

distinct look of it; what lulls are up, what challenges may be tabled, and keep a good count of them. 2. Endeavour to have faith in exercise on God's covenant and promises, and be sure that the promise is sicker that ye lay hold on, and see that ye make use of it according to the covenant; which is done, when with your souls ye take hold of it: And that is not, nor shall not be reckoned presumption, when ye bestir yourselves from the faith of God's covenant and promises, laying the weight of that which ye would be at on the promise, cleaving thereto for attaining of it; and in time, thro' God's blessing, your unsuitableness shall piece-mail wear away, and ye shall become tender: And any bit of softness and tenderness that ye win at, cherish and watch over it. 3. Make this a particular errand to God, having your eye on the covenant of promises, and on this promise in it in particular, and on other promises of this nature and to this purpose, as, concerning *taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh; of giving you a new heart; of making you to love yourselves for all your abominations; apprehending, receiving and closing with Christ in the covenant, for attaining of it as a fruit of his purchase: For it is not gotten but in the covenant; and therefore 'tis remarkable that this scripture is set down promise-wise, They shall come, the children of Israel and the children of Judah together: Your heavenly Father, who knows that ye have need of this thing (as it is, Matth. 6. 32.) will give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, as it is, Luke 11. 13. And ye would credit and trust him with the performing of that promise to you: And, endeavouring to be serious in having this for your task and work, ye shall find it made good for you and to you.*

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 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 IV.

**I**T is a most desirable design, and worthy to be driven vigorously by us all, to the prosecution whereof it

would very well become us to stir up and rouse ourselves and one another, according to the laudable practice of these here mentioned, even to hasten towards a closure of the covenant of grace betwixt God and us; to have it sounding loud in our ears, and to have it as the language of our hearts whetted to an edge in pursuit of the thing, *Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten.* It should be the great work and business of a communion-sabbath in a special manner, as it is our professed design this day, to close and make sure this covenant and blessed bond betwixt the Lord and us.

Having spoken somewhat formerly at several occasions to these sweet words, I shall not now trouble you either with the division or explication of them; but shall instantly propose *six or seven observations* from them, and then speak a word to the scope, and to the application of them, in the close: And tho' it be but a short word from each of them that we have to speak, yet they will be found to be very concerning to us, and therefore we would take the more exact notice of them.

The *first* observation then is, *That there is such a thing as distinct covenanting, or mutual engaging in covenant betwixt God and a poor sinner.* This is clearly holden out in these words as their scope: It were to no purpose for them to say, *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant,* if there were not such a thing as a covenant-union of God and sinners. The scripture is full to this purpose, and the treaty of ordinances is kept up for this end; as we have it, *Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, &c. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* This is the scope that the ordinances aim at. In prosecuting of this a little further, we shall, *First*, Explicate what covenanting is, in general. *Secondly*, What this covenanting with God is, 1. In respect of the Parties. 2. In respect of the terms thereof. 3. In respect of the ground on which it is founded. And, *Thirdly*, To the form of this covenanting.

*First* then, Covenanting in general may be cleared, from what covenanting among men is: Which is a mutual engaging

gaging of two parties on mutual terms; the one party offering such a thing on such terms and conditions, the other party accepting on those terms and conditions on which the offer is made: As we see in a contract of marriage; the man engageth to be the woman's, on condition that she be his; and she engageth to be his wife, as he engageth to be her husband; and each engageth to perform suitable duties to the other. And we make use of this the rather that the scripture alludeth to it in this matter.

*Secondly*, We are to consider covenanting, as it is betwixt God and a sinner: For we are not now speaking of the covenant of works betwixt God and *Adam*, wherein there was made an offer and promise of life upon condition of perfect obedience; so that, if he did that which was commanded him, he should live: But we are now speaking of God's covenanting with a sinner; for that is the covenant spoken of here. It is indeed a great wonder, that ever there should have been a covenant betwixt God and a creature; but a greater wonder, that there should be a covenant betwixt him and a sinful creature: Whatever is spoken in scripture of the covenant of grace, belongs to this covenant. 1. The *Parties* in this covenant are God and the sinner, God's creature, but a sinful creature; it is the Lord *Jehovah*, and we the house of *Israel*, and we the house of *Judab*. 2dly, The *terms* of the covenant are not, *Do this, and live*: Tho' the promise be the same, for 'tis life that is offered; yet it is not on the same terms: For, tho' the life be as good as that which was promised to *Adam*, yet the terms are far better: The substance of this covenant we have set down, *Jer.* 30. 31, 32, 33. and cited *Heb.* 8. 10, 11, 12. unto which this same invitation doth here relate; *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judab, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers*; but this shall be it, *I will write my law in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, &c.* And, *Come* (say they here) *and let us join in it.* His engagement is to be their God, and their engagement is to be his people; and the terms follow, which are, on God's part, free forgiveness of sins thro' the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, thro' whom

