

that have this faith, go away in peace; be of good comfort! This everlasting covenant betwixt the Father and the Son is yours; your good was promoted and secured in this treaty and federal engagement. How much doth this covenant speak for the benefit of believers! If you be such, it is all yours. By it you are already brought into a state of grace; by it you shall hereafter be brought into a state of glory. Upon this covenant Christ now "sees" you as "his seed." Upon this covenant you shall hereafter see him, as your Saviour, face to face unto eternity. To this Father, to this Son, with the Holy Spirit, be glory for evermore!

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## SERMON XII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

### THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*—Hebrews viii. 6.

THE general design of this epistle is my special design in this text, namely, to demonstrate to you, that you live under the best of gracious dispensations; that Jesus Christ, our deservedly-adored Mediator of the new covenant, "hath obtained a more excellent ministry," and, by the faithful discharge of that ministry, more excellent benefits, than either Moses, the messenger-mediator, or the Levitical priests, the stationary-mediators, of the old covenant.

*But now*—"Now" is not here a note of time, but of opposition; as in Rom. vii. 17: "Now then;" that is, after the law received; so Grotius. Or if you will have it to note the time, it is the time of the gospel, this last time.

*Hath he obtained*—Not by usurpation, but by election: he hath of divine grace freely received,\*

*A more excellent ministry*—Λειτουργος, "a minister," is he that doeth something at the command of another: (Heb. i. 7:) and so it is said of magistrates, "They are God's ministers." (Rom. xiii. 6.) But it is chiefly spoken of the priests: "The priests that minister;" (Neh. x. 39;) because they offer those things that God requires, they are said "to minister." (Exod. xxviii. 35, 43.) Christ's ministry is more excellent than the Levitical; he executes it partly on earth, and partly in heaven. But he amplifies the excellency, chiefly from the excellency of the covenant; † and therefore it follows,

\* ANSELM.

† PAREUS.

*By how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant*—If you take the old covenant for the whole dispensation under the Old Testament, as well gospel-promises as those things which are more strictly legal, then we may truly say, [that] the old and new covenant are for substance the same; and therefore the comparison relates rather to the form than to the matter of the covenant.\* The covenant of grace is dispensed with more latitude, clearness, and power of the Holy Ghost; and therefore it may be called “a better covenant.” †

*Which was established upon better promises*—Ο μαλιστα αυτοις ευφραινει τιθησι. † “He names that which may most affect them with joy,” in saying it is “established upon better promises.” All covenants consist in promises. The covenants of kings and princes amongst themselves consist in promises of either not hurting or helping one another. The covenants of princes and people consist in promises: the prince promises justice, clemency, and defence; the people promise love, obedience, and gratitude. So in the covenant of grace, the first and chief part whereof is, “I will be thy God, and of thy seed;” and we promise faith, obedience, and worship. The promises of the old covenant run more upon temporal good things; the promises of the new covenant are chiefly remission of sins, sanctification by the Spirit, &c. And the covenant is said to be “established;” the word is *νενομοθετηται* as if he had said, *legislatum* [“it was enacted”]. Law and covenant are joined together in scripture: “They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.” (Psalm lxxviii. 10.) The new covenant containeth certain precepts, which every one must obey that will obtain the promise.

Thus you have the meaning of the words. The OBSERVATION I shall commend to you, is this:—

#### OBSERVATION.

*The gospel-covenant (or the new covenant) is the best covenant that ever God made with man.*

I. I will not stay you long in the general notion of a covenant.—The word sometimes signifies an absolute promise of God, without any re-stipulation; as God’s engagement to Noah: “And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.” (Gen. ix. 11.) Whatever man’s carriage shall be, God promises that he will no more drown the world. So the promise of perseverance: “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Heb. viii. 10.) Our perseverance doth not lean upon imperfect grace, but upon divine favour. But I wave this, and shall speak of covenants as they note the free promise of God, with re-stipulation of our duty. §

A covenant is *amicus status inter federatos*: so Martin: “a friendly state between allies.” Pray consider the several covenants the

\* CALVIN.

† DIODATI.

‡ CHRYSOSTOMUS.

§ CAMERO.

scripture mentions: and they are three; namely, the natural, legal, and gospel-covenant. *The natural*, commonly called "the covenant of works," that flourished till the first sin. *The legal covenant*, that flourished till the ascension of Christ, and the pouring-out of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; though it began to languish from John's preaching, and began to grow old throughout the course of Christ's ministry. *The gospel-covenant*, that flourisheth from Christ till the end of the world.

I shall speak but little of the first, something more of the second, but dwell upon the last.

1. *The natural covenant* is that whereby God, by the right of creation, doth require a perfect obedience of all mankind; and promiseth a most blessed life in Paradise to those that obey him, and threateneth eternal death to those that disobey him; that it may appear to all how he loves righteousness and holiness; how he hates impiety and wickedness. In this covenant I shall consider but these three things:—

(1.) *God's condescension, that he would enter into covenant with man.*—God was at liberty whether he would create man or not; and when God had made this glorious fabric, there could be no engagement upon him, beside his own goodness, to keep it from ruin. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matt. xx. 15.) But man, having an understanding and will to comprehend and observe the laws given him, had a natural obligation to duty, which can no way be dissolved: there is no power in heaven or earth [that] can disoblige man from loving and obeying God. Now, that God will deal with man not *summo jure*, not "imperiously and threateningly;" but *magna comitate*, that God will deal with man "as with his friend;" and though he may give what laws he will, yet he will give none but what are easy, and yet make them more easy by bountifully rewarding an easy obedience,—this speaks wonderful condescension.

