

aged in our name to make us forthcoming. And if thou shouldst yet say, Will God indeed accept of the like of me? It saith, Here is a broken and bleeding Saviour and Mediator to lead thee to God, a Saviour who hath made himself a propitiation for sin: And hereupon the sinner may be strengthened to take hold of the covenant, because in the sacrament he sees Christ himself laid as a bridge, on which he may come over to God, and his rent flesh as the *Vail through which he may, as by a new and living way, enter into the holiest.*



Jeremiah 50. v. 5. — *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

S E R M O N V.

TH E R E are two main and mighty up-taking businesses to the people of God; the one whereof is, How to win to be in covenant with God, to be friends and in good terms with him; the other is, How to stand to, and keep covenant with him, and to live as being made friends with him according to the obligation that lieth on them. This is the great design of all preaching, to bring them within the covenant, who are without; and to make those who are within the covenant, to walk suitably to it: And as these are never separated on the Lord's side, so should they never be separated on our side; therefore these people are brought in here saying, *Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant:* And not only so, but there are two words added by them, to shew their earnest desire to keep and stand to the covenant; the one is, *a perpetual covenant;* the other a covenant *that shall not be forgotten,* the impression whereof may never wear away. And this we conceive to be their meaning, 1. Because to forget the covenant, in scripture, is to deal falsely in it; and to forget the covenant, and to break it, are the same. 2. Because it is (as we take it) opposed to their fear of false dealing in the covenant: As if they had said, We were once in covenant with God, but we did deal falsely

in it, and forgot it; let us now therefore *join ourselves in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten*; let it be a constant and standing, a lasting, even an everlasting bargain.

This being the meaning of the words, we shall speak to four observations from them (the substance whereof ye have heard touched on already) and these are,

First, That the great hazard which a people covenanting with God are in, is to slip and slide from their tie and engagements to him, and to forget the covenant.

The Second is, *That the great evidence of right entring in covenant with God, is to be serious and much concerned in keeping of it, even as much as in entring into it.*

The Third is, *That the great design and duty of a covenant with God is, never to forget the covenant, but freshly to remember it, so as to be answerable to it in practice.*

The Fourth is, *That the great mean whereby this design is got prosecuted, and this duty performed, is adhering and cleaving to God, according to the covenant. Let us (say they) join to the Lord in a covenant.* In this respect, adhering to him in it, is the mean to keep covenant, so as we may never fall from it.

The first observation then is, *That the great hazard that a people covenanting with God are in, is to slip and fall from their engagement to him: Or, There is such a covenanting with God, as people may soon forget and fall from; a temporary and unficker covenanting, that holds not. A perpetual covenant never to be forgotten, supposeth that there is a sort of covenanting that slips like a knotless thread (to speak so) and abides not. This is sadly verified in the experience of many common professors of religion, and often even of the godly themselves in a measure; even now there will be a bargaining with God, and within a little they will forget it: Peter saith, Though all should forsake thee, yet will not I; and yet within a very little he is found sleeping, and that same night denies and forswears his Master. So, Deut. 5. the people say, All that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do; and the Lord saith, They have well said, O that there were such a heart in them! and yet, within the space of little more than forty days, they set up a golden calf for their god. So, Psal. 78.*

34, 35, 36, 37. *When he slew them, then they sought him; they returned and enquired early after God: They remembered that God was their Rock, and the most High their Redeemer. But they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue; for their hearts were not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant; they abode not by the mint and essay which they made. But I think this is beyond any need of proof; we rather stand in need to have the impression of it made deep upon our hearts, and to go from the work we have been about with, holy fear and jealousy over ourselves, bespeaking ourselves thus, What if this engagement we have come under, hold not, but prove like the banging down of the head like a bulrush for a day? Serious thoughts of this hazard would, thro' God's blessing, further the exercise of watchfulness a great deal more. When carnal self-confidence and fearlessness creep on and take hold of us, we (as it were) lay aside our armour, foolishly fancying that there is no hazard, but that all will be well; were there more of this holy fear, there would not be such frequent surprizes. Have ye not often been surprized, and proved unstedfast in God's covenant? And, since ye have so many and clear proofs of the truth of this doctrine in your own sad experience, is there not the greater need of holy fear and watchfulness?*