whom they are accepted, as if there had never been a quarrel; and, on their part, by faith to take hold of him, and of the pardon of sin, which separated betwixt him and them, thro' Jesus Christ, as he is offered to them. Therefore, *Rom. 10. 6.* it is called *the righteousness of faith*, opposed to *the righteousness of the law*, spoken of before; and what saith it? It saith not, *Who shall go up to heaven?* nor, *Who shall descend into the depth?* But the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the *righteousness of faith*, which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; That is, If ye make suitable use of Christ for your peace with God, and give up yourselves to him to be his servants, ye shall get peace and pardon of sin here, and eternal life and salvation hereafter. These in short are the terms on which God offereth himself to sinners. 3. The ground of this, and how it comes to pass that such a covenant is accessible, is the Mediator's interposing in a covenant of redemption with the Father concerning elect sinners; wherein he hath procured this covenant of grace betwixt God and sinners, by his performing the condition required of him in that covenant; for this covenant of grace and reconciliation is nothing else but the result of the covenant of redemption, and the execution thereof: We had never had ground to say, that there is a way laid down for our peace with God, except there had been a covenant of redemption betwixt him and the Mediator, wherein the Mediator undertook to satisfy justice for the sins of the elect, by bearing their iniquities; and hath the promise of being satisfied for the travail of his soul, by his seeing of a seed, and by his justifying many through faith in him; as it is, *Isa. 53. 11.* This gives the rise to this covenant of grace betwixt God and sinners; and therefore these two are put together, *Isa. 53. 3.* *Incline your ear, come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David;* that is, the sure mercies of the *Messiah*, the assignation whereof, even of the purchase of redemption made by him, is by covenant made over to the believer in him: And therefore, when we speak of this covenant, it always supposeth

poseth and implieth Christ, who, *Isa. 42. 6.* is called the covenant, because he is given for the ground of covenanting betwixt God and sinners; it being by him, and in him, that God and sinners meet: There being a gulf (as it were) betwixt sinners and God, he hath made himself the bridge on which sinners may come over and meet with God; and the covenant brings us to Christ: As, under the law, Christ was typed out by the *mercy-seat* and the *ark*, wherein the law was put, to shew the linking together of Christ and the covenant; the efficacy of the covenant flowing from Christ, and the covenant giving us a title to Christ, and making Christ accessible to us: It lays (as it were) a bridge to us to step on, and makes an open door to us to enter in by, on Christ, and by Christ to the *bolv of holies through the vail, which is his flesh.*

*Thirdly,* As for the form of this covenanting, it is, as in other contracts, God making the offer, and the person accepting it: God's offer is in the word of the gospel, wherein he saith, *Come, and I will make a covenant with you*; as the apostle hath it, *Rom. 10. The word is near thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth*; and the sum of it is, *If ye believe in Jesus Christ, ye shall be saved*: The proposing whereof in the gospel, is the laying of God's offer before you; and it is as really God's offer, as if audibly he were speaking to you from heaven, as he once spake the law on mount Sinai: It being his authority, by which ministers are sent to treat and close this covenant with you; as it is, *2 Cor. 5. We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were beseeching you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*; that is, Be friends with him, by entering in covenant with him: And he sheweth us the ground of it, *For he, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* God's offer is, I am content to be thy God, and to make all that is mine forthcoming to thee for thy good, upon condition thou quit thy own righteousness, and betake thee to my Son the Mediator for righteousness and life. The sinner's covenanting is his formal and distinct, at least his real, consenting to that offer on these terms, saying with his very heart, I am content to have God to be my God, not by vertue of any thing in myself, but by vertue of Christ's

satisfaction, which hath procured access to sinners for peace and reconciliation with God; and this is called *a submitting to Christ's righteousness*; So then, there is a devouring of the soul to God, a hearty contenting to give itself away to him, to be saved and sanctified, to live to him and to his honour; as it is, *Isa. 44. 5. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his band unto the Lord*: As if it were said, Whose are you? and the person should say, *I am God's*; for, as plainly and distinctly, at least as really and solidly, a person wrought upon by God's Spirit, gives the answer and return to God's offer in his covenant, and resigns himself to God, as if paper were laid down before him, and he should subscribe his name with his hand to be God's. There is an obligation really taken on, and a consent plainly given; the person with the very heart subscribing the contract, which, *2 Chron. 30. 8.* is called a *yielding or giving the hand to God*. He cometh with stretched-out arms in the gospel, and saith, Man or woman, who findest thyself lost, close with me in my Son Christ, and thou shalt be saved; and our consenting is, our heart's catching hold of that word, and yielding to him, as one striking hands with another with whom he hath before been at odds and variance, in sign of his being content and satisfied to be reconciled to him, and of his being so in very deed.

The second observation is, *That this covenanting with God hath with it, or in it, a near union and conjunction with the Lord*. Let us (say they) join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant. The word *joining* hath in it a special emphasis, being such as is used to set out the conjunction that is betwixt the husband and wife; *For this cause* (saith the Lord) *shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and so the wife cleaveth to her husband*: Thus the word is, *Gen. 29. 34. Now shall my husband be joined to me; therefore she called his name Levi, which flows from this root, added or joined*. In prosecuting this point a little, we would speak shortly, 1. To the nature of this union. 2. To the properties of it. 1<sup>st</sup>, As to its nature, we would consider, that there is, 1. A legal union, wherein by contract and bond there is a transferring of the interest of

of one party to another, which is here; for God becomes the sinner's God, and the sinner becomes God's own, as his portion and property: Even as, in marriage, the husband is the wife's, and the wife the husband's; and the relations stands, tho' they should be in several kingdoms.

