do this for you, trust in Christ that it may be done unto you, and even so shall it be.

**III.** The third covenant mercy (we cannot dwell on any item long) is, FREE PARDON. You will find this at the end of the thirty-fourth verse: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Oh, this is a great blessing of the covenant. You people who have never sinned, or who think that you have not, you who believe yourselves to have been always good, or at least as good as you could be, and far above the average of mankind, you exceedingly excellent people, who have never done anything that you need to repent of very greatly, well, I have nothing for you here. Only remember what Mary sang, “He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich” (that is you) “he hath sent empty away.” But if there be a soul here that feels the burden of its guilt, one bowed down with grief because of the heavy load of past iniquity that lies upon it, why, surely you, if you have the faith, will jump for joy as you read these words, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” First, he will

forgive it, blot it right out. "Be," saith he, "as if you had never offended. Come to me, come to my heart, as if you had always loved me. Guilty though you be, I will not impute iniquity to your charge, I will forgive it." The great Judge will put on the white gloves, and not the black cap. You shall be forgiven. And then the Lord says, "I will remember their sin no more." It is a wonderful thing when omnipotence overcomes omniscience, when omnipotent love will not allow omniscience to recollect: "I will remember their sin no more." Satan comes and pleads against the sinner, "Lord, he did so and so." God says, "I do not remember it;" nor does he remember it, for he laid it all on Christ, and Christ suffered the penalty due for it, and therefore it is gone. It is never to be recalled; it stands not in the book of remembrance; and as the Lord looks over this man's life, when he comes to the black pages, there is a blank; not a line of it is left, for he who died has made the scarlet sins as white as snow. "I will remember their sin no more."

Oh, what a precious covenant mercy is this! I do not feel as if I wanted to elaborate or garnish it in any way, or give you any illustrations, or tell you any anecdotes. Was there ever set before you such a glorious gift? Will you not have it, the perfect pardon of every sin, and a divine act of amnesty and oblivion, for every crime, of every sort, published in the covenant of grace to every soul that is willing to receive it through Christ Jesus the Savior?

**IV.** Let us look a little farther, and see if there is not something more. Look to the next chapter, Jeremiah thirty-two, at the thirty-eighth verse: "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." That is the next covenant mercy, RECONCILIATION. The offense is put away, the sin is pardoned. "Now," says God, "They shall be my people." "Lord, they are the people who worshipped Baal; they are the horrid wretches who gave their children up to be burned in the red-hot arms of Molech." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord. "But, Lord, these are the men and women who committed adultery and fornication, and were even guilty of murder." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord. "But, Lord, they provoked thee to anger year after year, and would not hearken to thy prophets." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord, "and I will be their God." Did you ever think how much there is involved in that expression "I will be their God"? God is everything; and when God gives himself to us, he gives us more than all time and all eternity, all earth and all heaven. "Fear not, Abram," said the Lord to the patriarch, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," as if it was reward enough for any man to have God to be his

God; and so it is. Afore riches than Croesus, more honor than the greatest conqueror, hath that man who hath this God to be his God for ever and ever. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The young people might look that text out, and find how many times it occurs in the Word of God. I remember many times that God puts it, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This is another grand covenant blessing. Are you willing to be the people of God, are you willing to take him, even this God to be yours for ever and ever? If so it be, then is the text true concerning you, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

**V.** Will you follow me to the next verse for a fifth covenant mercy, the blessing of TRUE GODLINESS? "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." See here, that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of God" is a description of true godliness; and God says that he will give this to men. He might have asked it of you, and rightly, too, but you would never have yielded it; but when he says that he will give it, that is a very different thing. He is willing to give you his fear, to give you true religion, to bestow upon you that veneration of his sacred name which lies at the bottom of all godliness. He will give you that, give that to you who never had it, and even despised it, to any of you who have lived all your lives without it, but who are willing to come and take it, this night, as the gift of his grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Lord make you willing in this the day of his power, for that is a part of the covenant blessing! The willingness itself is his gift, and this he gives freely to his own.

**VI.** Now look, dear friends, to the next verse, which is more wonderful than anything that I have yet read. The sixth covenant mercy is, CONTINUANCE IN GRACE: "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. perseverance, is me." Talk about final it not taught here? I will not turn away from them, and they shall not depart from me." What a covenant blessing this is! It reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus concerning his sheep: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "Yes," I heard a man say, who did not believe what that verse teaches, "No man shall pluck them out of his hand; but

they may crawl away from between his fingers.” No, they shall not. See how this text secures them both ways. “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.” Here are both gaps blocked; there is no getting out either way. God will not leave you, and he will not let you leave him. This is a covenant blessing indeed. Oh, for faith to grip it! The soul that comes to Christ, and rests itself wholly upon him, shall find two hands to grasp it, even these two gracious words, “I will not turn away from them,” and “they shall not depart from me.” And this is spoken of the guilty, of the very men who provoked God.

*“Wonders of grace to God belong,  
Repeat his mercies in your song.”*

If God saved the good, and the meritorious, and the righteous, then the proud Pharisees would swarm in every street in heaven, and God would have no glory; but when he saves the vilest of the vile, then the publicans, who are afraid to lift their eyes to heaven when they think of their own unworthiness, will get near the throne, and sing; oh, how they will sing of free grace and dying love!

This covenant would be great enough if there was nothing more in it than the six blessings that I have mentioned.

**VII.** I must trouble you to turn in your Bibles to another prophecy, to read about another of the mercies of his covenant, namely, CLEANSING. Some poor soul says, “Well, I can see that God is going to do great things; but I feel myself so unclean, I dare not come near to God. Why, sir, I am polluted all over, inside and out, I am altogether like a leprous man!” Come then, let me read this verse to you, the twenty-fifth verse of the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” God’s Word elsewhere says, “Wash you, make you clean.” That is your duty; but here you are told that the Lord will wash you, and make you clean. This is your privilege. “Ye are clean,” said Christ to his disciples, “through the word which I have spoken unto you.” That is “the washing of water by the word” of which Paul wrote to the Ephesians. The Lord sprinkles this “clean water” upon the leprous and the polluted sinner, upon him who lies covered with his own blood, a filthy thing in the sight of God, and loathsome to himself. The free-grace covenant runs, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” When God himself



says, "Ye shall be clean," I wot that we are clean, for he is the best judge, of true cleanliness. His pure and holy eyes detect every spot of sin, and every latent trace of disease. Though it be deep within the heart, he can spy it out; but he says, "I will sprinkle you, and ye shall be clean." Blessed be his name!

And then he goes on to enumerate that from which he will cleanse us: "From all your idols will I cleanse you." Is drink your idol? Is some lust of the flesh your idol? "Oh!" say you, I cannot get rid of these things." No, but the Lord can cleanse you from them. Only come to him, hearken diligently to him, trust him, yield yourself up, surrender yourself to him, and he will dash your idols in pieces, and tear them from their thrones. He will also cleanse you from whatever else there may be that is unmentionable, "from all your filthiness;" things not to be spoken of, not even to be mentioned, those things that are done in secret, "I will cleanse you from them," saith the Lord. I may be speaking to somebody here who, as he listens to me, thinks that I am talking some rhodomontade, some romance. "Why," says he, I am a filthy creature. I am a great sinner. Can God bless me? Yes, he can bless even you. Did you never hear of Colonel Gardiner? On the very night on which he had made an appointment to commit a filthy sin, Christ appeared to him, and he thought that he heard him say, "I have done all this for thee; wilt thou never turn to me?" He did turn to Jesus, and he became noted as an eminent Christian man, more noted than he had formerly been as a debauched officer in the army. The Lord Jesus Christ still works these wonders of grace. He meets men often when they are desperately set on mischief, just as a horse might be rushing into the battle, and he comes and lays his hand on the rein, and turns it, and leads it back whithersoever he wills, such is the power of his almighty love. I pray him to do the same to-night according to this wondrous promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

**VIII.** Nor is that all; for, if a man should be made clean once, he would soon get foul again if left to himself, so here follows the next astounding covenant mercy Of RENEWAL OF NATURE. Listen: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." It is not said, "I will help you to this," but, "I will do it;" not, "I will help you to make yourself a new heart," no, nothing of the kind, but, "I will give you a new heart." You know that if you cut off the branches of a tree, it will

grow fresh ones; but if you could tear out its heart, it would never grow a new one. There are some creatures, like the lobster, that will shed their claws, and the claws will grow again; but a lobster never grows a new heart. If the center of animal or vegetable life is once destroyed, there is no renewing it; but God can work this miracle in human hearts, he can strike at the very center of man's nature, and change it. It is little to render pure the streams, but it is a great marvel to cleanse an impure spring, so that a spring of bitter water suddenly turns sweet. This is a miracle that can only be wrought by the finger of God; and there is nothing short of this renewal of nature that is worth having.