The second observation is, *That those who are sincere and serious in covenanting with God, will be no less so, in keeping of, and standing to it.* Where people are sound and honest at the heart, it will be no less an uptaking work to them, how to keep covenant, than it was to get it entred in: Therefore these here mentioned have it as one piece of their seriously uptaking business, how to be joined to the Lord in covenant; and another, how to get it stood to, so as it may be a perpetual one, never to be forgotten. The same reasons that prove that there should be, or that there is seriousness in making and closing the covenant, will also prove that there should be, and will be seriousness in endeavours to keep it; for, if the person honestly mind to enjoy the blessings covenanted, he must and will endeavour to keep and stand to the covenant; if he honestly mind and sincerely desire to be in good terms with

God thro' the covenant, he must and will endeavour to stand to the terms of the covenant, and breach of covenant will waken a challenge. If it be a principle of true saving grace that puts a person to desire to be under the bond of God's covenant, that same principle will make him desire and endeavour to abide under that bond, and to keep faithfully to him: Thus *David* saith, *Psal.* 119. 29, 30. *I have chosen the way of thy precepts; and I have stuck unto thy testimonies.* There is a choosing of the covenant and testimonies, and a design of sticking to them, when upon choice closed with.

The *Use* of this point serves for *instruction*. Would ye fain have a mark of your honesty in covenanting with God? Here it is, and we know no better mark or evidence to give you than this, even to be serious and much concerned in keeping covenant: God will never account that man to be a true covenanter, that will cast his law behind his back. The apostle *James*, Chap. 1. speaks of two sorts of men that are hearers of the word; and he compares the one sort, viz. forgetful hearers, to a man, *who beholding his natural face in a glass, goes away, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was*: But the other sort are such, *who are not only hearers, but doers of the word*; That man (saith he) *shall be blessed in his deed*. It is not the sayer, but the doer and the keeper of the words of the covenant, that is blessed. As many as seriously engage to God, are put on (as we said before) with as much seriousness, in endeavouring the performance of their engagement, as to come under it: I speak not of a perfect performance, or fulfilling of engagements without any the least defect, that is not to be win at here; but of serious minding and endeavouring, in the Lord's strength, the performance of that which we are engaged to: For there is a great difference betwixt mens failing and slipping of infirmity, and their sinning with allowance; the former sheweth a body of death to be yet remaining, and may consist with faithfulness in God's covenant; but the latter speaks out a slothful, careless and negligent undervaluing of God and of his covenant. Let never such a man cloke himself with the pretext of being in covenant with God, nor palliate his palpably gross and voluntary

voluntary breaches of covenant, with the pretext of infirmity, who doth not seriously drive it as his great design, to be faithful in God's covenant.

Now, would ye know wherein this seriousness in keeping and performing covenant consists? Ye may take it in these characters. The man that is serious in performing his engagement, 1. His heart is taken up with it, and there is an ardent longing to be answerable to the covenant that he is entred into with God: His greatest wish in all the world is, as to be in it, so to be faithful in keeping it; therefore saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!* and this is given as a mark of the blessed man, who is undefiled in the way: And saith he, *v. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;* which is a reason of the former, and a confirmation of it: He designs to be short in his obedience to no command, and he does not allow himself in his shortcoming even as to degree, but is constant in pursuing his design *always, even unto the end.* 2. Seriousness in performing appeareth by kindly acknowledging the impression of the weightiness of the tie and obligation that the covenant lays on persons; it somehow affects and burdens them, so that they walk not so lightly as others do under the obligation and debt of the covenant, tho' it be a friendly debt, and also a privilege: Their burden is not, that they are under the obligation, but how to get it performed; thus saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 56. 12. Thy vows are upon me, O God: They take on vows to God, and keep them on, and walk as being under them.* This is a main thing to be looked to in keeping covenant. 3. This seriousness in performing appears in the fear that persons have of going wrong and miscarrying: They are afraid to break to God; neither are any so suspicious of them, as they are of themselves, knowing by sad experience, that their *hearts are deceitful above all things*: And this is a very native evidence, considering what we heard of our sickleness, which cannot be without the impression of fear. 4. It appears in a holy carefulness and diligence to prevent that which they fear: Lest at any time they let a buckle slip (to speak so) and lest that which they feared come on them, their fear puts