2. There is a mystical union, which is spiritual and more mysterious, whereby God becometh one with covenanting sinners, and they become one with him; God by his Spirit dwelling in the covenanter, and the covenanter dwelling by faith in God: Which floweth from the former mutually transferred right or legal union, and followeth on it; in which respect it is said, *1 Cor. 6. 17. He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit*; he is *God's temple*, and *God by his Spirit dwells in him*. By this *one Spirit*, is meant a spiritual conjunction, union or communion; whereby God takes hold really of the soul by his Spirit, and the soul takes a real hold of God by faith: They do mutually embrace each other, as the husband doth the wife, by vertue of their union. 3. This union implieth a nearness, a friendliness, an intimacy and familiarity, and it is opposed to distance and estrangement from God: The covenant, really entered into, is like a bond to keep the believer near God, glued (as it were) and straitly join'd to him; or it is a cementing with God, to speak so: By this covenant, God and sinners are made near, and knit to one another, and kept from ever separating; there's such a near and strait union betwixt Christ and believers, as is betwixt the foundation or corner-stone and the house, yea, as is betwixt the vine and the branches, *Eph. 2. John 15.*

2dly, As for the properties of this union by covenant, a few of which we shall only now touch at, not having access to enlarge, as this subject by itself would require.

1. It is with the Lord himself, not with any benefit, common gift or grace or mercy; these follow the union with himself: The covenanter becomes *one Spirit with him*, as is said; and saith the apostle, *Eph. 5. We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone*. 2. This union is in and thro' Christ, by whom it is made up; he being the temple and tabernacle, or meeting-place, wherein we meet with God. So that we are not anxiously to enquire, nor curiously to dispute here, how our union with God, and with the Me-

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diator do differ; we unite with God in him, and upon the grounds of his redemption, in which respect our union with God is more mediate. 3. This union is very friendly, most firm and indissoluble: It is a wonderful near and sure union. 'Tis an inexpressible union, and therefore we must here give over speaking further to it, only looking to a word of it, *John* 17. 21, 23. in the 21. *verse* saith our Lord, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us:* It is such an union, by the believer's being in God and in the Mediator, as is that, whereby God and the Mediator are one; tho' no parity is here to be understood, but a resemblance only. And, *v.* 23. *I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one.* *I in them*, here the union is most immediate; and *thou in me*, there the union is most mediate, *viz.* by God's being in the Mediator, dwelling in the believer, and the believer's dwelling in God (the fulness of the Godhead being in the Mediator) by his meeting with God thro' faith in the Mediator: And indeed, were there no more but this, it saith that this covenant is a good bargain.

The third observation is, *That union with the Lord by this covenant is accessible to a run-away sinner, that hath perverted his way, upon his coming aright to close with him therein on the terms of it.* Who are those coming here to join in covenant with the Lord? It is even those spoken of, *Jer.* 3. 6, 7. *Backsliding children, treacherous dealers,* who are bidden return, and he will heal their backslidings; which could not be, if this covenant were not accessible to sinners. Nay, let me say, there is scarce any sort of sin, but the Lord out-faceth it in his covenant; as we may see, *Jer.* 3. where the Lord saith, *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, thou hast spoken and done evil as thou couldst; yet, wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?* If we look to the grossness of sin, were it like scarlet or crimson, *Isa.* 1. 18. *it shall be made white like snow and wool:* *If ye be willing and obedient,* saith the Lord, *to close a covenant with me, ye shall eat the good of the land.* In the propounding of the covenant, he will take away that exception of the grossness of sin, which might stand in the sinner's way, were it even rotten hypocrisy



crisy, detestable indifferency and lukewarmness in the matters of God, putting the person in hazard to be spewed out of Christ's mouth; yet he saith even to such (if they will indeed take his counsel, and be content to have their deadly evils removed, and their wants supplied) *I counsel thee to come and buy of me eye-salve, gold and garments; And, Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and be with me.* Only take this word of advertisement here, and then I shall clear and confirm the doctrine further: When then we speak of sinners access to God by this covenant, we mean, that there is access, only on condition they take with their faults, and come weeping, heart-broken, and someway suitably affected with their sin: These only are the persons that may comfortably expect this access; he seeks after such, tho' he will find none such till he make them such. For further clearing and confirming of it then, we would consider these four things. 1. God's end in the covenant, which will make out this, that there must be access to a run-away sinner by this covenant to union with God, when he comes home to him in the way of repentance and believing; because his end in the covenant is *to save sinners*, often spoken of; *to justify the ungodly*, Rom. 4. 5. *to dwell with rebels*, Psal. 68. 18. *to get a name and a praise to himself* of being gracious: As it cannot admit of, nor let in a sinner, but on this condition; so it cannot but accept of a sinner having this condition. 2. We would consider God's contrivance of the covenant, in making it suitable to such an end, so as it may make the riches of his grace to shine, and may be effectual for the gaining of souls; and therefore, 2 Sam. 23. 5. it is said, in this respect, *to be ordered in all things and sure*; and Jer. 31. 33. compared with Heb. 8. the substance of it is set down compended in a few words, *I will pardon their iniquity, and remember their sin no more, &c.* 3. We would consider the administration of the covenant: 'Tis not in an immediate way, as that first covenant made with Adam was, wherein there was no Mediator, neither was there need of any; but it is in a mediate way, by a Surety and Mediator, who hath taken on and engaged for the debt of the covenanting sinner, and hath

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undertaken for his through-bearing. Now, why is this administration and dispensation? but because the principal debtor is a bankrupt, and not able to satisfy for himself; therefore he hath access to come and get pardon, and to be friends with God thro' the Mediator. 4. We would consider all the properties of the covenant, especially the freeness of it, and we will find that they speak out this: It is a covenant of *sure mercies*, Isa. 55. 3. and all the promises and articles of it respect sinners, and hold forth this, that there is a way laid down, how a sinner, at feud with God, may get this union made up by covenanting with him.