I know that some people fancy that Christians, when they do not go into such and such worldly amusements, deny themselves very much. Nothing of the kind. It would be an awful denial to us if we had to go with the worldlings. Those who frequent the theater and places of loose amusement, perhaps think that it is a denial to us not to go with them. Oh, dear, dear, they little know us! When I go down to a friend's farm, I see a man carrying to the pigs a couple of pails full of food; but I never envy the pigs. I like them to have all that they can, and to enjoy themselves; but do not suppose that I am denying myself in not wanting their food; my taste does not lie that way. But suppose that a man has a hog's heart, what is the way to deal with him? To deny him his swill? Certainly not, let him have it while he is like the hogs. The thing that is wanted is a change of heart, and when his heart is turned into a renewed man's heart, and is made to be a God-like heart, then it is no denial to him to loathe the things which once gave him so much pleasure. His tastes are entirely changed; and that is according to the promise of the covenant, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The old heart is very hard; in some, it seems to be petrified altogether; you cannot make any impression upon it. You are received with ridicule, however earnest you may be in your pleadings for God. But the Lord can change the stony heart.

*"Our heart, that flinty, stubborn thing,  
That terrors cannot move,  
That fears no threat'nings of his wrath,  
Shall be dissolved by love.*

*Or he can take the flint away,  
That would not be refin'd;  
And from the treasures of his grace,  
Bestow a softer mind."*

Then the man, who was just now as hard as flint, sits and weeps over his sins. See how watchful he is in the presence of all kinds of temptations. He is half afraid to put one foot before another. The very man who was called “Devil-may-care” is now the one who does care, and who trembles lest he should in any way grieve the living God. What a blessed covenant mercy is this!

**IX.** But I must hurry on. The ninth covenant mercy is, **HOLY CONVERSATION**. Let me read verse twenty-seven: “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” When God deals with a man in the way of grace, he not only calls him to holiness, but he gives him holiness; he not only bids him walk in his way, but he makes him walk in his way; not by compulsion, not by any kind of physical force, but by the sweet constraints of infinite love. The man’s entire life is changed externally, just as I have shown you that his heart is changed internally. “Oh!” says one, “this is very wonderful.” It is; it is the standing wonder of the gospel. Certain miracles have ceased; but the miracles of turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, are being wrought every day. I rejoice that they are constantly being wrought in this very house of prayer; and I believe that they are going to be wrought to-night on some who are listening to me. If this miracle be wrought, you will not attribute it to me; I know you will not, for you will remember how feeble I am; but you will understand that there is the power of God, working through the preaching of the gospel, making dry bones to live, and turning black sinners into bright saints, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

**X.** Once again, will you kindly look at the thirty-first verse? This will be the tenth covenant mercy, **HAPPY SELF-LOATHING**. Perhaps you will wonder that I called this a mercy. Listen: “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.” Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do. “O Lord,” says the saint, “to think that ever I should have sinned against one who loved me so much! That I, the elect of God, should have acted like the elect of hell! That I, who was God’s own, should have called myself the devil’s own! That I, who was chosen unto holiness and eternal life, should have passed it all by as if it were no concern of mine!” Oh, may

God grant us this holy loathing, as he will do when we have once tasted of his infinite love!

**XI.** The next covenant mercy, mentioned in the thirty-seventh chapter, verses twenty-six to twenty-eight, is the blessing of COMMUNION WITH GOD: “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” God promises to set up his tabernacle and his temple in the midst of his people, and to make them his priests, his servants, his children, his friends. God will be no longer absent from you when this covenant work shall have been wrought in you; but you shall be brought to dwell in his presence, to abide in his house, and to go no more out for ever, until the day when he shall take you to his palace home above, to be for ever in his presence, and to serve him day and night in his temple. And all this is promised to the worthless, to the vilest of the vile, all this without asking of you anything but that you will be willing to receive him, all this without requiring of you anything but just your emptiness that he may fill it, your sinfulness that he may cleanse it; only you must surrender to him. What have you to surrender? Nothing but a lot of rubbish of your own your self-righteousness especially, which is but filthy rags. The Lord bring you to this surrender even now!

**XII.** There is only one more covenant mercy for me to mention, and I put it last because you will be surprised, perhaps, when I read it. It is about NEEDFUL CHASTISEMENT. For that I must ask you to turn to Psalm eighty-nine, and verse thirty: “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break. my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” There is a rod in the covenant. Children of God, you do not like it; it were no rod if you did; but it is good for you when you come under the fatherly discipline of God. Though he will never take his everlasting love from you, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail; yet, when you transgress, the rod shall be sure to fall upon you, and sometimes its strokes shall come upon you before you transgress, to keep you from sinning.

I often hear of some of God's dearest servants suffering. I heard of one whom I am sure God loves very much. He is very useful; he spends himself in his Master's work. He is also very prosperous; God gives to him great wealth, which he discreetly and wisely uses; but he has had a very sharp affliction come upon him lately, which is enough to break his heart; and when I heard it, I said, "Yes, yes, God loves him; God loves him." If you are a child of God, note this truth, and accept it with joy, our heavenly Father never pampers his children. We may spoil our girls and boys; but our Father never spoils his children. If he gives you great happiness, and great success, and makes you useful, he will every now and then give you a whipping behind the door. You think sometimes, "That man is very happy; he has great blessing resting on his work." Yes, this man is very happy to tell you that he has not all sweets to drink, to make him sick and ill; but there are bitter tonics, sharp blows of the rod, to keep him right. If we have to bless God more for any one thing than for everything else, it is to thank him that we have not escaped the rod. Sickness is a choice blessing from God; I cannot measure the unutterable good that comes to us full often in that way; and losses in business, and crosses, and bereavements, and depressions of spirit, are all, when we see them in the light eternal, so many covenant mercies.

The true-born child of God cannot escape the rod, and would not if he might. He gets afraid when he does not sometimes feel it. He will not long have to be afraid about it, for it will come in due time. I think that I hear somebody say, "I do not want that." No, just so; you want worldly pleasure. Perhaps God will let you have it till you have spent all your substance on it, as the prodigal did; and then you will find that it is all weariness and sorrow, and you will want something better. But if tonight you will say, "I will take the covenant of grace, rod and all; for if I can be God's child, I will very gladly take the rod as part of the mercies of the covenant," come along, and you shall have it. Do seek the Lord to-night. Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids till you have found him. God grant you all the mercies of the everlasting covenant, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

## EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*JEREMIAH 32:30-42.*

**Verse 30.** *For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from, their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.*

Here were people who had done nothing else but evil. God had been very good to them, but they had been very bad to him. From their youth, and without a break, they had continued to rebel.

**31.** *For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face,*

Jerusalem, which ought to have been a holy city, had been so impure that it had been a standing provocation to God from the day it was built.

**32.** *Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

They seem to have been all alike. With scarcely an exception, from the highest class to the lowest, they were always disobeying God.

**33.** *And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.*

This is a fearful indictment. When men refuse to learn better, turn their back upon the King of kings, and will have nothing to do with him, surely the time for vengeance has come.

**34, 35.** *But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech;*

There was nothing so terribly bad but they would do it; there was nothing so unnatural, so detestable, but they must needs practice it.

**35-38.** *Which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the*

*sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God:*

Is not this a wonderful passage? After all this sin, and all this provocation, when we expect the thunder and lightning of divine judgment, behold, there is nothing but the sweet voice of pitying love: “They shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Oh, the wonders of divine grace! See what the covenant of grace does for guilty men.

**39, 40.** *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they May fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them,*

“With them” — with these very people who had provoked him, and served Molech, and bowed before idol gods, and put the Lord to Shame, and angered him.