(2.) The second thing considerable in the natural covenant is *man's duty*.—Which consisted in the knowledge and love of God; whence would have proceeded piety to God, justice and love to man. This was man's natural duty; for we must distinguish the duty from the symbol of duty. Natural duty consisteth in those things that are good in their own nature, and not in those things that are only good because God commands them. The law about the forbidden fruit was only for the trial of man's obedience; for had not the divine command intervened, it would have been as lawful for man to have eaten of that tree, as any other tree in Paradise. But,

(3.) The last thing I shall mention concerning this natural covenant, is *the promise of reward*.—Now that consisted in a perpetual life, flowing with all manner of good things, agreeable to the soul and body of man in that perfect estate.

2. *The second covenant was the legal.*—Now the legal covenant is that whereby God did require of the people of Israel obedience to the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law; and to that obedience, he pro-

mised all sorts of blessings in the land of Canaan; and to the disobedient, he denounced most severe curses and death; and all to this end, that he might bring them to the future Messiah.

Here I shall propose the same considerations as in the former covenant, only something more. Therefore consider,

(1.) *God's condescension* is singularly observable, that ever he would enter into another covenant with man when the first was broken.—This Moses useth as a mighty argument to persuade Israel to observe the covenant: “Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever.” (Deut. iv. 32—40.)

(2.) Consider *man's duty in the legal covenant*.—And that is obedience to the moral law; to which was added the ceremonial law, for a rule and direction in the worship of God; and the judicial law, which was their divine policy for the government of the state.

All these are comprehended in the Ten Commandments. But the more particular their directions were, the more plain was their duty. And the truth is, it was but need that they should have particular direction, when their legal covenant neither admitted of faith in the Redeemer, nor repentance of sin; for pardon of sin and curse for sin are inconsistent: “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” (Gal. iii. 10.) As many as depend upon the works of the law for justification are under the curse; and the law discovered no other way of justification but by works.

(3.) The third thing considerable in the legal covenant is *the pro-*

*mise that God made to those that obeyed it.*—And that was, perpetual happiness in the land of Canaan.

By the way, to prevent mistakes, I do not say, neither will the scripture at all warrant any such assertion as, that the fathers under the Old Testament had only temporal promises. They had salvation promised them, and pardon of sin promised them; but thanks to the gospel for those promises. The apostle tells us: "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. iii. 17.) The morning-star of the gospel-covenant that shone upon Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the legal covenant was given, did shine through that dark dispensation.

But to speak of the legal promises as legal, so they are of temporal good things; and they were made to works, not to faith: "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." (Rom. iv. 4.)

(4.) The fourth thing considerable in this covenant, which had no place at all in the former, is *a mediator*.—Now the mediator of the covenant strictly legal was Moses; for that needed only a mere man, it not admitting of satisfaction nor reconciliation, of mercy nor pardon. Moses might serve as a messenger to make known the mind of God unto the people: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord." (Deut. v. 5.) In the natural covenant, communion with God was natural unto man, and so there needed no mediator. In the legal covenant, man was rather considered as what he should be, than what he was: and so a mere man was able in the name of the people to promise obedience, and in the name of God to promise a reward; and this Moses did. You have both very plain in Deut. v. The people do, as it were, say, "Go to God from us upon this errand:" "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it:" (verse 27 :) and God doth as it were say, "Go, dismiss them with this blessing, if they will be obedient:" "And the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say to them, Get you into your tents again." (Verses 28—30.) As if he had said, "If they will keep their promise, assure them I will keep mine." And thus much concerning the covenant strictly legal.

3. *The third covenant is the gospel-covenant.*—And here, beloved, here is the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all our salvation, and all our desire." (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) Here is the "better covenant, established upon better promises." But I must explain it, before I admire it. The gospel-covenant is that whereby

God, upon the condition propounded of faith in Christ, promiseth remission of sins in his blood, and a heavenly life; and that for this end, that he might show forth the riches of his mercy.\*

Here I shall propose the same considerations as in the former covenant; only still something more, and more comfortably considerable, in the consideration of the persons contracting, namely, God and man, according to the proposed method.

(1.) Consider *God's gracious condescension*.—And now, beloved, that I have named God's gracious condescension, were my heart but duly affected with it, it would constrain me to stop, and put in a large parenthesis of admiration before I should speak a word more. Will God, after the loss of the natural communion, wherein he created man; will God, when man dreads his majesty, and trembles at his revenging justice; will God then, as a merciful Father, enter into a covenant of peace with poor undone sinners, affrighted with the sense of sin and wrath? O the incomprehensible condescension of such unsearchable riches of grace, that grace should abound according to sin's abounding! when sin overflowed all its banks, that God should make a way through the deep into the heavenly Canaan! Never can we enough admire such ecstasying grace. This is the first thing considerable.

(2.) The second thing considerable, is *the duty which God requires in this gospel-covenant*.—And that is faith; faith whereby we embrace the remedy offered us. We want a pardon; and nothing but faith can receive it. We want perfect righteousness; and nothing but faith can furnish us with it. We want that which may make this covenant effectual to us, and make it a blessing to us; and nothing can do any of these things but faith. Faith is the antecedent condition, for which the reward is given.

(3.) The third thing considerable in the gospel-covenant, is *the promise*.—Now the promise of the gospel-covenant is comprehended in the word "salvation;" therefore the gospel is called "the salvation of God." (Acts xxviii. 28.) And this is the great business of Christ, to be a Saviour: "That thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." (Isai. xlix. 6.) When the angels preached the gospel, they thought they could not express their news in better language, than to tell people of salvation; that must needs be "great joy to all people." In short, when gospel-ministers come clad with "garments of salvation," as heralds do with the garments of their office, then saints may well "shout aloud for joy." (Psalm cxxxii. 16.) Now this promise of salvation contains all gospel-promises in it; but they are reduced to these four:

(i.) *Justification*.—This is a privilege which other covenants were unacquainted with; and without this what would become of poor sinful man? And this may well be the first great gospel-promise; I might name, not some verses, but whole chapters, to prove it: Rom. iv. and v.; Gal. iii. and iv. But, in a word, if you would know the preciousness of this promise, ask those that have but felt what sin is, and they will tell you.