The fourth observation is, *That covenanting with God is a very short cut for the quieting, peace, and happiness of a treacherous backsliding sinner*: Therefore, when these people, here spoken of, are, in their holy heat and warmth, stirred up under the conviction and sense of their guilt; as the short cut to come to peace and a happy condition, they say, *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant*. It is the accepting of God's offer, and being content to be his on the account of Christ's righteousness, that they propose to themselves as the ground of their calm, quietness, and happiness. This observation implies these three things. 1. That covenanting with God doth fully make the covenanter happy, tho' formerly he hath been a miserable sinner; and O this is a good bargain, that makes a sinner compleatly happy! it makes him to say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee*, Psal. 73. I shall name a few scriptures, to shew the full happiness of a sinner that enters in this covenant: The first whereof is, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *Altho' my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire*: It is *mensura voti*, even all that heart can wish. And these words being considered, as David the sweet singer of Israel his last words, when he is a-dying, they clearly imply a commendation of this covenant as full for the happiness of a sinner. Another passage is, Rev. 21. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things*: How is that? even thus, *I will be his God, and he shall be my son*; that

is in substance, I will declare myself to be in covenant with him. This is the compend of the compleat happiness of glorified saints in heaven, and the begun happiness of believers, of sojourning saints here on earth, in a less measure and lower degree ; for in heaven God *will be all in all* : And is not this a good bargain, and good to sinners ? which commends it the more. A third place is, *Rom. 8.* where 'tis told us, that nothing can be *laid to their charge*, but 'tis answered in this covenant. They have a Cautioner to pay their debt, and to strengthen them for their duty ; *I will* (saith he) *be their God, and they shall be my people : I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me : I will pardon their iniquities, all bygones, and heal their backslidings*, they shall not get leave to go from me : Would ye be pliable and yielding to God's covenant ? *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and a new heart will I give unto them, and will cause them to walk in my statutes, and to do them.* 2. The doctrine implies, as it is a full covenant, or makes the covenanter fully happy, so it makes him sickerly and surely happy : *2 Sam. 25. 5.* it is a *covenant well ordered in all things and sure*. Whoever by faith be-take themselves to Christ's righteousness, and lay hold on this covenant, may expect communion with God, as certainly as *Adam* before the fall had it ; for 'tis the same God that promiserh, who is as faithful as ever he was : Hence 'tis called a *word tried as silver in a furnace seven times* ; a pure word, that cometh out of the furnace always as massy and weighty as it went in. And the ground of the covenant being Christ's satisfaction, it makes it sure ; therefore he is called a *tried Corner-stone, a sure Foundation*. 3. It implies, that as it is a sure, so it is a compendious and speedy way to happiness, and of deliverance to the sinner ; which maketh much for God's praise : He is a *very present help in time of trouble, or a speedy help*, *Psal. 46.* So, *Psal. 32. 5.* *I said* (saith David) *I would confess my transgression, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*, immediately (as if he had said) upon my confession, without longer delay : And, *Rom. 4. 7.* this *Psalm* is made use of, to demonstrate the righteousness which is by faith in Christ.

The fifth observation is, *That sinners, who are lying under*

*a quarrel with God, and have the offer of a covenant, should betake themselves to it, and without delay put a close to the bargain betwixt God and them. Come (say they here) and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant ; whereby is holden out, that, when a sinner hath access to the covenant with God, he should flee to it, and take hold of it quickly. In this respect, covenanting with God is compared to fleeing in to the city of refuge, Heb. 6. That which I mean is, 1. That a sinner, who hath this covenant in his offer, should take no other way for justification and freedom for sin and wrath, but hold to this only, and seek to be justified by it. 2. That he should do it speedily : When the word of the gospel saith, Come ; he should answer, Lo, I come unto thee ; When God by the preaching of the gospel maketh a gracious declaration, that he will accept of lost sinners that come to him, and saith, This is the day of salvation, this is the accepted time, as it is, 2 Cor. 6. 3. and when by his ministers he waiteth on you, inviteth and wooeth you, ye should presently, without delay or demur, close with the offer, and accept of the invitation.*

*The sixth observation is, That those who are convinced that they have sinned, and would fain be in covenant with God, should endeavour to have it througked and made sure, to have it an absolutely closed and ended bargain. This is very clear in this people's practice, who concernedly say, Come let us join ourselves in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten ; they think they cannot get it made sure enough, and therefore they join in a covenant never to be forgotten, to be perpetual ; they judged that it could not possibly be made too sure : Which manifestly saith, that when God giveth an opportunity to enter into, or renew a covenant with him, we should be holily solicitous, in very good earnest, and greatly concerned to have it made sicker, as the word is, Neh. 9. v. last, We make a sure covenant and write it, and our princes, Levites and priests seal unto it. That word, Isa 44. 5. is remarkable to this purpose, One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord ; that it might stand (as it were) over his head, as being formally and explicitly engaged.*

gaged in, with heart and hand : And they that know how fickle and inconstant their hearts are, and how prone to deal loosely and unfaithfully in God's covenant, have good reason to look to this, that all be sure work ; that they get not the shell for the kernel, and go not down to the grave with a lie in their right hand.