**40, 41.** *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. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*

A whole-hearted God, blessing those upon whom he looks with an eye of grace. It is a wonderful thing. If he had set his whole heart to destroy them, it would have seemed natural; but God is far above any conception of ours; and so, in the midst of guilt extraordinary and almost immeasurable, behold love equally extraordinary and grace altogether measureless.

**42.** *For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.*

Oh, for grace to lay hold upon this everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David; and to be saved thereby!

# THE COVENANT PLEADED.

NO. 1451

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Have respect unto the covenant.” — Psalm 74:20.*

HE will succeed in prayer who understands the science of pleading with God. “Put me in remembrance: let us plead together,” is a divine command. “Come now, let us reason together” is a sacred invitation. “Bring forth your strong reasons, saith the Lord,” is a condescending direction as to the way of becoming victorious in supplication. Pleading is wrestling: arguments are the grips, the feints, the throes, the struggles with which we hold and vanquish the covenant angel. The humble statement of our wants is not without its value, but to be able to give reasons and arguments why God should hear us is to offer potent, prevalent prayer. Among all the arguments that can be used in pleading with God, perhaps there is none stronger than this — “Have respect unto the covenant.” Like Goliath’s sword, we may say of it, “There is none like it.” If we have God’s word for a thing we may well pray, “Do as thou hast Said, for as a good man only needs to be reminded of his own word in order to be brought to keep it, even so is it with our faithful God; he only needs that for these things we put him in remembrance to do them for us.” If he has given us more than his word, namely, his covenant, his solemn compact, we may then with the greatest composure of spirit cry to him, “Have respect unto the covenant,” and then we may both hope and quietly wait for his salvation.

I need not tell you, for you are, I trust, well-grounded in that matter, that the covenant here spoken of is the covenant of grace. There is a covenant which we could not plead in prayer, the covenant of works, a covenant which destroys us, for we have broken it. Our first father sinned, and the covenant was broken; we have continued in his perverseness, and that covenant condemns us. By the covenant of works can none of us be



justified, for we continue still to break our portion of it, and to bring upon ourselves wrath to the uttermost. The Lord hath made a new covenant with the second Adam, our federal head, Jesus Christ our Lord, — a covenant without conditions, except such conditions as Christ has already fulfilled, a covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which now consists of promises only, which run after this fashion — “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people”: “A new heart also will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them”: “From all their transgressions will I cleanse them”: — a covenant, I say, which had once conditions in it, all of which our Lord Jesus fulfilled when he finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and now the covenant is all of promise, and consists of infallible and eternal shalls and wills, which shall abide the same for ever.

We shall talk of the text thus, What is meant by the plea before us - “Have respect unto the covenant”? Then we will think a little of whence it derives its force: thirdly, we will consider how and when we may plead it: and we will close by noticing what are the practical inferences from it.

**I.** Let us begin by this — WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PLEA “Have respect unto the covenant”? It means this, does it not? “Fulfil thy covenant, O God: let it not be a dead letter. Thou hast said this and that; now do as thou hast said. Thou hast been pleased by solemn sanction of oath and blood to make this covenant with thy people. Now be pleased to keep it. Hast thou said, and wilt thou not do it? We are persuaded of thy faithfulness, let our eyes behold thy covenant engagements fulfilled.

It means again, “Fulfil all the promises of thy covenant,” for indeed all the promises are now in the covenant. They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us; and I may say without being unscriptural that the covenant contains within its sacred Charter every gracious word that has come from the Most High, either by the mouth of prophets or apostles, or by the lips of Jesus Christ himself The meaning in this case would be — “Lord keep thy promises concerning, thy people. We are in want: now, O Lord, fulfill thy promise that we shall not want any good thing. Here is another of thy promises: ‘When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.’ We are in rivers of trouble. Be with us now. Redeem thy promises to thy servants. Let them not stand on the book as letters that mock us, but prove that thou didst mean what thou didst write and say, and let us see that thou hast power and will to make every jot and

title good of all thou hast spoken. For hast thou not said, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away? Oh then have respect unto the promises of thy covenant.’”

In the connection of our text there is no doubt that the suppliant meant, “O Lord, prevent anything from turning aside thy promises.” The church was then in a very terrible state. The temple was burnt, and the assemblage broken up, the worship of God had ceased, and idolatrous emblems stood even in the holy place where once the glory of God shone forth. The plea is, “Do not suffer the power of the enemy to be so great as to frustrate thy purposes, or to make thy promises void.” So may we pray — “O Lord, do not suffer me to endure such temptation that I shall fall. Do not suffer such affliction to come upon me that I shall be destroyed; for hast thou not promised that no temptation shall happen to us but such as we are able to bear, and that with the temptation there shall be a way of escape? Now have respect unto thy covenant, and so order thy providence that nothing shall happen to us contrary to that divine agreement.” And it means also, “So order everything around us that the covenant may be fulfilled. Is thy church low? Raise up again in her midst men who preach the gospel with power, who shall be the means of her uplifting. Creator of men, Master of human hearts, thou who canst circumcise human lips to speak thy word with power, do this, and let thy covenant with thy church that thou wilt never leave her be fulfilled. The kings of the earth are in thy hand. All events are controlled by thee. Thou orderest all things, from the minute to the immense. Nothing, however small, is too small for thy purpose: nothing, however great, is too great for thy rule. Manage everything so that in the end each promise of thy covenant shall be fulfilled to all thy chosen people.”

That, I think, is the meaning of the plea, “Have respect unto the covenant.” Keep it and see it kept. Fulfil the promise, and prevent thy foes from doing evil to thy children. Precious plea, assuredly.

**II.** And now let us see WHENCE IT DERIVES ITS FORCE. “Have respect unto the covenant.”

It derives its force, first, from the veracity of God. If it be a covenant of man’s making we expect a man to keep it; and a man who does not keep his covenant is not esteemed amongst his fellows. If a man has given his word, that word is his bond. If a thing be solemnly signed and sealed it becomes even more binding, and he that would run back from a covenant

would be thought to have forfeited his character among men. God forbid that we should ever think the Most High could be false to his word. It is not possible. He can do all things except this — he cannot lie; it is not possible that he should ever be untrue. He cannot even change: the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He will not alter the thing that hath gone out of his lips. When then we come before God in prayer for a covenant mercy we have his truthfulness to support us. “O God, thou must do this. Thou art a sovereign: thou canst do as thou wilt, but thou hast bound thyself by bonds that hold thy majesty; thou hast said it, and it is not possible that thou shouldst go back from thine own word. How strong our faith ought to be when we have God’s truth to lean upon. What dishonor we do to our God by our weak faith; for it is virtually a suspicion of the fidelity of our covenant God.

Next, to support us in using this plea we have God’s sacred jealousy for his honor. He has told us himself that he is a jealous God; his name is jealousy; he has great respect unto his honor among the sons of men. Hence this was Moses’s plea — “What will the enemy say? And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?” Now, if God’s covenant could be trifled with, and if it could be proved that he had not kept the promise that he made to his creatures, it would not only be a dreadful thing for us, but it would bring grievous dishonor upon his name; and that shall never be. God is too pure and holy, and he is withal too honorable ever to run back from the word that he has given to his servants. If I feel that my feet have almost gone I may still be assured that he will not suffer me wholly to perish, else were his honor stained, for he hath said, “They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” He might give me up to mine enemies so far as my deserts are concerned, for I deserve to be destroyed by them — but then his honor is engaged to save the meanest of his people, and he has said, “I give unto them eternal life.” He will not, therefore, for his honour’s sake, suffer me to be the prey of the adversary; but will preserve me, even me, unto the day of his appearing. Here is good foothold for faith.