• CAMERO.

(ii.) The second promise contained in gospel-salvation, is *sanctification*.—"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 2—4.) As if he had said, "The efficacy and power of the sanctifying Spirit, which gives life to believers, frees us from the tyranny of sin and death. And whereas the law, by reason of the corruption of our nature, could not make us pure and perfect, but rather kindled than extinguished corruption; God hath clothed his Son with our flesh, to take away the guilt and power of sin, that his perfect righteousness might be imputed to us, and fulfilled by us; that we might not live according to the motion of our sinful nature, but according to the motion of his Holy Spirit."

(iii.) The third promise is *the resurrection of the body*.—You know, the penalty of sin is the death of soul and body; though the soul be immortal, yet its being miserable for ever may sadly be called "an eternal death:" now let the guilt of sin be abolished, and you do therewith abolish the punishment of it; for guilt is only an obligation to punishment; let sin be pardoned, and the sinner is freed from death; and though believers die, yet it is as a corn of wheat falls into the ground,—they thereby obtain a multiplied life. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 54.)

(iv.) The last promise is *eternal life, a spiritual, blessed, and immortal life in heaven*.—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) The covenant of grace is excellently fitted to bring us to the chiefest good. Now the chiefest good consists in communion with God. That was broken by sin; and can never be perfectly recovered, till sin be abolished. Therefore when the guilt of sin is taken away by justification, and the filthiness of sin is taken away by sanctification, and the penalty of sin taken away by resurrection, then what can hinder our communion with God? When we have once obtained perfect holiness, nothing can hinder us of perfect happiness. Thus you have the promise of the gospel-covenant, which was the third considerable in it.

(4.) The fourth thing to be considered in the gospel-covenant, is *the Mediator of this better covenant*.—And that is Jesus Christ, God-man, blessed for ever. Through his dignity he hath purchased salvation: "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 12—14.) And he is not only the Author of eternal

salvation by his merit and efficacy, but the most absolute example and pattern to us, how we should walk, that we may obtain his purchased salvation: "God did predestinate us to be conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 49.) And this is the only covenant whereof Christ is Mediator. The first covenant needed no mediator; [of] the old covenant as legal, take it without its sprinkling of gospel, and so chiefly Moses [was a mediator], but in all respects mere men were mediators; but of the new covenant Christ was Mediator. But this I shall leave to be enlarged by another.

(5.) The fifth thing to be considered in the gospel-covenant, is *the efficacy of it*.—I did not so much as mention the efficacy of the former covenants; for there was never so much as any one made happy by them. It is sadly true, that the threatenings of punishment for the neglect of duty took hold of them; the threatenings seemed plainly to belong to the nature of those covenants; but in the gospel-covenant it is otherwise. For it is said in John iii. 36, Ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει, "The wrath of God abides;" which shows that the wrath was brought upon them by the violation of the former covenant: he speaks as of that which was upon them already.

But yet mistake not, as if refusing the gospel were no sin, or not punished. They sin more grievously that sin against gospel-love, than they that sin only against legal goodness; but wrath doth not properly belong to the essence of the gospel.

Thus you have the first thing I undertook; namely, *the nature of the covenant positively considered*.

II. The second is *the comparative excellency of the new covenant above others*.—I will be brief in showing its excellency above the covenant of works; more large in showing you how it is better than the old covenant of grace.

Only suppose, to prevent mistakes, that each covenant is in its own kind most perfect, and most accommodated to the state of the people, and to the purposes for which they were instituted.

This premised,

First, *The new covenant of grace is better than the covenant of nature*.—I forbear to speak of the agreement and difference of them: I shall speak only of the excellency of this better covenant.

1. The covenant of works was a declaration of God's justice, than which nothing can be more terrible to a guilty sinner; but the covenant of grace is a declaration of God's mercy in Christ. And let the overwhelmed conscience speak, Is not this better?

2. The foundation of the covenant of works was the creation of man, and the integrity of his nature; the foundation of the covenant of grace is man's redemption by Jesus Christ.

3. The promise of the covenant of works was eternal life in Paradise; the promise of the new covenant is eternal life in heaven.

4. The covenant of works had no mediator, no possibility of



recovering the least slip; the new covenant is ratified in the blood of the Son of God; it is composed on purpose for our relief.\* Thus the new covenant is better than the covenant of works.

Secondly. *The gospel-covenant is better than the old covenant of grace.*—Beloved, you may observe, I do not say “better than the covenant strictly legal;” but better than the whole dispensation which the Jews and all other believers lived under before Christ’s incarnation; better than the old doctrine of spiritual grace delivered by Moses and the prophets; openly promising eternal life unto the fathers, and the dull people of the Jews, under the condition of perfect obedience to the moral law, together with the intolerable burdens of legal rights, and yoke of most strait Mosaical policy; but covertly under the condition of repentance and faith in the future Messiah, prefigured in the shadows and types of ceremonies; that by this form of divine worship and policy a stiff-necked people might partly be tamed, and partly be brought to Christ, that lay hid under those ceremonies. So that in short, you see, the Old Testament, or the old covenant, (for by a metonymy they are chiefly one and the same thing; and the apostle plainly so expresseth himself: “Until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ;” 2 Cor. iii. 14; and this) contains these three things:—

1. The old kind of doctrine, which was openly and principally legal, covertly and less principally evangelical.
2. The old way of worship, and legal priesthood.
3. That Mosaical policy which was tied to one people.†

