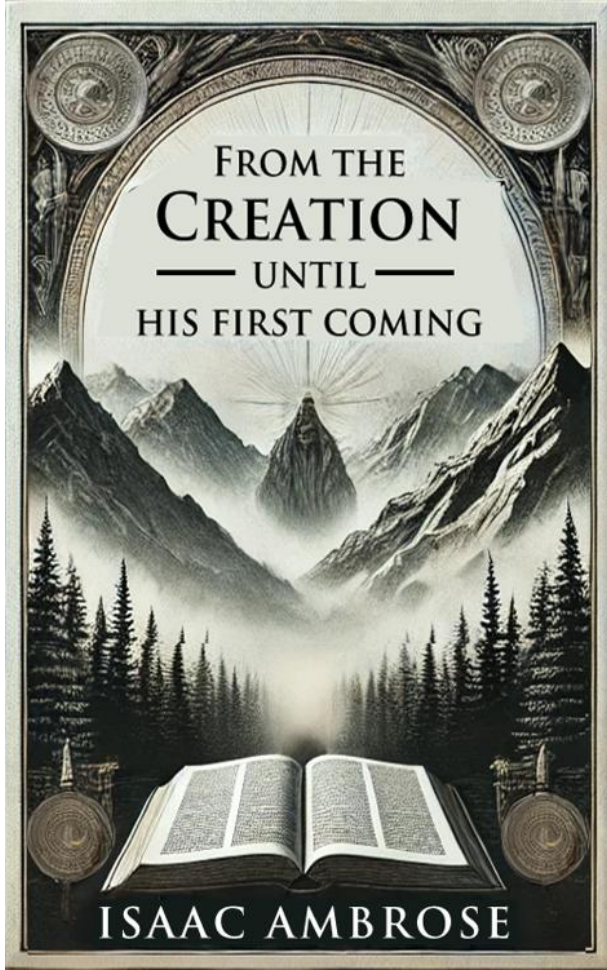




FROM THE
CREATION
— UNTIL —
HIS FIRST COMING



ISAAC AMBROSE



Looking Unto Jesus
From the Creation until his first
coming.

The Third Book.

By ISAAC AMBROSE, Minister of the GOSPEL.

Revel. 1.8, 11.

The Lord will give thee for a Covenant of the People.—
Hear ye deaf, and look ye blind, that ye may see.

LONDON: Printed by John Field for Nathanael Webb and William
Grantham, at the Greyhound in Paul's Church-yard. 1656.

Table of Contents

Chapter. 1.

Sect. 1. Of Christ promised by Degrees

Sect. 2. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Adam

Sect. 3. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Abraham

Sect. 4. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Moses

Sect. 5. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to David

Sect. 6. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Israel, about the Time of the Captivity

Chapter 2.

Sect. 1. Of knowing Jesus, as carrying on the Great Work of our Salvation, from the Creation, until His First Coming.

Sect. 2. Of Considering Jesus in that respect *ibid.*

Sect. 3. Of Desiring Jesus in that respect

Sect. 4. Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

Sect. 5. Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

Sect. 6. Of Loving Jesus in that respect

Sect. 7. Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

Sect. 8. Of Calling on Jesus in that respect

Sect. 9. Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect.

CHAPTER I

SECTION I: Of Christ Promised by Degrees

The Lord will give you for a Covenant of the People.— Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see. - Revelation 1:8, 11

In this period, as in the former, we shall first establish the object, and then guide you on how to contemplate it.

The object is Jesus, advancing the work of man's salvation during the dark era before His incarnation.

No sooner was the world created, along with all things within it, than man was made, to provide a means for God to display His grace in saving His elect. At this juncture, God's eternal purpose, counsel, foreknowledge, decree, and covenant with Christ came into action. Initially, there was no need for Christ, for man was created holy, bearing the image of God, and ruling over other visible creatures—though this state of purity was short-lived. It was a prevailing opinion in earlier times that humanity's first parents fell into sin on the very day they were created. Augustine, among others, wrote that they stood for only six hours. While the precise timing cannot be verified, it is highly likely their fall came swiftly. Moses, after describing the creation of man, immediately recounts the fall, indicating the devil wasted no time in leading man to share in his own condemnation.

Thus, Adam, through his sin, deprived both himself and all his descendants of the image of God. As all humankind was in Adam's loins, God decreed that all would share in the guilt of his transgression. This is why the cry of every saint—including Adam, Abraham, David, and Paul—is, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But take heart, dear souls, for here is the Gospel's sweet news.

In the midst of this grievous temptation, God intervened. He would not leave humanity without hope. Addressing the devil, the instigator of this ruin, He declared: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel*" (Genesis 3:15). At the very moment God pronounced judgment upon the guilty, Jesus was introduced, and the covenant of grace was proclaimed. O, the boundless riches of God's mercy in Christ!

But how, you may ask, did Jesus begin His work of salvation in such a dark time?

1. By assuming the form of man and performing specific offices in that capacity. Scripture recounts Christ's appearances before His incarnation, particularly when engaging with the great task of human redemption. Some speculate that Christ assumed the form of man even when He first created humanity, so that man was made not only in His image of holiness and righteousness but also in the physical form Christ would later assume. Regardless, after man's fall, Christ appeared to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and others.

- He first appeared to Adam in the garden: "*And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*" (Genesis 3:8). God, as pure spirit, has neither

voice nor form, yet He took on human shape to walk and speak with Adam, proclaiming the first Gospel promise, *“It shall bruise your head.”*

- He appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, where the Lord conversed with him. Abraham addressed Him as the *“Judge of all the earth”* (Genesis 18:25), a title rightly belonging to Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead. Christ renewed His covenant with Abraham, promising: *“I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you”* (Genesis 17:7).
- Christ also appeared to Isaac (Genesis 26:2), Jacob (Genesis 32:24, 30), and Moses (Exodus 20:1-3). These appearances foreshadowed His incarnation, preludes to His taking on flesh to accomplish the great work of salvation.

Let us now meditate on the infinite mercy of God, who, even in humanity's darkest hour, revealed Christ, the Redeemer, and proclaimed the covenant of grace.

2. Christ's Work of Salvation in the Darkness of Promise.

Christ carried on the great work of our salvation during that dark time, not by being physically present (as in His Incarnation), but through promise. The great King deemed it fitting that His heralds should first prepare the way before He Himself came in person. Just as the Lord had ordered creation with darkness preceding light, and as He continues to sustain the world with dawn preceding the full day, so too did He establish and uphold His Church: first revealing Christ through ceremonies, rites, figures, types, promises, and

covenants; and then, like a glorious sun or the day-spring from on high, He visited the world to give light to those sitting in darkness.

Thus, we read that both Christ and the Covenant of Grace (which applies Christ to us) were first promised and then proclaimed. The Covenant of Promise is that which God made with Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and all Israel in Jesus Christ—foretelling His Incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. It was fitting that the promise should precede the Gospel, so that the goodness to be bestowed might first be earnestly desired. In times of darkness, men long for light; just as the morning-watch looks eagerly for dawn, so the obscure revelation of Christ in promise stirred the hearts of the patriarchs with an earnest desire for His coming in the flesh.

Even within this obscurity, however, we may observe degrees of clarity. Before the Law was given through Moses, the promise was more obscure. With the giving of the Law, up to the time of the prophets, the promise became somewhat clearer. During the time of the prophets, up to John the Baptist, it grew clearer still. As the advent of the Messiah drew nearer, the promise shone ever more brightly. Just as the light preceding the sun grows stronger or weaker depending on its proximity, so too did the revelation of Christ vary in clarity as the rising of the Sun of Righteousness approached or receded.

It pleased God to manifest the riches of His grace gradually, not all at once. Even today, as we bask in the marvellous light of the Gospel, we partake of divine ceremonies and sacraments. Yet we see only dimly and know in part. A time will come—before His second coming—when we, or our children, shall see Him more clearly, perfectly, and immediately.

My current purpose is to present Jesus as He is revealed in the Covenant of Grace through promise. Because this promise unfolds in stages, reflecting the various ways it broke forth into the dark world, we shall consider it as it was revealed:

1. From Adam to Abraham.
2. From Abraham to Moses.
3. From Moses to David.
4. From David to the Babylonian Captivity, or thereabouts.
5. From the Captivity, or thereabouts, to Christ.

In each of these periods, we witness further and fuller revelations of God's mercy in Christ, the Covenant of Grace, and the unfolding of Jesus' great work of eternal salvation during that dark era.

Earlier, we discussed the covenant between God and Christ concerning our salvation. However, this was not the Covenant of Grace that God made directly with fallen humanity, but a particular covenant with Christ as Mediator. Where it pertained to grace, it was made between God and Christ, with the intention of later being extended to us. At first, we were hidden in the womb of God's election, unable to covenant with Him directly. In this state, Christ undertook the role on our behalf, so that when we are regenerated, we may enter into covenant ourselves.

Thus, we read of God making covenants with various individuals—Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and others. These will be explored further in the following sections.

SECTION II. The Covenant of Promise as Manifested to Adam

The Covenant of Grace, in this sense, is nothing other than an agreement made between God and man concerning reconciliation and eternal life through Christ. The first revelation of this gracious covenant came to Adam and Eve immediately after the Fall, expressed in these words: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”* (Genesis 3:15).

This promise, as the first of its kind, is also the hardest to fully comprehend. It contains the good news of Satan’s kingdom being overthrown and humanity’s liberation through the death of Christ. However, its obscurity has led to much difficulty in understanding. Luther lamented greatly over this, saying, “The text which all men should rightly know, is yet, as far as I am aware, accurately and thoroughly unfolded by no one.” Among the ancients, none, he claimed, had expounded this text in a way befitting its dignity.

The occasion for this promise was the following: The Lord, looking down from heaven and seeing how Satan had triumphed over man, thus damaging the very fabric of creation, resolved upon Satan’s ruin and man’s preservation. The Lord God said to the serpent, *“Because you have done this, you are cursed.”* This pronouncement, understood literally, applies to the serpent; spiritually, it refers to the devil. Both were instruments in leading man to sin, and so both are united in their punishment. The rabbis note that God cut off the serpent’s feet and cursed him, while also casting Samael (the devil) and his company out of heaven, cursing them as well. Man, too, being involved in the transgression, was not exempt from

punishment, as seen in verses 17–19. Yet, to manifest the riches of His grace, God included in the serpent’s curse the everlasting Gospel: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.”*

Let us now examine the meaning of the words in this promise by addressing several key points:

1. Who is the serpent?
2. Who is the woman?
3. What is the seed of the serpent?
4. What is the seed of the woman?
5. What is the significance of "it" (translated as *he* in some versions)?
6. What is the serpent’s head, and what does its bruising signify?
7. What is the heel of the seed of the woman, and what does its bruising signify?
8. Among whom is the enmity, or rather enmities, found?

1. Who is the Serpent?

There is diversity of opinion among interpreters. Some assert it was merely the serpent, with Satan’s involvement understood only mystically. Others argue it was Satan alone, described as the serpent, just as he is elsewhere called the great dragon: *“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world”* (Revelation 12:9). Still others maintain it was both Satan and the serpent, with the devil possessing the serpent as he might possess a person. Since Satan could not tempt Adam and Eve inwardly, as he now does through human corruption, nor could he enter their bodies or minds due to their

holiness and glory, he instead employed a beast. Controlling the serpent's tongue, he spoke through it.

Why, then, was the serpent punished when it was merely a tool of Satan? Because of God's love for humanity, He condemned both the author and the instrument of evil. Just as a father, in anger, might break the sword that wounded his son or friend, so God broke Satan's instrument. The serpent was punished according to the literal meaning of the text, and Satan was punished in the spiritual sense.

2. Who is the Woman?

Some favour allegories and claim that the serpent and the woman represent the superior and inferior faculties of the soul, with a perpetual war existing between them since the Fall. However, I regard this interpretation as vain and trifling, even though it has been attributed to some ancient scholars of no small reputation. Others assert that the woman is the Blessed Virgin Mary, interpreting the text to read: "*She shall bruise your head.*" This reading is not only endorsed but also confirmed by the Council of Trent, and in some prayer books, she is called "*The Mother of the Lord, the Tree of Life, the breaker of the serpent's head, and the Gate of Heaven.*" Yet, I find this interpretation ignorant, idolatrous, and wholly derogatory to the kingdom of Christ.

Others, more discerning, conclude that the woman mentioned in this text is Eve and no one else. She was the one whom the tempter seduced, and in righteous judgment for her engagement with him, God declared: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman.*"

3. What is the Seed of the Serpent?

In Scripture, the term *seed* can refer either collectively to a multitude or singularly to one individual. For example, God said to Abraham: “*I will be your God and the God of your seed,*” and, “*To you and your seed, I will give this land.*” Similarly, “*I will multiply your seed as the sand of the sea*” uses *seed* collectively. On the other hand, when Eve named her son Seth, she said, “*God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel,*” clearly referring to one person. Likewise, the promise concerning Christ declares, “*In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*”

In this passage, the seed of the serpent is understood collectively, representing all the families of devils—Satan and his angels (as Christ calls them)—and all the reprobate, whose father and prince is the devil. As Jesus said to the Jews: “*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires*” (John 8:44). Similarly, John wrote: “*Whoever commits sin is of the devil. By this, the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil*” (1 John 3:8,10). Thus, both devils and the ungodly are considered the seed of the serpent.

4. What is the Seed of the Woman?

The seed of the woman is her posterity that does not degenerate into the seed of the serpent. This is the meaning of the phrase, “*I will put enmity.*” It continues: “*between your seed and her seed.*” Several arguments support this interpretation:

1. **The opposition of the seeds:** Just as the seed of the serpent is understood collectively, so too must the seed of the woman be

taken collectively to maintain the parallel.

- 2. The enmity described:** This enmity pertains not only to Eve but to all her godly descendants until the end of the world. As the Apostle Paul states: *“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Timothy 3:12). God declares: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman”—but not just between them; it extends to “between your seed and her seed.”* Who can deny that this enmity has persisted between Satan’s offspring and the saints throughout history? We wrestle against *“principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12).

5. What is the “It” in “It shall bruise your head”?

Some note that the Hebrew word *hu*, translated as “it,” is masculine in gender, as are the words *zera* (seed) and *jeshuphka* (shall bruise). This contradicts the translation that renders it as *“she shall bruise your head”* and confirms the more accurate rendering: *“he,” “it,” or “that same seed” shall bruise your head.* This “he” is clearly a singular person of that seed—Jesus, the Son of the living God.

Here is the first mention of Jesus ever recorded or heard in the world. This is the Proto-Evangel, the first Gospel proclamation following creation. O blessed news, fit for God’s mouth to speak and the world to hear! Dear parents, how would you have despaired if, before receiving your sentence, you had not heard these blessed tidings? O Adam and Eve, where would you and all of us have been if not for this text? Let us mark it with a star, inscribe it in letters of gold, or better still, write it on the very tables of our hearts. This is the most blessed news ever proclaimed; without it, we would all be

firebrands of hell. Without it, Adam, Eve, and all their descendants would be eternally damned.

Away with gross errors and mistaken notions. As you love your souls, embrace this truth! The “*it*” or “*he*” is one of that same seed, and this one is Jesus—Jesus alone, none other but Jesus. Supporting this sense, we offer the following arguments:

1. The Singular Seed

Some observe that this sentence is marked off from the former by a full stop or significant pause. Although God continues to speak of the seed of the woman, He does not say, “*And that seed shall bruise your head.*” If He had, we might think the term *seed* was used collectively, as before. Instead, He stops and rephrases it: “*It (or he) shall bruise your head,*” meaning a specific individual from the collective seed of the woman. This suggests that one singular person, distinct from the rest of the woman’s offspring, would bruise the serpent’s head. Just as David alone, of all the host of Israel, went forth to fight Goliath and overcame him, so Christ alone, from among the seed of the woman, would fight the serpent in His own strength, overcome him, and bruise his head.

2. The Translation of "He"

The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures), supported by the Chaldee Paraphrase, renders the pronoun *he* instead of *it*. This translation clearly points to a singular person, a son of the woman. Furthermore, the grammatical gender of the Hebrew words supports this interpretation. The word *seed* (*zera*) is masculine, as is the verb *shall bruise* (*jeshuphka*), confirming that the pronoun should be *he*, not *she*. This translation distinguishes a singular, personal antagonist in the conflict. The battle described is a

duel—a hand-to-hand combat between Christ and the serpent: *“He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

3. The Bruising of the Head

The act of bruising the serpent’s head clearly identifies *he* as Jesus Christ. No one but God can bruise the serpent’s head. As the Apostle says, *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet”* (Romans 16:20). Among the seed of the woman, only Christ—God and man united—is capable of this feat. To bruise the serpent’s head with His heel is an act of divine power. Consider the manner of this duel: Christ treads on the serpent, but in doing so, His heel is bruised. It is extraordinary that Christ should strike at the serpent’s head with no other weapon than His heel. For a man to strike even a common serpent with a bare foot would be daring; how much more remarkable is Christ’s act, bruising the head of Satan—the fierce, monstrous serpent—with His heel! This act could only be accomplished by someone of divine strength, and who among the seed of the woman could do this but Jesus Christ?

4. Scriptural Testimony to the Seed as Christ

Elsewhere in Scripture, God explicitly identifies the promised seed as Christ. Consider how the promise is repeated to the patriarchs:

- To Abraham: *“In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”* (Genesis 22:18).
- To David: *“I will raise up your seed after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom”* (2 Samuel 7:12).

The Apostle Paul interprets the promise to Abraham, saying: *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘and to seeds,’ as if referring to many, but as of one: ‘and to your*

seed, who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Similarly, the prophet interprets the promise to David, declaring: *“He shall sit upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it”* (Isaiah 9:7). The one described here is *“Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace”* (Isaiah 9:6)—none other than Jesus Christ.

5. The Fulfilment in Christ

The New Testament clearly demonstrates that this promise was fulfilled in Christ:

- Was Jesus Christ not of the seed of the woman, born of a virgin?
- Was His heel not bruised—He Himself crucified?
- Did He not bruise the serpent’s head, breaking Satan’s power and dominion?

The Gospel declares: *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). When the seventy disciples returned, they said: *“Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!”* Jesus replied, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”* (Luke 10:17–18). And again: *“Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out”* (John 12:31). The author of Hebrews states: *“Through death, He destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil”* (Hebrews 2:14).

These and many other passages confirm that this promise was fulfilled in Christ, and only in Christ. He is *the seed of the woman* who bruises the serpent’s head.

Participation of the Faithful

While this promise is primarily and properly fulfilled in Christ, it may also extend, by way of participation, to His whole body—the Church:

1. **Union with Christ:** The head and members form one body, as the writer of Hebrews affirms: *“Both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all of one”* (Hebrews 2:11).
2. **The seed of Christ:** The faithful are called the seed of Christ: *“When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed”* (Isaiah 53:10).
3. **Shared suffering:** Satan bruises not only Christ’s heel but also that of all the faithful. *“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Timothy 3:12).
4. **Victory through Christ:** The victory won by Christ our Head extends to His members: *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet”* (Romans 16:20).

In this sense, many ancient and modern theologians extend the application of this promise to the entire body of Christ. However, the promise is primarily, originally, and especially fulfilled in Christ alone. He alone is the seed by whom the promise was accomplished, though the faithful share in its benefits as the seed for whom the promise was made.

6. What is the Serpent’s Head, and the Bruising of it?

1. The Serpent’s Head

The serpent’s head symbolises the power, rage, reign, and kingdom of Satan. It is observed that the strength, power, and life of a serpent reside in its head. Thus, using a metaphor suited to the serpent, which was Satan’s instrument, God warns the devil of the danger to his head—that is, to his power and kingdom. The power and kingdom of Satan especially consist of

sin and death, for *“the sting of death is sin,”* and the power of death belongs to Satan. Sin and death are often called the works and wages of Satan; they are his possessions, carried metaphorically at his side.

2. The Bruising of the Head

To bruise the serpent’s head is to overthrow Satan’s power. *“He shall bruise your head,”* meaning Christ shall break Satan’s power, destroy sin and death, and defeat the devil, who holds the power of death. Although the faithful also partake in this victory, Christ achieves it by His own power, while the faithful conquer through Christ’s power. The victory is shared by all the seed, but its author is Christ alone, the head and chief among them. *“You have overcome the evil one,”* says the Apostle, but this victory is not their own doing: *“It is the God of peace who will crush Satan under your feet”* (Romans 16:20).

Thus, the serpent’s head represents the devil, sin, death, and hell, all of which are overthrown. Not only is the devil defeated, but so are the sinful works he implanted in human nature, such as pride, vanity, ignorance, and lust. Moreover, the consequences of these works—death and hell—are also destroyed. In light of this, all the faithful can join Paul in saying: *“O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (1 Corinthians 15:55–57).

7. What is the Heel of the Seed of the Woman, and the Bruising of it?

1. The Heel

The heel represents the humanity of Christ, which made Him subject to suffering. Alternatively, it may symbolise Christ’s

works and ways, which Satan sought to suppress through every means possible.

2. The Bruising of the Heel

The bruising of Christ's heel refers to the miseries, mockery, wounds, crucifixion, and burial that He endured in His humanity. This also extends to the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions suffered by the faithful through the devil and his agents. Yet these are but bruises to the heel—they cannot endanger the spiritual life of their souls.

It is noted that the serpent has one head, but the seed of the woman has two heels. Thus, one heel may be injured while the other remains intact. Furthermore, an injury to the heel is far removed from the head and heart, and while painful, it is not fatal. Indeed, Christ's heel was bruised—He was delivered to death, even the death of the cross. Yet He rose again, and the devil gained no advantage from His death. As an angry bee, after stinging, becomes powerless, so too the devil: though he may hiss, he can no longer harm. By the wound Christ received in His death, He inflicted an irreversible wound on all His enemies. That very act was Christ's triumph. At the cross, the kingdom of darkness was utterly overthrown, and sin, death, and Satan were conquered and taken captive. Every accusation against God's people was nullified.

O blessed riddle! Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness (Judges 14:14). With reference to the promise, "You shall bruise his heel," Christ is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). This is good news indeed.

8. Among Whom Was the Enmity, or This Hostile War?

The text reveals three hosts engaged in three battles:

1. Between Satan and the Woman

“I will put enmity between you and the woman,” meaning between Satan, the seducer, and the woman, whom he deceived. This enmity replaces the former familiarity and amity between the woman and the serpent. While this hostility extends to man as well, the woman is singled out because she was first deceived and bore greater involvement in the transgression.

2. Between Satan’s Seed and the Woman’s Seed

“I will put enmity not only between you and the woman, but also between your seed and her seed.” This enmity did not cease with the woman’s death but extends to her seed and her descendants until the end of the world. To this day, the serpent and his seed wage war against the Church. Yet it is remarkable, given the malice of the enemy, that the Church continues to exist. This is only because of Christ’s promise: *“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18) and *“Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20).

3. Between Christ and the Serpent

This is a bloody conflict on both sides: *“He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”*

4. *“He shall bruise your head”*—Christ shall break the serpent’s power. The serpent’s power lies in sin and death, but Christ has overcome them. If Satan is defeated, his seed cannot stand.

5. *“You shall bruise His heel”*—Satan shall afflict Christ and His followers. Through persecution and opposition, Satan wages war against Christ and those who keep God’s commandments and bear the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I have kept you for some time in the explanation of this first promise, largely because of its obscurity and the abundant sweetness it contains. It is rich with Gospel truths—strike but the flint, and these glorious sparks will fly forth:

1. A Saviour Promised from the Beginning

A Saviour was promised from the very beginning of the world.

2. Deliverance from Sin, Death, and Hell

This Saviour would free all His saints from sin, death, and hell—the head and power of the devil.

3. The Necessity of a Mediator

To accomplish this, the Saviour must act as a Mediator. God would not grant an immediate pardon; the promised Seed must first intervene.

4. The Mediator as God-Man

This Mediator would be of the seed of the woman—that is, He would be a man. Yet, He would be stronger than the devil, endowed with divine power, and thus, He is also God.