them to diligence to prevent the thing feared. This makes them to fast and pray, and to be watchful over themselves in loose and untender company, and to eschew them as far as they can, and to hazard some loss, rather than to put themselves under a snare ; watching and praying, lest they fall into the sin of dealing falsely in God's covenant. 5. It appears in the sharpness of challenges, when any thing miscarries in their hand : They are soon challenged for the very first beginnings of a breach ; a wrong look will affect them : Therefore saith *Job*, Chap. 31. *I made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I look upon a maid ?* And the heart, while tender, will lothe and scar at the least thing that hath the remotest tendency towards a breach, were it but the appearance of evil. Any the least guilt soon toucheth and smiteth them, not only that which is their own, but even that of others : Thus good *Ezra* saith, Chap. 9. *Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations ?* And he lieth in the dust before God mourning, because of this. 6. It appears in respect of the exercise of a person's faith : As 'tis an uptaking work and business to honest souls, to get their faith founded rightly in closing the covenant with God, that they be well grounded in believing ; so it is no less an uptaking and exercising work, to be improving their faith on God's promises, to make them forthcoming according to their engagement and for keeping covenant : Which is the apostle's exercise, *Gal. 2. 20. to live by faith on the Son of God ; I am (saith he) crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, is by faith on the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And, try it who will, they shall find it to be an uptaking work, rightly to exercise faith for entertaining of spiritual life, and for preventing a covenant-breach with God. It may be, for as many professed covenanters as are here, that but few of you know much, if any thing at all, what it is to be taken up with being answerable to the covenant according to your engagements : This, no doubt, makes much unsound work, that ye do not singly and seriously design this ; that ye reach not forward, that ye bear not down the body, and bring

it under subjection, lest ye come short here. If ye were suitably serious, these characters and evidences might be as so many directions to you : There would be much watchfulness in doing ; ready entertaining of challenges and convictions ; much heart-melting under the sense of wrongs done to God ; and the very appearances of evil would be fear'd at, and appear terrible. There is an evil readily incident to many professors of religion, that they would fain be at marks of a good spiritual state, and of being in covenant with God, but such as would not disturb their carnal confidence, ease, and laziness, nor put them on to painful diligence ; But we have no such marks to give ; neither dare we, for the fear of God, and because of the hazard of souls, assign any such ; there being none such given or assigned in the word of God : Nay, let me tell you, that, if there be not painful diligence and faithfulness in keeping covenant with God, it will darken the light of any other mark that can be given ; and, no doubt, 'tis this negligence and unfaithfulness that makes many good marks, clear in themselves, dark to many Christians, while they give not diligence to make their calling and election sure, and give not all diligence to add one grace to another, and one degree of grace to another : It is also the cause of uncomfortable walking, yea, of uncomfortable communicating. But to be sincere and serious in owning our covenant-engagements, and faithfully forthcoming in the fruits thereof, and in a correspondent conversation, is a mark that will give comfort, and some quietness at least, till comfort come ; the Lord will comfortably confess such as faithfully confess him.

The *third* Observation is, *That it is and will be the great study of persons really entred in covenant with God, to have it an abiding bargain, a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten* : This is their design, as well as their duty, that their practice and walk may be suitable to the covenant. And it being the main thing implied in the words, and that which we intend to insist on, I shall, in the prosecution of it, speak a little to these *three*. 1. To what it is to aim to have God's covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten. 2. To the reasons and the ground that there is

to press this. And, 3. To some motives and encouragements for exciting to it.