This covenant was made by God to Adam, presently after the fall; (Gen. iii. 15;) afterward to Abraham and his posterity. (Gen. xvii. 1, 2, 7, 8.) The symbol of this covenant was circumcision. (Verses 10—14.) I forbear further particularizing to whom it was often renewed and confirmed, whereupon it is called the covenants. (Rom. ix. 4; Eph. ii. 12.) Now the new covenant of reconciliation to God by Christ exhibited in the flesh, is the better covenant. The gospel is the table of the New Testament, *longè diviniór quàm smaragdina Hermetis*, “far beyond the emerald table of Hermes,” which the chymists vainly boast to yield the philosophers’ stone to enrich all persons, and the panacea that cures all diseases. Here is the “elect and precious stone.” (1 Peter ii. 6.)‡ But I will come to particulars; only premising this caution:—

#### CAUTION.

Let not any thing I shall say be interpreted as if I put a hostile contrariety between the old covenant and the new. In spiritual practice they yield spiritual help to each other. Justin Martyr saith, that grace is not according to the law, nor against the law, but above the law; therefore they are not *adversa*, but *diversa*.§ The gospel, in scripture, is called “the law;” (Isai. ii. 3;) only it is “the law of

† CAMERO. † PAREUS. † CROCI *Syntagma*. § “They are not opposed to each other, but severally different.”—EDIT.

faith," (Rom. iii. 27,) and "the law of the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 2.) Therefore when we advance the gospel, "do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 31.) "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. iii. 21.)

The believers in the Old Testament were saved by the free mercy of God in Christ:\* "He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Heb. ix. 15.) And their sacraments and ours sealed the same thing:† "They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 3, 4.)

This premised, I shall now show you the excellency of the gospel-covenant.

(I.) The gospel-covenant is a better covenant than the legal, *in respect of its original, and manner of patefaction.*—It is true, they have both one principal efficient cause; but the law may in some sort be known by nature. It was written in man's heart at the first; and the character is not wholly worn out: "The Gentiles show the work of the law written in their hearts;" (Rom. ii. 15;) but now the gospel was immediately manifested from God to the church alone: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 16, 17.) It so far transcends the capacity of human reason, that reason cannot so much as approve of it, when it is revealed, without inward illumination and persuasion of the Holy Ghost:‡ "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 14, 15.) And hereupon it is called "the new covenant;" not in respect of the time, that it had no being before the incarnation of Christ; but in respect of the knowledge of it. The knowledge of the legal covenant was born with us, and it was foreknown to nature; but the gospel-covenant was wholly new, revealed from the bosom of the Father; it was administered by new officers, confirmed by new sacraments, let into the hearts of people by new pourings-out of the Spirit. Therefore the apostle prays:§ "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

\* GERHARDI *Loci Communes*.  
ALTINGIUS.

† MACCOVII *Loci Communes*.

‡ GERHARDUS,

§ MACCOVIUS.

the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Eph. i. 17, 18.) God would never have instituted the legal covenant but for the gospel's sake : "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." (Gal. iii. 24.) The law was a sharp schoolmaster, by means whereof the refractory and contumacious minds of the Jewish people might be tamed ; for "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.)

(II.) The gospel-covenant is better than the legal, *in respect of the manner of it.*—The law was a doctrine of works, commanding and prescribing what we should be, and what we should do : "And the law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them, shall live in them." (Gal. iii. 12.) But now the gospel requires faith in Christ for righteousness and salvation : "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." (Rom. iii. 21.) "Therefore," saith Augustine, "faith obtains what the law commands." We have no help from the law.\* The condition of the law is simply impossible ; it finds us sinners, and leaves no place for repentance.† And notwithstanding the sprinkling of gospel that there was with the law, yet it was but obscure. And that shall be the next particular.

(III.) The gospel-covenant is better than the legal, *in respect of the manner of holding forth Christ in it.*—Though the gospel is one and the same whereby all saints are saved in all times ; (for there was not one way of salvation then, and another since : "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins ;" Acts x. 43 ;) yet the doctrine of the gospel was more obscure in the Old Testament ; partly through prophecies of things a great way off, and partly through types. Christ was wrapped up in shadows and figures.‡ In the gospel, the body of those shadows and the truth of those types is exhibited : the land of Canaan was a type of heaven ; Israel according to the flesh was a type of Israel according to the Spirit ; the spirit of bondage, of the Spirit of adoption ; the blood of the sacrifices, of the blood of Christ. The glory of divine grace was reserved for Christ's coming ; they had at most but star-light before Christ's coming. When Christ first came, it was but day-break with them. Christ was at first but as a morning-star ; (2 Peter i. 19 ;) though soon after he was as the sun in the firmament. (Mal. iv. 2.) The apostle saith, "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things ;" (Heb. x. 1 ;) and in this respect it was that the apostle saith, the gospel was promised to the fathers, but performed to us ; (Rom. i. 1, 2 ;) it was hid to them, and revealed to us ; (Rom. xvi. 25, 26 ;) and not only by fulfilling of prophecies, which we may see by the comparing of scripture, but by the Spirit : "The mystery of Christ in other ages,

\* GERHARDUS. † CAMERO. ‡ *Umbratili et per se inefficaci ceremoniarum observatione, &c.*—AMTRALDUS. "By a shadowy and of itself inefficacious observance of ceremonies."—EDIT.

was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles, and prophets by the Spirit." (Eph. iii. 4, 5.) They had but a poor discovery of Christ; but we have the riches of this mystery made known unto us.\* (Col. i. 26, 27.) The old covenant leads to Christ; but it is a great way about; the gospel-covenant goeth directly to him. Their ceremonies were numerous, burdensome, and obscure; those things that represent Christ to us, are few, easy, and clear.†