The next reflection that should greatly strengthen us is the venerable character of the covenant. This covenant was no transaction of yesterday: or ever the earth was this covenant was made. We may not speak of first or last with God, but speaking after the manner of men the covenant of grace is God’s first thought. Though we usually put the covenant of works first in order of time as revealed, yet in very deed the covenant of grace is the

older of the two. God's people were not chosen-yesterday, but before the foundations of the world; and the Lamb slain to ratify that covenant, though slain eighteen hundred years ago, was in the divine purpose slain from before the foundations of the world. It is an ancient covenant: there is nothing so ancient. It is to God a covenant which he holds in high esteem. It is not one of his light thoughts, not one of those thoughts which lead him to create the morning dew that melts ere the day has run its course, or to make the clouds that light up the setting sun with glory but which soon have lost their radiance; but it is one of his great, thoughts, yea, it is his eternal thought, the thought out of his own inmost soul — this covenant of grace. And because it is so ancient, and to God a matter so important, when we come to him with this plea in our mouths we must not think of being staggered by unbelief, but may open our mouths wide, for he will assuredly fill them. Here is thy covenant, O God, which of thy own spontaneous sovereign will thou didst ordain of old, a covenant in which thy very heart is laid bare, and thy love which is thyself is manifested. O God, have respect unto it, and do as thou hast said, and fulfill thy promise to thy people.

Nor is this all. It is but the beginning. In one sermon I should not have time to show you all the reasons that give force to the plea; but here is one. The covenant has upon it a solemn endorsement. There was the stamp of God's own word — that is enough. The very word that created the universe is the word that spake the covenant. But, as if that were not sufficient, seeing we are unbelieving, God has added to it his oath, and because he could swear by no greater, he has sworn by himself. It were blasphemy to dream that the Eternal could be perjured, and he has set his oath to his covenant, in order that, by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, he might give to the heirs of grace strong consolation.

But more, that venerable covenant thus confirmed by oath was sealed with blood. Jesus died to ratify it. His heart's blood bedewed that Magna Charta of the grace of God to his people. It is a covenant now which God the just must keep. Jesus has fulfilled our side of it — has executed to the letter all the demands of God upon man. Our Surety and our Substitute has at once kept the law and suffered all that was due by his people On account of their breach of it; and now shall not the Lord be true and the everlasting Father be faithful to his own Son? How can he refuse to his Son the joy which he set before him and the reward which he promised him? "He shall see his seed: he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." My soul,

the faithfulness of God to his covenant is not so much a matter between thee and God as between Christ and God, for now it go stands — Christ as their representative puts in his claim before the throne of infinite justice for the salvation of every soul for whom he shed his blood, and he must have what he has purchased. Oh what confidence is here! The rights of the Son, blended with the love and the veracity of the Father, makes the covenant to be ordered in all things and sure.

Moreover, remember, and I will not detain you much longer with this, that up till now nothing in the covenant has ever failed. The Lord has been tried by ten thousand times ten thousand of his people, and they have been in trying emergencies and serious difficulties; but it has never been reported in the gates of Zion that the promise has become naught, neither have any said that the covenant is null and void. Ask ye those before you who passed through deeper waters than yourselves. Ask the martyrs who gave their lives up for their Master, “Was he with them to the end?” The placid smiles upon their countenances while enduring the most painful death were evident testimonies that God is true. Their joyous songs, the clapping of their hands amidst the fire, and their exultation even on the rack, or when rotting in some loathsome dungeon — all these have proved how faithful the Lord has been.

And have you not heard with your own ears the testimony of God’s dying people? They were in conditions in which they could not have been sustained by mere imagination, nor buoyed up by frenzy, and yet they have been as joyful as if their dying day had been their wedding day. Death is too solemn a matter for a man to play a masquerade there. But what did your wife say in death? or your mother now with God? or what your child, who had learnt the Savior’s love? Can you not recall their testimonies even now? I think I hear some of them, and amongst the things of earth that are like to the joys of heaven, I think this is one of the foremost, — the joy of departed saints when they already hear the voices of angels hovering -near, and turn round and tell us in broken language of the joys that are bursting in upon them — their sight blinded by the excess of brightness, and their hearts ravished with the bliss that floods them. Oh it has been sweet to see the saints depart!

I mention these things now, not merely to refresh your memories, but to establish your faith in God. He has been true so many times and false never, and shall we now experience any difficulty in resting on his

covenant? No, by all these many years in which the faithfulness of God ‘has been put to the test, and has never failed, let us be confident that he will still regard us, and let us pray boldly, — “Have respect unto the covenant.” For, mark you, as it has been in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be, world Without end. It shall be to the last saint as it was with the first. The testimony of the last soldier of the host shall be, “Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised.”

Only one more reflection here. Our God has taught many of us to trust in his name. We were long in learning the lesson, and nothing but Omnipotence could have made us willing to walk by faith, and not by sight; but with much patience the Lord has brought us at last to have no reliance but on himself, and now we are depending on his faithfulness and his truth. Is that thy case, brother? What then? Thinkest thou that God has given thee this faith to mock thee? Believest thou that he has taught thee to trust in his name, and thus far has brought thee to put thee to shame? Has his Holy Spirit given thee confidence in a lie? and has he wrought in thee faith in a fiction? God forbid! Our God is no demon who would delight in the misery which a groundless confidence would be sure to bring to us. If then hast faith, he gave it to thee, and he that gave it to thee knows his own gift, and will honor it. He was never false yet, even to the feeblest faith, and if thy faith is great, thou shalt find him greater than thy faith, even when thy faith is at its greatest; therefore be of good cheer. The fact that thou believest should encourage thee to say, “Now, O Lord, I have come to rest upon thee, canst thou fail me? I, a poor worm, know no confidence but thy dear name, wilt thou forsake me? I have no refuge but thy wounds, O Jesus, no hope but in thy atoning sacrifice, no light but in thy light: canst thou cast me off?” It is not possible that the Lord should cast off one who thus trusts him. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Can any of us forget our children when they fondly trust us in the days of their weakness? No, the Lord is no monster: he is tender and full of compassion, faithful and true; and Jesus is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother. The very fact that he has given us faith in his covenant should help us to plead, — “Have respect unto the covenant.”

**III.** Having thus shown you, dear friends, the meaning of the plea, and whence it derives its force, we will now pause a minute and observe **HOW AND WHEN THAT COVENANT MAY BE PLEADED.**

First, it may be pleaded under a sense of sin — when the soul feels its guiltiness. Let me read to you the words of our apostle, in the eighth chapter of the Hebrews, where he is speaking of this covenant at the tenth verse. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Now, dear hearer, suppose that thou art under a sense of sin; something has revived in thee a recollection of past guilt, or it may be that thou hast sadly stumbled this very day, and Satan whispers, “Then wilt surely be destroyed, for thou hast sinned.” Now go to the great Father, and open this page, putting thy finger on that twelfth verse, and say, “Lord, thou hast in infinite, boundless, inconceivable mercy entered into covenant with me, a poor sinner, seeing I believe in the name of Jesus, and now I beseech thee have respect unto thy covenant. Thou hast said, I will be merciful to their unrighteousness: — O God be merciful to mine. Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more: Lord, remember no more my sins: forget for ever my iniquity.” That is the way to use the covenant: when under a sense of sin, run to that clause which meets your case.

But suppose, beloved brother or sister, you are laboring to overcome inward corruption with intense desire that holiness should be wrought in you. Then read the covenant again as you find it in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah at the thirty-third verse. It is the same covenant, only we are reading another version of it. “This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Now, can you not plead that and say, “Lord, thy commandments upon stone are holy, but I forget them, and break them; but, O my God, write them on the fleshy tablets of my heart. Come now and make me holy; transform me; write thy will upon my very soul, that I may live it out, and from the warm impulses of my heart serve thee as thou wouldst be served. Have respect unto thy covenant and sanctify thy servant.”

Or suppose you desire to be upheld under strong temptation, lest you should go back and return to your old ways. Take the covenant as you find it in Jeremiah at the thirty-second chapter at the fortieth verse. Note these

verses and learn them by heart, for they may be a great help to you some of these days. Read the fortieth verse of the thirty-second chapter of Jeremiah. “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.” Blow go and say, “O Lord, I am almost gone, and they tell me I shall finally fall, but O, my Lord and Master, there stands thy word. Put thy fear in my heart and fulfill thy promise, that I shall not depart from thee.” This is the sure road to final perseverance.