5. His Priestly and Kingly Offices

This God-Man, in His Priestly office, would be a sacrifice for sin. The serpent would bruise His heel, meaning He would suffer and die for His people. Yet, in His Kingly office, He would overcome Satan, bruising his head, overthrowing his kingdom, and making us more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

6. The Free Promise of Christ and Justification

This promise of Christ and our justification is entirely free. Out of sheer mercy and grace, God brought forth this promise. After

the Fall, no merit could be found in man; yet even then, God promised forgiveness of sins and eternal life in, for, and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that through faith in this promise, the patriarchs and fathers of old obtained life, glory, and immortality. *“By faith, the elders obtained a good report”* (Hebrews 11:2). By faith, Abel obtained the witness that he was righteous; by faith, Enoch was translated so that he would not see death; by faith, Noah became the heir of the righteousness of Christ.

How, then, can it fail to revive our hearts in these last days to hear that the very first thing God did after the Fall of the world was an act of mercy: making a promise of Christ and reconciling lost humanity to Himself through the same Jesus Christ? Surely, He began then to do what He intended always to do, even to the end of the world.

Thus far, we have considered the promise as it was revealed from Adam to Abraham.

SECTION III: The Covenant of Promise as Manifested to Abraham

The second revelation of this gracious covenant was made to Abraham, and now it shines in a clearer and more glorious light than before. At first, it was presented in dark and veiled terms, difficult to understand, with much left unstated. But in this second unfolding, it is expressed in plain and direct words:

“I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your seed after you, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you”
(Genesis 17:7).

To fully grasp this, we must consider several points:

1. What is a covenant?
2. What does it mean to establish this covenant?
3. Between whom is the covenant established?
4. For how long is the covenant to endure?
5. What are the privileges of the covenant?
6. What are the conditions of the covenant?
7. Who is the head, as both undertaker, purchaser, and treasurer, upon whom the covenant rests?

1. What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a contract of mutual peace and goodwill, binding both parties to the performance of mutual benefits and obligations. The covenant between God and Abraham involved mutual stipulations: on God’s part, to fulfil His promises of temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings; and on Abraham’s part, to receive this grace by faith and to render obedience and thankfulness to God.

In simpler terms, a covenant is an agreement between God and man, whereby God promises all good things—especially eternal happiness—and man promises to walk before God in willing and faithful obedience, expecting all good from Him, and finding happiness in Him, to the praise of His grace.

When we speak of the Covenant of Grace (as distinct from the Covenant of Works, which we will not discuss here), it can be defined as a free and gracious compact. This covenant is established by God out of His sheer mercy in Jesus Christ with sinful man, promising pardon of sins and eternal happiness to those who repent of their sin, embrace His mercy through true faith, and walk before Him in faithful and sincere obedience.

From this definition, several points are worth noting:

1. **The Author:** God is the author of this covenant, not as our Creator alone but as our merciful Father in Christ Jesus.
2. **The Cause:** The cause of this covenant is not human worth, dignity, or merit, but God's mercy, love, and favour.
3. **The Foundation:** Jesus Christ is the foundation of this covenant. Through Him, we are reconciled to God. Since sin has separated God and man, no covenant could exist, no reconciliation could occur, and no pardon could be granted except through a Mediator.
4. **The Party Addressed:** This covenant is made with sinful man. The fall of our first parents necessitated this covenant, and God permitted the Fall so that He might display the riches of His mercy in mankind's recovery.
5. **The Form:** On God's side, the covenant involves gracious and free promises of forgiveness, holiness, and happiness. On man's side, it requires a pledge of duties consistent with God's grace and mercy in Christ.
6. **The Stipulations:** Man's part in the covenant includes repentance for sin, belief in God's promises, and a life of reverence, worship, and obedience according to His word.

Though much more could be said, brevity prevents further elaboration.

2. What Does It Mean to Establish This Covenant?

To establish the covenant refers not only to its duration but also to its confirmation. Previously, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:4–5). Here, He does not abolish the earlier covenant or replace it but renews, confirms, and establishes it.

Perhaps Abraham experienced some hesitation or doubt, as suggested in Genesis 15:1–2. To assure Abraham of His unchanging purpose, God confirms His covenant. When a man hears that God is willing to enter into a covenant with him, he might exclaim, as Gideon did: *“My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house”* (Judges 6:15). Who am I, he might wonder, that God should make such promises to me? To address such doubts, God often confirms His covenant by promises, oaths, the blood of Christ, or seals.

In this case, God added the seal of circumcision: *“You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you”* (Genesis 17:11). This is similar to His words about the rainbow: *“I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth, that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh”* (Genesis 9:13–15).

In the same way, circumcision served as a sign and seal of the covenant. God declared: *“Circumcise yourselves,”* and added, *“When*

I see the circumcision, I will remember my covenant and fulfil all its promises to you.”

The Significance of Circumcision in the Covenant

What is the connection between circumcision and the covenant? It is significant in many ways. Circumcision involved the shedding of blood, symbolising that the covenant was not yet established in the blood of the Messiah. While the rite itself held no inherent power, it pointed the faithful patriarchs to the blood of Christ, assured them of the cleansing of sin through Christ, and symbolised the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit of Christ.

Thus, when God looked upon the sign of circumcision, He remembered His covenant and confirmed its promises to Abraham and his descendants.

Though the outward act of circumcision is no longer required under the New Covenant, its deeper significance remains: the covenant, sealed in the blood of Christ, assures us of God’s faithfulness and the purging of sin for all who trust in Him.

3. Between Whom Is the Covenant Established?

“Between me and you,” says God, *“and your seed after you.”* The two primary parties in this covenant are God and Abraham. On God’s side are the whole Trinity of persons, the blessed angels, and all the host of heaven. On Abraham’s side are his seed and his posterity—but with this distinction: *“Not all are Israel who are of Israel;*

neither are they all children of Abraham because they are his descendants. In Isaac shall your seed be called” (Romans 9:6–7). That is, those who are children of the flesh are not the children of God; rather, the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

This covenant did not extend to the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, or the Keturahites—Abraham’s carnal seed. These groups quickly departed from both Abraham’s family and faith. “No,” says God, “*I will establish my covenant with Isaac for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him*” (Genesis 17:19). The seed refers to Abraham’s spiritual descendants.

1. **Believing Jews:** All Jews who shared in the faith of Abraham are included.
2. **Believing Gentiles:** All Gentiles who walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith are also counted as his spiritual seed.

Thus, the promise declares: “*In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 12:3), and “*In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 22:18). These promises include the Gentiles, as the Apostle explains: “*As it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations,’ that he might be the father of all who believe, though they are not circumcised*” (Romans 4:17).

Through Jesus Christ, the blessing of Abraham extends to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14). This is our joy: the covenant was not made for Abraham’s sake alone but also for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

You may think this covenant concerns only Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Jews. But blessed be God, heaven is no more accessible to the Jew than to the Gentile. “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is*

neither slave nor free, male nor female. For if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28–29).

4. For What Time Is the Covenant Established?

This covenant is not for a few days, months, or years; it is everlasting. The very word “*establish*” implies permanence. “*I will establish my covenant,*” says God, meaning: “*It shall stand and continue forever.*”

The covenant with David exemplifies this: “*I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to my servant David: ‘I will establish your offspring forever’*” (Psalm 89:3–4). Similarly, God declares: “*My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant shall stand firm for him*” (Psalm 89:28).

This covenant is everlasting in two senses:

1. From Eternity Past

The covenant was made from everlasting, as God's promise to Christ for us predates the foundation of the world. It is no recent arrangement but as eternal as God Himself. “*As the mercy of God is from everlasting, so too is the covenant of grace.*” The divine decrees concerning our salvation were established, signed, and sealed by the Trinity in eternity past. The gospel and this covenant are not new but are the eternal counsel of God's infinite wisdom.

2. To Eternity Future

The covenant also endures from everlasting to everlasting. It is

called a “*covenant of salt*” because it does not decay or fail (Numbers 18:19). Every blessing of the covenant is eternal.

- **Forgiveness:** Once forgiven, sins are remembered no more.
- **Joy and peace:** These are everlasting: “*Your heart shall rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you*” (John 16:22).
- **Salvation:** “*Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation*” (Isaiah 45:17).

This covenant is not a lease but a permanent title—a “*fee-simple*” of grace and glory to the saints forever. Death may dissolve covenants between men, such as between spouses or business partners, but this covenant between God and His people stands firm forever. Though Abraham has long passed, God remains “*the God of Abraham,*” and by virtue of this covenant, Abraham will rise again at the last day.

5. What Are the Privileges of the Covenant?

The privileges of this covenant are many and profound. God promises not only great blessings but also innumerable blessings. This covenant is a rich storehouse, overflowing with all manner of goodness. It is neither dry nor barren but like a flourishing olive tree or a fruitful vine. It is a “*well of salvation*” (Isaiah 12:3), a treasure of “*unsearchable riches*” (Ephesians 3:8) that cannot be exhausted.

Though our finite minds cannot fully comprehend the infinite grace contained in this covenant, we may still glimpse its treasures as one might view a map. Let us endeavour to examine these blessings as far as our capacities allow, trusting that what is now seen dimly will one day be revealed in full.

The Privileges of the Covenant

The privileges of the covenant are folded into its promises; every promise contains a privilege, though the time for fully unveiling all these promises has not yet come. Only when *“the heavens are folded up like a garment”* will all the promises be fully revealed. In the meantime, we have a right and interest in these eternal privileges by virtue of the promises. Indeed, the terms *covenant* and *promise* are often used interchangeably, as seen in Ephesians 2:12 and Romans 9:4.

For now, let us focus on the promises and privileges of the covenant as they were manifested to Abraham. These can be divided into two categories:

1. **Temporal Blessings**
2. **Spiritual Blessings**

1. Temporal Blessings

God made several temporal promises to Abraham, as recorded in Scripture:

- *“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Genesis 12:2–3).
- *“Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all*

the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever” (Genesis 13:14–15).

- *“I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted” (Genesis 13:16).*
- *“Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you are able to number them. So shall your offspring be” (Genesis 15:5).*
- *“I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will give to you and your offspring after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:6–8).*
- *“By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Genesis 22:16–17).*

Specific Promises Explained

1. “I will make of you a great nation”

God repeatedly promised to make Abraham the father of a great nation. This seemed incredible, as Abraham was old, and Sarah was barren and past childbearing. Yet God, who is all-sufficient, fulfilled this promise. Abraham became the father not only of one nation but of many—such as the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and the Jews, of whom it is said: *“What great nation is there*

that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law?”
(Deuteronomy 4:8).

Scripture and other sources often use three metaphors to describe an innumerable multitude: the dust of the earth, the sand of the sea, and the stars of the heavens. All these are applied to the descendants of Abraham to signify their great number.

2. **“I will bless you”**

God’s blessing included wealth and prosperity. Abraham was *“very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold”* (Genesis 13:2). These riches came directly from God’s blessing: *“The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it”* (Proverbs 10:22).

Yet, God warned Abraham’s descendants against pride: *“Do not say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers”* (Deuteronomy 8:17–18). True riches come only from God, and only through the covenant of grace. How blessed we would be if all our wealth came from God’s promises and not by any other means!

3. **“I will make your name great”**

No monarch, no conqueror, has been as renowned for faith and obedience as Abraham. Among the Hebrews, for over three thousand years, none has been held in higher esteem than Abraham—except perhaps Moses. Even the Jews challenged Christ by saying: *“Are you greater than our father Abraham?”* (John 8:53).

Among Christians, Abraham's name remains magnified, as believers take pride in being called his children. Indeed, one cannot belong to Christ without being Abraham's seed and an heir according to the promise (Galatians 3:29).

4. **“To your seed I will give this land as an everlasting possession”**

Though the Israelites possessed the land of Canaan only for a time, it was called an *“everlasting possession.”* The Hebrew word translated *“everlasting”* does not always mean without end but often refers to an age, term, or long duration. For example, Samuel was to serve the Lord *“forever,”* meaning for his lifetime (1 Samuel 1:22). Similarly, David declared: *“I will praise the Lord forever and ever,”* signifying as long as he lived (Psalm 145:1–2). The desolations of captivity were called *“perpetual desolations,”* which lasted seventy years (Psalm 74:3; Jeremiah 25:11).

Temporal and Spiritual Privileges of the Covenant

Regarding these blessings or privileges, I have only this to add: in the earlier ages, God granted more temporal blessings and fewer spiritual ones to the natural seed. In later ages, He has provided more spiritual privileges and fewer temporal ones. This is true even today among the Christian seed of the Gentiles, as the Apostle observes: *“Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth”* (1 Corinthians 1:26).

1. Spiritual Blessings

We read: *“Fear not, Abraham, I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward”* (Genesis 15:1); *“I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. I will be your God and the God of your offspring after you”* (Genesis 17:1, 7).

What precious promises these are!

1. **“I am your shield”**

God promises to protect Abraham from all harm. This shield is impenetrable, covering him completely and surrounding him on all sides. As God said of Jerusalem: *“I will be to her a wall of fire all around”* (Zechariah 2:5). Likewise, God says to Abraham: *“I will be your shield and a wall of fire around you”*—a shield that not only protects but also consumes Abraham’s enemies. Just as fire defends those within and burns those outside who approach it, so is God to His people.

2. **“I am your exceedingly great reward”**

God declares that He Himself is the ultimate reward of the covenant. He is saying, *“All that I am is yours—my attributes, my power, wisdom, counsel, goodness, and riches. Whatever I have, I give to you as your portion. I, and all that I am, are yours for your use and joy.”*

Christians, is this not an exceedingly great reward? Who can comprehend its height, depth, length, and breadth? Truly, *“Happy are the people whose God is the Lord”* (Psalm 144:15).

2. The Condition of the Covenant

The condition of the covenant of grace is **faith**, and faith alone. Scripture says of Abraham: *“He believed the Lord, and He counted it*

to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). This text is often cited by the apostles. Abraham’s belief means that he regarded God’s word as certain, stable, and reliable.

Faith is opposed to fainting, as illustrated by Jacob. When his sons told him that Joseph was alive, his heart fainted because he did not believe. But when he believed, his heart revived (Genesis 45:26–27). Similarly, David said: *“I would have fainted unless I had believed”* (Psalm 27:13). Faith is a lively movement of the heart, assenting to and trusting in God and His word as firm and constant.

Abraham’s Trial of Faith

The condition required of Abraham was faith. God essentially asked him:

- *“Abraham, do you believe that the Messiah will come into the world?”*
- Abraham replied: *“Yes, Lord, I believe.”*
- God then tested him further: *“I will give you a son, even though you and Sarah are as good as dead in terms of bearing children. Do you believe?”*
- Again, Abraham responded: *“I believe, Lord.”*

God continued: *“You see the land of Canaan. You do not yet possess even a foot of it, but I promise to give it to you and your descendants. Do you believe?”*

These trials of faith may seem unrelated to the condition of the covenant—faith in God and in Jesus Christ. But they were shadows of the great promise of Christ.

Abraham's Faith in Christ

1. Shadows of Christ

The faith Abraham exercised in God's temporal promises—believing he would have a son and that his descendants would inherit Canaan—was a shadow and pledge of his faith in the ultimate promise: the Messiah. The promise of a seed pointed forward to Christ, in whom all nations would be blessed.

2. Faith in the Promised Seed

Abraham's faith was not limited to temporal blessings. He believed every promise, including: *"I will be your shield and your exceedingly great reward."* Who is our shield but Christ? Who is our reward but Christ? Especially, Abraham believed the promise of the seed, the one in whom all nations would be blessed. Christ affirmed this when He said: *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad"* (John 8:56).

The Jews objected: *"You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"* But Abraham saw Christ's day by the eye of faith. No doubt, his belief in Christ was credited to him as righteousness.

Faith and Works

Some may ask: *"If faith alone is the condition of the covenant, what need is there for obedience or works of holiness?"*

This objection was raised by libertines in the apostles' time, to which James replied: *"Faith without works is dead"* (James 2:20). Christ Himself said: *"A tree is known by its fruit"* (Matthew 12:33). True

faith produces love, and love cannot help but manifest in good works.

Abraham was justified by faith, as the Apostle Paul says: *“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”* (Romans 4:3). But was this faith without works? Consider: when God commanded him to offer Isaac, did he not obey? Surely, this was a great work of faith. As James explains: *“His faith was active along with his works, and by works, faith was made perfect”* (James 2:22).

7. Who Is the Head Upon Whom This Covenant Is Established?

Who is the head, both as undertaker, purchaser, and treasurer, upon whom this covenant is established? I answer: Christ, and none but Christ. *“All the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory”* (2 Corinthians 1:20).

In the first manifestation of the covenant to Adam, this was presented in a veiled manner. But in this second revelation to Abraham, it is clearly expressed and frequently repeated. For instance:

- *“In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3).
- *“All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham”* (Genesis 18:18).
- *“In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 22:18).

By comparing these passages, the meaning becomes clear. “*In you,*” that is, in Abraham, all the families and nations of the earth shall be blessed. However, lest anyone think that Abraham himself was the source of this universal blessing, the explanation is given: “*In you,*” that is, “*in your seed.*” The Apostle Paul confirms this, saying: “*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ referring to many, but to one, ‘And to your seed,’ who is Christ*” (Galatians 3:16).

Thus, the sense is this: from Abraham’s posterity would come the Messiah, through whom not only Abraham’s descendants but all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

In the first promise, Christ was called the seed of the woman. Here, He is called the seed of Abraham. Christ, as the Son of Eve—or the Son of Mary—was the seed of the woman, and Mary, being a daughter of Abraham, made Christ also the seed of Abraham.

The Passion of Christ in the Covenant with Abraham

Where in this covenant with Abraham do we find mention of Christ’s passion? In the first revelation to Adam, it was implied in the phrase “*bruising His heel*” (Genesis 3:15). In this second manifestation, it is signified in three ways:

1. The Divided Sacrifice

In Genesis 15:17, the “*smoking furnace*” and “*burning lamp*” passed between the divided pieces of Abraham’s sacrifice. Just as the sacrifice was divided, so Christ’s body would be torn. The smoking furnace and burning lamp symbolise God’s wrath

passing between the broken nature of Christ, who bore the judgment on behalf of sinners.

2. **The Sign of Circumcision**

Circumcision, which required the shedding of blood, prefigured the blood of Christ. Wherever God commanded the shedding of blood in the Old Testament, it pointed to Christ's sacrifice and His eternal covenant.

3. **The Sacrifice of Isaac**

The binding and near-sacrifice of Isaac was a plain type of Christ's death. Consider these parallels:

- **Isaac, the Beloved Son:** Isaac was Abraham's son, his only son, whom he loved. Similarly, Christ is God's only Son, beloved and innocent, "*in whom God is well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). Abraham freely offered Isaac, and God freely gave His Son for the salvation of the world.
- **The Early Morning Offering:** Abraham rose early in the morning to sacrifice Isaac. Likewise, the Jews rose early in the morning to condemn Christ, who is called "*the hind of the morning*" (Psalm 22:1).
- **The Mount of Sacrifice:** Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Moriah, where Solomon's temple was later built—a type of Christ's body (*John 2:19*). God offered His Son on a nearby mount, Golgotha, which was on the outskirts of Moriah.
- **Isaac and the Wood:** Abraham laid the wood on Isaac, and then Isaac on the wood. Similarly, Christ bore His cross

and was laid upon it: *“There they crucified Him”* (John 19:18).

- **Isaac Alone:** Abraham’s servants were left at the foot of the hill, unaware of the sorrow and trial above. Likewise, Christ trod the winepress alone, abandoned by His disciples in His hour of agony.
- **The Sword and Fire:** Abraham carried the sword and fire, representing God’s justice and wrath. Both were directed at Christ, who bore the full weight of God’s justice and extinguished the flame of His wrath.

This typology is confirmed in God’s words to Abraham after the trial: *“By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 22:16–18).

All believers are blessed through the death of Christ, the true seed of Abraham, who was typified by Isaac. While Abraham only intended to sacrifice Isaac, God actually sacrificed His Son to take away sin.

SECTION IV: The Covenant of Promise as Manifested to Moses

The next unfolding of this gracious covenant was revealed to Moses. By this time, the revenging justice of God had borne down upon

humanity for many generations—indeed, for thousands of years. It was now high time for God, in the midst of His wrath, to remember mercy and reveal a clearer expression of the promise, or covenant of grace.

To this end, the Lord called Moses up to Mount Sinai. There, out of His infinite love and undeserved mercy, God made—or renewed—His covenant with Moses and the children of Israel, declaring:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2–3).

For a proper understanding of this covenant, we will consider the following points:

1. Whether the Law was delivered in a covenantal form.
2. In what sense the Law is a covenant of grace.
3. How it can be shown that the Law, in any sense, is a covenant of grace.
4. Why God chose to deal with humanity in a covenantal rather than an absolute, supreme manner.
5. What good things are promised in this manifestation of the covenant.
6. What condition is required of us in this covenant.
7. Who is the mediator of this covenant.
8. What of Christ and His death is revealed in this manifestation of the covenant.

1. Was the Law Delivered in a Covenantal Form?

The Law was indeed delivered as a covenant, as evidenced by two key points:

(a) It Is Explicitly Called a Covenant

This is clear from several passages:

- *“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.’ So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments”* (Exodus 34:27–28).
- *“He declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and He wrote them on two tablets of stone”* (Deuteronomy 4:13).
- *“When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water”* (Deuteronomy 9:9).

These texts plainly describe the Law as a covenant.

(b) It Exhibits the Characteristics of a Covenant

A covenant involves mutual consent and stipulations on both sides, and these are clearly seen in the giving of the Law. Consider the account in Exodus 24:3–8:

- Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and His judgments.

- The people answered with one voice: *“All the words that the Lord has spoken, we will do.”*
- Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord, built an altar, and set up twelve pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Young men offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
- Moses took half of the blood from the offerings and sprinkled it on the altar.
- He read the book of the covenant to the people, and they again said: *“All that the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient.”*
- Moses then took the remaining blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said: *“Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”*

This same account is cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

“When Moses had declared every command of the Law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you’” (Hebrews 9:19–20).

Characteristics of This Covenant

From the details above, we can observe these covenantal features:

1. God’s Consent

God willingly expresses His desire to be their God, as seen in the preface to the Ten Commandments: *“I am the Lord your God.”*

2. The People’s Consent

The people, in turn, agree to be His servants, declaring: *“All that*

the Lord has spoken, we will do.”

3. The Writing of the Covenant

Moses formalises the covenant by writing it down, affirming its binding nature.

4. The Confirmation by Blood

The covenant is sealed with blood, symbolising its solemnity and God’s commitment.

- **The Blood on the Altar:** This represents God’s entry into the covenant.
- **The Blood on the People:** This signifies their voluntary agreement to the covenant.

These acts underscore the reality of the covenant when the Law was given at Sinai.

2. In What Sense Is the Law a Covenant of Grace?

The Law can be understood in various senses:

1. As Heavenly Doctrine

Sometimes the term *Law* is broadly applied to refer to any heavenly doctrine, whether promise or precept. For instance, the Apostle speaks of “*the law of works*” and “*the law of faith*” (Romans 3:27).

2. As Any Part of the Old Testament

At times, *Law* refers to any part of the Old Testament. For example, when Jesus said to the Jews, “*Is it not written in your*

Law, 'I said, you are gods?'" (John 10:34), He was quoting from the Psalms (Psalm 82:6).

3. As the Economy of Worship

The Law can refer to the entire system of worship given to the Jews, including the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws. In this sense, it is said: *"The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God is preached"* (Luke 16:16).

4. As Specific Acts of the Law

Occasionally, *Law* is used synecdochically, referring to certain acts of the Law: *"Against such things there is no law"* (Galatians 5:23).

5. As the Ceremonial Law

The Law sometimes specifically refers to the ceremonial laws, which are described as *"a shadow of the good things to come"* (Hebrews 10:1).

6. As the Jews Misunderstood It

The Law is also used to denote how some Jews understood it—as a system sufficient for salvation without Christ. This is a frequent theme in Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians.

7. As a Mandative Moral Law

The Law can refer to the moral commandments as purely preceptive, without any promise attached.

8. As the Moral Law with Preface and Promises

Finally, the Law can signify the moral law, including the preface and the promises that accompany it. It is in this last sense that we consider the Law to be a covenant of grace.