(IV.) The gospel-covenant is the better covenant, *in respect of the form of it*.—The promises are better promises. The promises of the law are conditional, and require perfect obedience: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them:" (Lev. xviii. 5 :) the condition, you see, is impossible. Beloved, pray mistake not; there is express mention of eternal life in the Old Testament: "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." (Isai. xlv. 17.) "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. xii. 2.) And that the law cannot save us,—that is accidental, in respect of our defilement with sin, and our weakness, that we cannot fulfil the condition: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good:" (Rom. vii. 12 :) and it is the word of life: "Who received the lively oracles to give unto us." (Acts vii. 38.) And the apostle brings-in Abraham and David for examples of justification by faith; (Rom. iv. 6, 13 :) but yet their promises were chiefly temporal. We have the promise of temporal good things in the New Testament, as well as they in the Old, only with the exception of the cross: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions:" (Mark x. 29, 30 :) that was the exception, "with persecutions."

We have three notable advantages in our temporal promises, beyond what they had in theirs.

1. The old covenant had special promises of temporal good things in the land of Canaan, for the preserving of their Mosaical policy, until the time of the Messiah to be born of that people; promises of long life, &c. The new covenant hath promises of all good things necessary, without any such clog. All good works shall be rewarded; and he promiseth to give a present temporal reward, in part of payment: "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free;" (Eph. vi. 8 :) and, which is more: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

2. The temporal good things promised in the Old Testament were

\* ALTINGIUS.

† *Synopsis purioris Theologiæ.*

symbolical, they prefigured spiritual benefits by Christ; we have them without any such adjoined significations. They had "a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 17.) They had a more sparing taste of heavenly good things in earthly benefits; we have a more straight and direct way unto eternal life.

3. Promises of temporal good things were in the old covenant more frequent, in the new covenant more rare; and this I name as their excellency, because they are thrown in as mere additions to spiritual promises: \* "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) This for temporal promises. And for spiritual promises, which are the best of the gospel-covenant, not only the conditions of those promises are more easy, (for whereas it was, "Do this, and live;" Gal. iii. 12; now it is, "Believe, and thou shalt not come into condemnation," † John iii. 18,) but the condition is also promised: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi. 31—34.) God's hearty good-will is herein manifested: "I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (Jer. xxxii. 41.) If you say, "These are Old-Testament promises, and belonged to them to whom they were spoken, and were not only prophetic, so as to concern another people;" ‡ I grant it: "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." (Rom. iii. 19.) But they had not that efficacy of the Spirit to make these promises so effectual, as was prophesied and promised for the times of the gospel: § "And it shall come to pass afterward," (mark that, "afterward,") "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," &c. (Joel ii. 28.) The measure of the Spirit which they did receive tended mostly to bondage; (Gal. iv. 24, 25;) but the Spirit is to us "a Spirit of adoption." (Rom. viii. 15.) And therefore the gospel is specially called "the word of God's grace;" (Acts xx. 32;) as if all the grace that God had formerly expressed had been nothing in comparison of this. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. vi. 14.) Law and grace are opposed, as condemnation and mercy. Thus the gospel is the better covenant, in respect of the promises of it.

\* ALTINGIUS.  
*patriar. Theologiz.*

† CAMERO.

‡ CALVINI *Institutiones.*

§ *Synopsis*

(V.) The gospel is the better covenant, *in respect of the effects of it*.—The old covenant shows us sin, doth accuse us, and declares us guilty before the judgment of God: “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. iii. 19, 20.) It subjects us under the curse, and condemneth sinners, for the transgressing of God’s commands: “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.” (Deut. xxvii. 26.) So, Gal. iii. 10. It is the ministry of death. (2 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) But now, the gospel,—that proclaims pardon of sin, and lifts up with quickening consolation. (Isai. lxi. 1, 2.) In the law, God is considered as reproving sin, and approving righteousness; in the gospel, as remitting sin, and repairing righteousness; and therefore the word of the gospel is called “good seed;” (Matt. xiii. 23;) “the seed of regeneration;” (1 Peter i. 23;) “the word of reconciliation;” (2 Cor. v. 18, 19;) “the ministration of the Spirit;” (2 Cor. iii. 8;) “the word of faith;” (Rom. x. 8;) “the word of life;” (Phil. ii. 16;) “the power of God;” (Rom. i. 16;) that whereby “the righteousness of God is manifest.” (Rom. iii. 21.) The destruction of unbelievers is not the end of the gospel; but that is through their own fault, *eventus adventitius*,\* “an accidental event.” God abundantly declares in the gospel, that he delights not in the death of sinners; but in the saving translation of them, by faith and repentance, “from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (Col. i. 13.) The best effect of the legal covenant is the bringing [of] man into the gospel-covenant; and pray observe how, when it is most effectual, it turns over the sinner to the better covenant.

1. It *discovers sin to us*.—“I had not known sin but by the law.” (Rom. vii. 7.) But wherefore is it that we know sin at all? That we might be compelled to seek reparation in the gospel-covenant: “The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Gal. iii. 21, 22.)

2. The old covenant *restrains sin*.—There is a natural stupidity in men’s consciences; but then when the dreadful threatenings of the law still sound in their ears, man is somewhat affrighted, and hath some reluctancy; though afterwards the law of the mind is led captive by the law of the members, and man forbears sin, as having a bridle put upon him, *ringente interim et intus tumultuante appetitu corrupto*; † though he be restrained from sin, yet it is but a kind of coercion. It ends best, when it ends in a spontaneous and voluntary inclination of the mind to forsake sin, and hate it; and that is the work of the gospel-covenant.