For the *first*, viz. What it is to study to have God's covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten. We take it up in these particulars; 1. That those entered in covenant would drive the great design of the covenant; which is summed in these two words, To have God to be ours, and ourselves to be God's: 'Tis even that which we have in answer to the first question of our excellent Catechism, What is man's chief end? To enjoy God, and to glorify him; to enjoy him as our own God, and to glorify him, by acknowledging ourselves to be his, and by devoting ourselves to his service, as being a people *formed for himself, to shew forth his praise*. This should be vigorously driven, as the great design of the covenant with God; and it would be a notable help to keep covenant, even to live and walk so as we may have God's company: For what use serves God's covenant unto us, and our entering therein, if we continue as great strangers to him as before? If this be not driven as our design, we forget wherefore we covenanted. 2. There would be a minding of our own obligation in the covenant, as the condition or mean by which the end, viz. the enjoying of God, is come at; which is, in a word, to be his, to walk before him, as he willeth *Abraham* to do, *Walk before me and be thou perfect*: God himself is that which the covenant should principally aim at; and walking before him is the mean appointed for coming at that end. In short, whatever the covenant saith in reference to our duty, as, to abandon lusts, to be *holy in all manner of conversation*, to be *watchful, to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his*, &c. is that which we are tyed to in the covenant, and which we would seriously drive at as our great design. 3. There would be a minding and remembring of God's engagement to us in the covenant, which is a part of it, as well as our engagement to him, and never to be forgotten by us: *Return* (saith the Lord, *Jer. 3.*) *backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: Return, for I am married to you: I will be your God and guide even unto death: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, &c. And this minding and remembring of God's part of the covenant

nant, is a crediting of his promise. Many believers mind and remember their own part of the covenant, but forget that God is tyed to them; (which is to remember, not a mutual engagement, such as the covenant bears out, but only our own particular engagement) which makes us have so many failings on our side, and doth very much weaken our hands in duty; because we lay not the weight of our performances on God that hath promised, *who is faithful, and will also do it.* We will find it to be frequent and familiar to the saints mentioned in scripture, to mind God's part of the covenant as well as their own, and particularly to David in the book of *Psalms*, who saith, *Thou hast made a covenant with thine Anointed: Thou hast laid help upon One that is mighty: Are not thou from everlasting our God? Lord, remember thy covenant;* that is, the covenant that God hath made with his people; and often elsewhere. The great weight of a believer's life and consolation lies here: Alas! what would our life or our engagement be, and what would our comfort and hope be, without his engagement to us in the covenant? And, if this be not suitably minded and remembered, it will prove but a very heartless bargain. 4. It implies this, seriously to endeavour to conform our practice to the many great obligations that we ly under to him, and which God's offer and covenant do on many accounts call us to. This is a short hint of what it is to keep and do the covenant of God, and to perform it alway even unto the end, to have his covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten.

As for the second, to wit, the grounds and reasons of this, and whereby it be may pressed. 1st, We would think of, and believe the reality of God's covenant, the reality of the promises in it, and of all that is spoken of it; and would put ourselves to it, if indeed we look on it as such. The truth is, it is the language of our unbelief, that we scarcely think God to be in earnest; as if all that is spoken of this covenant were but a cunningly devised fable: If we really believed, that by this blessed covenant we may be brought to enjoy God, and to be made conform to his image in holiness, to have our vile bodies at last made conform to his glorious body, &c. and that as certainly we shall be possessed of such great

and glorious privileges by keeping this covenant; as we are certain that this world is yet standing; such a faith would prove to us *the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for*; and would be a notable incitement and sharp spur to holy activity in, and to quick dispatch of called-for duty. O but it be a good and real bargain, and will have wonderful following, to all that keep it! and, whether this be now believed or not, it will be found a little hence, that this bargain was one of the best that ever was heard tell of in the world.