3. How Is the Law a Covenant of Grace?

The Law, in the sense outlined above, is shown to be a covenant of grace in several ways:

(a) The Contract Before the Promulgation of the Law

Before the Law was formally given, God made a covenant with Israel:

“If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5–6).

The prophet Jeremiah echoes this, saying: *“Obey my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God”* (Jeremiah 7:23).

These passages refer to the moral law, including its preface and promises. How could such a covenant be anything other than one of grace? Consider the privileges it offers:

- To be God’s peculiar treasure.
- To be a kingdom of priests.
- To be a holy nation.

These blessings could never be attained through a covenant of works. To be cherished by God as His own *“treasured possession”* is a privilege granted solely by grace. The Apostle Peter applies this very promise to believers under the Gospel: *“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession”* (1 Peter 2:9).

(b) The Contract at the Promulgation of the Law

When the Law was given, God proclaimed:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exodus 20:2).

Some interpret this as the affirmative part of the first commandment, where the Gospel is preached and promises are offered. Others see it as a preface to the entire Law, urging obedience to every commandment. All agree, however, that it is a free covenant, offering the forgiveness of sin and requiring faith in the Messiah.

By declaring Himself the God of Israel, God presented Himself as their King, Judge, Saviour, and Redeemer—not only from Egyptian bondage but also, typologically, from the bondage of sin and Satan. The commandments begin with an evangelical promise, *“I am the Lord your God,”* and similar affirmations are attached to various commandments throughout Scripture (e.g., Leviticus 19). These declarations underscore the Law’s character as a covenant of grace.

(c) The Contract After the Promulgation of the Law

Moses later declared:

“You have declared today that the Lord is your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His rules. And the Lord has declared today that you are a people for His treasured possession, as He has promised” (Deuteronomy 26:17–18).

Further, in the land of Moab, God instructed Moses to renew this covenant:

“You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God... that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today, that He may establish you as His people, and that He may be your God, as He promised to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Deuteronomy 29:12–13).

Could such promises be anything other than gracious? These blessings were freely granted and demonstrate that the Law, in this sense, is a covenant of grace.

4. Why Did God Use a Covenant Rather Than an Absolute Command?

Why did God choose to deal with humanity in a covenantal way, rather than merely as an absolute sovereign?

1. To Reveal His Character

Through the covenant, God displayed not only His wisdom, power, and sovereignty but also His faithfulness, love, and grace. As the Apostle writes: *“He made known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory” (Romans 9:23).*

2. To Showcase His Love and Faithfulness

God’s love and faithfulness are part of His very nature. John saw in a vision *“He who is called Faithful and True” (Revelation 19:11)*. If God had given the Law without entering into a covenant, we would have known His power, but not the depths of His love and faithfulness.

Moses told Israel: “*Because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your fathers, He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you*” (Deuteronomy 7:8–9). This demonstrates that the covenant reveals God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, which are the bedrock of His dealings with humanity.

2. Why God Deals with Us in a Covenant-Way

God prefers to deal with us in a covenantal manner, rather than solely as an absolute sovereign, for these reasons:

1. To Bind Us More Closely to Himself

A covenant binds both parties. The Lord does not bind Himself to us while leaving us free from obligation. “*I will bring you into the bond of the covenant,*” says the Lord (Ezekiel 20:37).

God knows how fickle and unstable our hearts are, how prone we are to stray from our duty to Him. “*We love to wander*” (Jeremiah 14:10). To address this inconstancy and keep our hearts steadfast in obedience, God binds us with the covenant. Just as we look to God for His blessings, so we are bound to keep our covenant with Him.

While a command alone may bind us, a covenant strengthens the bond. A covenant “*twists the cords of the law,*” as it were, doubling the precept upon the soul. A command alone expresses God’s will, but a covenant includes our voluntary promise, binding us to God even more securely.

2. To Make Our Obedience More Free and Willing

An absolute command might seem to demand obedience by compulsion. A covenant, however, invites a willing and joyful response. This is the nature of the covenant of grace: God first promises mercy and declares Himself our “*exceedingly great reward*” (Genesis 15:1). In response, we promise obedience, becoming His people not only by His sovereign power and love but also by our own voluntary consent.

“Your people shall be willing in the day of your power” (Psalm 110:3). When we enter into a covenant, we give God our hand, as Ezekiel describes: *“He despised the oath by breaking the covenant, even though he had given his hand”* (Ezekiel 17:18).

This covenantal relationship is likened to marriage: *“I entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine”* (Ezekiel 16:8). Just as marriage requires mutual consent, so too does this divine covenant.

3. To Strengthen Our Consolations

The covenant assures us of God’s faithfulness and love, giving us confidence in times of difficulty and distress.

1. God’s Faithfulness

David found his confidence in God’s faithfulness, and so can we. Even when friends are unfaithful or deceiving, the Lord is always faithful. *“His promises are Yes and Amen”* (2 Corinthians 1:20). We can build our lives on this firm foundation.

2. God’s Love

The covenant reveals God’s deep love for us. By dealing with us in this way, He sweetens His commands and endears Himself to

us, drawing us with “*cords of love*” (Hosea 11:4). God could have demanded obedience and, after all was done, reduced us to nothing or withheld heaven and Himself as our portion. But His love is so great that He not only commands but also covenants, showing the extent of His desire to bless and commune with us.

This should encourage us to turn to God in every distress, knowing that His faithfulness and love are pledged to us. How thankful and loving we should be toward a God who condescends to enter into covenant with us!

5. The Good Things Promised in the Covenant

Among the blessings of the covenant, the greatest is expressed in these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exodus 20:2).

This promise is as great as God Himself. Let us examine it carefully, for it is pure gold, and every detail is worth cherishing. Here God describes Himself in four ways:

1. By His Eternal and Perfect Essence

“I am the Lord.”

God identifies Himself as the self-existent and eternal being, the source of all life and existence.

2. By the Plurality of Persons in One Essence

“I am the Lord God.”

The name *Jehovah Elohim* reflects both God’s unity and the plurality of persons within the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. By the Personal Relationship with His People

“I am the Lord your God.”

God declares His covenant relationship with His people. He is not only the God of all creation but their God, personally and intimately.

4. By His Saving Acts

“Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

God reminds His people of their redemption from slavery in Egypt, which serves as a type of the greater spiritual redemption from sin and Satan.

1. I Am Jehovah

We read that God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name **God Almighty** (El Shaddai), but He revealed Himself to the Israelites by the name **Jehovah**: *“I am the Lord”* (Exodus 6:3).

Was it not by this name that He appeared to the patriarchs? God Himself says: *“By my name Jehovah, I was not known to them”* (Exodus 6:3). This raises a question: how can this be? Did God not say to Abraham, *“I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans”* (Genesis 15:7), and to Isaac and Jacob, *“I am the Lord God of Abraham your father”*?

This has perplexed many scholars. The explanation seems to be this: while the patriarchs knew the name **Jehovah** as a word or title, they did not experience its full significance. The name **Jehovah** denotes both God's self-existence and His constancy in fulfilling His promises. While the patriarchs lived by faith in God's almighty power, they did not receive the fulfilment of the promises. For example, though God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, "*He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length*" (Acts 7:5).

Now, however, as God fulfilled His promise by bringing Abraham's descendants out of Egypt, they experienced the power and faithfulness encapsulated in the name **Jehovah**. Thus, God declares, "*Then you shall know that I am the Lord*" (Ezekiel 20:42), and again: "*My people shall know my name... they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks: behold, it is I*" (Isaiah 52:6).

2. I Am Jehovah Elohim

The title **Jehovah Elohim** reveals not only God's being but also the manner of His being—the plurality of persons in the unity of His essence. In delivering the Law, God disclosed His triune nature: three persons subsisting in the one, simple, eternal being.

The word *Elohim* is plural, signifying strength, might, and omnipotence. It can be rendered "*the Almighty Ones*" or "*Almighty Powers*". Scripture applies the title **God** to each person of the Trinity:

- The Father is called God: "*God... has spoken to us by His Son*" (Hebrews 1:1–2).
- The Son is called God: "*The Church of God, which He obtained with His own blood*" (Acts 20:28).

- The Holy Spirit is called God: *“You have not lied to man but to God”* (Acts 5:4).

By emphasising His authorship of the Laws delivered through Moses, God confers supreme authority on them. This reflects the practice of human lawgivers, who often claim divine authority to strengthen their decrees. In the case of God’s Law, however, this authority is absolute and true.

3. I Am the Lord Your God

This declaration conveys both possession and mercy. God speaks to each faithful soul, saying: *“I am your God.”* Through this statement, He gives us both a right to Him and a possession of Him.

(a) A Right in God

As a wife may say of her husband, *“This man is my husband,”* so the faithful may say of the Lord, *“He is my God.”*

(b) A Possession of God

God does not merely reveal Himself to us; He also communicates Himself to us in His holiness, mercy, truth, grace, and goodness. The Apostle John writes: *“We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3). Christ promises to *“sup with us”* (Revelation 3:20) and is near to us *“in all that we call upon Him for”* (Deuteronomy 4:7).

This is the highest happiness of the saints: God is their God. When they can truly say this, they have all they need. If someone were to say, *“This house is mine, this city is mine, this kingdom is mine, this*

world is mine,” what would it amount to? Nothing in comparison to this: *“This God, who made the world, is mine.”*

Indeed, this is the greatest promise ever made or that can be made, to angels or men. In this promise, God gives Himself wholly to us. Whether considered in His essence or His persons, **Jehovah Elohim** is entirely ours. God in His attributes—His power, wisdom, mercy, and grace—is for our good. God in His persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—enters into covenant with us.

1. The Father Enters into Covenant with Us

The Father promises to be a Father to us. He declares, *“Israel is my son, my firstborn”* (Exodus 4:22), and again, *“Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child?”* (Jeremiah 31:20). The Lord speaks as if He were fond of His children, delighting in them: *“The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him”* (Psalm 147:11). He also pities them: *“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him”* (Psalm 103:13).

2. The Son is in Covenant with Us

Christ speaks to us, saying, *“You are mine.”* How does this come about? He explains: *“I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1). This is Christ’s covenant with us. He brings us back to the Father, from whom we were estranged, and places us before Him forever.

Christ undertakes to resolve any disputes that might arise between God and us. He promises to restore us to the status of adopted sons

and daughters—not just in title but also in inheritance, so that we may be where He is. *“In my Father’s house are many rooms... I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also”* (John 14:2–3).

3. The Holy Spirit Makes a Covenant with Us

The Holy Spirit applies the benefits of Christ’s work to us. *“By one offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us”* (Hebrews 10:14–15). The Spirit says: *“This is the covenant that I will make with them: I will put my laws into their hearts, and write them on their minds”* (Hebrews 10:16).

Although the Father’s work is implied in this, the Holy Spirit’s unique role is highlighted. What the Father purposed in eternity and the Son accomplished in history, the Holy Spirit applies to us personally in time.

The Spirit:

- Applies the blood of Christ for the remission of sins.
- Writes God’s law on our hearts.
- Comforts us in sorrow.
- Supports us in weakness.
- Guides us when we go astray.

By doing these things, the Holy Spirit is said to make a covenant with us. Thus, **Elohim**, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, enters into covenant with us.

4. The Great Promise: *“I Am the Lord Your God”*

What greater promise could God make? When He said to Abraham, *“I will be your God,”* what more could He give? Similarly, when He says, *“I am the Lord your God,”* what more could He say?

The Apostle writes: *“When God desired to show more convincingly... the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath”* (Hebrews 6:17). Having no greater thing to give, God gave Himself.

O, the goodness of God in Christ! *“I am the Lord your God.”*

5. The Fruit of the Covenant for Israel: Deliverance from Egypt

God reminds Israel: *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery”* (Exodus 20:2). This fulfilled His promise to Abraham:

“Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs... But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions” (Genesis 15:13–14).

Israel endured servitude in Egypt for 400 years, but God delivered them. This demonstrated that He is **Jehovah**, the covenant-keeping God. Their redemption from Egypt prefigures our redemption from sin, death, and hell.

This act of deliverance reveals the power and faithfulness of **Jehovah Elohim** as Redeemer. Whether this deliverance was meant solely as a peculiar argument for the Jews to obey the commandments, or whether it also applies to us who are grafted into the same covenant, is not disputed here. What is clear is that their bondage was a type of our spiritual bondage, and their redemption a type of our salvation in Christ.

6. The Condition of the Covenant: Faith in Jesus Christ

The condition of this covenant is faith in Jesus Christ. This is implied in the promise: *“I am the Lord your God”* (Exodus 20:2) and in the commandment: *“You shall have no other gods before me”* (Exodus 20:3).

But where is faith in Jesus Christ mentioned in this covenant? Though not explicitly stated, it is clearly implied. God is not the God of Israel except through the Mediator, nor can Israel accept God as their God without faith in the Messiah.

The prophets repeatedly exhort God’s people: *“Trust in the Lord,”* *“Commit your way to the Lord,”* and *“Cast your burden on the Lord”* (Psalm 37:5; 55:22). These exhortations align with the covenant’s command to trust in God. However, no sinner can trust in God except through a Mediator.

Israel was commanded to walk before God in all pleasing obedience, but the Apostle tells us: *“Without faith it is impossible to please God”* (Hebrews 11:6). Faith in Christ is thus the foundation of obedience.

The First Commandment Implies Faith in Christ

The affirmative aspect of the first commandment calls us to acknowledge one God in Christ and to embrace Him by faith. Though Christ and faith are not explicitly mentioned, they are certainly implied. Just as love is not explicitly stated in the commandment but is revealed by Christ as its essence (*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart”*—Matthew 22:37), so too is faith implied as a necessary consequence.

Some may object: if faith is the condition of the covenant, where does obedience fit? Is it not also a condition of this covenant as revealed in the Law?

The Law and Obedience: Their Place in the Covenant

Indeed, the Law and obedience are correlatives. However, in this discussion, we should not view the Law as merely mandatory. Recall that the Law can be understood as a covenant of grace when taken in its broader sense.

The Law is considered either:

1. **Strictly**, as an abstract rule of righteousness that promises life on the condition of perfect obedience. In this sense, it is a covenant of works.
2. **Largely**, as the whole doctrine delivered at Mount Sinai, including the preface and promises attached to it. In this sense, it is a covenant of grace.

Yet, even as a covenant of grace, the Law does not exclude obedience. Obedience, like faith, can be regarded as a condition of the covenant in some respects. Let me explain this distinction:

- **Obedience as the cause of life:** In this sense, it is not a condition of the covenant of grace.
- **Obedience as a qualification of the covenant's recipient:** In this sense, it may be considered a condition, provided we define "condition" as anything required on our part—whether preceding, accompanying, or following the covenant of grace. Repentance, faith, and obedience are all conditions in this broader sense.

However, if by "condition" we mean something required as the cause of the promised blessings, even in an instrumental sense, then faith alone is the condition. Faith and obedience, while inseparable in the life of a believer, are distinct in their roles. They cannot jointly contribute as causes of justification or salvation.

Thus, when we speak of the condition of the covenant of grace, we mean faith as the sole cause. In the covenant of works, obedience was required as the cause of life. In the covenant of grace, obedience must accompany faith, but faith alone is the cause of the life promised.

The Mediator of the Covenant

There are two types of mediators in the covenant:

1. **The Typical Mediator:** Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, foreshadowing Christ.
2. **The Spiritual Mediator:** Christ Himself is the mediator of the New Covenant.

Moses held a unique position, unparalleled by any before him. He was the mediator of the Old Testament, while Christ reserved for

Himself the role of Mediator of the better covenant, the New Testament.

Moses as Mediator

Moses acted as a mediator in two ways:

1. **On God's Part:** He received the Law from God and delivered it to the people.
2. **On the People's Part:** The Israelites, afraid of God's presence and the fire on Mount Sinai, requested Moses to stand as their intermediary. Moses himself said: *"At that time, I stood between the Lord and you, to declare to you the word of the Lord"* (Deuteronomy 5:5).

He acted as God's mouthpiece to the people and as the people's advocate before God. Moses prevailed with God to suspend His justice and with the people to commit themselves to the covenant and obey God's commands.

Yet Moses was not a mediator of redemption, only of relation. There is a vast difference between Moses and Christ:

1. Moses received the Law; Christ fulfilled it.
2. Moses broke the tablets of the Law to signify humanity's failure; Christ restored and fulfilled the Law perfectly.
3. Moses wrote the Law on tablets of stone; Christ writes it on the tablets of human hearts.
4. Moses was merely a man; Christ is both God and man.
5. Moses was a servant in God's house; Christ is the Son and the Lord over His own house, the Church.

Moses' mediation was limited to showing how to worship God, but he could not empower people to follow it. He could not reconcile humanity to God. This highlights the necessity of Christ, the true Reconciler.

Christ and His Death in the Covenant

1. Christ in the Giving of the Law

Did God Himself deliver the Law in His own person? Some affirm this, pointing to the preface: *“God spoke all these words”* (Exodus 20:1). Moses also said: *“These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire... and He wrote them on two tablets of stone”* (Deuteronomy 5:22).

Others, however, argue that angels delivered the Law, noting instances where the Scriptures say God spoke through intermediaries such as angels or prophets (Genesis 18:2, Exodus 3:2, Acts 7:53). Augustine asserts that God did not speak directly to Israel in the Old Testament but through Christ, angels, or prophets.

Some support this view with texts like: *“The Law... was put in place through angels by an intermediary”* (Galatians 3:19) and *“If the word spoken by angels proved steadfast...”* (Hebrews 2:2).

Others believe that Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who is called the *“Angel of the Covenant”* (Malachi 3:1) and the *“Angel of His presence”* (Isaiah 63:9), delivered the Law to Moses. This view is supported by Acts 7:38: *“This is the Moses who was in the assembly in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai.”* The Apostle Paul further clarifies: *“Let us not test Christ, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents”* (1 Corinthians 10:9).

Some even suggest that Christ delivered the Law in the form of a man. While I leave this matter for further reflection, the Scriptures undeniably testify that Christ, the eternal Word, was active in delivering God's revelation.

The Covenant of Promise as Manifested in the Law

2. In the **Law itself**, understood as a Covenant of Grace, we find much that points to Christ. In the preface, God proclaims Himself as our God. In the first commandment, we are bound to take this God to be our God. In the second commandment, He provides a double motive for obedience: *“For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”* Similarly, in the fifth commandment, He promises long life in Canaan, which may be interpreted as a type of Heaven or understood literally as a prosperous life on earth. Either way, this promise is grounded in the covenant and serves as a testimony of God's love.

All these promises are fulfilled in Christ. God is not our God except through Christ. Mercy is shown to no one—not even one among the thousands of His saints—except in Jesus Christ. Eternal life hereafter, or even a blessed life on earth, is granted only in and through Christ. Moses may not have explicitly written the name “Christ,” but his writings clearly imply Him. As Christ told the Jews: *“If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me”* (John 5:46). And as Philip said to Nathanael: *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth”* (John 1:45). Surely, if Christ was not the sole

subject of Moses' writings, He was at least their primary aim. Thus, even in the Law itself, we find clear pointers to Christ.

3. In **Moses' exposition of the Law**, Christ is also revealed. Indeed, Moses adds more clarity to the promise of Christ than was previously given. In the first promise, Christ was revealed as the seed of the woman. In the second manifestation, He was revealed as the seed of Abraham. In Moses' time and writings, it becomes clear that Christ would be incarnate and dwell among His people.

The promise declares: *"I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. They shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them"* (Exodus 29:45-46). This promise is fulfilled in the incarnation: *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14).

Furthermore, Moses foretold the coming of Christ in these words: *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear"* (Deuteronomy 18:15). Peter, preaching to the Jews, identifies this Prophet as Jesus Christ, citing Moses directly: *"For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things'"* (Acts 3:22).

4. In the **confirmation of the Law**, we see further evidence of Christ. The Law was confirmed by seals and sacrifices, each pointing to Christ. To the seal of circumcision, God added the Passover, which symbolised Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Moses also instituted the priesthood as a settled ordinance for offering sacrifices. This priesthood and the sacrifices were types of Christ, our eternal High Priest. Consider the Jewish understanding of these rites:

- They saw in their continual sacrifices a Messiah who would die to make atonement for sin.
- They understood that this Messiah would not die for His own sins but for the sins of others, as symbolised by the spotless animals offered.
- They learned to lay hold of His merits, represented by laying hands on the sacrificial animal or grasping the horns of the altar, a sanctuary from judgment.

The death and resurrection of Christ, His priesthood, and His kingship were prefigured in the sacrifices, the bronze serpent, the priesthood of Aaron, and the kingdom of Israel. Godly Jews undoubtedly understood these symbols spiritually and by faith experienced Christ through them.

5. In the **intention of God's giving the Law**, Christ is central. The very purpose of the Law was to reveal humanity's inability to keep it and to highlight the necessity of a Saviour. As the Apostle Paul writes: "*Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes*" (Romans 10:4).

By giving a holy Law and requiring perfect obedience, God humbled Israel, leading them to seek Christ earnestly. In this sense, the Law was a "*schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*" (Galatians 3:24). Like a teacher, the Law not only corrects and disciplines but also points to the source of help and power—Jesus Christ.

This truth counters the error of those who, under the guise of free grace, disparage the Law. Instead, we should uphold the Law, as it magnifies both grace and Christ. The one who recognises his failings through the Law and whose soul is humbled by them will esteem and desire Christ above all.

SECTION V. Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to David.

The next revelation of this gracious Covenant was made to David; and in this manifestation, even more of Christ is revealed. The expression of it is chiefly found in these words:

"Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

To rightly understand this, we shall examine the following particulars:

1. Who is the author of this Covenant?
2. To whom is the Covenant made?
3. What does it mean that the Covenant is said to be made?
4. How is the Covenant ordered?
5. In what way is the Covenant sure?
6. Is Christ more clearly manifested in this revelation of the Covenant than in any of the earlier revelations?

1. Who is the Author of this Covenant?

David declares, "He hath made it." He, that is, God—the Rock of Israel, the everlasting Rock, the Rock of their Salvation (Psalm 19:14), the Rock of their Strength (Psalm 62:7), the Rock of their Heart (Psalm 73:26), the Rock of their Refuge (Psalm 94:22). He is their Rock and Redeemer (Psalm 19:14). The psalmist frequently uses this expression to show that God is the mighty, stable, and unchanging foundation and defence of all the faithful who flee to Him and trust in Him. He is a Rock that will neither shrink nor fail His creatures. Man is unstable, but He is God and not man—the unchanging Author of this Covenant.

2. To Whom is the Covenant Made?

David states, "He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant." This may either refer to Christ, the Antitype, or to David himself, the type of Christ. While the former interpretation has been discussed elsewhere, the latter seems more fitting here. The Covenant was indeed first made with Christ and then with David as a member of Christ.

Some argue that the Covenant exists solely between God and Christ, denying any such Covenant between God and man. However, is Scripture not explicit? "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you" (Deuteronomy 4:23). And again, "I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31). Does Scripture not also name individuals, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom God covenanted? (Genesis 17:7; Genesis 26:2; Genesis 35:12; Leviticus 26:42). Here too, we see God covenanting with David: "I have made a Covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David" (Psalm 89:3). "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie

unto David” (Psalm 89:35). “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it” (Psalm 132:11).

Beware of doctrines that lead to liberty and licentiousness! The Covenant that God makes with us binds us closer to Him. If there were no Covenant between God and us, it would create a path to spiritual laxity. How could we be charged with unfaithfulness to God if we had not entered into a Covenant with Him?

3. What Does it Mean That the Covenant is Made?

This phrase underscores the freeness of God's entering into Covenant with us: "I will make My Covenant between Me and thee," saith God. Or, as the original renders it, "I will give My Covenant; I will dispose My Covenant between Me and thee." Elsewhere it is stated plainly, "Behold, I give unto him My Covenant of peace" (Numbers 25:12). When God makes a Covenant, He gives the Covenant of Grace to all He takes into Covenant with Him. As Moses said to Israel, "The Lord set His love upon you... to take you into Covenant with Him—not because you were more in number than other people, but because He loved you and chose your fathers" (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). This demonstrates the freeness of His love: He loved them because He loved them.