Thus I might take you through all the various needs of God’s people. and show that in seeking to have them supplied they may fitly cry, “Have respect unto the covenant.” For instance, suppose you were in great distress of mind and needed comfort, you could go to him with that covenant promise, “As a mother comforteth her children, even so will I Comfort thee, — out of Zion will I comfort thee.” Go to him with that and say, “Lord, comfort thy servant.” Or if there should happen to be a trouble upon us, not for yourselves, but for the church; how sweet it is to go to the Lord and say, “Thy covenant runs thus — ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.’ O Lord, it seems as though they would prevail. Interpose thy strength and save thy church.” If it ever should happen that you are looking for the conversion of the ungodly, and desiring to see sinners saved, and the world seems so dark, look at our text again — the whole verse — “Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, to which you may add, but thou hast said that thy glory shall cover the earth, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Lord, have respect unto thy covenant. Help our missionaries, speed thy gospel, bid the mighty angel fly through the midst of heaven to preach the everlasting gospel to every creature. Why, it is a grand missionary prayer. “Have respect unto the covenant.” Beloved, it is a two-edged sword, to be used in all conditions of strife, and it is a holy balm of Gilead, that will heal in all conditions of suffering.

**IV.** And so I close with this last question, WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL INFERENCES FROM ALL THIS? “Have respect unto the covenant.” Why, that if we ask God to have respect unto it we ought to have respect unto it ourselves, and in this way.

Have a grateful respect for it. Bless the Lord that he ever condescended to enter into covenant with you. What could he see in you even to give you a



promise, much more to make a covenant with you? Blessed be his dear name, this is the sweet theme of our hymns on earth, and shall be the subject of our songs in heaven.

Next, have a believing respect for it. It' it is God's covenant, do not dishonor it. It stands sure. Why do you stagger at it through unbelief?

*“His every work of grace is strong  
As that which built the skies;  
The voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises.”*

Next, have a joyful respect for it, Wake your harps, and join in praise with David: “Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant.” Here is enough to make a heaven in our hearts while yet we are below — the Lord hath entered into a covenant of grace and peace with us, and he will bless us for ever.

Then have a jealous respect for it. Never suffer the covenant of works to be mixed with it. Hate that preaching — I say not less than that — hate that preaching which does not discriminate between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, for it is deadly preaching and damning preaching. You must always have a straight, clear line here between what is of man and what is of God, for cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm; and if you have begun with the Spirit under this covenant do not think of being made perfect in the flesh under another covenant. Be ye holy under the precepts of the heavenly Father; but be ye not legal under the taskmaster's lash. Return not to the bondage of the law, for ye are not under law, but under grace.

Lastly, have a practical respect for it. Let all see that the covenant of grace, while it is your reliance, is also your delight. Be ready to speak of it to others. Be ready to show that the effect of its grace upon you is one that is worthy of God, since it has a purifying effect upon your life. He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. Have respect unto the covenant by walking as such people should who can say that God is to them a God, and they are to him a people. The covenant says, “From all their idols will I cleanse them.” Don't love idols then. The covenant says, “I will sprinkle pure water upon them, and they shall be clean.” Be ye clean then, ye covenanted ones, and may the Lord preserve you and make his covenant to be your boast on earth and your song for ever in heaven. Oh

that the Lord may bring -us into the bonds of his covenant, and give us a simple faith in his dear Son, for that is the mark of the covenanted ones. Amen and Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON — Psalm 74.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK.” — 237, 228, 742.**

# THE COVENANTER.

NO. 1975

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING,  
JULY 31ST, 1887,

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.” — Psalm 25:10.*

THIS Psalm is intensely earnest. “Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” The sentences are ingots of gold. Every word is exceeding weighty with sense and sincerity. I take it that one reason for this weight is the fact that David was in affliction. He says, “I am desolate and afflicted. Look upon mine affliction and my pain.” Pain is a great disenchanter. Flowery speeches suit the summer-tide of our health, but we find them not in the winter of our grief. Pain kills fine phrases as a mighty frost kills butterflies and moths. You can play with religion until you are laid low, and then it becomes serious work. The romance of religion is one thing; the reality of it is another. It would be a great blessing to some if they were shrivelled with a little pain, else will they grow unbearable in their pride. The frog drinks, and drinks, and thinks he will soon swell into an ox; one single bitter drop is mingled with the stream, and he is back into a frog again. It is often the best thing that can happen to us that we should be reduced to our true selves, and not be left to strut about as noble somebodies. May our meditations this morning be solid, and leave on our minds no savor of unreality!

Mixed also with David's suffering there was a sense of sin. Read verse eleven, “For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.” And again, in verse eighteen, “Forgive all my sins.” No man need have a worse trouble than conviction of sin. A thorn in the flesh is nothing to a thorn in the conscience. A sense of sin is another great disenchanter. This

bursts the bubbles of conceit by thousands. When the heart is awakened, and sin is laid bare by the Spirit of God, so that we are truly humbled by it, life ceases to be sport, and an awful earnestness pervades our being. To carry burning coals in the bosom is nothing compared with bearing sin in an awakened conscience. There is no cheating your soul when sin lies hard on it; and no attempt is then made at dealing with God in a dishonest manner; but, crushed into the dust, we pine for a real atonement, and a real faith in it, and the true seal of the Spirit to make our pardon sure. When sin is truly felt, we come before the great Father, not with mimic sorrow, but with downright soul-weeping and heartbreaking, we cry to him, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” If we feel either of these two things, pain or sin — and who among us can hope to be without them at all times? — then shall we see the solemn side of life, and look for those sure consolations by which we may be sustained. I hope that our subject of discourse to-day may help in that direction.

One other thing is notable about David in writing this Psalm: whatever his trouble might be, and however deep his sense of sin, he looked Godward always. He cries, “Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” “Remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord.” In our text his mind dwells upon “the paths of the Lord.” The ungodly fly away from God when he chastens them, but the saints kiss the chastening rod. The child of God goes home when it grows dark. We seek our healing from the hand which has wounded us. Which way dost thou look in a storm? If the Lord be now thy haven, thou shalt fly to him in the last dread storm; for that way thine eye has turned these many years. If thou lookest for everything to God thou art looking out of the right window. When thine eyes look towards the great sea of divine all-sufficiency thou shalt not look in vain. Thou mayest have to come again seven times ere thou seest thy deliverance, and when thou dost see it, it may seem no bigger than a man’s hand; but thou shalt not be ashamed in the end. I trust this mark and evidence of a child of God is upon many of you this morning; and if it be so, you are among the Lord’s host whom I would call to the battle. With your eyes looking right on, and your eyelids straight before you, come with me to the rallying-place of the Lord of hosts.

In my text I see two things worth talking about. The first is, *the spiritual covenant* — “such as keep his covenant and his testimonies”; and, secondly, here is *his notable experience* — “all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.”

**I.** Observe in the text the footprint of THE SPIRITUAL COVENANTER. You have all heard of the old Covenanters of Scotland, their decision of mind and force of character. Their theory of government for the kingdom of Scotland was quaintly unpractical, but it grew out of true and deep fear of the Lord. The Old Testament spirit in them was not enough tintured with the meekness of the Lord Jesus, or they would not have touched the weapon of steel; but in this mistake they were very far from being alone. In my bedroom I have hung up the picture of an old Covenanter. He sits in a wild glen with his Bible open before him on a huge stone. He leans on his great broadsword, and his horse stands quietly at his side. Evidently he smelleth the battle afar off, and is preparing for it by drinking in some mighty promise. As you look into the old man's face you can almost hear him saying to himself, "For the crown of Christ and the covenant, I would gladly lay down my life this day." They did lay down their lives, too, right gloriously, and Scotland owes to her covenanting fathers far more than she knows. It was a grand day that in which they spread the Solemn League and the Covenant upon the tombstones of the old kirkyard in Edinburgh, and all sorts of men came forward to set their names to it. Glorious was that roll of worthies. There were the lords of the Covenant and the common men of the Covenant; and some pricked a vein and dipped the pen into their blood, that they might write their names with the very fluid of their hearts. All over England also there were men who entered into a like solemn league and covenant, and met together to worship God according to their right, and not according to human order-books. They were resolved upon this one thing — that Rome should not come back to place and power while they could lift a hand against her; neither should any other power in throne or Parliament prevent the free exercise of their consciences for Christ's cause and covenant. These stern old men, with their stiff notions, have gone. And what have we in their places? Indifference and frivolity. We have no Roundheads and Puritans; but then we have scientific dress-making, and we play lawn-tennis! We have no contentions for the faith; but then our amusements occupy all our time. This wonderful nineteenth century has become a child, and put away manly things. Self-contained men, men in whom is the true grit, are now few and far between as compared with the old covenanting days.