3. The old covenant *works fear*.—When sin hath been committed, and the raging of the affections is a little appeased, then the mind

\* POLANI *Syntagma*. † “His corrupt desires, in the mean while, inwardly fretting and tumultuating.”—EDIT.

returns unto itself, and the Spirit, that was resisted, brings to remembrance those grievous and unavoidable threatenings which the law denounceth; whereupon there follows *μεταμελεια*, a legal "repentance;" that is, "a wishing that the fact were undone," and that he had not committed the sin that causeth that trouble. But not that he is any better than before. For show him a new temptation, and he presently runs after it, though under trouble of mind, and though expectation of wrath, incredibly full of anguish, doth sting and vex him intolerably. But now, beloved, where this ends well, there the Spirit insinuates something to put him upon panting after a Redeemer, and to get power against sin; and this brings unspeakable joy, and begets peace past all understanding. Thus you see, the best effects of the law is the bringing [of] men to the gospel, which shows the fifth excellency of the gospel-covenant.

(VI.) The gospel-covenant is the better covenant, *in respect of its objects, or persons taken into covenant*.—And that under a double consideration,—their *multiplicity*, and their *quality*.

1. *In respect of the number*.—The old covenant belonged only to one people; the new, to Jews and Gentiles. Abraham and his posterity were taken into covenant, and all the world beside were excluded. Those few others that were admitted, it was by extraordinary grace, and they were, as it were, planted into Abraham's family; but now the partition-wall is broken down, which, as it were, shut up the mercy of God in the confines of Israel. Now peace is proclaimed to those that are far off, as well as to those that are near, (Eph. ii. 17.) that they might become one people. This is a great mystery. (Col. i. 26.) Certainly, all may well say so, as we are poor Gentiles, and we are made nigh by "the blood of his cross." (Verses 20, 21.)

2. The gospel-covenant is better, *in respect of the quality of the persons taken into it*.—The law is proposed to wicked, secure, and hardened sinners: "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for men-ayers, for whoremongers," &c., (1 Tim. i. 9, 10,) to restrain and bridle them; but the gospel lifts up broken-hearted sinners: "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 18.) The law is to terrify the conscience, the gospel is to comfort it.\*

(VII.) The last excellency I shall name is this: *the gospel-covenant is every way faultless*.—It is the last and best dispensation of divine grace: "If the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. viii. 7.) As if he should say, "The covenant from Mount Sinai was not such, *quo non alterum posset esse perfectius*,† 'that man could not desire a better:'" "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made

\* GERHARDI *Loci Communes*.

† GROTIUS.

nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." (Heb. vii. 18, 19.) Plainly, this is so excellent [that] we cannot desire a better.

The old covenant is abrogated,

1. As to *the circumstance*.—*De futuro*: it all related to the future Messiah. Christ is come, and that consideration therefore ceaseth.

2. It is abrogated as to *the impossible condition of perfect obedience*.—The gospel-sincerity of the meanest believer is better than the exactest obedience of the highest legalist.

3. It is abrogated as to *the burden of legal ceremonies, priesthood, and shadows*.—God gave these things to them, and the gospel to us; as we give *nucis parvulo, et codicem grandi*; \* "things of smaller value to a little child, but a good book to him when he is grown up." They have lost their temple, their priesthood, their unction: *Αντι του ιερου τον ουρανον εχομεν*, † &c.: "We have heaven for our temple, and Christ for our Priest, and the Spirit for our unction."

4. The old covenant is abrogated as to *the yoke of Mosaical policy*.—We have nothing to do with the judicial laws of the Jews, any farther than they are moral, or of a moral equity: "The law and the prophets were until John." (Luke xvi. 16.) "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. vii. 12.) And thus I have doctrinally showed you the excellency of the gospel-covenant.

#### APPLICATION.

USE I. *This retorts wicked men's reproaches into their own faces*.—They cry out against the ministers of the gospel for preaching terror to them. Be it known to you, the gospel is properly employed in celebrating the mercy of God in the pardon of sin, and comforting drooping sinners; but in your doing what you can to put out this comfortable light, you force us to fetch fire from Mount Sinai to take hold of you. It is true, the law was given with thunder and lightning, and terrible miracles; the gospel was attested with a comfortable voice from heaven, and healing miracles: but as sinners broken by the law needed some gospel-balm to heal their wounds; so secure gospel-sinners need legal threatenings to fright them out of their sluggishness and sleepy security. If whispers of peace will not awaken them, we must cry aloud, to stir them up, if it be possible, to break off sinning, and to mind salvation.

Sirs, it is no pleasure to us to speak words displeasing to you; you hinder us from work more purely evangelical, and which it is a thousand-fold more pleasure to us to be conversant about. Pray take notice, that, were it not in love and faithfulness to your souls, we would never be so poorly employed, as to be pelting at your base lusts. Do but try us. Break off your soul-undoing wickedness; and you shall never hear us rate you any more, you yourselves being judges. For example: Ask a sober man whether the lashing of drunkenness makes him smart or not. Ask a chaste person whether

\* BEDA.

† CHRYSOSTOMUS.



the naming of such texts as, "The mouth of strange women is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein," (Prov. xxii. 14,) "A whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit," (Prov. xxiii. 27,) reproach him. In short: Ask one that is conscientious, whether he thinks the minister hath a spite at him in his sermon, because he names, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) Alas! all these will tell you they have no such thought, nor any cause for any such thought. Through grace, they abhor these sins, and wonder that any are so besotted as to quarrel with a minister for speaking against them. You see, then, it is your consciences that reproach you, and not the ministers of the gospel.