2dly, We would seriously bethink ourselves, what will come of it, in case there be grossly unfaithful dealing and unsteadfastness in God's covenant. I shall only name these *five* things that will follow on it. 1. Much sin, 2. Much shame, 3. Much reflection on God, 4. Much wrath, and, 5. Much want of peace, and much anxiety, in the conscience that is guilty of this sin. (1.) I say, much sin. Better there had never been a covenant in your offer, and that ye had never profest your entring into covenant with God; *'Tis better* (saith the wise-man, *Eccl. 5 5.*) *not to vow to God, than to vow and not to perform*: It had been better that many of you had been crushed in your mother's belly, or that ye had been born *Turks* and *Pagans*, and had lived and died so, than to be found among them that deal falsely in God's covenant; the grossest sins of *Pagans* are in some respect as no sins in comparison of this, *John 15. 22.* (2.) There will be much shame before God, even shame and confusion of face, everlasting shame. *They shall rise from the dead to shame and everlasting contempt*, *Dan. 12.* Sinners will have much shame, ere all be done, for every sin: But such as have wickedly betrayed their trust to God, and, after they had made profession of entring in covenant with him, have dealt perfidiously and falsely in it, will be in a manner hissed at amongst devils and reprobate *Pagans*, who never had such offers, neither made such professions; and their condemnation will be acknowledged to carry eminent and conspicuous desert in it; because such had a good bargain, and dealt treacherously with God, and quite marred it to themselves: They have often also much shame amongst men even here; *The man* (saith Christ) *that bears my sayings,*

sayings, and does them not, is like unto a foolish builder, that built his house upon the sand. And elsewhere he resembles rash engagers in protest covenanting with him, to men who sit not down to count the cost, that begin to build, and, not being able to finish, expose themselves to the mockage, scorn and derision of all that pass by: Such and such a man (will some be ready to say) was a great professor; but now, behold what is become of him; take him up yonder; he seemed once to have some tenderness, but now he is quite turned aside, and become gross and loose. Men of any moral honesty and ingenuity will be ashamed to break their word and to violate their engagements one to another in worldly matters; how much greater shame is it to break to God, and to deal falsely in his covenant? (3.) It hath deep reflections upon God; for the covenant-breaker saith on the matter, that it repents him that ever he made it, for he hath never gotten good of it; and that God hath not been faithful in keeping to him, and that therefore he thought himself loosed from all its obligations. Now, will any of you dare to say, that the covenant is not a good bargain, or that God is not a good, responsal and faithful Party to deal with? *What iniquity have your fathers found in me* (saith the Lord to his professing people, *Jer. 2.*) *that they are gone so far from me? Come* (saith he, *Micah 6.*) *before the mountains, and let the hills bear my controversy with you; what iniquity have ye found in me? wherein have I wearied you? testify against me.* Sure, all that depart from God, rub reproach on God's covenant as a bad bargain, and on God as a bad and unfaithful Party to deal with: O high and horrid practical atheism and blasphemy! Doubtless such will find that they have played the fools egregiously, in committing these two great evils, in forsaking God the Fountain of living waters, and in digging to themselves cisterns, even broken cisterns that could hold no water. O if ye could imagine, what ye will think of it ere long, when ye will not get a drop of water to cool your tongue, because ye said by your practice, that God was not worth the having, and to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we will have none of thee, neither will we have the knowledge of thy ways!* (4.) Much want of peace and much anxiety will follow upon it: Even the penitent and

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converting people of God, Jer. 3. 20, 21. have much bitterness on this account of treacherous dealing in God's covenant; *A voice of weeping and lamentation is heard on the mountains, the children of Israel saying, -We have perverted our way, we have forsaken the Lord our God.* How much more bitterness of another nature, how much more smart, vexation, anguish, agony, and gnawing of conscience shall impenitent sinners have, on account of their false and perfidious dealing in God's covenant? This will make the hearts of many to quake and tremble for terror. If ye get repentance, it will be a heart-break to you; and, if ye get not repentance, much heartless heart-break and crushing is abiding you in the end for evermore: And, O what trembling of heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind may be betwixt and that! (5.) Much wrath will follow on it in the day of the Lord, if it be continued in: And judge ye within yourselves if there be so many aggravations of, or so many threatnings against any sin, as of and against unfaithful and false dealing in God's covenant; this sin hath made the *Jews* to ly, these sixteen hundred years and above, scattered among all nations as a curse: Therefore make it your great design and business now, to be faithful to God, and to have the covenant with him a *perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten.*