The *seventh* observation is, *That there are some times beside other times, wherein some people beside others have it pungently put to them to enter in, and to renew their covenant with God.* These here spoken of, who say, having God's pressing call to it, before they said it one to another, *Come and let us join to the Lord in a covenant*, are put to it more than others, and at this time more than at another. In a word, people are then put to it in a more especial manner, 1. At such a time when the gospel is clearly, convincingly, and powerfully preached unto them ; preaching of the gospel being God's way of meeting and treating with sinners, and the ministers and preachers thereof being as his ambassadors commissioned and sent forth by him to treat, and close a treaty with sinners, on the terms contained in their commission ; which when they with suitable concernedness and earnestness do, their hearers are the more put to it. 2. They are thus put to it, when some stirring and warmth of affection towards covenanting with God is wrought in them ; or when their own frame, thro' grace, presseth them on to it ; as we may see it did in this people. 3. When the Lord oftner than once or twice, in frequently renewed opportunities of this kind, puts people to it ; and more especially in the sacrament of the Lord's supper : The very sight and offer of the elements in the communion speak plainly, on the matter, to the communicants, *Are ye indeed in earnest in the great business of covenanting with God, since ye are now to receive the seal of it? If ye be not, ye notably profane the ordinance, by setting a seal to a blank charter : It is therefore called the covenant, This is the cup of the new covenant ; because it puts you in mind of the covenant, and puts you to it, whether ye will really engage in it. It is like the king's appointing a day for sealing of pardons to rebels ; his proclamation first puts them to it, to accept of the pardon ; next, the heralds put them to it ; and then, lastly, the set and fixed*

time or day of the sealing, puts them most of all to it : And so it is with you in this ordinance, that we are by and by to be about.

We come now to the *application* of all, wherein we shall not insist on all things that these doctrines minister ground for ; but shall pitch on some most useful, and which are the great scope of the text and of the day.

And, in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, I would *beseech* you to endeavour to gather and compose yourselves, and gravely to ponder what it is that this day ye are pressingly called to ; it is even this, *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten.* Know and believe, that there is such a thing as covenanting with God ; that God is dealing with you to covenant with him ; and that it is a good bargain : *To you is this word of salvation sent.* And ye should be very seriously thinking how to get it accepted and made use of, how to receive this offer by faith, and how to get yourselves given up and away to him ; because in this covenant (as I shewed before) there is a mutual engaging : God offers himself, and all that is in him, to be ours, and to be made forthcoming for our good ; and we by faith close with the offer, and give up ourselves to him to be at his dispose. Have ye any serious thoughts of this ? Put yourselves to it, and we in the name of the Lord put you to it ; for we cannot well proceed any further, till ye be at some point in this : Are ye in earnest ? is this your errand in being here to day ? if not, why are ye come hither ? is it to see how the day goeth ? or, is it only to get your communion, as ye use to speak ? Alas ! what's that ? it is to covenant with God, and, ere ye depart this place, to put it to a point, that it may be a closed bargain ; that should be your errand.

And therefore, in the 2<sup>d</sup> place, we tell you, that the great God is content to covenant with poor, feckless and sinful creatures ; whereat we may wonder, and say, *Is it so in very deed that God will dwell with men on earth ?* will he indeed covenant with men, with sinful men, with treacherous-dealing men, with backsliders ? Yea, we tell you, that it is so ; he is content to be your God, and that ye possess all things in him ; content to pardon you all your sins, to give you grace and glory, even every

every good thing ; to enter you heirs to a kingdom, and on good and easy terms ; to do it freely, *without money and without price*, if ye be but indeed content to accept of his offer on his easy and very reasonable terms : And may not your very hearts laugh within you at the hearing of the glad tidings of this covenant, and that God is yet content to make it up with you ? O how sappy and massy is this ! and that is a very sweet word to this purpose which we have, *Psal. 16. 6. God, even our own God shall bless us*, which may make the believer smile. This relation of *our own* maketh the blessing double ; and it flows from this formal (at least, real) covenanting and union with God, and the believer hath a right to this and all things : He hath here an offer, and another sort of right, than he hath to his house and land or clothes ; 'tis a right to God, that giveth a right to these things, I mean a spiritual right ; for we speak not now of that which is civil : Let us, therefore, stay ourselves and wonder, and be stirred and affected with it, that the infinite and all-sufficient God is content to make this good bargain, and even now to make it with us sinners, even with insignificant and unworthy us.

3dly, We make *proclamation* of this bargain to you, and avouch, that there is salvation offered to sinners, and to be had thro' Jesus Christ : The Lord alloweth and warranteth us to make this proclamation, as well as he did *Jeremiab*, when he saith to him, *Chap. 3. 12. Go and proclaim these words towards the north, Return, thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon thee ; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever* : He alloweth, nay, he peremptorily commandeth that ye should be put to it ; and therefore, when we have laid the covenant before you, what say ye to it ? what will ye do ? we must have an answer from you : Ye have his word and oath for confirmation of it ; O believe and take hold of it, and ye shall get the seal from us as his commissioners, who treat with you, according to our commission, in his name. And here we must be particular, and be ye particular with yourselves : Take and receive what we say to you with a warrant, as the word of the Lord ; for it is no less his word now, than it was when *Jeremiab* and the