But I want to speak this morning, not of the old covenanters, but of those who at this day keep the covenant of the Lord. Would to God we had among us great companies of "such as keep his covenant, and remember

his commandments to do them"! *The true covenant is one who has found out God*, and therein has made the greatest discovery that was ever made. He has discovered, not only a God, but the living and true God and he is resolved to be on living terms with him for time and for eternity. He will henceforth never shut his eyes to God, for his longing is to see more and more of him. He is determined to be right with God; for he feels that if he were right with all his fellow creatures and everything about him, yet if he were wrong with God he would be out of order in the main point. He has settled in his own soul that he will know the Lord, be right with him, at peace with him, yea, and in league with him. It is not natural to men thus to cling to God, and seek after him; but it has become natural to this man, so that he hungers and thirsts for the living God. By this very fact the man is ennobled: he is lifted up above the brutes that perish. A man capable of the idea of covenant with God, and taken up with a passion for it, must surely be born from above. There must be a divine nature within him, or he would not be drawn towards the divine One above him. It is even so: the Spirit of God has been working here.

Already, too, *this man has discovered another covenant, whose ruins lay between him and God, and block the road*. Turning to his Bible, the believer discovers that we were from the first under covenant towards God. He reads of the first covenant, the covenant with our first father, Adam, which was broken by his disobedience, whose fatal breach has brought upon us losses and woes unnumbered. This covenant the believer has not ignored, for he has felt his share in its failure, and come under the condemnation of it. His very desire to be right with God has brought home to him the judgment of the law; he has smarted under the lash of it; he has seen the Lord arrayed in robes of justice avenging the quarrel of his covenant, and he has said to himself, "What shall I do? The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Brethren, we are condemned under the first covenant, not only by the act of our representative, but also through our personal endorsement of his rebellion by our own actual sin. That covenant, which should have been a covenant of life, has become a covenant of death unto us. You know what I mean, for I speak to many who know, by deep personal experience, what it is to be the prisoners of the Covenant, shut up in soul despair, and numbered for destruction. You could not keep the law, you felt you could not, though you wished you could: the future was against you. As for former violations of the law, you could make no amends for them: the past

was against you. Even then your inward corruptions were gnawing at your heart like the worm that never dies and the horseleech that is never satisfied: the present was against you. Yet despite all this, you still followed after the Lord, and could not live without him.

*This covenanter of whom I speak is one who has, through divine enlightenment, perceived a better covenant, and sure salvation therein.* He has seen in the Lord Jesus a second Adam, greater than the first, and he has heard the glorious Lord exclaim, "I have given him as a covenant for the people." He has seen Jesus pledged unto God to make good the breaches of the broken covenant. The believer has seen the Son of God arrayed in blood-stained garments coming from Gethsemane; he has seen him answering at the bar for the broken law, scourged with the chastisement of our peace, and bound with the bands of our condemnation. I say the believer has seen the beloved Surety of the New Covenant meeting the law's demands at calvary, surrendering his hands to be nailed for our ill-doings, his feet to be fastened up for our wanderings, and his heart to be pierced, for our wantonness. O my soul, hast thou not seen thy Lord bareheaded amid the tempest of divine wrath for sin? Hast thou not heard him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"? If so, thou hast seen how out of the old covenant the new was born, like life from between the ribs of death. Our soul has stood in the midst of the horrible tempest, half-blinded by the lightning, and deafened by the thunder: at last there has been a rent in the black mantle, and a shower of wondrous love has followed the black tempest, and a voice has been heard, sweeter than the harps of angels, saying, "It is finished." Thus have the Lord's covenanted ones come forth from under the old covenant into a covenant of grace, in which peace and joy abound. Now are we in happy league with God. Now we would think, and feel, and act, in harmony with God. Our covenant with him shall compass all our life: we are his, and he is ours. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul"; and, on the other hand, "The Lord's portion is his people." Henceforth we would have no life except for the living God: he is our ambition and our expectation, our end and our way, our desire and our delight. He rejoices over us to do us good, and we rejoice ourselves in him, and seek his glory.

*The spiritual covenanter has the covenant with God written on the tablets of his heart.* I have known believers when first converted, follow a hint given them by Dr. Doddridge, in his "Rise and Progress of Religion," where he draws up a covenant which he invites the reader to sign. Some

have executed a deed with great solemnity, and have also observed the day of its signature from year to year. Very proper, no doubt, to some natures, but I fear that to the more timid and conscientious such covenants are apt to cause bondage. When they find that they have not, in all things, lived up to their own pledges, they are apt to cut themselves off from all part and lot in the matter: this is the covenant of works, and not of grace; a covenant on paper, and not the covenant written upon the bears and mind. The true covenanter wills the will of God. It is not merely that God commands him to do right, but he longs to do it. God's law is his love. That which is pleasing to God is pleasing to his people, because their hearts are made like his own. The divine likeness is restored by the Spirit of grace, and hence the will of the Lord is written out upon the new-born nature. Holiness is the passion of a true believer. He consents and assents to the law that it is good, and the divine life within him delights itself in the law of the Lord. This is the surest sort of covenant — this divine writing in the nature, according to that gracious promise — “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” O happy man whose covenant with God is the covenant of his own desire, who wills and wishes and longs and labors to yield himself fully and wholly unto the law of his God!

*This covenanting man does not regard himself any more as one by himself*, for he is joined unto the Lord, and has entered into the closest fellowship with him. None can separate him from God — the union is vital and complete. He has thrown his little all into God's great all, and taken God's great all unto himself to be his heritage for ever; and now henceforth he is in God and God in him. You ask me what it is which thus binds the man to God. I answer: he feels that he is henceforth joined unto the Lord for many reasons, and among the rest because the Lord has *chosen him* to be his own. He is old-fashioned enough to believe that God has a choice in the salvation of men, and he perceives, because faith has been granted him, that the Lord has evidently chosen him unto salvation. He often cries, “Why me? Why me?” and yet knowing that those whom the Lord calls by grace he first predestinated thereto, he is not ashamed to believe in his election. Now the man that believes that God has chosen him, that is the man to enter into Covenant with God, and to keep that covenant. He that is chosen of God chooses God, and chooses him because he is chosen. The vows of God are upon him. Such amazing grace compels him to a consecrated life.



Moreover, in addition to the choice of God this covenanter sees a blood-mark upon his body, soul, and spirit. The *redemption* made on the cross, whatever its other bearings, is seen by the believer to be specially for him. He cries, "For me the bloody sweat; for me the spitting and the scourging; for me the nails and the spear. Truly I am not my own, I am bought with a price." This blood-bought man feels that he cannot be as other men are, he must subscribe with his hand unto the God of Jacob, and own and confess that he belongs alone to the Lord. Others may be their own lords; but as for us, we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God. O sirs, if you know your election and your redemption, you must and will dedicate yourselves unto the Lord by a covenant which cannot be broken. If the choice of the Father and the redemption of the Son do not supply us with a potent force towards holiness, what can do so? Well may we be the covenanted ones of God when we are thus distinguished.

Besides, the covenanting believer feels that he has been the subject of *a special call*. Whatever God may have done with others, he knows that he has dealt specially with him in a way of grace and mercy. The Lord hath said to him, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." A voice has called him from his kindred and from his father's house as surely as Abraham was called. The Lord himself has brought him out of darkness into marvellous light. Whatever the gospel may be to the congregation at large, it has been the power of God to him; for in it he has felt the touch of a hand unfelt before, and heard the sound of a voice unheard in all the days gone by. Omnipotent grace has aroused the echoes of his soul. "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." This special and effectual call is another mighty reason for entering into league and covenant with God. By that call omnipotent, O Lord, I render up myself to thee. Let the world do as it wills, we cannot account for its fully; but as for us and our house, we will serve the Lord. Our bonds of amity with the world are broken: let it do and say what it will; but to the Lord are we bound for ever by that same power which has fetched us out of our former slavery. What with election, redemption, and calling, what more can we say?