As for the *third*, viz. Some motives and encouragements to excite you to be faithful in God's covenant, and to study to have it a *perpetual covenant never to be forgotten*; Consider, in the 1st place, that it is a singularly good and none-such bargain to them that keep covenant, there is no bargain more lovely to them that keep touches with God; *It is* (saith dying David, 2 Sam. 23.) *all my salvation, and all my desire*; it hath all things in it that my heart can wish. We make a pitiful and poor life to ourselves, thro' our undervaluing God's covenant; the believer, by improving of it, might have (as we use to speak) a lord's life, yea, a king's life, yea, a life infinitely preterable to the life of all the great men and monarchs on earth; *Having all things, tho' possessing nothing*, as it is, 2 Cor. 6. 10. And saith the apostle, *Philip. 4. I have all, I abound and have no lack*; while, in the mean time, he was living on a little charity from others: We might have a good life here and hereafter.

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Doth it not exceedingly commend God's covenant, that neither sickness, poverty, reproach, contempt, persecution, nor death itself, tho' violent and bloody, can mar this excellent life? When the covenanter comes to judgment, *Who can lay any thing to his charge? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn him?* He hath a Friend before him, *Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*, and is in good terms with God. The great advantage of it in this life and in that which is to come (*for godliness is great gain, having the promise of both*) may abundantly commend the covenant, and faithfulness in it. I am perswaded, there is no suiter or wooer to court and put in for the sinner's heart and affection, that can possibly out-bid God's covenant: Can the *lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life*; can profit, pleasure or preferment make such profers? Is there such advantage to be had in serving them, as there is to be had in serving God? By the one, *ye bring forth fruit unto holiness, and in the end reap eternal life*; but, by the other, *ye sow to the flesh, and shall of the flesh reap corruption*, a poor and hungry harvest. 3dly, The very keeping of covenant with God, is in itself an advantage. It hath a great reward in the bosom of it; for it puts the person to love God, to delight in him, to place its happiness in him, to study holiness and mortification of sin; and is there not great advantage in these? Can ye think or say, that there is any prejudice in these and such things as these, namely, to be blameless in your conversation, to be sincere and not a hypocrite, to be serious and not lukewarm? I am perswaded, that, if ye will but put it seriously to your own consciences, ye will be forced to say, that sincerity in religion is better than hypocrisy; and steadfastness in God's covenant, than treachery: And, what more do we call for? And therefore let me, on this ground, and as ye would not come in tops with your own consciences, beseech you to study faithfulness in the covenant. God's covenant hath a great advantage of the hearers of it, and of professed engagers in it, even a friend in their bosoms, *viz.* Conscience, that will side with it, and say, that it was a good bargain, that the terms were very reasonable, and that no prejudice could come by it, but unspeakably much advantage; and will tell the man, that it would have