Evidences of the Freeness of God's Grace in the Covenant:

1. God Seeks Us First

God is the one who seeks us to draw us into Covenant with Him. We do not seek Him; He seeks us. We do not choose Him; He chooses us. He loves us first: “I am found of them that sought Me not” (Isaiah 65:1). To a nation not called by His name, He said, "Behold Me, behold Me."

2. There is Nothing in Us to Attract God

Unlike a man who pursues a bride for her beauty or dowry, there is no such merit in us. When David heard of God's Covenant with him, he exclaimed, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" (2 Samuel 7:18). Such free grace makes any soul cry, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4).

3. There is Much in Us to Repel God

We are contrary to God by nature, like darkness to light. "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). Despite our sinfulness, God seeks us when we are least seeking Him. Thus, Saul was called while persecuting the Church (Acts 9:1-6), and the mocking Jews at Pentecost were brought to repentance (Acts 2:37). O, the unexpected grace of our God!

4. We are by Nature No Better than Others

The difference between us and those without God is solely His grace. Publicans and harlots entered the Kingdom while self-righteous Pharisees were passed by (Matthew 21:31). God often chooses the weak and despised to display His free grace (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

5. How is the Covenant Said to Be Ordered?

The word "ordered" signifies a marshalling, an arrangement of things to oppose disorder and confusion. The Septuagint translates it as "marshalled, disposed, prepared," as in Judges 20:22: "The men of Israel... set their battle again in array." Like an army arranged in ranks, every part of this Covenant is so ordered as to withstand all objections. A troubled Christian may raise a thousand objections, yet the Covenant is like a marshalled army, prepared to receive and repel every assault.

Let us see how this Covenant is ordered in all things, as will be demonstrated in the particulars that follow.

1. It is Well Ordered in Respect of the Root from Which It Grew

This Covenant, as divines affirm, was founded on the infinite sovereignty, wisdom, and mercy of God.

1. **Sovereignty:** The Covenant of Grace was rooted in God's absolute sovereignty. He had the right to deal with His fallen creatures as He pleased—either to save or to condemn. “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Romans 9:21).
2. **Wisdom:** This Covenant was the result of divine counsel, not a hasty or rash decision. It was a deliberate act, reflecting infinite wisdom. God, being the Sovereign of all His creatures, saw mankind in a perishing condition and determined, with perfect deliberation, to establish a Covenant of Peace—first with Christ, and then with all the elect in Him.
3. **Mercy:** The Covenant was also rooted in mercy, defined as the free outpouring of God's goodness toward the miserable. Mercy involves two acts: first, identifying an object of misery, and second, extending goodness to it. In the Covenant of Grace:
 - The object of misery was lost, wretched humanity, undone by sin.
 - God's goodness overflowed, as His very heart was moved with compassion. “I have loved thee with an everlasting

love,” saith God, “therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Surely this was well ordered. A troubled soul might cry out in despair: “I am miserable; I shall die and not live. My sins will damn me; I am lost forever.” Yet the Covenant, in its foundation, stands like a well-marshalled army to confront and dispel such doubts:

1. **Sovereignty:** Cannot God, in His sovereign authority, save you if He wills?
2. **Wisdom:** Though you see no escape but death and damnation, cannot infinite wisdom devise another way?
3. **Mercy:** Is not infinite mercy greater than your misery?

Behold, poor soul, how the Covenant rises to repel all your objections and fears!

2. It is Well Ordered in Respect of the Persons Interested in It

From all eternity, the Covenant was established between God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son. As for the elect, they did not yet exist, and thus the Covenant could not have been made immediately with them. This arrangement was essential, for if the Covenant had been struck directly between God the Father and the elect from eternity, a troubled soul might have raised objections such as:

1. “If the Covenant was eternal, how could I, who did not yet exist, partake of it?”
2. “If the Covenant was made directly with me, would it not depend on my own power and strength to fulfil it? But alas, I have utterly failed and can do nothing!”

However, the Covenant is well ordered in these respects:

1. **Christ's Eternal Existence:** Christ existed from eternity, and the elect were included in Him as their Head.
2. **Christ as Mediator:** Christ, as the Mediator and Surety of the Covenant, bears the responsibility to fulfil it. The burden of satisfying the Father lies upon Him. Any obedience or faith on our part is only possible through Him. "Without Me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Thus, the Covenant is perfectly ordered: the Father has His role, Christ His role, and the sinner, through faith, receives his place.

Christ has existed from all eternity, and you, as an elect vessel, had your being in Him, as He was your Head. Christ is fully able to perform the Covenant, and as the Contractor, the responsibility lies upon Him to satisfy His Father. He who first made the agreement must fulfil it. For your part, if you do anything, it must be through Him: "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). See now how the Covenant stands to repel all objections regarding the persons involved from eternity: God has His place, Christ has His place, faith has its place, and the sinner has his place.

3. It Is Well Ordered in Respect of the Method of Its Articles in Their Workings

The Covenant operates in an orderly manner: first, God acts, and then we respond. God, on His part, grants grace and glory; then, on our part, we exercise faith and obedience. God always takes the first step:

- "I will be your God, and then ye shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

- “I will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh; and then you shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities and abominations” (Ezekiel 36:26-31).
- “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean” (Ezekiel 36:25).
- “I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes; and ye shall keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).
- “I will pour upon you the Spirit of grace and supplication, and ye shall mourn as one mourns for an only son” (Zechariah 12:10).
- “I will do all, and then ye shall do something.”

A perplexed and troubled soul may cry, “O, alas! I can do nothing. I might as well try to dissolve a rock as turn my heart of stone into a heart of flesh!” But see how the Covenant stands, well ordered like an army: “I will do all,” says God, “and then thou shalt do something.” God promises, “I will strengthen and quicken you, and then ye shall serve Me.”

4. It Is Well Ordered in Respect of Its End and Aim

The ultimate purpose of the Covenant is “the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:6). The parts of the Covenant—promise and stipulation—are directed toward this goal:

- **The Promise:** The principal promise is God and Christ; secondary promises include pardon, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, and glorification.
- **The Stipulation:** On our part, we are called to exercise faith and obedience—believing in Him who justifies the ungodly and walking before Him in all well-pleasing.

Observe the main design and aim of the Covenant and see how all its streams flow toward the great ocean of grace:

- God gives Himself for the praise of the glory of His grace.
- God gives Christ for the praise of the glory of His grace.
- God grants pardon, justification, sanctification, and salvation for the praise of the glory of His grace.
- We believe and obey for the praise of the glory of His grace.

This is reasonable, for all is of grace, and therefore all must tend to the praise of the glory of His grace. It is by grace that God has given Himself, Christ, pardon, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, and salvation to any soul. It is by grace that we believe: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

O, the sweet and beautiful order of this Covenant! All is of grace, and all leads to the praise of this grace, which is why it is called a Covenant of Grace. Many a dear soul is compelled to cry, “I cannot believe! I might as well try to reach heaven with my finger as lay hold on Christ by faith.” Yet the Covenant, like a well-marshalled army, repels this doubt. If you cannot believe, God will enable you to believe: “To you it is given to believe” (Philippians 1:29).

O, the Covenant of Grace is indeed a gracious Covenant! God not only promises good things but, by His Spirit, enables us to fulfil the condition. He works in our hearts to believe in Him and in Christ. All is of grace, so that everything may lead to the praise of the glory of His grace.

5. Wherein Is the Covenant Sure?

I answer: it is sure in its performance and accomplishment. Hence, the promises of the Covenant are called the "sure mercies of David," not because they are certain only to David, but because they are sure to all the seed of David who are in Covenant with God as David was. The promises of God's Covenant are not "yea and nay," uncertain or variable, but they are "yea and amen," certain to be fulfilled.

The stability of God's Covenant is compared to the firmness and immovability of the mighty mountains: "The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed by a miracle, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10). Sooner shall the rocks be uprooted, the fire cease to burn, the sun be turned into darkness, and the heavens be confounded with the earth, than the promise of God shall fail. "The testimony of the Lord is sure," saith David (Psalm 19:7). Christ Himself established it and sealed it with His own blood. To this very end was Christ appointed, and it has been His constant work to secure Heaven for His saints.

Some question whether it is within God's present power to blot a name out of the Book of Life. We say no: His initial action was free, but now it is necessary—not absolutely, but *ex hypothesi*, upon the supposition of His eternal Covenant. Hence the Apostle declares: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). It is now an act of divine justice to pardon the sins of the elect, given the current state of the Covenant. Mercy was the foundation of our salvation initially, but now truth works with mercy to secure Heaven for us.

Thus, David prays, "Send forth Thy mercy and Thy truth, and save me" (Psalm 57:3). He often prays similarly: "Deliver me in Thy righteousness"; "Judge me according to Thy righteousness";

“Quicken me in Thy righteousness”; “Answer me in Thy faithfulness” (Psalms 31:1; 143:1; 119:40). Without the Covenant of Grace, surely David would not have dared to make such prayers.

The Covenant is sure in every respect: “I will make an everlasting Covenant with you,” saith God, “even the sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55:3).

6. Is Christ More Clearly Manifested in This Revelation of the Covenant Than in Former Ones?

The answer is affirmative, as evidenced by the following particulars:

1. **His Dual Nature:** He is both God and man in one person—David’s Son and yet David’s Lord: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psalm 110:1).
2. **His Sufferings:** These reveal numerous details:
 - His cry: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Psalm 22:1).
 - The taunts of the Jews: “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delights in Him” (Psalm 22:8).
 - The manner of His death: “They pierced My hands and My feet. I may count all My bones; they stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (Psalm 22:16-18).
3. **His Resurrection:** “Thou wilt not abandon My soul to Sheol, nor let Thy Holy One see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

4. **His Ascension:** “Thou hast ascended on high, leading a host of captives in Thy train, and receiving gifts among men” (Psalm 68:18).
5. **His Kingship:** He is both King and Governor of His elect, as well as the one who subdues His enemies: “I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill” (Psalm 2:6). “The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psalm 110:1). “The Lord will extend Your mighty sceptre from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies’” (Psalm 110:2).
6. **His Priesthood:** He is Priest as well as King and Sacrifice as well as Priest. “The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4). “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions” (Psalm 45:7). Sacrifices and burnt offerings were not God’s ultimate desire, but Christ’s body was prepared as the true sacrifice: “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God” (Psalm 40:7-8).

The Septuagint renders “Mine ears hast Thou opened” as “A body hast Thou prepared for Me,” signifying that His body was ordained as a sacrifice for the sins of the world when other legal sacrifices proved inadequate.

O, see how clearly Christ is revealed in this unfolding of the Covenant! Never before was He so expressly manifested.

Thus concludes the consideration of the Covenant of Promise, as it was revealed from David to the time of the Captivity.

Section VI: Of the Covenant of Promise as Manifested to Israel During the Captivity

The great breaking forth of this gracious Covenant occurred to Israel during their captivity in Babylon. By reason of this captivity, Israel was almost completely destroyed. It was therefore high time for the Lord to appear like the sun after a stormy rain, bringing clear light of Christ and the Covenant of Grace in a manner more radiant than ever before.

He did so, as revealed especially in these words:

“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 broke, although I was a 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 I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

In this revelation of the Covenant, we shall examine the following particulars:

- 1. Why it is called a New-Covenant?
- 2. Wherein the Expressure of this Covenant doth excel the former, which God made with their Fathers?
- 3. How doth God put the Law into our inward Parts?
- 4. What is it to have the Law written in our Hearts?
- 5. How are we taught of God, so as not to need any other kind of Teaching comparatively?
- 6. What is the Universality of this Knowledge, in that All shall know me, saith the Lord?
- 7. How is God said to forgive Iniquity, and never more to remeber sin?

1. Why Is It Called a New Covenant?

I answer: It is called "new" either in respect of the recent and fresh blessings God bestowed upon Israel when He brought back their captivity with joy and replanted them in their own land, or because of the excellence of this Covenant. Among the Hebrews, anything excellent was often called "new." For example, "O sing unto the Lord a new song" (Psalm 96:1), meaning an excellent song.

Alternatively, it is called "new" in contrast to the Covenant of Promise given before Christ's coming. In this latter sense, the same words are repeated in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. In that He saith a new Covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:8, 13).

The New Covenant is typically understood in this latter sense. It is "new" because it differs from the Covenant made with the fathers before Christ. It introduces:

- New worship,
- New adoration,
- A new form of the Church,
- New witnesses,
- New tables, sacraments, and ordinances—none of which will ever be abrogated or grow old, as the Apostle declares.

Yet, in respect of the fresh blessings God bestowed upon Israel immediately after their captivity, this manifestation may also be called "new." For example, in reference to their return, the Lord said:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, ‘The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘The Lord liveth, which brought up and led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land’” (Jeremiah 23:7-8).

2. How Does This Expression of the Covenant Excel the Former?

I answer:

1. It Excels in Continuity

This Covenant, once established, continued without interruption until Christ, whereas the former Covenants were often broken or expired. This is why God calls it a New Covenant:

“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 broke, although I was a husband to them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:32).

In this sense, it may be considered the beginning of the New Covenant, as it remained in force until Christ, a quality unmatched by previous expressions of the Covenant.

2. It Excels in Spiritual Benefits and the Graces of the Spirit

Under this Covenant, spiritual blessings were poured out upon the Church more abundantly than before. Consider the promises:

“I will set My eye upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land. I will build them and not pull them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. They shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart” (Jeremiah 24:6-7).

Further, the Lord declares:

“I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Haggai 2:7-9).

The promises of inward transformation also abound:

“I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

These promises highlight the spiritual richness and permanence of the blessings provided under this Covenant, far surpassing those of the former.

3. It Excels in the Revelation of the Mediator

This Covenant surpasses the former in its discovery and revelation of the Mediator, through whom the Covenant was made. In earlier expressions of the Covenant, much was revealed, but in none was the time of His coming, the place of His birth, His name, the events surrounding His nativity, His humiliation, and His kingdom so plainly foretold as they are here.

1. Concerning the Time of His Coming

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy” (Daniel 9:24).

2. Concerning the Place of His Birth

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He

come forth unto Me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

3. Concerning His Name

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

“In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6).

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou, O virgin, shalt call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

4. Concerning the Events of His Nativity

- He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
- At His birth, all the infants around Bethlehem would be slain (Jeremiah 31:15).
- John the Baptist would be His forerunner, preparing His way (Malachi 3:1).
- He would flee to Egypt and be recalled from there (Hosea 11:1).

Many more details could be added of this nature.

5. Concerning His Humiliation

“Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions,

bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:4-12).

This passage reads more like a history than a prophecy of Christ’s sufferings. If you examine the details, you will find:

- He was sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).
- With that silver, a potter’s field was purchased (Zechariah 11:13).
- Before His passion, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).

I could elaborate further, but it might prove tedious.

6. Concerning His Kingdom

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9).

Consider the repeated emphasis: *Behold, a King! Behold, thy King!* He comes to you:

- He is a King and therefore able to save.
- He is *your* King and therefore willing to save.

Such love is wondrous—that He would come at all. Even more wondrous is the manner of His coming: He who made man in the image of God humbled Himself to take a body in the image of man.

Thus, we see how this Covenant excels the former in every one of these respects.

How Does God Put the Law into Our Inward Parts?

I answer: God puts the law into our inward parts by infusing a person with the graces of His Spirit, making them inclined and enabled to obey His commandments. First, we encounter the law of God externally, as we read it in Scripture. But when the law is placed within us, God works an inward disposition in our hearts that corresponds to the law written outside of us.

For example, the law states:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

To fulfil this, God makes a promise:

“I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 30:6).

When this promise is accomplished, when God places within us the affection and grace of love, when the habit of love resides in our hearts in harmony with the external command, then the law is truly put into our inward parts.

Similarly, the law says:

“Thou shalt fear the Lord, and keep His ordinances, and His statutes, and His commandments to do them” (Deuteronomy 6:2).

To correspond with this, God promises:

“I will make a Covenant with you, and I will not turn away from you to do you good; but I will put My fear into your hearts, and you shall not depart from Me” (Jeremiah 32:40).

When this promise is fulfilled, when God implants within us the affection and grace of fear, when the habit of holy fear dwells in our hearts and aligns with the command, then the law is written in our hearts.

Surely this is a great mercy, that God declares in His Covenant:

“I will put My law in their inward parts” (Jeremiah 31:33).

Many times, a poor soul laments: "I am troubled with such-and-such a lust; I cannot keep this commandment or that. I cannot overcome these strong inclinations to evil." O, but in such a condition, go to God and plead with Him: “Lord, it is part of Thy Covenant. Thou hast promised to circumcise my heart. Thou hast promised to put Thy law in my inward parts. Thou hast said that Thou wilt dissolve these lusts. Lord, I beseech Thee, do it for the sake of Thy Covenant.”

How Can We Know This Inward Work of Grace, This Law in Our Inward Parts?

The best way to resolve doubts about this is to examine ourselves. Let us open the door to the closet of our hearts and see what lies nearest and dearest there. That which is most intimate and central to us resides closest to our hearts.

Christ says:

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:37).

The love of one’s parents is deeply natural; it does not need to be taught but is inborn from birth. Yet, if we do not love Christ more than these—if Christ does not dwell closer to our hearts than father or mother—we are not worthy of Him.

Even our natural life, which is most inward and precious, lies near the heart. As the Devil once rightly observed:

“Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life” (Job 2:4).

Yet Christ says:

“If any man hate not his father and mother—yea, and his own life also—he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26).

The Apostle Paul expresses this intimate, inward life of grace in these words:

“I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me

and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

What a profound and striking expression! Paul essentially says: “I do not live the life of the senses, nor do I merely breathe physical breath, for such things are nothing compared to the life of faith.” In comparison, his natural life—though deeply personal—is described as though it were not lived at all, because the life of grace is more inward and vital.

Let this suffice as an answer to the question.

4. What Is It to Have the Law Written in Our Hearts?

This "writing" includes the previous explanation of the law within us but goes further. The metaphor is explained as follows:

1. A Correspondence Between the Law Without and the Law Within

The law is said to be written in our hearts so that there is something within us that corresponds to the law outside of us. The external law is written in Scripture, while the internal law is inscribed within our hearts. This writing is akin to copying or transcribing. Just as the law is written outwardly, so it is mirrored inwardly. What a mercy it is that the same God who wrote the law with His own finger on tablets of stone should also write it with the finger of His Spirit on the tablets of our hearts!

Consider the impression left by a seal on wax: when the seal is removed, its exact imprint remains on the wax. Similarly, when the Spirit softens our hearts, He impresses upon them a disposition corresponding to every detail of the law. This is what the Apostle calls “the law of the mind”:

“I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind” (Romans 7:23).

This “law of the mind” is an inner disposition enabling us, even imperfectly, to keep the commandments. This is the writing of the law within us, a divine transcription of the external law onto our hearts.

2. Engraved and Permanent

The law is said to be written to signify its deep rooting and permanence, like letters engraved on marble. When God writes, His writing cannot be erased. Letters engraved on stone are not easily worn away, and even more so are the writings of God’s Spirit enduring and immutable.

Some might consider these writings to be as fragile as letters in the dust, but if Pilate could say, “What I have written, I have written,” how much more can God declare the permanence of His work! Hence, the promises of perseverance:

“My covenant will I not break” (Psalm 89:34).

“The root of the righteous shall not be moved” (Proverbs 12:3).

“Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you” (Isaiah 46:4).

While people with great outward gifts may fall away, the poorest Christian with even the smallest measure of true grace will never fall away. If the law is written in our hearts, it will remain there. Grace, once implanted, is not removable. The sun is more likely to cease shining than Christ to abandon the smallest spark of grace in His people.

3. Legible to God, Others, and Ourselves

The law is written in our hearts so it may be readable:

- **To God:** God writes the law so that He may read it and delight in it. He takes pleasure in the graces of His own Spirit. The Church, as His spouse, invites Him to read His work:

“Come into Thy garden, and eat Thy pleasant fruits”
(Song of Solomon 4:16).

The fruits of grace are precious to God because they are planted by His own hand and reflect His Spirit, making them fitting for His delight.

- **To Others:** The law within us is manifest to others. As Paul says to the Corinthians:

“Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Just as letters engraved on stone are visible, so the fruits of grace are evident in a believer’s life. Wherever God implants grace, it shows itself outwardly in conduct and conversation:

“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes” (Ezekiel 36:27).

“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34).

- **To Ourselves:** A gracious heart is privy to its own sincerity and grace when in a right frame. If others can discern grace by its outward fruits, how much more can we, who not only

observe the fruits but feel the inward disposition! This self-awareness gives comforting assurance of both God's love for us and our love for Him.

Thus, we understand what is meant by the writing of the law in our hearts.

5. How Are We Taught of God, So as Not to Need Any Other Teaching Comparatively?

I answer:

1. Inward Teaching

God teaches us inwardly:

“In the hidden part, Thou shalt make me to know wisdom”
(Psalm 51:6).

David also declares:

“I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also,
my heart instructs me” (Psalm 16:7).

The “heart” and the “night season” suggest divine teaching is intimate and personal. While man may teach the mind, only God can teach the heart. Human instruction provides a surface-level knowledge, but God's teaching penetrates deeply:

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,
hath shined into our hearts” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

As Augustine said, “His chair is in Heaven, but He teaches hearts.”

2. Clear Teaching

God teaches with clarity. Elihu, offering to reason with Job, said:

“My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly” (Job 33:3).

When the Word of God reaches the heart, it does so with unmistakable clarity, bringing full conviction:

“Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

This assurance is described with triple emphasis: assurance, full assurance, and much full assurance. Such is the clarity of God’s teaching when it reaches the heart.

3. God Teaches Experimentally

The soul taught by God speaks of truths it knows through experience. Paul declares:

“I know whom I have believed” (2 Timothy 1:12).

Paul had experienced God’s faithfulness and sufficiency and trusted Him completely, confident that God would keep what he entrusted to Him until the last day. Common knowledge rests in generalities, but those taught by God can say:

“As we have heard, so we have seen” (Psalm 48:8).

They affirm with personal conviction: "It is so indeed; I have experienced this and that word working upon my own heart." In such cases, Scripture is the original, and the heart becomes its copy. They

can read the promises and warnings in Scripture and say, *Probatum est* (it is proven).

David in his Psalms and Paul in his epistles speak directly to the hearts of believers, reflecting their temptations, objections, and experiences. These believers can set their seal to this truth: “God is true.” Their lives and conduct solemnly declare God’s truth and faithfulness in His word and promises.

4. God Teaches Sweetly and Comfortably

David testifies:

“Thou hast taught me” (Psalm 119:102).

He follows this with:

“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psalm 119:103).

He delighted in God’s word and promises, savouring them like sugar under his tongue, drawing from them a sweetness greater than Samson found in his honeycomb. Martin Luther once said he would not want to live in paradise without the Word, but with the Word, he could endure even hell.

When Christ moves the heart, as described in *The Song of Solomon*, the soul is profoundly stirred:

“My beloved put his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh” (Song of Solomon 5:4-5).

These teachings of Christ leave a fragrant blessing upon the soul, refreshing and comforting the believer. As Augustine said:

“Sometimes, O Lord, Thou givest me a strange motion or affection, which, if perfected in me, could only be eternal life.”

Such divine teaching surpasses all human instruction, leading to the promise that:

“They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’” (Jeremiah 31:34).

This does not mean human teaching is unnecessary, but God’s teaching is incomparable, working in ways no man can.

5. What Is the Universality of This Knowledge?

The phrase, “They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” means that all who are in the Covenant of Grace will be taught by God. Each will know Him inwardly, clearly, experimentally, sweetly, and savingly.

While there are varying degrees of knowledge—fathers for experience, young men for strength, and babes for the truth and being of grace—every member of Christ’s school knows God to some extent. As one star differs from another in glory, so does each Christian differ in their knowledge.

To Those Who Feel They Know Little:

Take heart, dear souls, even if your knowledge seems small. Consider these points:

1. It is by grace that you are a star at all, even if not one of the first magnitude. The Covenant of Grace allows even the faintest glimmer of light in your soul.
2. If your knowledge is small now, it may grow with time. God does not reveal all His lessons at once. His light enters the soul gradually. Do not despise small beginnings, for even a heart longing for knowledge is precious:

“My soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto Thy judgments at all times” (Psalm 119:20).