USE II. *Here is matter of admiration.*—Admiration of God's rich grace and unparalleled providence to us; that God should cast our lots into such places and times, wherein we enjoy the best of the best gracious dispensations: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts xvii. 26.) God hath been pleased so to dispose of Christ's little flock, that there shall be some in all times of the world, and in all places of the world, where he makes known his name, to be "the salt of the earth." But now for us to be so disposed of, that, among the several thousand years of the world's continuance, and among the innumerable millions of places of the world's inhabitants, we should be brought forth in such a nick of time, and in such a spiritual Paradise of place, that there is none in the world to equal it! Sirs, what doth this call for? what shall we render to the Lord for this — (I know not what to call it, it is such) unspeakable love? Beloved, I must both give and take time to answer this question. And O that you and I may give a suitable answer to it! I know not at present what to say to it, unless we could, as overcome by it, faint away in a love-sickness into the bosom of our dearest Jesus; seeing he hath brought us where we may not only taste a draught out of a bottle, but are brought to the great vessels of spiritual comforts, where we may not only enjoy Christ a little, but even to spiritual ecstasy. (Canticles ii. 4—6.) O that we now, as sinking down in a swoon, and as unable to stand under the thoughts of such love, might be even strowed [shored] and bolstered up with the comfortable doctrines of the gospel-covenant, and all through impatience of love! The love of God to such inconsiderable persons, should carry the soul out of itself, to do more than languish with desire after more ecstasying communications; so that none but Christ, with his right hand of Divinity, and left hand of humanity, may be acceptable to us to embrace us. O Christians, I should be glad to send you all home heart-sick of love to Christ. But,

USE III. *By way of inference*:—

1. *Every one of you that is not in the gospel-covenant, is in a dreadful state.*—It is your own wilfulness, you will not believe the gospel. Though it is through divine grace that persons do close with the gospel, yet it is your own sin [that] you do not close with it; for you are willing to be strangers to it, you are willing to enjoy your lusts, which you must part with, if you embrace it. You may observe the dreadful estate of persons out of covenant in these three particulars:—

(1.) *The sin against the gospel-covenant is most dreadful.*—This sin hath the guilt of all other sins in it: “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.” (John xv. 22.) Sodom and Gomorrah, publicans and harlots, go into the kingdom of heaven, before those that refuse the gospel. God the Father invites men to the marriage-supper; nay, you are wooed and entreated to be Christ’s bride. You make light of it. You have the profits and the pleasures of the world to take up your thoughts. You will not be persuaded to believe that Christ is better than your lusts. You will not be beaten out of it, but that a bag of gold is better than a crown of glory; but that a filthy lust is better than communion with God; but that the devil’s slave and fool is better than to be God’s child and darling. Is this your choice? Then consider,

(2.) *The penalty for the contempt of this gospel-covenant is most dreadful.*—“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.” (John iii. 19.) This brings persons under the very utmost of the wrath of God. (1 Thess. ii. 16.) When the Jews sinned against the legal dispensation, then Daniel complains: “Under the whole heavens hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem:” (Dan. ix. 12:) but what now will become of those that refuse the gospel? “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?” (Heb. x. 29.) Can any thing be worse than to die without mercy? “Yes,” saith the apostle. What is that? Nay, he leaves it to your consideration, as being impossible to be expressed. To pour contempt and scorn upon the precious blood of Christ, wherewith the covenant betwixt God and his people was made and ratified; to offer a spiteful affront unto the Spirit of God, by contemning and opposing his gracious motions; O what remains for such persons but a dreadful expectation of God’s terrible judgments!

But there is a third thing that I would have you consider, which is sensibly more dreadful than either of these.

(3.) *The sentence against gospel-covenant breaking is most irreversible and peremptory.*—Mercy, and grace, and patience, and compassion,—when these are abused, all these become the sinners’ enemy. For that which is ordained a life to prove death unto them, O this is dreadful! For the blood of Christ to cry to heaven against sinners, this is dreadful! This made Christ to weep over Jerusalem. (Luke xix. 40, 41.) These persons pass judgment upon themselves, though

not with their lips, yet with their lives; they pronounce themselves unworthy to be saved. (Acts xiii. 46.) O Sirs, I beseech you, consider, though persons brake the covenant of works, there was salvation to be had by another covenant; but if this be violated, there is no other covenant to relieve this. The gospel-covenant is our refuge, when the other covenant pursues us. (Heb. vi. 18.) Contemptuous carriage against grace is beyond all help; I beseech you, therefore, take heed of sinning against gospel-light and gospel-love. O, you will have that sting of conscience that no other sinners in the world have that have not refused a Redeemer. Beloved, I would I could say, with due meltings of heart, it grieves me for you, to think how many hundreds in this congregation are yet "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. ii. 12.) O Sirs, do you know what you do, when you cocker your lusts in despite of Christ? Can you hear sermons, and go on in sin? You do well to hear; but you make a desperate adventure, to do what you know discovenants you from God, and hazards your eternal separation from God. Beloved, I must be plain with you: I beseech you, consider how Jews, and Pagans, and devils will rise up in judgment against you.

(i.) The Jew may say, "I had a legal yoke upon me, which neither I nor my fathers were able to bear. Christ invited me only into his garden of nuts, where I might sooner break my teeth with the hard shell of ceremonies, than get to the (little more than bitter) kernel of gospel-promises. You have those promises in abundance with more ease." As if he had said, [that] their nuts were ripe, but their pomegranates, full of sweet kernels of gospel-grace, were not then budded. (Canticles vi. 11.) The Jew may complain, that in the best of their sacrifices, the smoke filled their temple; smoke only, to provoke them to weep for a clearer manifestation. (2 Cor. iii. 14.) Those of the Jews that were most enraged against Christ, yet "had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) The Jew may say, "Though we could but grope after Christ, your eyes are dazzled with his glory. We had but the old edition of the covenant of grace, in a character very darkly intelligible; you have the last edition, with a commentary of our rejection, and the world's reception, and the Spirit's effusion. You have all that heart can wish! O had we had but one of your days of the Son of man, we would not have sinned against so great salvation!"