other prophets spoke it, when the apostles spoke it, yea, when Christ spake it himself: It is the same covenant, and the same word, that this day is preached to you; the Lord calls us to stir up ourselves, and to say in good earnest, *Come let us join to him in a perpetual covenant.* 1. The Party inviting is the LORD JEHOVAH in the Mediator; and sure he is a most, yea, *the* most excellent Party; *Thy Maker* (saith he, *Isa.* 54. 8.) *is thy Husband.* 2. There are in this covenant excellent promises: God is content to be your God, and to take you for his people and spouse, to pardon your iniquity, to heal your backslidings, to sanctify and save you, and to make you eternally happy; and are not these desirable? 3. It calls you to give yourselves up to him; and indeed it is very reasonable, that, if the husband give himself to the wife, she should give herself to him. Are ye then content to treat with God in the Mediator, and to be his on his own terms? It is good to meet and treat with God in him. Have ye any ground to except against this? doth it please or displease you? say to it, tell your mind: For I declare to you, that, if ye get him to be yours, you must needs be his. I fear, many of you stand and stick at this, notwithstanding the high reasonableness of it: Is this, think ye, an evil, disadvantageous, or prejudicial exchange? Whether is it better that the one and only true God reign over you, than that Satan, and a multitude of strange lords, your lusts, taking the throne (as it were) by turns, should reign over you? It is both sad and stupendous, that ever this should be suffered once to come in question or debate; and yet, alas! it is this, or something like this, at which it will stand. Either ye will not take God for your God, or ye will not give yourselves to him to be his people, on his own very reasonable and easy terms; and I trow, ye will make no better. I would, therefore, yet again put you to it; for it is the very thing that ye are called to, the great business of the day, and it is come even to the shock.

And therefore, labour to be at a point, whether ye will close with him or not: If ye will sincerely say, We take the Lord to be our God, and give ourselves to him, to be his people and servants; then we say to you, and assure



sure you in his name, that this cup, that by and by ye are to drink, shall be, according to his warrant, *the new covenant in his blood*. And, to press you to the thing, let me but ask you a few *questions*. 1. Is there not need of covenanting with God? are there not many sins on your score? is there not a quarrel betwixt God and you? is not this bargain meet and suitable for you, which holds out remission of sins and peace with God? are ye not urgently called to it? And what ground of challenge will it be, think ye, that this was in your offer, and on very free and easy terms, and ye would not accept of it, but would needs destroy yourselves? 2. If there be sin and a quarrel, is there not a necessity to have it taken away? Have ye laid your account and resolved not to be solicitous and careful, whether ye be friends with God or not? And, if ye will not say that, why do ye not enter this covenant? 3. Is there any other way to get sin pardoned, and the quarrel taken away, but by making sure your covenant with God? *David* or any others that were saved, were they saved any other way? This covenant was *all his salvation, and all his desire*. 4. What will ye say in the day of the Lord, when the trumpet shall sound, and he shall call you to an account for refusing his free and gracious offer; when there will be no more treating with you; when he shall say, and make your own conscience say to you, It was plainly told you, that there was a quarrel standing betwixt me and you; it was told you, that I was willing to enter into a covenant with you, and to remove that quarrel; I sent my messengers unto you for this end, but ye made light of the matter? Say to it, O say to it; ye must say something, *Yea*, or *Nay*; ye are not left to be indifferent, and to keep up yourselves in this matter: I tell you, if ye say not *Yea*, ye say *Nay*; and, as the apostle speaks, *Acts 13. 46.* ye pass sentence on yourselves, *and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life*; It is interpretatively a saying, that ye will not have heaven and life thro' Christ; and therefore, as ye would not destroy your own souls, I beseech you, nay, I obtest you in the name of the Lord, and for his sake, accept of this covenant. We tell you, and, as the apostle hath it, we say, *As it is known unto you, that through Jesus Christ remission of sins*

*is preached to you*; he hath purchased life and salvation to sinners; and, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*: Give, O give your consent to the bargain, and that is all we seek of you.

Now, to prosecute this a little, and to put you yet further to it, because it will ly before God, whether we have put you to it or not, and whether ye have accepted of this covenant or not; whether we were in earnest in proposing it, and whether ye were in earnest in closing with it: Consider, 1. The persons whom we put to this, and the things that we put you to; 2. The terms on which; 3. The grounds from which; And, 4. The qualifications and directions whereby.

*First*, As for the persons whom we put and press to this covenanting with God; It is not those only, who have gotten their tokens warranting them to come to the table, nor those only that are debarred, and so have got no tokens; but it is all of you, *those who are afar off, and near-hand*; but differently: To the tender soul we say, Come forward; To the secure we say, Humble yourselves, and then come and join in this covenant. The thing we call you to is, to take the Lord to be your God, and to give up yourselves to be God's; we call you to take God to be your Master, your Father, your Saviour, your Head, your Husband, your Friend, even your All: And that is no ill nor small offer: And we call you to give up yourselves to God, to forsake your father's house, and all your kindred, and to cleave to him; to *join yourselves to the Lord*, as the text hath it; and as it is said, the prodigal *joined himself to a certain citizen*, so ye would join yourselves to the Lord, and be beholden to him for your life.

*Secondly*, As for the terms, they are in short, That seeing God saith, Accept of my Son's righteousness, and ye shall be my sons and daughters; ye would freely accept of it, and take and put Christ's righteousness in the place and room of self-righteousness which was in the covenant of works; found your plea before God on nothing that ye can do, but on Christ's doing and suffering for you, which now by faith ye resolve to adhere to; and resign your

yourselves to him without any reservation, to be guided and saved by him, in his own way.