To Those Who Use This Promise to Reject Human Teaching:

Some claim that because the Spirit teaches all things, human teachers are unnecessary, citing:

“Ye need not that any man teach you” (1 John 2:27).

However, these words must be understood in context. They either refer to the foundational truths of religion, which are universally known among Christians under the Gospel, or they are a Hebraism—a way of speaking that makes a comparative point.

In Gospel times, knowledge is so abundant that God is said to be the teacher Himself, rather than men needing to instruct one another as they did in the days of darkness under the Mosaic Covenant. Back then, the rudiments of religion had to be taught continually, as the Spirit was given sparingly. But in the Gospel age, the Spirit of grace and knowledge is so abundantly poured out that believers are taught directly by God in comparison to the limited understanding under the Old Covenant.

The Prophet Isaiah captures this beautifully:

“An highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isaiah 35:8).

Thus, all who are taught of God, from the least to the greatest, will come to know Him.

7. How Is God Said to Forgive Iniquity and Never More Remember Sin?

First, God is said to forgive iniquity when the guilt of sin is removed. Second, God is said never more to remember sin because, after pardon, the sinner is no longer regarded as a sinner. Is this not the Covenant? As if to say: “I will remove your sins and do away with them as if they had never been. I will blot them out of the book of My memory; I will erase the record so that none can read it.”

But you may ask, “If sin remains in the regenerate, how are they forgiven so completely that their sins are remembered no more?” Divines explain that there are two aspects to every sin: **macula** (the stain) and **reatus** (the guilt). Guilt can be further divided into two types: the inherent demerit of sin, which deserves damnation, and the actual obligation to punishment, which ordains the sinner to damnation.

In different respects, we can say that sin both remains and does not remain in believers. If we speak of the stain of sin or its demerit, these remain even in the regenerate. But if we speak of the obligation to condemnation, this is entirely removed after pardon. The sinner is as free as if he had never sinned.

You may ask, “Is not the stain of sin removed when sin is forgiven?” I answer: The stain of sin is not removed by forgiveness but by sanctification and renewal. In this life, because we do not have perfect inherent holiness (sanctification being gradual and incomplete), some remnants of sin, especially the effects of original sin, still cling to us.

Yet here is our comfort: when God pardons sin, He removes the guilt in terms of condemnation. He absolves the sinner from any obligation to punishment, viewing him no longer as a sinner but as righteous. In this sense, God forgives and remembers sin no more.

Ah, Christians! Beware of the doctrine that claims justification eliminates the essence and presence of sin entirely. Let us rather align with Scripture, which teaches that even justified saints must humble themselves and acknowledge their indwelling sin. They carry the “bolts and fetters” of sin through the fields of free grace to the gates of glory, with Christ washing them daily as they daily defile themselves. This ensures that grace remains grace.

The Covenant of Grace: A Continuity Through the Ages

Having surveyed the manifestations of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament, let us now consider two important questions to see how these truths concern us:

1. Is the Covenant of Grace the Same in Substance Across All Ages?

We answer: Yes. Though the fathers before Christ and we after Christ may appear to have different covenants, the Covenant of Grace is one and the same for both. This is evident in two ways:

1. They Had the Same Promise

The promise was:

“I will be your God, and you shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

“Happy art thou, O Israel, saved by the Lord!” (Deuteronomy 33:29).

“The Lord is our King; He will save us” (Isaiah 33:22).

Their hope was not merely for an earthly inheritance in Canaan, as some wrongly assume, but for a heavenly inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Jesus Himself declared:

“Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 8:11).

2. They Had the Same Ground for the Promise

The promise was grounded in faith in Christ Jesus, just as it is for us. Christ said:

“Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).

And Scripture declares:

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

He is the same not only in essence but also in the efficacy of His office from the beginning to the end of the world. Peter affirms:

“We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11).

Paul likewise states:

“The Gospel was preached unto us, as well as unto them” (Hebrews 4:2).

Some may think the fathers had no Gospel, only the law. But have we not seen the Gospel thread running through the Old Testament from beginning to end? The Apostle Peter speaks plainly:

“For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead” (1 Peter 4:6).

Here he refers to those who lived in Noah’s time. Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews provides a catalogue of Old Testament believers:

“By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death. By faith, Noah, being warned of God, prepared an ark. By faith, Abraham obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:4-8).

These all died in faith, having seen the promises afar off and embraced them. The list continues with Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets, who through faith performed great acts.

Surely, they had the same Doctrine of Grace as we do. The Covenant of Grace is identical in substance across all ages.

2. What Is the Difference Between the Old and New Testament, or Between the Old and New Administration of the Covenant of Grace?

The Covenant is one in substance, but there is a difference in the manner of its dispensation and revelation across various times, ages, states, and conditions of the Church. This distinction can be summarised in the following particulars:

1. In the Object

In the Old Testament, Christ was *promised*; in the New Testament, Christ is *revealed and exhibited*. It was fitting that the promise should precede the Gospel and be fulfilled in it, so that such a great blessing might first be earnestly desired before being bestowed.

2. In the Federates

Under the Old Covenant, believers are likened to an heir in childhood, needing a guardian, tutor, or schoolmaster, differing little from a servant. In the New Testament, believers are compared to an heir who has come of age and attained maturity. The Apostle explains this in Galatians 4:1–7.

3. In the Manner of Worship

In the Old Testament, worship was conducted under the ceremonial law, involving a multitude of ceremonies, rites, figures, and shadows. These reflected the infancy of the Church. The people of that time, being unable to grasp the deeper mysteries of the Gospel, were taught through their eyes as well as their ears. These ceremonies served as rudiments, preparing them gradually through symbols and figures for the true substance and reality to come.

In contrast, worship under the New Covenant is more spiritual. Jesus declared:

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23–24).

4. In the Burden of Ceremonies

Peter describes the Old Testament ceremonies as:

“A yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear”
(Acts 15:10).

This burden was significant, as seen in these examples:

1. **Costly Sacrifices:** If someone touched anything unclean, they were required to offer sacrifices, such as a bullock or a lamb. Imagine the burden if every offence today required such sacrifices!
2. **Long Journeys:** All males were required to travel to Jerusalem three times a year. As the land was long and narrow, and Jerusalem was near one end, these journeys were tedious and difficult.
3. **Frequent Observances:** They were bound to observe many days, including new moons and ceremonial sabbaths, and were restricted from various liberties, such as certain foods.

These burdens were heavy indeed. In contrast, under the New Covenant, the yoke is lighter:

“Take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:29–30).

Though we are still bound to the moral law, much of the ceremonial burden has been lifted.

5. In the Weakness of the Old Law

The Old Testament law was incapable of granting life, purging the conscience, or fully satisfying God’s wrath. As the Apostle says:

“There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof”

(Hebrews 7:18).

Thus, the Old Testament ceremonies are called “weak and beggarly elements” compared to the New Testament. The Spirit’s influence was less powerful under the Old Covenant because the Spirit had not been given in full measure:

“The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

This difference is evident in the following:

1. Less Power of Faith

The saints before Christ had less power of faith because the doctrine of faith was less fully revealed. As Paul writes:

“Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (Galatians 3:23).

This implies that there was a time of weaker faith among God’s people, namely, during the time of the law.

2. Less Power of Love

Faith and love are proportionate. The less the saints understood God’s loving-kindness in Christ, the less they loved Him. Under the law, they were likely drawn more by the terrors of judgment than by the promises of grace.

3. Less Measure of Comfort

Christ is called “the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). The more Christ is revealed, the greater the comfort. After Christ’s coming, the saints are described as:

“Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:31).

In the Old Testament, the Spirit was given less abundantly, as this blessing was reserved for the time of Christ. Christ first received the Spirit without measure in His human nature and then distributed His grace to His people.

6. In the Darkness of the Old Administration

Under the old dispensation, Christ was presented to the fathers through types, figures, and dark prophecies. Now, we see Him with unveiled clarity. Consider the differences concerning the person of Christ, the offices of Christ, and the benefits that come by Christ:

1. Concerning the Person of Christ

It was revealed to them that He would be both God and man:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given... and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

The same verse speaks of a child born and a mighty God. Yet how He would be God and man in one person was revealed only dimly.

2. Concerning the Offices of Christ

- His mediatorial role was typified by Moses.
- His priesthood was foreshadowed by Melchizedek among the Canaanites and Aaron among the Jews.
- His prophetic office was prefigured by Noah, a preacher of righteousness.

- His kingly office was shadowed in David.

Yet these types were not fully understood. Consider the Apostles: they did not comprehend that He would die, imagined an earthly kingdom, and remained ignorant of many truths concerning the Kingdom of God until the Holy Spirit came.

3. Concerning the Benefits That Come by Christ

- Justification was symbolised by the sprinkling of blood.
- Sanctification was represented by the water of purification.
- Heaven and glorification were depicted by their promised land, flowing with oil, olive, and honey.

The Lord revealed these principal mysteries to the Jews not directly but through types and shadows, as they were able to grasp them day by day.

However, in the New Covenant, Christ is presented in His fullness. The truth, substance, and reality of these things are now made clear. Christ is openly revealed, without any type or shadow, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

7. In the Number of Those Who Partake in the Covenant

At first, the Covenant was limited to the families of the patriarchs. Later, it was confined to the borders of Judea. But now the partition wall between Jew and Gentile has been broken down, and the Covenant of Grace is extended to all nations. He is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.

Christians! Herein lies our great happiness. How thankful should we be that for hundreds and thousands of years, our forefathers sat in darkness, while we now partake of this grace! That

we, who were once “dogs,” should now be seated at the children’s table!

Even the Jews themselves, hearing of this, glorified God:

“When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, ‘Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life’” (Acts 11:18).

If they praised God for this, how much more should we glorify Him ourselves? But more of this shall be said later.

Conclusion and Transition

I have now presented the object of our focus: it is Jesus, held forth in a way of promise and covenant during that dark time from the Creation until His first coming in the flesh. Our next task is to guide you in the art and mystery of grace—how you are to look to Him in this respect.

CHAPTER II

SECTION I

Of Knowing Jesus as Carrying on the Great Work of Our Salvation from the Creation Until His First Coming

"Looking" encompasses knowing, considering, desiring, and similar acts, as previously discussed. Let us, therefore, put this into practice.

1. We Must Know Jesus Carrying on the Great Work of Our Salvation in the Beginning and from the Beginning of the World

Let us learn what He accomplished for us so early in the morning of this world. He created the world for us and made us, above all, for His own glory. Yet, soon after we were made, we sinned, marring the image in which God created us. This was the saddest act in history, leading to the ruin of humanity and, without God's mercy, the eternal damnation of the souls of all men and women.

O my soul, understand this: you were in Adam's loins at that moment. What he did, you did. You partook in his sin, and thus, you were destined to share in his punishment. But, blessed be God for Jesus Christ! At the very moment when all seemed lost, Christ intervened. A Covenant of Grace was established with humanity, with Christ as its foundation. In and through Him, we are reconciled to God.

Study the Covenant of Grace

Come, my soul, and examine this Covenant of Grace in relation to yourself. Had this covenant not been made, where would you be? Where would all the world be today? Surely, it is essential for you to take notice of this profound transaction.

After humanity fell into sin, Christ was promised. And so that all the saints might partake of Christ, a covenant was entered into. In the early days of the world, this promise was dimly revealed, but as the

time of Christ's incarnation approached, it grew clearer and clearer. Whether dimly or clearly, this was how God, in Christ, carried forward the great work of our salvation—through a promise of Christ and a covenant in Christ.

For greater understanding, study the promises made to Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel. Dive into these unfolding revelations of the Covenant of Grace. It is worth your effort, for it is a mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but is now made manifest to the saints.

The Foundation of Christian Comfort

Here lies the first and most solid foundation of a Christian's comfort. If you can study this covenant and assure yourself of your share in it, you are blessed forever.

How incomparably sweet and satisfying it is for a self-examining Christian to know the faithful engagements of Almighty God through His beloved Son in the Covenant of Grace!

SECTION II

Of Considering Jesus in This Respect

2. We Must Consider Jesus Carrying on the Great Work of Our Salvation in That Dark Time

It is not enough to study and know these truths; we must seriously meditate, ponder, and reflect upon them until they bear fruit in our hearts. True consideration involves holding our thoughts on a

spiritual subject until we see its profit, and the work prospers in our hands. To aid in this reflection:

1. Consider Jesus in the First Promise Made to Humanity

"It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

When all humankind was under the guilt of sin and the power of Satan—when *you*, my soul, were in as wretched a condition as any other—to hear these glad tidings of Jesus, a Saviour and Redeemer, must surely have been welcome news!

Bring this reality nearer to yourself: imagine yourself in Adam's place. Imagine hearing the Lord's voice walking in the garden, calling:

"Adam, where art thou? Peter, Andrew, Thomas, where art thou? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? Then come, appear, and face judgment."

The law is unchangeable:

"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

There would be nothing to expect but death—temporal, spiritual, and eternal. What a fearful condition this is! No sooner to enter the world than to be cast into hell; to be monarch of all creation one day and a slave of Satan the next; to go from Eden's delights, enjoying every tree pleasant to the eyes and good for food, to eternal torment with the devil and his angels!

No wonder Adam hid himself among the trees of the garden. In that situation, my soul, you would have cried to the rocks and mountains:

“Fall on me, and hide me from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne!”

For who can stand before God’s anger? Yet do not despair! Cheer up, O my soul! In wrath, God remembered mercy. Even at the moment when the world deserved damnation, Jesus was proclaimed and promised. He was to die in accordance with the law’s demands, for He would become our surety. By His death, He would conquer death and the devil:

“It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

God said to Satan:

“You have taken captive countless souls. Adam and Eve are now ensnared, and in their loins all their descendants. This is your day of triumph, your hellish holiday. But you will not prevail. From all eternity, I foresaw your actions and decreed a counterwork. From the seed of the woman will come One who will crush your head, shatter your power, and trample your dominion underfoot. He will lead captivity captive, take away sin, and point humanity to the glory of heaven and a new world of free grace.”

In this promise, O my soul, lie your hope, heaven, and salvation. Dwell on it, turn it over, examine it from every side, and see that it contains a precious treasure. In it is a Saviour, a Redeemer, and a Deliverer from sin, death, and hell. Are these not truths to savour? Are these not treasures to ponder in your meditation?

2. Consider Jesus in the Promise Made to Abraham

“I will establish my covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Genesis 17:7).

In this covenant, Abraham is called the father of the faithful, and those of faith are his children. O my soul, if you are in covenant with God, it is by faith in Christ, through Abraham, to whom this promise was made. As Paul says:

“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

What a mercy it is that God would include you in His covenant through Abraham! God made a promise of Christ and, inclusively, a Covenant of Grace when He comforted Adam. But He established this covenant explicitly with Abraham and his seed.

Reflect on this deeply: What is man that God should make Himself a debtor to us? He is in heaven, and you are on earth. He is the Creator, and you are His creature. What are you, or your father’s house, that you should be raised to such a privilege?

The covenant itself is a wonder. It is a compact, an agreement, a binding together of God and His people. When Jehoshaphat allied with Ahab, he declared:

“I am as thou art; my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses” (1 Kings 22:4).

So it is between God and us. If He gives us His covenant, His strength becomes our strength, His power our power, His armies our armies, and His attributes our attributes. We gain an interest in all

that is His. There is, as it were, an offensive and defensive alliance between God and us. If we call upon Him in times of need, He cannot deny us.

Just as Rome defended her allied nations with the same diligence as her own city, so God defends His covenant people. He is bound by His honour to scatter both His enemies and ours. This is the tenor of His covenant:

“I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Genesis 17:7).

This general promise can be called the mother-promise, for it carries all other promises within it. It holds forth God in Christ:

“I will be a God to thee.”

What a sweet assurance! This is the greatest promise ever made. Christ as God is more than grace, pardon, holiness, or heaven—just as a husband is far more precious than a marriage robe or adornments. The well of life exceeds the streams that flow from it. Christ, as the fountain of all happiness, surpasses all the blessings He imparts.

O my soul, is this not worthy of your deepest consideration? More of this will follow in the next section.

Consider Jesus in the Promise Made to Moses and the Israelites

“I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2).

Much has already been said about this promise, but to summarise, consider two key aspects: **sufficiency** and **propriety**.

1. Sufficiency

This promise is of infinite worth—a hidden treasure, a rich possession, an overflowing blessing beyond measure. It offers nothing less than the great, mighty, and infinite God Himself. Were we promised a hundred worlds or even ten heavens, this would still be far greater. Heaven is beautiful, but God is infinitely more so, for He is the God of heaven.

The saints in heaven are not satisfied without their God. As Bernard beautifully expressed:

“Whatever we give to You, Lord, unless we give ourselves, cannot satisfy You; and whatever You give to us, unless You give Yourself, cannot satisfy us.”

Thus, just as God makes His saints His portion, so too is God the portion and inheritance of His saints.

Reflect on the greatness, goodness, and all-sufficiency of this promise:

“I am the Lord thy God.”

Moses received many promises from God, yet he could not be content without God Himself:

“If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence” (Exodus 33:15).

Without God, all things are nothing; with God, even in the absence of all else, we have everything. God alone has the prerogative to be an all-sufficient good.

The things of this world provide limited help: bread satisfies hunger, drink quenches thirst, clothes protect against cold, houses shelter from storms, riches relieve poverty, and friends ease loneliness. But only God is sufficient for every need—spiritual and physical.

- **Are we guilty of sin?** God's mercy pardons us.
- **Are we weak with infirmities?** God's grace sustains us.
- **Are we struggling with sin?** God's power subdues it.
- **Are we troubled in conscience?** God's Spirit comforts us with joy unspeakable.

Even for our outward needs, all our welfare is laid up in God. He is the God of our life:

“The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me” (Psalm 42:8).

In Him, we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:28).

Meditate on This Promise

O my soul, meditate on this promise in all your wants and discontents. When earthly resources fail, turn to the Fountain where the waters are sweet and sure. As Joseph said to Pharaoh:

“It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace” (Genesis 41:16).

So too, earthly possessions declare:

“It is not in us; God shall provide all from Himself.”

Have God, and have all; lack God, and all else is vanity. The Apostle’s testimony captures this beautifully:

“As having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Corinthians 6:10).

God is sufficient in any condition—whether in wealth or poverty, liberty or captivity. He accompanies His people into the wilderness, into prison, and meets all their needs. Thus, your discontent arises not from a lack of earthly means but from a lack of fellowship with God. If you do not find sufficiency, it is because you do not fully enjoy Him, your all-sufficient good. Stir up your faith, meditate on the Covenant, and reflect on this promise:

“I am God all-sufficient. I am the Lord thy God.”

2. Propriety

Consider this astounding truth: **the Lord is your God.** What does it mean that the great and mighty, all-sufficient God should be called *your* God? Heaven and earth, angels and men, may stand in awe of such a mystery!

The Apostle declares:

“God is not ashamed to be called their God” (Hebrews 11:16).

Would a prince not feel shame in taking a beggar, a runaway, or a sinful woman as his bride? Yet we are worse than these, and God is far better than any prince. Sin has made us worse than the worst, and

God is holier than the holiest. Yet, He is not ashamed to own us or to let us claim Him as our God.

It is as though God says:

“Use Me and all My power, grace, mercy, and kindness as your own. My power is yours to accomplish all your works and deliver you from every trouble. My wisdom is yours to counsel and guide you in all difficulties. My justice is yours to vindicate you from oppression. My goodness, truth, faithfulness, patience, and love are all yours.”

Consider God in Christ

Remember, this covenant is possible only through Christ. Without Him, you have no part in the Covenant of Grace. Through Christ, you may say:

“Jesus Christ is mine—my Saviour, my Redeemer, my Head, and my Elder Brother. His works are mine, His sufferings are mine, His resurrection and ascension are mine. His intercession is mine, and all that He is and has is mine.”

If Christ is yours, then all good things are yours in Him. These blessings do not come to you directly but through the hand of your Redeemer. Even though He is man, He is also God, and thus all your blessings come with the richness of heaven and the love of God.

This promise—“**I am the Lord thy God**”—is the very heart of the Covenant of Grace. It is the soul and life of all God’s promises.

O my soul, how carefully should you reflect on this precious promise! Let your mind, thoughts, and affections dwell on it. Why waste your

energy on vain pursuits when such riches are offered to you? Meditate on these truths, and let your heart rejoice in the Covenant of Grace.

5. Consider Jesus in the New Covenant or Promise

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

1. The Spirit Within and the Principle of Grace

Reflect on the error of claiming there is no inherent righteousness in the saints or no grace in the soul of a believer except through Christ. Is this not the clear language of Scripture?

“I will put my Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:27);

“The water that I shall give you shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14);

“The anointing which you have received of Him abides in you” (1 John 2:27);

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

The Spirit of the living creatures was within the wheels (Ezekiel 1:20) —when the Spirit moved, they moved; when the Spirit was lifted up,

they were lifted up. Similarly, the Spirit of Christ guides, frames, and disposes His people to walk according to His laws.

Christ declared:

“The kingdom of heaven is within you” (Luke 17:21).

David said:

“I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8).

O my soul, if you are in covenant with God, then besides the indwelling of the Spirit, Christ has placed within you a spiritual power—a principle of grace enabling you to turn toward God.

This principle is described in many ways:

- *A new life* (Romans 6:4),
- *A living with Christ* (Romans 6:8),
- *Being alive to God* (Romans 6:11),
- *The revealing of His Son in us* (Galatians 1:15),
- *The law written within the heart* (Jeremiah 31:33).

O consider this inward principle—it is an excellent subject, worthy of deep reflection!

2. "I Will Be Their God, and They Shall Be My People"

Consider God in all His fullness—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, both in Himself and as revealed in His creation. This promise transforms

all things—heaven, earth, sea, land, bread, clothing, rest, and life—into the gifts of free grace.

God sets this promise at the very heart of the Covenant, as the heart gives life to the body. This promise influences and empowers all others. It is the greatest promise of the New Covenant, for it contains God Himself. Though the heavens cannot contain Him, He has chosen to bind Himself within this promise:

“I will be their God.”

“They shall be My people” signifies a peculiar relationship. God claims His people as His special treasure:

“The Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:9).

They are His peculiar treasure:

“If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine” (Exodus 19:5).

Though all people belong to God, His covenanted people hold a unique place in His heart. He declares:

“Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, my inheritance” (Isaiah 19:25).

The saints are God’s delight, His inheritance, His bride. They are nearer to Him than even the angels, for they are united to Christ in a mystical union. O the blessedness of the saints:

“I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

3. "They Shall All Know Me, from the Least to the Greatest"

Consider this promise! O poor soul, you often lament your ignorance, feeling you know so little. Yet here is a glorious assurance: if you are in covenant with God, you shall be taught by Him. You shall know Him more clearly than the Jews of old.

He will open to you the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, granting you a greater measure of His Spirit:

"Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

We say a skilled teacher can impart more in a day than another could in a week or month. How much more does God, the supreme Teacher, accomplish!

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:13).

This does not exclude private instruction or public ministry, for these remain ordained under the New Testament. However, God's teaching surpasses all human instruction. Under the New Covenant, knowledge of God exceeds that of the old.

This demonstrates the excellence of Christ's prophetic office:

- He enlightens every person who comes into the world (John 1:9).
- He baptises with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11).
- He makes hearts burn within when He speaks (Luke 24:32).
- He commissions His ministers to teach all nations, promising:

"Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

- He equips them to be able ministers, not of the letter but of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Christ teaches inwardly, clearly, experimentally, and sweetly. No man can do this—only Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of the Church, raised up by God to surpass Moses in every way.

O my soul, consider if you are taught by God in this manner.

4. "I Will Forgive Their Iniquity, and I Will Remember Their Sins No More"

Consider this promise deeply! *“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”* (Romans 4:7).