have been his honour, and for his profit, to have kept it, and to have been faithful in it: Why then, will the Lord say, didst thou deal falsely in it, and renounce it? The wretched man's conscience will answer, that there was no shadow of reason for it, it was plainly *folly and madness*; for to keep and do God's covenant and commandment, is peoples wisdom before all nations, Deut. 4. It is a sad matter, that when men may have that which is infinitely preferable to what they are so eager in seeking after, even true riches, pleasure and honour, peace that passeth all natural understanding, joy unspeakable and full of glory, and every good thing, by covenanting with God, and by faithful dealing therein; that they should not drive this as their great design, and make it their great work and uptaking business: *O that there were such a heart in them* (saith the Lord, Deut. 5.) *that they might fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* Men are ready to say, We must provide for our families, and, under that specious pretext, they shift this main work; but, ah, fools that they are! there is no way comparable to this, to provide for families and children, even to have themselves and their children entered into God's covenant, and made to deal faithfully in it! this engageth him to provide for, and become Tutor unto the man's children: And, is there not great encouragement here, to have every good thing bestowed, and all carking care and anxiety concerning ourselves and children removed? 3dly, We would consider, that God is a singular good Party to deal with, very tender of them that aim to deal honestly with him; He is indeed severe and terrible, when he becomes the Avenger of a broken covenant; but he is most tender towards honest engagers, who sincerely endeavour to keep touches with him; he is no rigid Interpreter of their actions, but is ready to put the best sense on them that they are capable of: *Like as a father* (saith the psalmist, Psal. 103.) *pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity them that fear him.* He is a Father that will take little off the hand of his children, when he knows them to have a will to the work, when he will not deal so with others; *All his ways are mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant and his testimo-*

monies;

monies: It is not meant of such as keep it perfectly, for so they needed not mercy; but of them that honestly design and endeavour to keep it: And, may not that encourage to be faithful in God's covenant, that he is so easy to please? *4thly*, Consider, that he hath graciously stuffed his covenant with promises meet for the through-bearing of them that would fain keep covenant. If it be an evil heart that will not love God, which troubles them, the promise is, *I will circumcise their heart, and the hearts of their seed, to love the Lord their God*; whereas no others, who are without the covenant, or deal unfaithfully in it, can expect the performance of any such promise: If it be a backsliding heart, the promise is, *Jer. 3. 22. I will heal your backslidings*: If it be the fear of departing from God that troubles them, the promise is, *Jer. 32. 40. I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me*: If it be the dominion of sin that they fear, the promise is, *Rom. 6. 14 Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace*, that is, under the covenant of grace: And, if it be fear of the prevailing of Satan's tentations that troubles them, the promise is, *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*. May we not then take heart to be faithful in this covenant? Yea, he hath also condescended to come under this engagement too, even to make us forth coming in the covenant; *I will call* (saith the psalmist, *Psal. 57.*) *upon the Lord, who performeth all things for me*. It might have been said to David, How wilt thou get all done that thou hast undertaken? He answers, *I will call upon him who performeth all things for me*; and so I will get them all done and performed, so as I may hope to be accepted on the Mediator's account and for his sake. *5thly*, Consider the Mediator of the covenant, who is Surety and Cautioner, not only for believers debt, but also for their duty; therefore he is called, *Heb. 7. the Surety of this better covenant*: And, when Christ and we are engaged in one bond, there is ground for us to expect that something will be got done; tho' the principal debtor be not much worth, yet the Cautioner is worthy and infinitely responsible. *6thly*, Consider, that there are already many, who have passed thorow the troublesome sea of this world, and have been marvelously

ly helped; and 'tis but a little, and all you honest engagers to the Lord will be thorow the same sea, and fairly set on land; your warfare ere long will be at an end, the prize will be got without any more fighting: What is your fighting, fighting and walking heavily, clothed, as it were, in mourning for a little time? It is but for a few years, and it may be to some of you not so long; and, within a little space, *the day of refreshing from the presence of the Lord will come*; a relieving of you from your post, a loosing of you from your bonds, a final discharge from your warfare will come; and a new song will be put in your mouths, and palms in your hands. O but faithful dealing with God in the covenant will have a heartsome ouigate! When ye shall come ashore, *all tears shall be wiped from your eyes, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*; and ye shall meet with that word, O warm word! *Come, ye faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord*. Ye will not always fight and wrestle, neither will ye be always tempted and troubled; rest and repose is a-coming, 'tis even at hand: Then one ray of his countenance will be infinitely more heartsome, refreshing and satisfying, than all these things that ye are now called to abandon and part with, can possibly amount to; Christ's first welcome to his Father's house will eternally banish the remembrance of all the sad things that ye meet with in this world.