Yes, I can say something more, for this true covenanter feels that he is now *united to God in Christ Jesus*. Matchless doctrine, unity with God through Jesus Christ! No man knoweth all the name and nature of the man quickened of the Spirit. Thou canst not tell whence he cometh, nor whither

he goeth. We talk of aristocrats, but believers are the aristocrats of heaven and earth. We often hear the words “royalty” and “blood royal”; the blood royal of the universe is in the man that believes in Jesus. He hath made us unto our God, kings and priests. By virtue of our union with Christ we are one with God and partakers of the divine nature. The day shall come when all the gewgaws and trappings of courts shall be laid aside as faded tawdriness, but then the true dignity and honor of the twice-born, the quickened by the Holy Ghost, shall be truly seen. To be members of the body of Christ — this means glory indeed. To be married unto the King’s Son, even to the Lord Jesus — this means such bliss as angels cannot reach. Do you wonder that because of such immeasurable privilege we make a sure covenant with God?

There are three or four things I would say briefly about this true covenant: the Lord make each one of us to be of his stamp! You may know him by his attachment to the Lord Jesus, who is the sum, substance, surety, and seal of the covenant; as also by his *zeal for the gospel* through which the covenant is revealed to the sons of men. He will not hear anything which is not according to the old gospel, for he counts another gospel to be a pestilent evil. He is very fond of the word “grace”; and with the thing itself he is altogether enamoured. The man that is in covenant with God cannot bear the idea of human merit — he loathes it, it raises his indignation. Have I not known some Christian people come out from hearing certain sermons with their souls on fire with holy wrath? I feel, in casting my eye over many modern writings, as if I had breathed poisonous gas, and was like to die. We cannot endure the smell of sacramentarianism, and priestism, and human righteousness. Others may feed on philosophical morality, but nothing but the grace of God will do for us. Cats and dogs may feed on any rubbish, but men of God must live on the grace of God, and nothing else. Our keeping the covenant and the testimonies binds us to a firm adherence to the inspired gospel, and the grace of God which is the glory of it.

He who is indeed in covenant with God is known by his continual regard to the life, walk, and triumph of *faith*. He has faith, and by that faith he lives and grows. He is, and has, and does all things by faith; and you cannot tempt him away from that faith wherein he stands. Carnal sense and fleshly feeling are not able to tempt him from believing. The highest enjoyment proffered by a fancied perfection cannot charm him from standing by faith. “No,” he says, “I must trust, or else it is all over with me. My element is

faith; and as a fish out of water dies, so do I die, and all my covenanting with God dies too, unless I cling by faith to the promise of a faithful God.” Though all men should live by sight and feeling, yet will not the true covenanter quit the hallowed way of faith in the Lord.

This covenanting man will also be known by his stern resolve to preserve the gospel in its purity, and hand it on to others. When the truth of God was made known to Abraham, it was committed to him and to his descendants as a sacred deposit, of which they were to be the guardians and trustees. It was theirs to keep that lamp burning by which the rest of the world would, in due time, be saved from darkness. At this hour the eternal truths of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are given over to certain chosen men and women, to be preserved by them till the coming of the Lord. This keeping is to be accompanied with a constant proclamation, so that the truth may spread as well as live, and may go on conquering and to conquer. O ye who are the covenanted ones of God, let not his gospel suffer damage. I charge you that love the Lord to bind the gospel about you more firmly than ever. Bear aloft the standard of our grand army. The blood-stained colors of the cross, bear them to the front; spread them to every wind; uplift them on every hill! And if you cannot spread the truth, and are shut up to defend it, then do so even to the death. Wrap the colors about your heart; be wrapped in them as in your shroud, if you cannot live bearing them as your flag! A true covenanter says, “Sooner death than false of faith.” The crown of our Lord Jesus shall never suffer loss. We will do everything for Jesus. We will for his sake bear reproach, and for his sake labor to win souls unto God. We vow that he shall be glorified in our mortal bodies, and that by some means his great name shall be made known to the ends of the earth. O my comrades! I am revived by the very thought of you. God hath yet his faithful covenanters who have not bowed the knee to Baal, to whom the Lord is God and King for ever and ever.

**II.** Under our second head let us now study THE COVENANTER’S NOTABLE EXPERIENCE. The text says, “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

Observe, first, that *the Lord makes many approaches to covenanting men*. He does not leave them alone, but he comes to them, and manifests himself to them. By the expression, “All the paths of the Lord,” I learn that the Lord has many ways of drawing near to his chosen. Not in the public highways of grace only doth he meet those with whom he is on terms of

peace, but in many private and secret paths. In a grass-field a path is made by constant treading, and God makes paths to his people by continually drawing nigh unto their souls, and communing with them. The Lord has many paths, for he comes to them from different points of the compass, according as their experience requires. He uses sometimes this way and sometimes another, that he may commune with us. He will never leave his covenanted ones long alone. Often does he say, "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

I like the word "paths," as we have it in our English version: for it seems to say that the Lord has walks of his own. He makes ways for himself, and comes along them quietly, taking his people at unawares. On a sudden he whispers a word of heavenly promise, and then is away again. But he is not long gone: he makes another path, and comes to us with new unction and fresh revealings. His visits to us have been many and gracious. O my hearer, if thou wilt give thyself to God, God will give himself to thee. Young man, I invite you to the grand destiny of one that shall henceforth live with God, to whom God shall manifest himself. Will not this be a distinguished honor? Do not think it unattainable. God may be reached: if thou wilt consecrate thyself to him this day by a covenant of salt through Jesus Christ the ever-blessed sacrifice, thou shalt know the visitations of the Almighty; thou shalt, like Enoch, walk with God; Believe me, I speak truth and soberness. Between this place and the pearly gates the Lord will come unto thee, yea, he will take up his abode with thee. When thou canst not get to him, he will come to thee; for he is a great pathmaker. His ways are in the sea, and he leaps over the mountains. He has a desire to the work of his hands, and that desire will break through stone walls to reach thee. What a life is that to which the Lord makes innumerable paths! Happy shall he be who shall attain to it!

Note, next, *that all the dealings of God with his people are in a way of mercy.* "All the paths of the Lord are mercy." This is well, for the best of the saints will always need mercy. Those who keep his covenant are still kept by his mercy. When they grow in grace and come to be fully developed Christians, they still need mercy for their sins, their weaknesses, their necessities. The Lord exercises mercy to the most highly instructed believer, as well as to the babe in grace, mercy to the most useful worker as much as to the most weary sufferer. Thank God that his mercy towards us is for ever.

That mercy will always be “tender mercy,” abiding mercy, and abounding mercy. His mercy is constant as the day, fresh as the hour, new every morning. Mercy covers all. In every gift of providence and in every way of predestination mercy may be seen. It would be greatly to our advantage to think more of the mercy of God to us. So much of his mercy comes and goes without our noticing it. Shame that the Lord should thus be deprived of the revenues of his praise!

In the Hebrew I find the word here used is “wheel tracks,” such ruts as wagons make when they go down our green roads in wet weather and sink in up to the axles. God’s ways are at times like heavy wagon-tracks, and they cut deep into our souls; yet they are all of them mercy. Whether our days trip along like the angels mounting on Jacob’s ladder to heaven, or grind along like the wagons which Joseph sent for Jacob, they are in each case ordered in mercy. I stand by the happy memories of a tried past, as in summer weather I walk down a green lane, and as I look at the deep ruts which God’s providence made long ago, I see flowers of mercies growing in them. All the crushing and the crashing was in goodness. Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Yes, “all the days of my life,” the dark and cloudy, the stormy and the wintry, as surely as in “the days of heaven upon the earth.” Brethren, we may sing a song of unmingled mercy. The paths of God have been to us nothing else but mercy. Mercy, mercy, mercy, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.”

The Psalmist says, “All the paths of the Lord are mercy *and truth*.” That is to say, God has always shown the truth of his word. He has never been false to his pledges. He has done according to his word. Moreover, the blessings which God has promised have always turned out to be as he represented them. We have followed no cunningly devised fables. The blessings of grace are not fancies or frenzies, exaggerations or mere sentiments. The Lord has never fallen short of his promise. He has never kept his word to the ear and broken it to the heart. All the ways of God have not only been merciful and true, but they have been essential “mercy and truth.” We have had truth of mercy; verity of mercy; substantial, solid, essential mercy. I have found no delusion in trusting in God. I may have been a dreamer in some things; but when I have lived unto God I have then exercised the shrewdest common sense, and have walked after the rule of prudence. It is no vain thing to serve God, the vanity lies on the other side. I know that many of you think that Christian experience leans to the region

of sentiment, if not of imagination; but indeed it is not so. The surest fact in a believer's life is God's nearness to him, care for him, love to him. Other things are shadows or shinings which come and go, but the goodness of God is the substance, the truth, the reality of life. How I wish I could persuade you of this! but, alas, the carnal mind will not receive spiritual things: I may bear witness of that which I taste and handle, but you will not believe me. Divine Spirit, come and open blinded eyes.