O my soul, imagine yourself in this scenario: You are brought before a human court for breaking the law. The judge renders an impartial and just sentence. You are condemned to die, but not swiftly—instead, you are sentenced to endure years of slow, excruciating torment. Day by day, your flesh is cut away, your bones are broken, and your wounds are treated only to prolong your agony. For decades, you are kept alive in misery, deprived of sleep, comfort, and sustenance. Instruments of pain—whips, racks, molten lead—are prepared to torture you without reprieve.

Now imagine a mighty prince intervenes, granting you not only a pardon but a life of perfect health and joy. He places you in a paradise of delights, where honour, love, and acclamation from men and angels surround you. You are lifted to the pinnacle of happiness, surpassing the glory of Solomon’s royalty or Adam’s innocence.

Would this not be the highest act of grace and love a fellow creature could show you? Yet, O my soul, this earthly mercy is but a shadow compared to the grace of God in Christ, who forgives your iniquity and remembers your sin no more. Through this promise, you are delivered from eternal death and granted the right to an eternal kingdom.

Know your blessedness! Consider how deeply you are indebted to God, Christ, and the free grace of His mercy. This promise declares nothing but grace and blessing—grace from God and blessings for us.

The Nature of Divine Forgiveness

Forgiveness is entirely of grace because only grace and mercy can remove sin. God does not forgive as humans often do, when they lack the power to avenge. God has full authority to enact vengeance:

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Yet He chooses to forgive. This is His name: merciful and gracious.

O my soul, perhaps you wonder, *“Will the Lord truly forgive my sins? Why would God look upon me, pardon me, and snatch me as a brand from the fire of hell?”* But consider this: if your heart is humbled, the Lord will forgive.

Why Does God Forgive?

1. Because He Delights in Mercy

It brings God joy to forgive sin. We may have taken great

pleasure in committing sin, but God takes far more delight in pardoning it. He is the *Father of mercies*, delighting in His children. Just as a parent rejoices in the fruits of their labour, God rejoices in removing the sins of His people.

2. Because It Is His Eternal Purpose

From eternity, God purposed to glorify His grace through the salvation of sinners. His grand design is to make His grace glorious:

“To the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:6).

God will not forfeit His glory. He will astonish the world by revealing the sins His people have committed and the forgiveness He has granted. This is why His people are called *vessels of mercy*:

“That He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy” (Romans 9:23).

Just as a vessel can be filled to the brim, so the vessels of mercy are filled with God’s forgiveness, showcasing the riches of His glory to all.

3. Because It Is His Nature to Forgive

God’s very nature inclines Him to pardon. This is evident:

- In His proclamation of His name:

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exodus 34:6-7).

- In His invitations:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

- In His patience:

“The Lord waits to be gracious unto you” (Isaiah 30:18).

4. Because It Is His Covenant Promise

Forgiveness is a cornerstone of the Covenant of Grace:

“I, even I, am He that blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

The Sweetness of the Promise

O my soul, if you have a share in this promise, what joy should fill your heart! God has blotted out your sins, never to remember them again. You are free from the condemnation of eternal death and are now an heir of eternal life.

Reflect on the enormity of God’s mercy:

- **It is entirely of grace.** Only a gracious God can forgive sin.
- **It glorifies His nature.** He forgives not because He lacks power to punish but because He delights in mercy.

This is the essence of His character:

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Psalm 103:8).

A Call to Gratitude

Let this promise draw you closer to God in love and thankfulness. Recognise the depth of His grace and the riches of His glory. How can you not be moved to worship and obedience?

Take this promise to heart, O my soul, and let it be the foundation of your peace and joy:

“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.”

Now come, consider, O my soul, every particular in this gracious Covenant, and be serious in thy meditation. Surely, there is far too much of thy spirit spent on vain, transitory, and worldly things. Alas, alas, thy time on earth is but short, and the strength of thy mind—this precious gift—is the most valuable thing thou hast.

O then, let the labour and activity of thy mind, let thy innermost thoughts and deepest affections be devoted and exercised upon this subject. Be vigilant that none of these precious waters run wasted, spilling away in vanity. If God, Jesus, and all thy eternal good are contained here, why should not thy whole soul be fixed upon this? Why shouldst thou squander thyself upon the fleeting pleasures of the creature?

Why dost thou allow thyself to be overtaken by carnal griefs and fears? Surely these concerns are unworthy of the heart that ought to be fixed upon God in Christ—upon Jesus and His Covenant of Grace.

Section III. On Desiring Jesus in This Respect

We must desire Jesus as the one who carries forward the great work of our salvation through the Covenant, even before His coming in the flesh. It is not enough merely to know and consider; we must also desire. Such is the order of God's work: no sooner does His Spirit clearly reveal the goodness of the promise than the soul begins to comprehend it.

The soul considers it, examines it from every angle, and weighs its excellencies in the balance of the deepest meditation. Once this is done, the affections are stirred, and the soul begins to reason:

“O happy am I to see the goodness of this gracious promise! But miserable shall I be if I see it yet never partake of it. O why not I, Lord? Why should not my sins be pardoned? Why not my corruptions subdued? Why should not the law be written in my heart and placed within my innermost being? Why may I not say, *‘My Lord and my God?’* or, *‘I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine?’* Why should not this Covenant be established between God and me?

Now my soul thirsts after this as a dry and thirsty land. My affections hunger after Jesus in the Covenant of Grace. O how I long to be in Covenant with God! For this is all my salvation and all my desire.”

(2 Samuel 23:5)

An Objection Considered

It may be objected: *The object of desire is something perceived as absent or distant. We do not covet what we already possess. If it is present, we rest in it rather than move towards or desire it. How then could David, or any soul already in the Covenant of Grace, desire the Covenant? Does David not say: "He has made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation and all my desire"?*

The Nature of Desire

It is true that desire often pertains to something absent. Yet this is not always the case entirely. The presence of a good thing can also stir desire, particularly when that good is capable of further growth or improvement. For example, we see this with material wealth: none desire riches more eagerly than those who already possess them.

Likewise, the more grace a soul has, the more its heart is enlarged to long for greater measures of grace. As priming a pump with a small amount of water draws forth more, so does the presence of grace ignite a greater thirst for grace. No one prays more fervently, *"Lord, help my unbelief"* than the one who can already say, *"Lord, I believe"* (Mark 9:24).

Furthermore, things present may still be the object of our desires when it comes to their continuance. For example, one who delights in something they possess naturally desires the continuance of that delight. Similarly, the human soul, with its reach extending to immortality, may rightly desire not only the presence but also the perpetuity of the good things it enjoys.

A Call to Desire

Come then, O my soul, and stir up thy desires in every respect:

1. **Desire after thy interest in the Covenant.** Long to know and claim thy place within the gracious promises of God.
2. **Desire after the improvement of the Covenant.** Seek a greater measure of grace and growth in thy relationship with God.
3. **Desire after the continuance of thy Covenant-state.** Pray for steadfastness and perseverance in the faith, that nothing may sever thee from this bond of grace.
4. **Desire after Jesus, the great focus and foundation of the Covenant.** Fix thy heart on Him who is the all-in-all of salvation, the centre of every promise, and the fulfiller of every hope.

1. Desire After Thy Interest in the Covenant

O say within thyself: Is it thus? Is the Lord truly willing to receive me into His grace? Was that His voice calling in the streets: *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn you at My reproof; behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you?* Was that His proclamation: *Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; incline your ear, and come unto Me, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David?*

Are these not the promises offered in the Covenant: *I will put My law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people?*

Oh, how blessed is the condition of those who are in covenant with God! *Blessed art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord?* (Deuteronomy 33:29). *Oh, happy is the people that are*

in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord (Psalm 144:15).

But alas, what can I say? *No sin like unto my sin, no misery like unto my misery.* I am an alien to God, separated from His people, and outside the covenant. Like the poor prodigal, I perish with hunger while those in my Father's house have bread enough. Oh, that I were in their condition!

Never did David long more for the waters of the well of Bethlehem than my soul, touched with the sense of sin, now desires to be at peace with God and in covenant with Him. O, I thirst! I pant! I gasp after Him. I long for communion and peace with Him. *With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early* (Isaiah 26:9).

2. Desire After the Improvement of the Covenant

Perhaps the Lord has given thee an interest in the covenant, yet thy hold is so weak that thou scarcely knowest its meaning. The Lord may answer thee but speak darkly, as when He said to the woman, *Go thy way and sin no more.* It was neither a full assurance of pardon nor a denial of hope, leaving her in suspense that her sin might yet be forgiven.

Thus, it may be that God has given thee a little ease, yet not spoken full peace. Go on, then, and desire more and more after confirmation. Say within thine heart:

O Lord, Thou hast begun to show grace unto Thy servant, but oh, manifest unto me all Thy goodness. Thou hast given me a drop, and I feel it so sweet that now I thirst and long to enjoy the fountain. Thou hast given me a kiss of Thy mouth, and now

I pant to be united to Thee in a more perfect and consummate marriage. Thou hast given me a taste, yet my appetite is not diminished but enlarged. For what are these drops and tastes but the firstfruits of the Spirit, the earnest of greater things to come? O then, what are the harvests of joy, the treasures of wisdom, and the boundless riches of free grace that are hidden in Thee, O God? I have indeed seen a feast of fat things, of wines well refined, but oh, what a famine still remains in my spirit! Lord, I have longed for Thy salvation. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

3. Desire After Continuance in the Covenant-State

Many a sweet soul cannot deny that the Lord has shown mercy to them, yet they fear they will not endure. They feel the power of corruption within, strong temptations, and many lusts, leading them to doubt:

What will become of my poor soul? What will be the end of this woeful work?

Come now, and desire after perseverance. When Peter was ravished on the mount, he said, *It is good for us to be here; let us build three tabernacles* (Luke 9:33). His desire was to remain there forever. It was the prayer of Christ on Peter's behalf: *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not* (Luke 22:32). What was this prayer but Christ's fervent desire for Peter's continuance in the faith? Shall Christ desire thy perfection, and wilt not thou?

Come, then, with pantings and breathings after God. Let thy desires pour forth:

O Lord, Thou hast said, “I will betroth thee unto Me forever” (Hosea 2:19). What does this mean but that the bond of union between Christ and a gracious soul shall never be broken? What does it mean but that the union between a believer and Christ is secured by Thee, and Thy Spirit holds the other end, so it can never be severed?

Thou hast revealed in Thy Word that the foundation of this union is sure: “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Timothy 2:19).

Thou hast shown that this union is in the Son, who loves His own unto the end (John 13:1), and in the Spirit, who abides with the elect forever (John 14:16).

Thou hast said, “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed” (Isaiah 54:10).

Thou hast promised that the saints shall be kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5). It is Thy work, O Lord, to preserve Christ’s union with His saints. Surely, the heavens and the earth would sooner fall apart than Thou would fail to uphold one gracious soul united to Thy Son.

If these are Thy sayings, O Lord, I desire their fulfilment. O fulfil what Thou hast promised! It would break my heart should this covenant ever be broken between Thee and me. My desire is towards Thee, and the more I enjoy Thee, the more I long for Thee. My desires are like Thyself—infinite, eternal, and everlasting.

4. Desire After Jesus: The All in All in the Covenant of Grace

The most proper object of desire, especially for fallen humanity, is Jesus Christ. Hence, a poor sinner, under the weight of sin, cries out with vehement longing: "Christ, and none but Christ! Give me Christ, or I die; I am undone, I am lost forever." But what is Christ, or Jesus, in relation to the covenant of grace? I answer: He is the great business, the all in all. Christ holds at least a sixfold relation to the covenant of grace:

1. He is the **Covenant itself**, being more than a creature.
2. He is the **Messenger of the Covenant**, mediating between the parties.
3. He is the **Witness of the Covenant**, who has seen, heard, and testifies to all its truths.
4. He is the **Surety of the Covenant**, undertaking for both parties.
5. He is the **Mediator of the Covenant**, reconciling and bridging the divide.
6. He is the **Testator of the Covenant**, confirming it through His death.

Oh, what abundant fuel this provides for thy desire! Consider each of these truths carefully, and let thy heart be set ablaze with longing for Him.

1. Christ as the Covenant Itself

The Scripture declares: *"I gave thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. And I will preserve thee and give thee for a*

covenant of the people" (Isaiah 42:6; 49:8). Christ, being both God and man, is the covenant in its entirety:

1. **Fundamentally:** Christ is the origin and foundation of the covenant. It derives its being and beginning from Him. He is its maker, manager, and fulfiller; every aspect of the covenant is rooted in Him.
2. **Materially:** The very substance of the covenant is this: *"I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* Christ embodies both these roles. He is God to His people and, representatively, He stands before God as their representative.
3. **Equivalently:** Though the covenant's promises unfold progressively in believers' lives, Christ Himself, at the moment of justification, is given as the "earnest" or pledge of all its blessings. This pledge holds equal worth to the full covenant's fulfilment.

Christ is thus the covenant itself: our peace and reconciliation. *"This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land"* (Micah 5:5). Just as fire is inherently hot and all other things derive their heat from it, so Christ is the covenant, and our participation in it depends entirely on our possession of Him. Without Christ, there is no peace or covenant of grace.

2. Christ as the Messenger of the Covenant

"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in" (Malachi 3:1).

Christ acts as the divine envoy, carrying messages between the covenant parties:

1. **From God to Us:** Christ reveals the Father to us, commending His love and will. *"My Father is the husbandman"* (John 15:1). He also commends Himself: *"I am the bread of life; I am the light of the world; I am the door; I am the good shepherd"* (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11). Christ speaks of Himself with unparalleled authority, inviting all to partake of Him.
2. **From Us to God:** Christ represents and commends His people to the Father. *"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me"* (John 17:25). He speaks of His people's prayers and struggles in heaven, recounting their pleas and drawing forth the Father's compassion.

O my soul, let thy desires be stirred as thou hearest Christ speak of the Father and of Himself. None can testify as He does, for He has seen all.

3. Christ as the Witness of the Covenant

"Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people" (Isaiah 55:4). Christ is the faithful and true witness (Revelation 3:14). He testifies to every truth of the covenant:

- The covenant says: *"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."* Christ responds: "Amen, this is true."
- The covenant declares: *"Christ died and rose again for sinners."* Christ confirms: "Amen, I was dead, and behold, I live forevermore" (Revelation 1:18).

In all things, Christ affirms the covenant's promises, giving believers unshakable confidence.

4. Christ as the Surety of the Covenant

“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Hebrews 7:22).

The covenant of works lacked an oath, but this new covenant is sealed with God’s oath, offering assurance to every doubting soul.

1. Christ is **Surety for God**: He guarantees that God will fulfil His promises. *“Fear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).
2. Christ is **Surety for Us**: He has paid our ransom, given us new hearts, and is committed to losing none of His own. *“Those that Thou gavest Me, I have kept, and none of them is lost”* (John 17:12).

5. Christ as the Mediator of the Covenant

Christ is described as *“the mediator of the new covenant”* (Hebrews 12:24).

- **As God and Man**: Sharing both divine and human natures, He bridges the gap between the two.
- **As Friend and Reconciler**: He brings God’s heart to man and man’s heart to God, saying: *“Father, come down to My brethren”* and *“Come up, My spouse, to My Father.”*
- **As Servant**: Christ serves both parties: *“Behold My servant,”* says God (Isaiah 42:1), and He serves us, not to be ministered unto but to give His life for us (Mark 10:45).

6. Christ as the Testator of the Covenant

The covenant is confirmed through Christ's death: "*Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator*" (Hebrews 9:16).

Christ shed His blood to seal the covenant of grace. It was His death that made the covenant unbreakable and effective, making Him not only its Testator but its guarantee of eternal life.

O what fuel is here to set our desires aflame! Come, O my soul, and bend thy desires towards Christ, as the sunflower turns towards the sun, as iron is drawn to the lodestone, and the lodestone to the pole star. Indeed, the nearer thou drawest to Christ, the more earnestly shouldst thou desire Him. True desires are never fully satisfied nor extinguished. "*He that thirsts, let him thirst more,*" saith Bernard, "*and he that desires, let him desire yet more abundantly.*" Is there not abundant cause for this? O what excellencies hast thou discovered in Christ!

Poor soul, thou hast undone thyself by sin. There is but a step between thee and damnation; yet to save thy soul, Christ comes leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills. He enters into a covenant with God. Indeed, He is the covenant: the Messenger of the covenant, the Witness of the covenant, the Surety of the covenant, the Mediator of the covenant, the Testator of the covenant—the great business, the all in all in the covenant of grace.

If David could say, "*My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to Thy judgments at all times,*" how much more mayest thou say, "*My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to Thy mercies, and to my Jesus, at all times!*" Oh, I gasp for grace as the parched ground thirsts for drops of rain. I thirst, I faint, I languish, I long for a hearty draught from the fountain opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Oh, that I could behold Jesus flying through the midst of heaven, bearing the covenant in His hand! I long for that Angel of the covenant. I yearn to see such a vision as John did, when he declared, *"And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth."*

What? Is that covenant in the hand of Christ? And is my name written in that roll? Speak, Lord! Is my name written upon the heart of Christ? Oh, if I possessed the glory and riches of all the world, if I held ten thousand worlds and ten thousand lives, I would lay them all down to have this trembling soul of mine assured of its place in the covenant.

My thirst is insatiable; my innermost being burns within me. My desire for Jesus, as it pertains to the covenant, is unrelenting, like the grave that is never satisfied. The coals of this longing are coals of fire, blazing with a vehement flame.

SECT. IV. Of Hoping in Jesus in That Respect

We must hope in Jesus as He carries on the great work of our salvation in the covenant of grace. What is hope but a confident expectation of enjoying its object? Indeed, a confident expectation is so essential to hope that it determines its kind and intensity. As this expectation is greater or lesser, it causes the strength or weakness, the excess or defect of this passion we call hope.

This expectation renders hope either doubtful or certain. If it is certain, it produces confidence or presumption. Presumption, however, is nothing but an immoderate hope without foundation; confidence, by contrast, is the assurance of the thing hoped for, as though it were already in hand. Hence, we often say we have *great*, *strong*, or *good* hopes when we speak with assurance. This has led some to define hope as a *certain grounded confidence that the desired good will come*. Without dwelling on definitions, the central question is: Do the promises contained in the covenant of grace belong to me? And what are the grounds and foundations on which my hope is built?

If the grounds are weak, then hope is doubtful or presumptuous. But if the grounds are sound, then hope is secure, and I may confidently cast anchor and build upon it.

The Grounds of Hope

To examine these grounds, we must explore the qualifications Scripture describes as present in those with whom the Lord establishes His covenant of grace. These can be summarized in two aspects:

- 1. The condition of the covenant.**
- 2. The promise of the covenant.**

1. The Condition of the Covenant: True Faith

If you are in covenant with God, He has wrought in you the condition of the covenant: a true, lively, soul-saving, and justifying faith. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved*" (Acts 16:31). The promise of life contained in the covenant is made only to

believers. This is such a sure measure of assurance that even the Apostle directs us to it: *"Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith"* (2 Cor. 13:5). But how shall we examine? For in these days, many claim faith. Consider these points:

1. True faith carries you out of yourself and into Christ.

Paul said, *"I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me"* (Gal. 2:20). A believer does not have his life in himself but in Christ Jesus. His spiritual being resides in the Father and the Son. He is united to the Lord and is one spirit with Him. He sees the Father in the Son and the Son within himself, and he knows the Father within himself through the Son. *"Do you not know that Christ Jesus is in you, except you are reprobates?"* (2 Cor. 13:5). Jesus said, *"You shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you"* (John 14:20). By faith, we enjoy the glory of union with Christ: *"The glory which You gave me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one"* (John 17:22).

2. True faith carries you beyond the world.

A believer sees Christ overcoming the world for him and, through faith, overcomes the world in Christ. *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith"* (1 John 5:4). Thus, the saints are described as *"clothed with the sun and having the moon under their feet"* (Rev. 12:1). Being clothed with the Sun of Righteousness—Jesus Christ—they trample upon all earthly things, valuing them as nothing compared to Christ.

3. True faith is always accompanied by true love.

If by faith you apprehend God's love and Christ's love for you, you cannot but love Him in return. *"We love Him because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). He who does not love God has not grasped God's love for him. If God in Christ is presented to you

for your justification, He will be such a lovely object that you cannot help but love Him. *"He that does not love does not know God, for God is love"* (1 John 4:8).

4. True faith purifies the heart and purges out sin.

When God reveals that He will heal backsliding, love freely, and turn away His anger, the believer responds: *"What have I to do anymore with idols?"* (Hos. 14:8). If Christ reveals Himself as the object of our justification, He will also present Himself as the pattern for our sanctification. The knowledge of God's goodness will inspire a love for holiness: *"They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure for them"* (Jer. 33:9).

5. True faith arises from a sense of spiritual poverty.

Faith begins with an awareness of one's lost condition. Spiritual poverty is the closest readiness for faith. The method of faith is to be condemned in order to be saved, to be sick in order to be healed. Faith, though a flower of Christ's own planting, grows only in the soul humbled at the brink of eternal despair. *"They that are whole do not need a physician, but those who are sick"* (Matt. 9:12). Christ takes the broken and destitute, clothes them, and brings them to His table.

When Satan whispers, *"You are unworthy of Christ; therefore, what have you to do with Him?"* faith argues differently: *"I am unworthy of Christ; I am exceedingly sinful; I tremble under this truth. Therefore, I must come to Christ."* This is Gospel logic and the proper method of true, saving faith.

Beware of doctrines that claim faith can arise in those unrepentant and proud, as though they could lay hold of Christ without humility.

Faith is the act of a soul weary, laden, and humbled under the weight of sin, yearning for the healing found only in Jesus Christ.

2. If You Are in Covenant with God, Then God Has Fulfilled Some Promises of This Covenant to Your Soul:

1. God Has Put His Law into Your Inward Parts and Written It in Your Heart.

Just as one written agreement mirrors another, or a face in a glass reflects the original, so your heart's conformity to God's law becomes evident. You obey God's will and delight in doing so, saying with David, "*I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart*" (Psalm 40:8).

2. You Have a Covenant Relationship with God and an Interest in Him.

By the covenant, you belong among God's people. Christ has your soul, body, affections, and love entirely. God has taken possession of you as His treasured, peculiar possession. You are Christ's by marriage—you have given yourself to Him to be His jewel, His spouse, His diadem, His crown, His servant, and His child forever.

3. You Are Clearly Taught to Know the Lord.

Your knowledge of God is now of a different kind than before. "*I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord*" (Ezekiel 16:62). There is a twofold knowledge:

- **Speculative knowledge**, which fills the mind but does not stir the heart.
- **Practical knowledge**, which affects the soul deeply. This knowledge sees the beauty and excellence of God, moving the heart to love Him with all its strength. If you know the

Lord in this way, your affections will be captivated by Him.

4. God Has Pardoned Your Sins and Remembers Them No More.

But how can you be assured of this? Consider these evidences:

1. If You Have Confessed, Bewailed, and Forsaken Your Sins.

“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil” (Isaiah 1:16). And immediately after: *“Come now, and let us reason together,”* says the Lord. *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”* (Isaiah 1:18). Likewise: *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon”* (Isaiah 55:7).

2. If Your Heart, After Storms and Troubles, Is Quieted Through Faith in Christ.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Romans 5:1). Do you have peace with God? Has He calmed your soul with His peace? This is a sure sign that your sins are pardoned.

3. If Your Heart Is Ablaze with Love for Christ.

The woman who had many sins forgiven loved Christ much (Luke 7:47). Her love poured out in her tears, as she washed His feet and wiped them with her hair, anointing them with precious ointment. If Christ has forgiven you, nothing will

be too good for Him.

4. If Your Heart and Soul Are Enlarged to Praise God for His Pardons.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits—who forgives all your iniquities” (Psalm 103:2–3). If your heart feels His pardons, your mouth will overflow with praise.

The Grounds of Your Hope

Are these, O my soul, the foundations of your hope? A lively faith in Jesus? A measure of the promises of the covenant fulfilled in your life? These are the very fuel of hope. If this is your state, act strongly in hope upon Christ and the covenant of grace.

Do not say, *“Hope is only for future things, so if I am already in covenant, what need do I have of hope?”* The question of whether you are in covenant remains central. Even if it is granted that you are, hope does not expire with the partial presence of its object—it increases. Just as natural motion accelerates as it approaches its center, so hope grows stronger as it nears the ultimate fulfillment of its desire.

