

SERMON UPON PSALM L. 5.

Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.—Ps. l. 5.

THIS whole psalm setteth forth the erection of the gospel church, and the ordinances thereof. Though the gospel kingdom came not with observation, that is, with external pomp and glory, yet much of the majesty of the divine presence was discernible in it.

Clearly in the frame of the psalm you may observe a rejection of the legal worship, and an establishment of the christian service, and the spiritual oblations which belong thereunto. Yet the expressions do rather represent Christ as coming in the majesty of a judge than a lawgiver; for three reasons, I suppose—

1. Because there was judgment exercised on the Jews for refusing to submit to Christ and enter into the gospel state.

2. Because in the prophetic writings the two comings of Christ are frequently mixed, his first coming in humility with his last coming in glory to judge the world.

3. Because those laws and ordinances which were given by Christ at the erection of the gospel kingdom will be the matter about which we shall be judged at the last and universal day of doom. For these, and other reasons, is Christ represented as a judge, summoning the world into his presence, that the actions of men, good or bad, may be examined; that it may be known who have resisted and despised the Messiah, and who have subjected themselves to him; that the former may be punished, and the other rewarded. We shall all one day be brought into the judgment about the covenant we have made with God by sacrifice. So much is intimated in the context.

In the words observe—(1.) God's charge to his officers to summon the court, 'Gather my saints together.' (2.) The description of the parties who are to appear in the judgment, 'My saints that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'

1. His charge to his officers, whether angels or others. None can hide themselves, but they must all appear before the tribunal of Christ; for God will have them all brought together from the four winds or corners of the earth.

2. The description, 'That have made a covenant.' The word signifieth, cut a covenant. In covenants the sacrifices were cut asunder, and the persons contracting went between the divided parts. As God

bid Abraham take an heifer, and a ram, and a she-goat, Gen. xv. 10, 'And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another;' and at evening, ver. 17, 'a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.' And Jer. xxxiv. 18, 'They have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof.' The meaning of this rite was an imprecation: So let them be cut asunder that shall break this covenant. The heathens: *Sic a Jove feriatur is, qui sanctum hoc fregerit fœdus, ut ego hunc porcum ferio*—Let Jupiter strike him dead that breaks this holy covenant, as I strike this swine. Thus are we said to cut a covenant with God.

Now this covenant is said to be made by sacrifice; for (1.) There is no covenanting between God and sinful man without a sacrifice; and (2.) No sacrifice will serve the turn to make the covenant effectual, but only the blood of Christ, by which his justice is satisfied, and wrath appeased.

Doct. That God's people or saints are such as have made a covenant with him by sacrifice; for so they are described here.

Two things I must speak to—(1.) About making a covenant with God; (2.) Why no covenant can be made with God without the interposing of or respect unto a sacrifice.

First, About making a covenant with God. Sometimes a covenant is said to be made by God, and sometimes made by us. It is made by God as he hath appointed it, and stated the terms of it, and unalterably fixed them. Though there be a condescension in the covenant form, and therein God carrieth himself as a God of grace; yet in fixing the term so unalterably, God carrieth himself as a sovereign: Ps. cxi. 9, 'He hath commanded his covenant for ever.' We must take the covenant as God hath left it, not bring it down to our fancies and humours. Our making covenant respects our stipulation, or binding ourselves to perform the conditions required on our part, when we heartily accept the covenant as stated by God.

In every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*, something given, and something taken. God will be our God, and we must be his people: Heb. viii. 10, 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.'

Now God makes this covenant—(1.) With respect to himself; (2.) With respect to us; (3.) With respect both to himself and us.

1. With respect to himself, to show the freeness and sureness of his grace.

[1.] The freeness of his grace. He might have required obedience from us out of his sovereignty, as he is our creator and we are his creatures; and given no other reason of his commands but this, I am the Lord; without any promises or contract made with us. But the absolute command of God, though it might exact obedience from us, yet it doth not carry such motives in its bosom to encourage us to perform it as the covenant. There was so much of grace in the first covenant: though the condition of it was perfect obedience, and the

reward had a respect to our personal righteousness, yet God would covenant withal, and enter into bonds and terms of agreement with man, who was not his equal, but the work of his hands; and give his word to him to make him sure of eternal life, in case of perfect obedience. But the last covenant hath the honour, by way of eminency, to be styled a covenant of grace; as being made with us after a breach, with man fallen; so it is called a 'covenant of peace,' Isa. liv. 10, 'My covenant of peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee;' and because therein God hath manifested the glory of his redeeming grace and pardoning mercy: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved;' and because the terms are so gracious, that God will accept of our imperfect obedience, if it be sincere; it is called a 'covenant of grace.' In short, when God was displeased with man for the breach of the first covenant, yet he would enter into a new covenant, to show the riches of his grace and mercy; and he giveth notice to fallen man, and sendeth him word, that if he will put himself under this law of grace, he shall be loosed from the curse: Luke i. 77-79, 'To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' And if we once enter into it, from first to last he dealeth with us upon gracious terms.