*To this rule there is no exception* — “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.” They say there is no rule without an exception, but there is an exception to that rule. All God's dealings with his people are gracious and faithful. Sometimes the ways of God are full of truth and mercy manifestly — they have been so to me in many a notable instance. I hope I do not trouble you too often with personal experiences. I do not narrate them out of egotism, but because it seems to me that every Christian should add his own personal testimony to the heap of evidence which proves the truth of our God. If I tell you about John Newton, you answer, “He is dead”, but if I tell you of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, he stands before you. Some ten days ago I was called to bear a baptism of pain. I had a night of anguish, and the pangs ceased not in the morning. How gladly would I escape from these acute attacks, but it seems I may not hope it! I felt worn down and spent. Far on in the morning my ever-thoughtful secretary came by my bedside, and cheered me greatly by the news that the letters brought tidings of considerable help to the various enterprises; in fact, there was far more coming in than is at all usual at this season. A legacy was reported of £500 for the Orphanage, and £500 for the College. Another will was mentioned in which the Orphanage was made residuary legatee. Living friends had also sent large sums as by a kind of concert of liberality. They did not know that their poor friend was going to be very ill that morning, but their Lord knew, and he moved them to take away every care from his servant. It seemed to me as if my Lord said to me, “Now, you are not going to fret and worry while you are ill. You shall have no temptation to do so; for I will send you in so much help for all my work that you shall not dare to be cast down.” Truly in this the paths of the Lord to me were mercy and truth. Many and many a time have I been lost in wonder at the Lord's mercy to his unworthy servant. I bow my head and bless the name of the Lord, and cry, “Whence is this to me? “Ah, brethren! one can bear rheumatism or gout when mercy flows in as a flood. “Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and

shall we not receive evil?" Seeing it all comes from the same hand, we should receive it with equal cheerfulness. Now will I suffer with patience and endure with tranquillity, for the Lord has dealt graciously and tenderly with his servant. I have often found his consolations abound in proportion to my tribulations, insomuch that I am on the look-out for the mercy when I begin to feel the smart, even as a child looks for the sweet when he finds himself called upon to take physic. Those more closely around about me say, "Now that you have a bad time of personal suffering you will see the Lord doing wonderfully for you"; and they are not disappointed. Indeed, I serve a good Master: I can speak well of him at all times, and specially do I find him kind when the weather is rough around his pilgrim child! Have you not found it so in your way? Come, dear friends, you cannot speak this morning, for one at a time is enough for a public assembly; but you can speak when you have had your dinners, and your children are round about you. Tell them how gracious God has been to you in your times of trouble. Exceedingly utter the memory of his great goodness.

Mark you, when we cannot see it, the Lord is just as merciful in his ways to us. We may not expect to be indulged and pampered by being made to see the mercy of God, like silly children that will be in a pet and a fume unless their father stuffs their mouths with sweetmeats, and their hands with toys. God is as good when he denies as when he grants; and though we often *see* the marvellous tenderness of our God, it is not necessary that we should see it to make it true. Our God is wise as a father, and tender as a mother, and when we cannot comprehend his methods we still believe in his love. This is not credulity, but a confidence to which the Lord is fully entitled; there can be no doubt about it, that "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant."

I hear some say, "These things do not happen to me. I find myself struggling alone, and full of sorrow." Do you keep the covenant? Some of you professing Christian people live anyhow, and not by covenant rule. You do not live to God, you do not keep his covenant, you do not observe his testimonies, you are not living consecrated lives; therefore, if you do not enjoy his mercy and his truth, do not blame the Lord. The text says, that all his paths are mercy and truth "unto such as keep his covenant": remember the character, and do not expect the blessing apart from it. O child of God, be thou more careful to keep the way of the Lord, more concentrated in heart in seeking his glory, and thou shalt see the loving-

kindness and the tender mercy of the Lord to thee. God bless this feeble testimony of mine to all who are assembled here this morning!

I have this much to add to it — What a bliss it is to have entered upon the spiritual life, and to be in covenant with God! If there were no mercy joined to it of a providential character, it would nevertheless be the grandest thing that ever could happen to any one of us to be living onto God. I call all short of this death, and I know no other name for it. What solidity we have in godliness! It puts eternal rock beneath our feet. There are fascinating things in life about which you are almost afraid to enquire, for fear they should not prove to be what they seem. All earthborn joys are of this kind: their charms are on the surface, their beauty is skin deep. But in regard to the life consecrated to God by covenant, and then enriched by his mercy, you may pry, and dig, and search, and the more you do so, the more will you be certified that now you are in the land of realities. Though we do not *see*, yet we perceive with a perception clearer than sight, and we shall so perceive through life; and when they fling back those golden gates, and we peer into the spirit land, then shall we value most of all the life which observes the covenant, and is surrounded with mercy and truth. What a wondrous thing the life of a consecrated man will seem to be when it shall be viewed in its completeness, in the light of the eternal throne! Then will the embroidery of love be seen in its beauty, and the fabric of life will be owned to be worthy of a God. Things not seen as yet will be seen then; and things known in part will be seen in all their bearings. I suppose that one of the engagements of heaven will be to observe how kindly our God has dealt with us upon the road. At any rate, when we come to the glory-land we shall only reckon that to have been true life which was spent in communion with God. Link us with God, and we live; divide us from him, and we are dead.

I hear worldlings mutter — “What is the man at? We know nothing and care nothing about being in covenant with God.” Truly you despise the life I set before you; but it is your own way of life which most deserves scorn, O you who live for gain or pleasure! I will sketch you with the pencil of truth. It is a country scene, and it passed under my own eye but a few hours ago. I sat by the rivulet, at a point where abundant springs poured forth new streams. It was a brook, wide but shallow, and the pure water glided along refreshingly under the overhanging boughs. Little children were there wading into the stream, and enjoying its cool waters. One of them was a true representative of your wealthy merchants. He went a-



fishing with a bright green glass bottle, and his ventures were successful. Again and again I heard his voice ring out most joyously and impressively, "Look! Look! Here! Here! Such a big 'un! I have caught such a big 'un!" It was by no means a whale which he had taken, but a fish which might be half-an-inch long. How he exulted! "Such a big 'un!" To him the affairs of nations were as nothing compared with the great spoil which he had taken. That is the gentleman upon the Exchange, who has made that successful speculation. For the next few days he will astonish everybody as they hear that it was "such a big 'un!" Earth, and heaven, and hell, time and eternity, may all accept the go-by now that the glass bottle contains its prey. I confess I was not carried away with admiration for the child's fortune, neither did I envy him the fullness of his satisfaction.

His brother, not far off, varied my picture for me: he was less richly endowed, and yet he had a very serviceable tin can, with which he fished most diligently. Soon I heard his voice pitched in another key: "Nasty little things! They won't come here! I can't catch 'em! They're good for nothing! I won't try any more." Then the impetuous genius threw his tin can with a splash into the water, and his enterprise was ended. That is the gentleman whose company has been wound up, or whose goods will not command a market. Things will not come his way. He cannot get on. He has made a fail of it, and is in the *Gazette*. All society is out of order, or he would have been sure to succeed. He is sick of it all for the present. You smile at my boys! O worldlings, these are yourselves! You are those children, and your ambitions are their tittlebats.

*"O happy man that lives on high,  
While men lie grovelling here."*

Without God you are paddling in the brooklet of life, fishing for minnows. If you get a grip of God, because he has laid hold on you, O man there is then a soul in you; then have you come to be allied with angels and akin to seraphim. Apart from God you subside into shameful littleness. O Lord Jesus pity those who forget thee! Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON — Psalm 25.*

**HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"  
— 116 (SONG II.), 664, 663.**

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