The nearer we are to possessing a good, the more we long for it. O then, hope in Jesus! Deepen your hope in the covenant of grace. Let your hope move from mere expectation to confident assurance. If you anchor your hope on Jesus, you cannot fail. He is not like a loose nail or a rotten hedge in the covenant of grace. He is *“a nail in a sure place”* (Isaiah 22:23). *“They will hang on Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small*

quantity, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons” (Isaiah 22:24).

Come, soul, though you are but a small vessel, hang all your weight upon Christ. He is the nail that cannot break.

SECTION V. Of Believing in Jesus in This Respect

5. We must believe in Jesus as He carries on this great work of our salvation in the way of the covenant.

Many times, Satan comes and hurls temptations into our hearts: *“What? Is it likely that God would enter into a covenant with you?”* Sometimes he so entrenches this temptation that it darkens everything within, leaving no trace of comfort in the soul. O, but now is the time to believe! Now, more than ever, is the season for faith to act. When evidence is scarce, adherence shines as the essence of true faith.

We read of some who could stay themselves upon the Lord, even while they walked in darkness, standing on the brink of death. David feared no evil, though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, for his faith assured him that God was with him. Heman could cry out, *“Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves”* (Psalm 88:7). Surely he thought that God had exhausted all possible means to drown him—not just a wave or two,

but all God's waves were upon him and over him. Yet he believed, saying, "*Lord, I have called daily upon You*" (Psalm 88:9).

Hezekiah, in a moment of severe distress, declared, "*My eyes fail with looking upward; O Lord, I am oppressed*" (Isaiah 38:14). Yet even in his anguish, his prayer revealed his faith: "*Undertake for me.*" Similarly, Christ's sense of comfort was at its lowest ebb when He cried out on the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matthew 27:46). But even then, His faith doubled, just as the cable of an anchor is doubled in the midst of an extraordinary storm.

God's Covenant with You

Poor soul, you stand in awe, marvelling at this great condescension of God: "*What? That God would enter into a covenant with me? That He would make such great and precious promises to me? Surely these comforts and privileges are too high for me—or for any soul living.*"

Perhaps it feels so, and yet do not be discouraged. God will magnify His grace, and for that reason, He will do this great thing. All that He asks of you—all that He requires in this matter—is simply to believe. Indeed, without faith, you have no part in Christ and no part in the covenant of grace. Faith is the condition of the covenant, and therefore you must either believe or remain outside the covenant.

I know it is not easy to believe. In fact, it is one of the hardest things under heaven to persuade a soul to have faith. "*What? Will the great God of heaven make a covenant with someone as wretched as I am? I cannot believe it.*"

But why? What hinders you?

You may answer: *“Ah, my sins, my sins, my sins! God is a consuming fire against such things; He cannot endure iniquity. How can I hope that God would ever enter into a covenant with me?”*

To help you take heart and draw near, O soul, consider these following truths:

1. Consider the sweet and gracious nature of God.

What often undoes broken hearts and trembling souls is a misunderstanding of God’s character. Many times, we have low and diminishing thoughts of God’s goodness but hold large thoughts of His power and wrath. To correct these misapprehensions, consider His name, which reveals His nature:

“The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children’s children to the third and fourth generation.”

“O, what a terrifying text!” says the soul. “I am guilty of thousands of sins, and if this is His name, I am undone. Woe is me and mine, even to the third and fourth generation!”

But consider again. In this description of God, there is an ocean of mercy compared to a drop of wrath, a sea of oil compared to a mere drop of scalding lead.

1. God does not begin with wrath, saying, *“The Lord, the Lord, who will by no means clear the guilty.”* Instead, He starts with mercy: *“The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-*

suffering.” This is the first and greatest part of His name. God is reluctant to speak in justice and wrath; He reserves it for the last. Mercy lies uppermost in God’s heart. If the sentence must come, it will be on the last day of judgment.

2. Observe how many words God uses to describe His goodness: *“Merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.”* There are six phrases here to describe the riches of His mercy. But when speaking of His wrath, He uses only two expressions. It was not a theme He delighted in. Judgment is His *“strange work,”* for He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.
3. Notice the difference in scale. When God speaks of mercy, He says *“keeping mercy for thousands.”* But when He speaks of wrath, it is only *“to the third or fourth generation.”* Surely mercy triumphs over judgment. God would rather show mercy to thousands than destroy three or four.
4. Though God will not clear the stubbornly guilty, He will never destroy a humble soul that lies at His feet and seeks mercy on His gracious terms. *“How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, O Israel? How shall I make you as Admah or set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst.”*

O my soul, why stand at a distance from God? Why imagine a lion in the way? Believe in God, believe in Jesus, and claim your portion in this covenant of grace. Let your thoughts of God be sweet and delightful, and you will not, you cannot, flee from Him. Some have

even said that a soul may find more encouragement to believe by meditating on God's gracious nature than on the promises themselves.

2. Consider the sweet and gracious nature of Jesus Christ.

Our thoughts of God may feel distant and unfamiliar because of the infinite gap between His divinity and our frailty. But in Christ, God has come down into our nature, and infinite goodness and mercy are incarnate.

Are you afraid of His names *Jah* and *Jehovah*? Then remember His name is *Immanuel—God with us*. Here, the Lion is disrobed of His terror; His rough hair becomes soft wool. See God stripped of His majestic dread and clothed as a man. Your Judge is your Brother. Blend *Jehovah* with *Jesus*, and the rod of judgment becomes a staff of comfort.

Oh, that balmy name, *Jesus!* It speaks healing for every wound, comfort for every sorrow. Yet the misery of distressed souls is that they often dwell more on hell than on heaven, frightening themselves with justice rather than resting in mercy.

How can you, O my soul, so contradict the gracious nature of Christ and the gospel's depiction of Him as a saviour, not a destroyer? Consider the evidence of His gracious nature:

- 1. In His incarnation.** What greater demonstration of willingness to save could there be than for the Godhead to assume our nature? Surely, this is a greater condescension than for the greatest king to become a fly or a toad to save such creatures.

2. **In His tender dealings with sinners.** Christ declared that He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He wept over Jerusalem, crying, “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not!*” When His disciples wished to call down fire on those who rejected Him, He rebuked them, saying, “*You do not know what spirit you are of.*”
3. **In His care for His own people.** He bore suffering and death without concern for Himself, so that we might be saved. That the Lord Jesus endured a life of misery and a death of even greater agony to manifest His love openly, and yet any soul should suspect Him of cruelty, is a profound injustice to His nature.

O my soul, believe! Never despairingly cry, “*My sins, my sins!*” for there is a gracious and merciful nature in Jesus Christ, inclined to pardon all who seek Him.

Section IV: Of Believing in Jesus in that Respect

3. **Consider the office of saving and showing mercy, which Christ has undertaken.**

This is more than a gracious inclination; Christ has assumed and established the office of seeking and saving the lost. He brings wandering souls back to His Father, acts as the great Peacemaker between God and humanity, reconciles God to man and man to God, and becomes the Head and Husband of His people.

Is this not a profound encouragement to believe in Jesus? To consider Him as the One who has made it His mission to heal, relieve, restore, and reconcile? Among merchants, there is often an office of security for those hesitant to venture across the seas, allowing them to be insured if they only place their trust in that office. In the same way, Christ has established His office as Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour of humanity—a divine office rooted in love and compassion for the relief of all poor, distressed sinners. If you dare not venture otherwise, let your soul put its trust here.

O, what suspicious hearts we have that will not trust Christ without an office of security! Christ has never given any soul reason to doubt His love or faithfulness, and yet this dear Husband encounters many a jealous spouse. O my soul, beware of this distrust! Satan's chief design is to persuade you to harbour hard thoughts about Christ. Believe! Never say, "*God will not take me into His covenant,*" for to this end, Christ has established His office—to save and to have mercy.

4. Consider the invitations and entreaties of Christ in the Gospel.

What is the Gospel but this: "*Take Christ and life in Christ, that you may be saved*"? What mean these free invitations:

"Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters; and whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."

God is the first to pursue the soul, beseeching it to take Christ.

Listen! Who is it that knocks at the door? Who calls now, even now? "*Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my*

head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” See Him through the windows—it is none other than Christ! His tender words, “*sister, love, and dove,*” reveal Him. His suffering language, that His head is filled with dew and His locks with the drops of the night, proclaims Him.

Hear the plea He makes to your soul:

“Consider the price I paid to save you. My body was crucified, my hands and feet were nailed, my heart was pierced. Through anguish, I cried out, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.’ Now, what remains for you but to believe? See, all things are ready on my part: remission, justification, sanctification, salvation. I will be your God, and you shall be one of my people. I offer myself, my merits, and the blessings that flow from them. I entreat you to accept this offer. Take Christ, take life, take salvation in me!”

O my soul, is this the voice of your Beloved? Are these the entreaties of Jesus? Will you not believe? Will you not accept this gracious offer?

5. Consider Christ’s commands to believe.

“And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.”

Surely, this command outweighs and overcomes every other excuse or argument of flesh, blood, Satan, and the world. This command is your warrant, a foundation upon which even the gates of hell cannot prevail.

When Abraham received the command to sacrifice his beloved son, though it was a trial of inconceivable grief, he obeyed without

hesitation. How much more should you obey when God's command requires nothing but that you believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ?

There is no harm in this command—it contains all imaginable good. To have Christ is to possess all blessings of heaven and earth. To have Christ is to be discharged from the torments of hell. To have Christ is to enjoy God Himself forever.

O then, believe in Jesus! Let not the doubts of Satan or the fears of your own heart prevail against the direct command of Almighty God.

6. Consider the messages Christ sends through His ministers.

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God."

What a wonder this is! Would an earthly king humble himself to send messengers to rebellious subjects, pleading for reconciliation? Yet Christ, the King of Glory, humbles Himself to do this. He patiently endures our affronts, persistently sending ambassadors to beseech us to return to Him.

O incomprehensible depth of mercy! Say, you who read this: will you take Christ as your Bridegroom and forsake all others? This is the message God has commissioned me, His unworthy ambassador, to deliver to you. Christ awaits your answer.

Will you accept this match? Will you have Christ as your Husband? Will you enter into covenant with Him? Will you surrender your soul

to God and rely on Christ, applying His merits to yourself? Will you believe?

To take Christ is to believe—to receive Him as your Saviour and Lord, to forsake all others for His sake. This is the true faith and the condition of the covenant. Believe in Jesus, and the covenant is sealed, the match is made, and all doubts are removed.

Section VI: Of Loving Jesus in That Respect

6. We must love Jesus as He carries on this great work of our salvation in the way of a covenant.

Love is often regarded as the first and most fundamental passion of all others; some even call it the first springing and outgoing affection of the soul. For this reason, I might have placed it before hope or desire. Yet, I have chosen this order, which (if not entirely aligned with the order of nature) seems most agreeable to the spiritual workings of my soul. When a good is presented, I first desire it, then hope for it, then believe in it, and finally, I love it.

Some define spiritual love as a holy disposition of the heart arising from faith. But setting aside these subtleties, one thing is clear: I cannot believe in all that God has done through Christ in a covenant for me without being moved to love that God and love that Christ who first loved my soul.

So, go on, O my soul, kindle the fire upon the hearth. Fan the little spark, set before you God's love, and you cannot help but love. Reflect on the **time**, the **properties**, and the **effects** of God's love:

1. The Time of God's Love.

- He loved you before the world was made. Have you not heard this? Will you ever forget it? Were not those ancient loves from all eternity admirable, astonishing, and ravishing?
- He loved you at the very beginning of the world. Was not the promise made to Adam intended for you? Just as you sinned in Adam's loins, so also, in his loins, you received the promise: *"It shall bruise thy head."* And not long after, when God established His covenant with Abraham and his seed, were you not included in that seed? *"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*
- He loves you now even more distinctly—not only with a love of benevolence, as before, but with a love of complacency. He has not only entered into a covenant with Christ, with Adam, and with Abraham on your behalf, but He has struck a personal and particular covenant with you. What love is this!

If a woman, newly conceiving, loves the child she carries, how much more does she love it when it is born and embraced in her arms? If God loved you before you had being—yes, before the world or anything in it had being—how much more does He love you now? O, the height, depth, length, and breadth of this immeasurable love! O my soul, I cannot fully express the love of God in Christ toward you. When I attempt to paint it, I only draw a faint sketch with coal when the subject demands all the colours of heaven.

2. The Properties of God's Love.

3. It is eternal love.

God was thinking of you from eternity, saying: *“At such a time, there shall be such a man and such a woman on earth. In the last days, there shall be such a soul (yes, you, if you believe). To this soul, I will reveal myself and communicate my love. I will offer Christ, giving this soul the hand of Christ to grasp Him. And I will write this name in the Book of Life, never to be blotted out.”*

O eternal love! What blessed transactions passed between the Father and the Son from eternity to reveal His love to your very soul!

2. It is a choice love.

It is elective and separating love. When He passed by and left countless others, He set His heart upon you. *“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?”* says God. *“Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.”* Were you not of the same family or fellowship as others who remain wicked and ungodly? Yet God loved you and set His love upon you. Surely this is choice love.

3. It is free love.

“I will love them freely,” says the Lord. *“The Lord did not set His love on you or choose you because you were more numerous than others, but because the Lord loved you.”* There is no other reason for God’s love but that He loves you. This may seem strange reasoning, but Moses could go no higher: *“He loved you because He loved you.”*

4. It is a love of all relations.

Consider the love of a friend for a friend, a father for a child, or a husband for a wife. God’s love encompasses all these and more. You are His friend, His son or daughter, His spouse. And God is your all in all.

3. The Effects of God's Love.

4. God loves you so much that He has entered into a covenant with you.

O, what love is this! Tell me, O my soul, is there not an infinite disparity between God and you? He is God above, and you are but a worm below. He is the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, and you are less than the least of His mercies. What condescension is this—that such a Potter and Former of all things should stoop to covenant with guilty clay! If we had the tongues of men and angels, we could never fully express it.

5. In His covenant, God gives you all His promises.

Indeed, what is the covenant but a glorious heap of promises? As a cluster of stars forms a constellation, so the promises of God converge in the covenant of grace. Wherever Christ is, divine promises grow from Him like beams of light from the sun.

I shall name a few.

1. God in the Covenant Gives the World

“All is yours,” says the Apostle, “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world” (1 Cor. 3:22). And Christ declares, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Even temporal blessings are part of the covenant God makes with His people. *“It is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers.”* Others may possess the world, but not by covenant-right. Even if you have only a little of this world, you have it by covenant-right, and it serves as an earnest of all the rest.

2. God's Care for His Saints Surpasses His Concern for the World

God declares, *"I loved you; therefore, I will give men for you, and people for your life."* If your well-being requires that others endure great evils, God does not hesitate. *"My heart is on you,"* says the Lord, *"so that in comparison to you, I do not regard the rest of the world."* O, the wondrous love of God toward His saints!

3. God Pardons Sins in the Covenant

This is another fruit of His love: *"To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."* It cost Christ dearly to pardon our sins—the very heart-blood of the Saviour. When God the Father spoke to His Son concerning our redemption, He said, *"If You would deliver their souls from sin, You must bear the curse Yourself."* Christ answered, *"Let Your will be done. Though it cost Me My life, though it require the best blood of My heart, let Me deliver them."*

This magnifies the love of Christ—that He foresaw your sin and still loved you. We often regret setting our love on ungrateful creatures, saying, *"If I had known how they would repay my love, they would never have had it."* But God foresaw all your sins and ingratitude and yet declared in the covenant: *"I will forgive their iniquities and remember their sins no more."*

4. God Grants Holiness and Sanctification in the Covenant

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. From all your filthiness and idols will I cleanse you." Holiness is the crown and diadem upon the heads of saints, their excellence in the eyes of men and angels. David calls the holy

ones “the excellent ones.” Holiness is a spirit of glory, “*the delight of God.*”

As a father rejoices to see his image in his children, so God delights in the holiness of His saints. He loved them before with a love of benevolence; now He loves them with a love of complacency: “*The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him.*” Holiness is the very essence of God, the divine nature imparted to believers: “*You are partakers of the divine nature.*” O, what love is this—that God should infuse His own life into you and enable you to live as He does!

5. God Grants Knowledge of Himself in the Covenant

Perhaps you knew Him before, but now He grants a deeper, covenantal knowledge. This new understanding of God stirs a true love for Him. How does this work?

Here is my experience: I reflect on the virtues, graces, and excellencies that make anyone admirable, and I trace them all back to God. If I see beauty or excellence in a creature, I think, “*How much greater must be the beauty of the Creator who made them!*” As the Psalmist says, “*He who made the eye, shall He not see?*” This knowledge warms the heart. When I rightly apprehend God through His Word and His works, my affections naturally follow my understanding. My soul is drawn to love and delight in Him.

This sweet knowledge is a fruit of covenantal grace: “*They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.*”

6. God Gives His Son in the Covenant

“*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*” And more than this, God gives Himself to you.

O my soul, what love is this? If God were to offer you all the world as your portion or promise to create another world and make you its emperor, would you not marvel at His love? Yet He has given you far more: He has given you His Son and Himself.

Christian, stand amazed! What love is this! To hear from heaven: *“I will be a God to you and to your descendants after you. I am the Lord your God; you shall be My people.”*

A Call to Love

O my soul, reflect on these evidences of God’s love in Christ. Are these not strong attractives to draw your love? What will you do? Can you withhold your heart from the Lord your God?

The Apostle says, *“The love of God constrains us.”* God in Christ is the very element of love. As air rises to air and rivers flow to the sea, so should your love be drawn to this ocean of divine love.

The bride says to Christ: *“Come, my beloved, let us rise early to the vineyards and see if the vines flourish. There I will give you my love.”* When you go to the Word, prayer, or meditation, remember to give Christ your love. Does He manifest His presence there? Are His graces abounding? Then let your love abound as well.

By how much more you feel God’s love for you, by so much more should you love Him in return. If many sins have been forgiven you, how can you not love much?

Section VII: Of Rejoicing in Jesus in That Respect

We must rejoice in Jesus as He carries forward the great work of our salvation through the covenant of grace. It is true that our joy in this life is partial; spiritual joy, in its pure and perfect form, is reserved for heaven. God has chosen not to allow it to be fully realised here below. Yet even in its mingled state—interwoven with cares and pains—joy remains a blessed duty, a light to our souls. Without it, life would descend into horror and confusion.

O my soul, if you had no hope of joy in all your acts, you would languish, motionless and weak. You would cease to speak of Jesus, the covenant of grace, or the life and glory to come. So, press on, O my soul, and rejoice in Jesus. If you love Him, what could hinder your rejoicing? It is a maxim that love naturally progresses to joy when no obstacle restrains the appetite. The first motion of the heart towards a good thing is the desire to be united with it, and the next is the longing to enjoy it. Love consists in union, and joy in fruition. And what is fruition but the delight we experience in possessing what we love?

Philosophers may debate the distinction between love and joy. Some describe it like this: as fluid bodies flow towards their centre, they find rest there. Yet they do not stop entirely but return upon themselves, swelling and overflowing. So it is with the soul: love propels it toward the beloved object, uniting it with that object. But the soul does not remain idle; through joy, it returns to itself, overflows, and immerses all its powers in the delight of possession. Joy, then, is an effusion of the heart, spreading itself over what is good, striving to possess it more perfectly.

But let us not tarry too long in theorising about its nature. O my soul, engage in the exercise of this joy! Is there not abundant cause? Behold your blessedness and reflect on the great things the Lord has done for you. Consider, for instance:

1. **A Covenant of Temporal Mercies**

God has made a covenant with you that includes temporal blessings. Everything you possess is yours by the covenant of grace. Your bread, your rest, your safety from harm—all these flow from the promises of the covenant. Even the tilling of your land comes under this covenant, as the Lord declares in *Ezekiel 36:34*.

Oh, how sweet is this thought! Every crumb of bread is a gift from Christ, secured by the covenant of grace. Every small mercy bears the mark of His love, and every provision whispers of His covenantal care.

We must rejoice in Jesus as He carries out the great work of our salvation through the covenant of grace. Consider the covenant God has made with you—a covenant of **peace, grace, blessing, and eternal life**. God Himself has become your God; He is all things to you. He has forgiven your sins, given you His Spirit to lead and sanctify you, to uphold you in the state of grace, and at last, He will bring you to enjoy the fullness of His glory, where you will bless Him and rejoice in His presence with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

O soul, lift up your heart and head. Strengthen your weak hands and feeble knees. Serve the Lord with gladness and joyfulness of spirit, knowing that the day of your salvation draws near. Write this truth in letters of gold: **Your God is in covenant with you**—to love, bless, and save you. Soon He who is coming will come and take you to

Himself. Then you will fully know what it means to have God as your God and to be in covenant with Him.

Rejoicing in Covenant Grace

Reflect on the profound privilege of being in covenant with God. To the man outside the covenant, God appears as a consuming fire; the law is a sentence of condemnation, the earth yields thorns because of sin, heaven's gates are shut, and the signs of heaven—fire, meteors, and thunder—strike terror. But this is not your case, O soul. A man in covenant with God sees everything with different eyes:

- **God:** “This is my Father.”
- **Christ:** “This is my elder Brother.”
- **Angels:** “These are my keepers.”
- **Heaven:** “This is my eternal home.”
- **The Signs of Heaven:** “These are but the effects of my Father's power.”
- **The Law:** “The Son of God has fulfilled it for me.”
- **Prosperity:** “God has even better things in store.”
- **Adversity:** “Christ has suffered far more for me than this.”
- **The Devil, Death, and Hell:** “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?”

Examine Your Heart

Come, poor soul, is this your condition? Are you in covenant with God, or are you not? If you doubt, review your grounds of hope and persist until you come to some assurance. But if you are persuaded of your interest in Him, then rejoice in it! Rejoicing in the Lord is a **gospel duty**, repeated and reinforced throughout Scripture:

“Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice.” God delights in your joy and desires it to be your constant frame of heart. He commands it as part of your daily walk, a joy grounded in Him and overflowing to every part of your being.

The Fountain of True Joy

This one promise, *“I am the Lord your God,”* is sufficient to stir your soul to love and joy. It unites your affections, scattering them throughout your whole being to embrace and possess this truth fully. As David said, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”* Likewise, rejoice in the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within you delight in His name. This is the essence of true joy—when the soul wholly unites itself to the goodness it possesses.

Was there ever an object of joy greater than this? Hear as if heaven itself has opened and the voice of God declares, *“I will be a God to you and to your seed after you; I am the Lord your God, and I will be your God.”* Does not your heart leap at this sound? When John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb at Mary’s voice, how much more should your soul spring within you at this voice of God?

Commands to Rejoice

Others may find joy in sin, but is not God better than sin? Even refined, sanctified souls delight in grace, pardon, holiness, and thoughts of heaven. Yet, is not God—the fountain of all blessedness—far more glorious and joy-inspiring than these? If you have within you any faculty for rejoicing, now is the time to awaken it!

It is the **Lord your God** in whom you are to rejoice—He who is the exceeding joy of heaven, the delight of glorious spirits, and your God as much as He is theirs. If this is not enough to stir you, listen to God’s repeated commands:

- *“Rejoice in the Lord”* (Phil. 3:1).
- *“Be glad, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God”* (Joel 2:23).
- *“Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, for praise is comely for the upright”* (Ps. 33:1).
- *“Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness”* (Ps. 97:12).
- *“Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice; let them ever shout for joy because You defend them; let those that love Your name be joyful in You”* (Ps. 5:11).
- *“Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God, yes, let them exceedingly rejoice”* (Ps. 68:3).
- *“Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice”* (Ps. 105:3).
- *“Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King”* (Ps. 149:3).
- *“Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O you righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart”* (Ps. 32:11).

A Call to Rejoice

O what pressing commands are these! They resound throughout Scripture, calling you to make joy in the Lord your duty and delight. Let your soul rise to this blessed invitation. Rejoice in your God, for He is your joy, your salvation, and your exceeding reward.