As for the *third*, How, or from and by what grounds we put you to this? or rather, How doth the Lord put us all to it? 1. Ye are put to it by his offer in the gospel, which, in discretion, calls you to give him an answer: He cries, *Come unto me, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David*; and, doth he not require an answer? and, is it not incumbent to us, who speak to you in his name, to crave your answer? We declare to you all, that ye may, if ye will, come to be joined with God in covenant, and may be sure to be accepted of as his, if ye come aright: Now, what say ye to it? Either ye must look on this as a cheat or cunningly devised fable; or, if ye dare not look on it so, ye must accept of it, and make it welcome. 2. Ye are put to it, in this respect, that the Lord brings you now and then under some conviction of the necessity of your peace with God; something within you saith, that peace with God is worth the having, and needful; that this is a good bargain, and that ye have need of it; and there are now and then some raw resolutions to put it to a point: And it may be there is something presently that puts you to it; and if not, so much the more ye would put yourselves to it, lest *the kingdom of God be taken from you*. 3. Ye are put to it by this same sacrament: Is it possible that ye can take the communion for a seal and confirmation, except ye covenant with God before? If ye will not covenant, ye prove yourselves to be treacherous dissemblers in going to the communion, and to be liars to God: When he presents and offers his covenant, ye profess to take his offer, and to close the covenant with him; but ye refuse, as it were, to take the pen in your hand, or do throw it away: When he presents to you the cup of the New Testament, ye drink the wine, and spill the blood, and so become *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, when ye despise it, and will not make use of it, nor covenant with God that ye may get the use of it. And therefore, 4. Know, that ye are put to it presently and peremptorily, and that the Lord will take it for a refusal and for a scorning and despising on your part, if ye do it not; and do ye think it

a little matter to have such a guilt lying on your score? What know ye, if ever God shall offer to seal a covenant with you again? And therefore we put you to it peremptorily, as to these *three*. (1.) As to the thing, that, when he invites, ye come; when he offers, ye receive and give the Lord you answer, not a *Nay-say*, but a *Yea*, as ye will be answerable: And, upon your saying *Yea* to this covenant on his terms, we declare in his name, that he says *Yea*, in taking in the sinner that fleeth unto him. (2.) As to the whole of the thing: For ye must not halve God's covenant; but, as ye accept of God to be yours, so ye must give up yourselves to him to be his; and as ye take Christ for paying of your debt, so also ye must take him to help you to do your duty: Take all therefore, and submit yourselves intirely to him in this covenant. (3.) As to the time, ye must do all this presently: For the Lord doth not allow us to give you an hour, or to promise to treat with you one hour after this; 'tis now, *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord*. 'Tis no difficult thing that ye are called to; 'tis to believe with the heart, and to confess with the mouth our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is *Rom. 10. 9*. The Object is Christ; the condition is faith, whereby he is gripped and taken hold of, and which goeth out towards him in the word: And so ye have no more ado, but, when the offer and promise comes out, to accept and subscribe, and to say, *I am the Lord's, I will be his, to be saved by his righteousness, and made holy by his grace*, both which are contained in the covenant; I am content to be beholden to him both for holiness and happiness; and it shall be a bargain. The Lord himself perswade you to do so, and that presently, without delaying, dallying, or shifting and off-putting.

Now, it may be, that some think this to be a good bargain, but they know not how to make it sure and sicker, so as it may hold for ever. And therefore this is the last thing, that, in the *fourth* place, we would speak a little to, viz. How shall a person covenant with God, and know that he hath done so in very deed? (for the *directions* how to covenant are so many evidences of covenanting, when performed.) For *directions* then in this matter; We would in general, in the *1st* place, have ground to suppose and take

take it for granted that ye know what ye are, even sinners, and that sin hath laid the foundation of a quarrel betwixt God and you; and that ye know what he is a designing and doing by this preached gospel, even to bring sinners into this covenant, and to have an union made up betwixt him and them. But ye will, belike, say, I know not how to make it sure. There is no answer to this, but, Be doing, till ye get it made sure; for your unsureness must flow, either from something on God's side; or from something on your side: Ye dare not, I suppose, say that it flows from any thing on God's side, or, if ye should, this is the way to make him sure (to speak so;) and, if it flow from something on your side, he bids you, *Return, backsliding children, and he will heal your backslidings*, and make it sure. But, in the next place, and more particularly, consider, 1. Your end and design, what ye would be at. Ye may have some general aim at something that is good in itself; but that is not enough, it must be something more particular and peculiar: Is it to get God to be your God? doth that fill your eye? Is it to get your backslidings healed as well as pardoned? That is right, if your aim be to have God and spiritual good. I mention this the rather, because some may love God and the covenant, for some temporal good; whereas others love him and his covenant, mainly for a spiritual good, and think themselves well come to and made up thereby. Wherein lies the difference? will ye say. I answer, in a word, To love God and the covenant only or mainly for temporal mercies, is ill and selfish; but to love God and his covenant, to be made thereby really happy in the enjoyment of him, and to be made conform to him in holiness, is good and desirable, and neither selfish nor servile and mercenary: As it is no unkindly-like token in a wife to love her husband, to be delighted in him, and to like well to enjoy his company; so it is a kindly-like mark for a soul to love God, on the account of the happiness and holiness that are to be had in him, and from him: Love to God shoulders not out all regard and love to ourselves simply, but it shoulders out love to lusts, and all inordinate love to self and to every idol; nay, 'tis inconsistent with true love to God, not to care whether we be happy