The fourth and last observation is, *That the great mean of securing a covenant, and making him steadfast, is, faith exercised on God, or adhering to him by faith, by virtue of this covenant*. It is not, to lay weight on, or trust to our own strength; but, seeing God hath made a promise of through-bearing, to undertake the duties that we are called to in his strength, trusting to his faithfulness, and to his furnishing of us, according to the covenant: As, when poor sinners are summoned to appear before God, and they have no righteousness of their own, they are to step forward trusting to Christ's righteousness; so when they are called to duty, and they have no strength of their own to enable them to a suitable discharge thereof, they are to consider that God is faithful, who hath promised, and who will also do it. And indeed believers have found in their comfortable experience, that, when they have adventured on duty with

with a believing look to God's covenanted strength, they have found it go sweetly and surprisingly well with them : Thus it is said of those *worthies* mentioned, *Heb. 11.* that *through faith they wrought righteousness*, as well as they did all other things thereby. This also is it, which the Lord inculcateth, *John 15.* *Abide in me* (saith he) *and ye shall bring forth much fruit : As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me ; for without me ye can do nothing :* Where it is clear, that it is not enough that we be in Christ, but that we must abide in him, and have continual dependence on him for the influences of life and strength derived from him.

Ye then that would be faithful in God's covenant, and would have it *perpetual never to be forgotten*, must especially make use of this mean. Make conscience of all other appointed means ; *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation :* But see that ye neglect not this mean ; which if ye do, *the watchman will watch in vain :* And your grip or hold will be unsicker, if ye make not use of him to make it sure, and to keep it so. And therefore, 1. Mind seriously and constantly what ye are, in and of yourselves ; even fickle, feckless, weak, feeble and unconstant creatures, not daring to undertake any thing in your own strength. 2. Remember what God is ; and that ye have a worthy, able and responsal Cautioner. 3. Remember that ye are engaged in a *covenant never to be forgotten* : Forgetting is the first rise of unfaithfulness. 4. Remember the promises that God hath made for your through-bearing, and let faith be exercised on them : Join with diligence and watchfulness a suitable exercise of faith. 5. Take a serious look, every day when ye go to pray, of your resolutions and engagements ; renew them frequently and seriously in his own strength, and be casting the other knot ; and put the heart distinctly to say, *This was my bargain, and I will through grace abide by it ;* and then go and pray over it, that ye may be made faithful in your thus covenanting with God, that ye may be enabled to pay your vows, and make your honest resolutions practicable ; levelling at this as your scope and design in all duties : I have said such a thing, and have not kept my word ; Lord, forgive it for Christ's sake :

fake: I am engaged in this, and that, and the other duty; Lord, help me to perform. And, for your furrherance in humiliation and soft walking before God, look on all your sins as aggravated by this unfaithful and treacherous dealing in God's covenant; and on all duties, as those which your covenant with God binds you to depend on him for strength to be communicated to you according to the covenant, for going about them suitably and acceptably: And within a little while ye shall get a fair pass to be gone, and a full discharge of all that ye were trusted with, according to the covenant. And the Lord help you to be faithful, so that it may be betwixt God and you in very deed *a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.*



A S E R M O N preached immediately before the Communion,

On Matth. 26. ver. 28, 29.

For this is my Blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

ALTHO' we had no more to do at our meeting together in this place to day, but to read and hear these same wonderful words, if our hearts were in a suitable frame, knowing and considering what we are about and doing, we would be in a divine rapture and transport of admiration at his love, and kindled into a flame of holy zeal for his glory, by them. O what sweet and happy words are these from our dying Lord Jesus Christ his mouth! *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, what things the Lord hath prepared for them that wait for him.* And indeed there is a sum of them in these words, they being a compend of the testament and legacy which our Lord hath left to his friends: O sinners, be of good cheer, there are good news and glad tidings of great joy here: Here is the new covenant and all that is in it, and remission of sins