Section VIII: Of Calling on Jesus in That Respect

1. We Must Call on Jesus

We must call on Jesus, or on God the Father through Jesus, in reference to this gracious covenant. This calling upon God includes both **prayer** and **praise**.

1.1 Prayer

Prayer involves presenting arguments of faith, grounded in the covenant. It is a bold yet humble pleading with God, based on His promises: *“Turn me, and I shall be turned: for thou art the Lord my God”* (Jer. 31:18). The covenant of grace serves as the foundation for all prayers, for it contains every promise of God. And what is prayer but those promises transformed into petitions?

Consider the example of the prophet Jeremiah:

“Do not abhor us for thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us. Art thou not he, O Lord our God?” (Jer. 14:21-22).

Similarly, the prophet Isaiah prayed:

“Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever. Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people” (Isa. 64:9).

The prophets appealed to God’s relationship with His people—His covenant people. As a prince cares for his subjects, a father for his children, or a shepherd for his sheep, so will God care for His own.

1.2 In Times of Desertion

Even in the saddest seasons of spiritual desertion, the soul can bring the covenant before God. A soul in the deepest distress, buoyed by the promises of the covenant, will not sink. Consider Christ in His darkest hour, praying: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Matt. 27:46).

When troubled by sin and the power of corruption, go to God and plead His promises:

- Say, as Jehoshaphat did: *“Lord, I am overwhelmed by my sin; I know not what to do, but my eyes are upon thee”* (2 Chron. 20:12).
- Plead His promise: *“He will subdue our iniquities”* (Mic. 7:19).

When you lack strength to fulfill your duties, cry out to God:

“Lord, thou knowest I have no strength of my own; I am barren and weak. But thou hast entered into a covenant with me, promising to put thy law in my inward parts and cause me to walk in thy statutes and do them” (Ezek. 36:27).

1.3 Trust in God’s Promises, Not Your Own

Too often, people rely on their own efforts—watchfulness, resolutions, or vows made to God. But these alone cannot sanctify the soul. Without God’s promises to us, we would remain in our sin and pollution forever. The strength to live a holy life comes not from our promises to Him but from His promises to us.

Let this truth guide you: in every want, trial, or necessity, fly to God and Christ in the covenant of grace. Say with faith, *“Thou art our Father, and we are thy people. Break not thy covenant with us.”*

1.4 The Power of Faith in Prayer

Though strong expressions and heartfelt affections are valuable in prayer, the true strength of prayer lies in **faith in the covenant of God**. This faith pleads His promises boldly and trusts His faithfulness completely.

So, O my soul, whenever you feel weak, tempted, or burdened, remember the promises of your covenant-keeping God. His covenant is your refuge, His promises your anchor, and His faithfulness your confidence. **Pray boldly, resting on the sure foundation of His covenant of grace.**

Here it may be that some soul will object:

"O, if I were assured that I were in covenant with God, then I would pray like this. But alas, I am a stranger, an alien, and have been so to this very day. I have no part in the covenant."

Answer:

If you are not actually in the covenant, yet you may still be in covenant in respect of God's purpose and gracious intention. To encourage all to seek unto God, consider the following particulars:

1. The Freeness of the Promise in the Covenant of Grace

"Come and buy wine without money or cost; come, and drink of the waters of life freely" (Isa. 55:1).

God's promise is free and not constrained by human merit. There is no requirement of payment or worthiness to partake of this covenant.

2. The Extent of the Promise in the Covenant of Grace

"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

The Gospel is likened to a feast, and God issues a universal invitation:

"As many as you find, bid to the marriage" (Matt. 22:9).

As hosts invite according to their estate, so God, as the great King over all the earth, invites universally. He has one house large enough to hold all, one table sufficient for all, and one dish to serve all. Accordingly, His invitation is for all: *"Ho, everyone that thirsteth."*

3. The Readiness of Christ to Give Grace

Christ is ready to give to all who ask, as He promised:

"Had you but asked," said Christ to the Samaritan woman, "I would have given you living water" (John 4:10).

Consider the context of these words. Christ, weary and thirsty from His journey, asked the woman for a cup of water—no great matter, and yet she refused. Though standing by the well, she gave no water, only astonishment that a Jew would ask anything of a Samaritan. But Christ responded:

"You deny me a cup of cold water in my thirst, yet had you asked of me, I would have given you living water."

Wonderful thought! Christ is more ready to give the water of life—the very Spirit of God—to a poor sinner than we are to give a cup of common water to a thirsty soul.

Go, then, even if you have denied Christ the smallest kindness. Seek grace from Him. Look to Jesus! Ask for His Spirit. Entreat Him to renew your heart. Plead the promise of His covenant and wait in hope.

2. We Must Praise

2.1 Praise While Seeking the Blessing

If you would have the blessing, seek it with the same intent that God offers it—with a purpose to glorify His grace. Moses sought pardon for Israel with this very aim, that God's mercy might be exalted. He prayed,

"If thou wilt forgive their sin, thy mercy shall appear, and we will be thankful unto thee for it" (Exod. 32:32).

Such requests, aimed at glorifying God's grace, are prevailing prayers. Christ prayed, *"Father, glorify thy name,"* and immediately a voice came from heaven: *"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again"* (John 12:28).

2.2 Praise When the Blessing is Received

If you have already received the blessing, be diligent to ascribe all the glory to God, who has fulfilled His promise. Say with the prophet:

"Who is a God like unto thee, who passes by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage?" (Mic. 7:18).

Make the praise of His grace resound throughout the world, that heaven and earth may take notice and marvel at the kindness He has shown you.

The prophet declares:

"I will recount the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he has bestowed on them according to his mercies and the multitude of his loving-kindnesses" (Isa. 63:7).

Observe how he exalts God's grace—"the kindnesses," "the loving-kindnesses," "the multitude of his loving-kindnesses," "the goodness," and "the great goodness." He could hardly stop praising, for he wanted God and His grace to receive all the glory.

O My Soul, Give Praise!

If God has entered into a covenant of grace with you, then bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Let this be the constant refrain of your heart, for God is worthy of all praise. More on this subject shall follow.

Section IX: Of Conforming to Jesus in That Respect

We must conform to Jesus in reference to this Covenant of Grace. We are transformed by beholding Him, becoming like Him in His image. If we fix our gaze upon Jesus in this respect, this very act will exert such influence upon us that we will conform to Him. But wherein does this conformity consist? I answer, it lies in the following particulars:

1. God in Christ Offers His Covenant to Us

As God through Christ offers His Covenant to us, so through Christ we should embrace His offer.

The gracious offers of God have been evident throughout history:

1. To Adam.
2. To Abraham.
3. To Moses.
4. To David.
5. To Israel and Judah.

The great promise of the Covenant is this: *"I will be thy God."* As if God said,

"Come, soul; if you will but have me, I am yours. Here I offer myself, my Son, my Spirit, justification, sanctification, adoption, salvation. Whatever I am, or whatever I have, all is yours if you will but accept me."

Take a look across this wide world. If there is anything in it that can satisfy your soul, examine it thoroughly. After you have done so, come and consider me in my glory, beauty, and excellency. Behold my attributes and see if you do not find enough in me to warrant your acceptance. All this—and more than eye can see, ear can hear,

or heart can conceive—I offer to you, if you will but have me. *"Lo, I will be thy God."*

God is the First Mover

God begins with us before we begin with Him: *"I will bring them,"* says God, *"into the bond of the covenant."*

If He offers, let us embrace the offer. If He leads the way, let us follow Him step by step. Do not prescribe conditions to God. Do not presume to set the terms of peace. Instead, take God and Christ on their terms. Submit to the conditions of the Covenant as the Lord prescribes, for this is true conformity to His gracious offers.

Faith's Response to the Offer

In offering Christ, God often plants seeds of faith in the hearts of those He intends to bring to Himself. Faith's work in receiving this offer can be seen in the following steps:

1. Faith Recognises the Blessedness of the Covenant

Hearing of the great blessings promised in the Covenant of Grace, faith stirs up the heart to consider the happiness of those who are in covenant with God:

"Blessed art thou, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord."

The soul reflects:

"What nation is there on earth like thy people, even like Israel, whom God has redeemed for Himself?"

There was a time, perhaps, when the soul counted the proud, the rich, or the honoured as blessed, placing its happiness in riches, status, or human favour. But now, these are seen as worthless. Faith transforms our perspective, enabling us to echo the Psalmist:

"Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."

2. Faith Kindles a Longing Desire for the Covenant's Blessings

Faith, by revealing the goodness of the Covenant, cannot help but stir up a longing desire for it. Desire naturally springs from the recognition of good.

Faith operates both in the understanding and the will:

- In the **understanding**, it opens the eyes to see and discern the blessings of the Covenant.
- In the **will**, it pursues and desires to obtain the grace revealed.

These desires are not faint or weak but earnest, eager, and fervent. Scripture often describes them as thirsting, panting, or even gasping after God:

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

It is a desire that cannot be satisfied by anything short of God Himself.

3. Faith Awakens Hope in the Heart to Obtain Covenant Blessings

Faith, even in its earliest stages, stirs in the heart a faint hope of enjoying the blessings of the Covenant. Though desire may be strong, hope of attaining these blessings often begins feeble and weak. Thus,

faith occupies itself with many thoughts. The soul longs to be joined to Christ but, overwhelmed by the sense of sin, often stands as the publican in the temple, “*afar off*” (Luke 18:13). Faith may not yet have the strength to speak directly to God but, like Jonah, it looks toward His holy temple (Jonah 2:4).

Picture a weak and speechless infant, lying sick in its cradle, able only to gaze at its mother for help. In a similar way, faith in its infancy expresses its desires through a mere upward look toward Heaven, as Jehoshaphat once said: “*Our eyes are upon thee*” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

The soul feels its deep need and earnestly desires relief, but the awareness of unworthiness and the demands of the law strike such fear into the heart that it dares not draw near. Consider Israel at Mount Sinai. When God proclaimed, “*I am the Lord thy God,*” what was this but His gracious offer to enter into a covenant with them? Yet the terrifying thunder and lightning made them afraid to approach (Exodus 20:19).

Likewise, the trembling soul hears the Lord saying, “*I am the Lord thy God,*” but it hesitates, feeling unworthy. It cries inwardly, “*What am I, or what is my father’s house, that I should enter into covenant with the Most High God?*” Unquiet and restless, the soul hears of peace with God but does not yet experience it. Faith continually sets the mind to meditate upon the promises, invitations, and encouragements of God’s Word, struggling to sustain hope amidst fear and doubt.

4. Faith Resolves to Seek God’s Throne and Plead for Grace

Faith stirs in the heart a resolution to approach God and plead for mercy. As the Ninevites wondered, “*Who can tell if God will turn*

and repent?” (Jonah 3:9), so the soul reasons, “It may be the Lord will be gracious to me.”

This hope breeds resolve, much like the lepers in Samaria who, facing certain death if they stayed put, determined to seek help from the Arameans (2 Kings 7:3-4). Similarly, Esther, knowing all was lost unless she acted, resolved to approach the king, saying, *“If I perish, I perish”* (Esther 4:16).

The soul, recognising its peril if it remains in its natural state, resolves to go to God. When the Lord says, *“Seek my face,”* the soul replies, *“Thy face, Lord, will I seek”* (Psalm 27:8). When He says, *“Come unto me,”* the soul answers, *“Behold, Lord, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God”* (Jeremiah 3:22).

In this state, the soul lays its burdens before God. It laments its sinfulness and rebellion, sending up a volley of sighs, groans, and cries. It confesses with grief and mourning all its past iniquities, smiting its thigh with repentant Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:19). Lying low at God’s footstool, the soul humbly acknowledges His righteousness in condemning it. Yet, amidst its unworthiness, it pleads for mercy, saying:

“Lord, I have no reason why Thou shouldst not condemn me, but if Thou wilt receive me, Thy mercy shall be glorified in me. O let Thy mercy shine forth! Take away all iniquity and receive me graciously.”

Thus, the soul pleads for grace, casting itself entirely upon God’s covenant promises.

5. Faith Watches for God’s Response

As the soul earnestly pleads, faith remains vigilant, eagerly awaiting God’s answer. Like a prisoner at the bar listens intently to every word

of the judge, hoping for a word of mercy, so does the soul carefully watch for any sign of God's favour. It listens for a whisper of comfort, an intimation of peace, or a word of grace.

Faith mirrors the posture of Ben-Hadad's servants, who hung on every word from the King of Israel to find hope for their master's life (1 Kings 20:31-32). Similarly, the soul cries, "*O let me hear joy and gladness*" (Psalm 51:8) and resolves, "*I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace unto His people*" (Psalm 85:8).

The vigilant soul longs to hear God's voice of pardon and peace, knowing that even a single word from Him can bring light and life to the weary heart.

O soul, let faith stir in you a longing for God's covenant blessings. Resolve to approach His throne with humility and boldness. Confess your unworthiness, plead His promises, and listen for His gracious answer. In this way, you will find peace and rest for your soul, for He is faithful to speak peace to those who seek Him.

6. Faith's Behaviour While Awaiting an Answer

1. When God Does Not Answer

Sometimes God delays His answer, and faith responds by persisting in its pursuit, crying out to Him with renewed strength. Faith resolves never to give up until the Lord either grants deliverance or decrees otherwise. If the Lord chooses to destroy, faith still clings to Him, choosing to perish at His feet, much like Joab, who refused to leave the altar and declared, "*I will die here*" (1 Kings 2:30).

Even Christ, when no deliverance appeared during His agony in Gethsemane, "*prayed more earnestly*" (Luke 22:44). Similarly, a

soul in spiritual anguish will redouble its prayers when help does not come at first. Faith becomes urgent, and the more God appears to delay, the more fervently faith pleads. It wrestles with God, like Jacob with the angel, refusing to accept denial and crying, “*Bless me, even me also! O send me not away without a blessing!*” (Genesis 27:34).

2. When God Answers in Part

Sometimes God provides a partial answer, speaking out of a dark cloud and giving a small measure of relief without offering full peace. He may say, as He did to the woman caught in sin, “*Go thy way, and sin no more*” (John 8:11), rather than, “*Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven.*”

Such partial answers give faith a glimmer of hope. The soul begins to plead anew, echoing Moses: “*O Lord, Thou hast begun to show grace unto Thy servant; go on, Lord, to manifest unto me all Thy goodness*” (Deuteronomy 3:24). Faith, though trembling and feeble, takes a tentative hold on the Covenant of Grace, drawing strength from the knowledge that its prayers have not been in vain.

3. When God Answers Fully

At times, God grants a fuller, more satisfying answer. He applies a specific promise to the conscience by His Spirit, allowing the soul to experience the comfort of His presence or of His Word more deeply than ever before. To such a soul, He says: “*Fear not, for I am thy God*” (Isaiah 41:10).

Faith responds boldly, embracing the promise with open arms. The Apostle calls this “*embracing the promises*” (Hebrews 11:13), which signifies an affectionate, wholehearted reception. Like Simeon, who held the infant Christ in his arms, the soul welcomes Christ and the

promises of God, laying them in the bosom of its heart to rest there forever.

At this moment, the Covenant is sealed between God and the soul. The soul possesses God in Christ as its own, finds rest in Him, and praises Him for His mercy, just as Simeon did, proclaiming: “*Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation*” (Luke 2:29-30). The soul commits itself entirely and eternally to God’s revealed goodness and mercy.

O my soul, have you thus gradually come to touch the golden sceptre of Christ? Is your hand given to God? Then you are entered into a Covenant of Peace. Christ’s offering of the Covenant of Grace and your receiving it bear a sweet harmony and perfect conformity.

2. Keeping Covenant with God

As God in Christ keeps Covenant with us, so we, through Christ, must be careful to keep Covenant with Him. In earthly matters, covenants are guarded with great diligence. How much more should we honour our spiritual covenant with God?

It is not enough to merely enter into a Covenant with Him; we must strive to keep it faithfully. While God has never, and will never, break His Covenant, humanity has already broken the first Covenant of Works. Let us take heed not to break the second Covenant of Grace, for there will be no further covenant to redeem us if we trample upon this one.

The Lord promises blessings to those who remain faithful: “*The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children, to such as keep His covenant*” (Psalm 103:17-18). Let us, therefore, mirror His

faithfulness, walking steadfastly in His ways and keeping His Covenant with fear and love.

There is much to consider in keeping the Covenant, so allow me to elaborate. Various acts of faith are necessary for this duty. Let us explore them in detail:

1. Faith Looks to God's Command as Its Rule

In keeping the Covenant, faith always keeps its eye on God's command. Just as faith relies on the promise for things to be believed, so it turns to God's command for things to be practiced. Faith will not present strange fire before the Lord (Leviticus 10:1). It knows that God accepts only what aligns with His will.

2. Faith Directs All Things to the Glory of God

Faith ensures that all we do is for the glory of God, who is our source and end. As Scripture says:

"None of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:7–8).

Again, Christ *"died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them"* (2 Corinthians 5:15). God claims this as His due: *"You shall glorify Me"* (Psalm 50:15). Faith answers, *"I will glorify Thee forever."*

3. Faith Shields the Soul from Hindrances

Faith guards against the obstacles that hinder keeping the Covenant, such as:

- **The Allurements of the World**

The world tempts with its promises: *"All these will I give you, if*

you will bow down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9). But faith overcomes the world by presenting far better things in Christ.

- **Crosses and Sufferings**

Afflictions and persecutions for Christ’s name may tempt us to falter, but faith helps us endure, making us conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). Like Jesus, who *“for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame”* (Hebrews 12:2), faith holds fast by keeping the end in view.

4. Faith Finds Encouragement in God’s Gracious Acceptance

Faith assures us that the Lord regards and accepts our efforts to keep the Covenant. Scripture says, *“In every nation, he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* (Acts 10:35).

This assurance is a great encouragement to well-doing. What servant would not strive if they knew their work was accepted by their master? Faith confirms that God takes notice of every prayer, holy desire, and good deed. As the prophet said:

“Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and thought upon His name” (Malachi 3:16).

5. Faith Draws Strength from Christ to Keep the Covenant

Faith not only encourages but also equips the soul with strength and grace to keep the Covenant. Consider how faith operates in this:

- **Faith Looks to Christ’s Fulness**

Faith sees Christ as possessing all fulness of grace. *“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell”* (Colossians

1:19). While others receive grace in measure, Christ has the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).

- **Faith Knows Christ Shares His Grace with Us**

Christ's fulness is not for Himself alone but for us. "*He received gifts for men*" (Psalm 68:18), and from His fulness, we receive "*grace upon grace*" (John 1:16). His wisdom makes us wise, His meekness makes us meek, and His patience makes us patient.

- **Faith Trusts in Christ's Faithfulness**

Faith acknowledges Christ as faithful in distributing grace. "*He is faithful in all His house*" (Hebrews 3:2). As He has received gifts, He faithfully bestows them upon His people. Thus, "*He received gifts for men*" becomes "*He gave gifts to men*" (Ephesians 4:8).

- **Faith Seeks Grace Through Prayer**

Faith leads us to seek grace from God through prayer. Whether we need wisdom, meekness, patience, or any other grace, faith brings us to the fountain of Christ's fulness. Faith waits at the promise and draws strength for the inner person, much like a child nourished by milk drawn from its mother.

By prayerful faith, we draw grace from Christ, enabling us to fulfil the Covenant we have entered into with God.

6. As Faith Strengthens, So It Restores Us in Covenant-Keeping

If at times, through temptation or weakness, we falter in keeping the Covenant, faith restores and recovers us to our former estate. I do not say that the Covenant between God and us can be broken, for it cannot. While we may offend God and fail in His service, the

Covenant of Grace endures unless we willfully reject God, abandon Him, and choose another master, lord, or husband. This, however, a true believer cannot do. Though he may fall—and fall often—he does not remain fallen but rises again. He may turn aside, but he inevitably returns to the path of the Covenant.

What a comforting truth this is! Christians, we may walk weakly at times in keeping the Covenant; our feet may slip, and we may stray from God's path. Yet faith brings us back to Him. Faith shames us for our ingratitude in the face of such grace. It reminds us of the promises of God:

"Return unto Me, and I will return unto you" (Malachi 3:7).

"You have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord" (1 Samuel 12:20).

"For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people" (1 Samuel 12:22).

By recalling these and other promises, faith encourages us to turn back to God. It leads us to take words upon our lips and plead His covenant of grace. It was this work of faith that brought Peter back to Christ after his denial, whereas Judas, lacking such faith, was consumed by despair and unable to rise again.

O my soul, are you familiar with these acts of faith, enabling you in some measure to keep covenant with God? If so, there is a sweet conformity between you and Jesus.

Honouring God as His Covenant People

God in Christ has highly honoured us as His people. So, through Christ, we should highly honour Him as our God. This is the ultimate purpose of the Covenant, and I conclude with this thought:

O my soul, be like God and bear His image as your Father. He has humbled Himself to exalt you; therefore, humble yourself to exalt Him. Seek in every way to magnify His name.

We are often eager to enter into covenant with God for our own benefit—that we may sit on thrones and inherit a kingdom. But our primary aim must be to enthrone God, to glorify Him above all. As Moses declared:

"Ascribe greatness to our God" (Deuteronomy 32:3).

Make it your goal to exalt Him, that He may be praised for His grace in making us His people and taking us into covenant with Himself. Honour Him as God, but honour Him even more abundantly as your God.

Who should glorify Him if not His people? The world does not know Him. The wicked do not seek after God; He is not in their thoughts (Psalm 10:4). Shall the God who stretched out the heavens, laid the earth's foundations, and formed man upon it receive no glory? Surely not! The Lord Himself declares:

"This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (Isaiah 43:21).

God will be glorified by His people, whom He has chosen for Himself. He will receive glory from all who draw near to Him.

How Should We Honour God?

I answer:

1. We Must Esteem Him as Chief and Highest.

Kings do not consider themselves honoured unless they are set above all other men. In the same way, we must exalt God in our

thoughts, acknowledging Him as supreme over all creation. This is why God's people have used expressions that elevate Him beyond any comparison.

Moses said, *"Who is like unto Thee among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"* (Exodus 15:11).

David declared, *"Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God besides Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears"* (2 Samuel 7:22).

Solomon prayed, *"Lord God of Israel, there is no God like unto Thee in heaven above or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants"* (1 Kings 8:23).

Micah proclaimed, *"Who is a God like unto Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes by the transgressions of the remnant of His heritage?"* (Micah 7:18).

In this way, we too should lift up our thoughts until we come to a holy ecstasy and wonder at God's infinite greatness.

2. We Must Count It Our Greatest Honour to Be in Covenant with God.

Whether we are esteemed or despised in this world, we must see our highest dignity and blessing in being God's covenant people.

If we are honoured, we should regard this as our greatest honour—that God is our God. If we are lowly and despised, we should find this enough: that God has lifted us up to be His people.

Christians, when the world counts us as nothing, we should quiet ourselves in this truth: God is our God. When we are persecuted, imprisoned, or distressed, we can say with Jacob, *"I have enough"* (Genesis 33:11). Why? Because the Lord has had mercy on us and

taken us into covenant with Himself. In doing so, we bear witness to Heaven and Earth that God is better to us than corn, wine, oil, or anything this world has to offer.

3. We Must Submit to God's Word and Follow His Example.

We honour God by submitting to the authority of every word He speaks and by conforming ourselves to His example. This means striving to become followers of God and imitating His virtues.

Just as children honour their parents by obeying their commands and imitating their godly behaviour, we cannot honour God more than by humbling ourselves at His feet to receive His word. We honour Him when we renounce the world's ways and strive to be "*followers of God as dear children*" (Ephesians 5:1).

Think on this: When we conform to God's ways, we reflect His holiness and purity, for we become "*holy as He is holy*" (1 Peter 1:16) and "*pure as He is pure*" (1 John 3:3). This, above all, brings honour and glory to our good and gracious God.

Looking to Jesus Before His Coming in the Flesh

Thus far, we have considered Jesus as our Saviour during that dark time before His coming in the flesh. Our next task is to behold Him carrying on the great work of man's salvation in His first coming—His incarnation.

MONERGISM BOOKS

Looking Unto Jesus, The Third Book, From Creation Until His Forst Coming by Isaac Ambrose, Copyright © 2023

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By downloading this eBook, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions January 2025. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068