Sirs, what do you think your consciences will be forced to reply?

"O, true, true," must the gospel-sinner say; "I have known, owned, and professed Christ; and have been angry with ministers and friends, when they did but question my being in covenant. But I have not in any measure walked worthy of the gospel."

But I pass by the Jew. Let us hear what the Pagan hath to say against you.

(ii.) "I perish eternally," may the poor Pagan say, "without all possibility of reconciliation, and have only sinned against the covenant

of works, having never heard of a gospel-covenant, nor of reconciliation by a Mediator. Alas! should I have improved my naturals to the highest, reconciliation by Christ could never have entered into my head. O had I heard but one sermon! had Christ but once broken in upon my soul, to convince me of my undone condition, and to have shown a righteousness unto me! But, woe is me! I never had so much as one offer of grace."

"But so have I," must you say that refuse the gospel; "I have, or might have, heard thousands of sermons. I could scarce escape hearing one or other showing me the danger of my sin, and my necessity of Christ. But, notwithstanding all I heard, I wilfully resolved [that] I would have nothing to do with him. I could not endure to hear strictness pressed upon me: it was all the hell I had upon earth, that I could not sin in quiet."

(iii.) "Nay," may the devil himself say; "it is true, I was, ever since my fall, maliciously set against God. But, alas! so soon as ever I first sinned, God kicked me out of heaven, and told me he would never have mercy on me. And though I lived in the time of all manner of gracious dispensations; I saw sacrifices offered, and Christ in the flesh, and the gospel preached; yet how could this choose but enrage me the more, to have God as it were say, 'Look here, Satan; I have provided a remedy for sin, but none for thine!' This set me upon revenge against God, so far as I could reach him. But alas, alas! had God ever entered into any covenant with me at all; had God put me upon any terms, though never so hard, for the obtaining of mercy; had Christ been but once offered to me; what, do you think, would I have done? Would I have hearkened to any thing you could say, to refuse Christ and salvation? Could you, or all the angels in heaven, have kept me from minding Christ?"

But, "Woe to me!" may the gospel-sinner say: "I have as good a remnant of the covenant of works in my nature as the Pagans have. I have all the discoveries of God in the legal covenant that the Jews ever had. I am under a better dispensation than the devils were under before their fall. The gospel of grace is urged upon me. And therefore, O poor Jew! whatever may be said against thy breach of covenant, there is a thousand-fold more to be said against mine. O poor Pagan! whatever is to be said against thy breach of covenant, there is ten thousand-fold more against mine. O wretched devils! whatever may be said against your sins, there is infinitely more to be said against mine. I am the most foolish, mad, wilful rebel that ever waged war with the grace of God."

Sirs, is all this nothing to you? Can you hear these things quietly? I know you dare not think them over again, and sin at the same rate as before. If you think your souls any thing worth, or heaven and glory any thing worth, now offer up yourselves to Christ in the gospel-covenant.

Thus much for the first inference, that *their estate is dreadful that are not in the gospel-covenant.*

2. The second inference is this, *that their estate is comfortable*

that are in the gospel-covenant.—I will only instance in two things :—

(1.) *The weakest and poorest faith and service is accepted through Christ in the gospel-covenant.*—The covenant of grace is made to poor, weak, sinful, frail man through a Mediator. God doth not expect that we should be perfect here. Poor Christians have more ado to pardon themselves, than to have God to pardon them. They quarrel more with themselves for want of holiness, than God quarrels with them for it. Beloved, here are some comfortable riddles of grace for you to resolve. The covenant is merely of grace : grace runs through all the veins and arteries of it ; all the life, blood, and spirit of the covenant are grace, grace, through Jesus Christ. And yet, beloved, though it be wholly of grace, it is of debt, by being a covenant : God is pleased to enter into bond to make good his deed of gift. What God doth for the heirs of promise,—it is no more than what is debt to Christ, and what through him he is graciously engaged [to] for us. O the comfort of being in covenant with God ! You will say so indeed if you add,

(2.) *This gospel-covenant is so made, that it can never be disannulled.*—Alas ! we do not know where nor how to make a covenant sure in the world. He that is my friend to-day, may be my enemy to-morrow : his bond may be good to-day, and may be to-morrow insolvable. There are ways more than we know of to evade the strictest covenant, to disannul the strongest oath ; but now God hath sworn by himself, (Heb. vi. 13,) that he will certainly bless those whom he takes into covenant with him. God hath sworn by his holiness. (Psalm lxxxix. 34, 35.) As if he should say, “Let me not be accounted a holy God, if I break covenant with any of my people.” Nay, he swears by his life. (Isai. xlix. 18, 19.) The prophet speaks there of Sion as of a mother-city, and of multitudes that should be brought home to her by the ministry of the gospel ; and that they shall be as jewels and ornaments, matter of much honour to her by their endowments with spiritual graces. Thus gospel-covenanters shall be qualified. But you will presently say, “There is no danger of God’s breaking covenant ; all the danger is on our part :” But, Christians, there is not so much danger on our part as many fear. It is not every sin that presently breaks the covenant ; a wife may be foolish and passionate, yet the marriage is not thereby broken. And when we do slip into covenant-breaches, Christ is ready to pardon us, and the Spirit of Christ ready to piece up our breaches ; provided that we do but make conscience in the whole course of our lives to keep covenant with God. Christians, I hope [that], by all that hath been spoken, you will be persuaded to enter into covenant, and to keep covenant, with God : if so, I have my end, and so hath my sermon.