in the enjoyment of him or not. 2. Consider how, and by what means, and on what terms ye seek to come at that end: Are ye secure, and senseless of your sin and misery without God? 'Tis very like, that ye make but a blind bargain whereof ye will have no real advantage; But, have ye any kindly touch of your sin and misery, and of your need of a Saviour; and have ye recourse to him, as *One able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him, and who lives for ever to make intercession for them?* Ye may know somewhat of your sincerity in covenanting with God by the way that ye come to him. 3. What use make ye of the Mediator, when ye are come to him? Is your peace with God, and your hope of holding by the bargain, grounded on him? Do ye lay the weight of all the good ye expect, on his mediation, on his satisfaction and intercession, on his purchase? Do ye hold all thorow him? That's a good token. 4. Are ye content to give to God, as well as to take from him; to devote yourselves to him for service, as well as to enjoy him and happiness in him? This also is a good token, as well as a direction. 5. Are ye in much holy fear and jealousy of backsliding? and is it in your eye and aim purposely to article this with the Lord, *to put his fear in your heart, that ye may not depart from him?* Many persons will sometimes in a warm fit, or in a good mood (as we use to speak) come far on, as *Agrippa* did, but quickly fall off, and return to their wonted bias, coldness and indifferency; therefore, in your covenanting with God, there would be much holy fear, lest it be not sound, lest it hold not: Let your soul say, Now I am absolutely and unreservedly given away to God, not by *mortgage* or *wadset* only (to speak so) but without reversion, even for ever. 6. Ye would come to close actually with God himself in covenant: Many come to the word and sacrament, to get, as they think, some good; but come not to the covenant, to be really and perpetually joined to the Lord himself. 7. Ye would seek after some heart-warming, by God's Spirit within you, and some lively exercise of your faith in him, as ye see to be in this peoples case. 8. Persons that are in earnest will be much affected with bygone slips, failings and unfaithful dealings with God, and

and are afraid of falling back and of dealing loosely with the Lord; and this puts them on to be more solicitous and careful, to take on the mo bands, and to cast the knot the faster, because the heart is deceitful: *Come* (say they here) *and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten.* They are not content with a covenant, except it be sicker; the heart protests against itself if it shall draw back, and resigns and renounces its liberty to do so any more, if it may be called liberty. 9. A person would aim to have himself sure and satisfied as to this, that he hath really given his consent, that he may have quietness in the assurance of its being so; yet, not laying the weight of his peace on his clearness and assurance, but because his comfort much depends thereon, therefore he will endeavour to have any blank filled up, and the business put to a point: He comes to this covenanting, with holy fear, self-suspicion and jealousy; and goeth from it with fear: And as he is attended with this fear in covenanting, so in receiving the sacrament the seal of the covenant; *Come* (say they) *and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten.* O so sure as they would have it! Ye who shall thro' grace come thus, shall find the Lord Jesus waiting and ready to welcome you.

But, 'tis like, ye will ask, How is the sacrament made useful and helpful in this joining to the Lord in covenant? I answer in general, as to the believer, That all the promises are his, and it seals all the blessings of the covenant to him, because the condition of the covenant is found in him: Even as a pardon given to a rebel on condition he lay down his arms, when he doth lay them down and accepts of the pardon, the seal is appended to it, which makes it firm and sure. But what if the persons doubt of their having entred into the covenant? *Answer* 1. They are either such as are mere strangers to God, and have no desire after, nor respect to the covenant; those are under God's curse, and shall get no good of the sacrament, because they resolve not to take Christ to fulfil the condition of the covenant in them, and are not in earnest to be in under the bond of the covenant: Yet, if even such would seriously resolve to fulfil the condition, or rather to take

Christ

Christ to help them to fulfil it, they should be welcome. Or they are such as are doubting, tho' they have some honest desire: Such would remember, the bargain is mutual, and they must engage to God, if they would have God engaged to them: And, if ye have not done it before, do it even now, and the sacrament shall be useful and helpful to you, in these respects: More particularly,

1. For sealing this general truth, *If I believe in Christ, I shall have eternal life*: In which respect, 'tis like a pardon offered to a rebel on condition he lay down his arms; he would first see it in writ, and then he would have it sealed: Well (saith the king) ye shall get it sealed.
2. 'Tis useful, and hath influence in a moral way, to make you accept of pardon, and to enter in the covenant: In which respect, 'tis an argument, as to allure the rebel to accept of the pardon, so to perswade and assure him, that on his acceptance he shall have it actually and certainly, when 'tis holden forth, sealed: For, saith the Lord, in the sacrament, ye have my covenant, and here I am ready to seal it.
3. It furthers our joining in covenant, in respect of its clear holding forth and manifesting the blessings of the covenant. The word saith, that ye are sinners, and that ye will get nothing that is truly good but in and through Christ; and that God is content to covenant with you, and to pardon your sins thro' him: And the sacrament brings Christ and the blessings of the covenant to be some way visible and sensible to you; and the gospel tells how it is done.
4. In the sacrament the Lord condescends in the most formal way to covenant; for in it he saith, Take you my Son's blood to wash you who are guilty and filthy: And your taking is, as it were, a striking of hands with him, and a saying, Content, Lord, let this blood wash me. And thus, looking to the word of institution, which gives footing to faith, and exercising faith thereon as your warrant, your faith is helped to take hold of Christ by and in the sacrament.
5. It helps to close with the covenant, by letting you see the grounds of the covenant, whereon it is bottomed and built. If thou shouldst say, Tho' God would covenant with me, I will not keep: The sacrament holds out Christ as Cautioner, that hath put himself in our room, and engaged



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.

**T**H E R E are two main and mighty uptaking 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