[2.] The sureness of his mercy. We are now at a certainty, and may know what to expect from God; for he is pleased to enter into bonds, and to make himself a debtor by his own promises. Mercy and truth are the Jachin and Boaz: Micah vii. 20, 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.' It was mercy to Abraham, with whom the covenant was made; truth to Jacob, to whom it was made good. So Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' We may enter our plea and claim; and therefore we are said 'to take hold of his covenant,' Isa. lvi. 4; Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.' Here is our sure stay and encouragement, and we may challenge the privilege as ours by God's donation.

2. With respect to us.

[1.] To leave the greater bond and obligation upon us; for there is, besides his right, our own consent. Therefore he would deal with us in the way of a covenant rather than in the way of absolute sovereignty. God seeth how slippery and unstable our hearts are, that we love to wander; and therefore he will bind us to our duty by a solemn covenant, which every one of us is personally to make for himself to God: Ezek. xx. 37, 'I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' We pass under God's rod, as sheep were told going out of the fold. And we enter into the bond of the covenant, that we may be bound to God the faster. God taketh us to be firmly obliged to him, and it is dangerous to break with him after such consent.

[2.] To make us more willing ; therefore we enter upon his service by choice. We are not at liberty to engage or not engage ; but God chooseth to rule us by consent rather than by force, with a sceptre of mercy rather than a rod of iron : Isa. lvi. 4, ' Thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs, that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' And God taketh this way as suiting best, partly with the nature of a reasonable creature, who is to be led rather than driven ; to be drawn by his own consent : Hosea xi. 4, ' I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.' And partly as suiting with the tenor of his gospel dispensation. Gospel grace useth no force : it is not extorted, but willing obedience which God now looketh for : Ps. cx. 3, ' Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.'

[3.] To put an honour upon his creatures. Surely it is an honour to be God's confederates, an honour vouchsafed to his people above all others : Deut. xxvi. 18, 19, ' The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments ; and to make thee high above all the nations that he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour ; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.' Surely it is the glory of any people to be in covenant with God. The meanest relation to him is above all the privileges in the world. God's honourable relation attends this covenant interest. They are his children : John i. 12, ' As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ;' 1 John iii. 1, ' Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' They are his friends : James ii. 23, ' Abraham was called the friend of God ;' John xv. 14, ' Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' It is a covenant of amity ; they are his friends, his dear children. Surely this is a great favour.

3. With respect to both parties. That both parties might be engaged to each other by mutual consent. Without it God is not bound to us, nor can we be knit and tied to the Lord. We are said to be joined to the Lord by this covenant : Jer. l. 5, ' Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten ;' and to cleave to him as a girdle cleaveth about the loins of a man : Jer. xiii. 11, ' For as a girdle cleaveth unto the loins of a man, so have I caused the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, to cleave to me, saith the Lord ; that they might be to me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.' God is not bound to us, as he is not to any creature, no, not to the angels in heaven ; yea, he is altogether free before the contract ; but is pleased, for our good and benefit, to enter into bonds, and is pleased to bind himself to bless us. And it was not fit we should be possessed of such benefits without being bound to God, and coming into some nearness to him. For in the covenant God doth manifest himself in the most familiar way to his people, and therefore will have this mutual bond to precede, that he and his creatures might come near to each other with the greatest familiarity, and bind themselves to each other by reciprocal engagements and consents.

Secondly, That no covenant can be made with God without the interposing of and respect unto a sacrifice.

1. In the old church, when Israel entered into covenant with God, there were solemn sacrifices. The manner you have described Exod. xxiv. 10, and explained by the apostle Heb. ix. 19, 20, 'When Moses had spoken every precept unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.' In this action you may observe that, after the writing of the law, Moses 'built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel,' Exod. xxiv. 4. The altar represented God, the first and chief party in the covenant, and the twelve pillars of stone represented the other confederate party, the people of Israel, who were to come before the Lord as his obedient people. Now both the parties were not only there by dead representation, or in image and figure, but there were also lively types of the glory and presence of the God of Israel; for it is said, ver. 10, 'They saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven for clearness.' God was there in great majesty to solemnise the covenant. You know heaven is his throne, and the church his footstool; therefore, when the church was desolate, it is said, Lam. ii. 1, 'God remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger.' On Israel's part there were present Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they were to worship afar off, ver. 1, to express their reverence to this great God who was to enter into covenant with them. Moses alone was to come up to Jehovah, but the elders went up but half way. Moses went up unto the top of the mount in a dark cloud as the mediator, and the people abode beneath at the foot of the mount, and the elders went up but half way. Well, then, the covenant is propounded to the people: Moses 'came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments;' and they make answer, 'All the words which the Lord hath said will we do,' ver. 3. But before the full confirmation of his covenant you read that Moses 'sent the young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord,' ver. 5. The young men, that is, the first-born, who had the right of priesthood, before the Levites were chosen, and taken instead of the first-born of Israel, Num. iii. 41. And by their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings it was declared that we cannot enter into covenant with God without sacrifices. These sacrifices did figure the death of Christ, and the benefits thence accruing to us. There were burnt-offerings to show the means of their propitiation with God, and peace-offerings to show their thankfulness for the peace and salvation which by it they obtained. The next thing in this action was that Moses 'took half the blood, and put it in basons, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar,' ver. 6. And then he 'took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient,' ver. 7. Then he took the rest of the blood, and 'sprinkled it on the people.' He sprinkled it on the altar to show that God took upon him

an obligation to bless. And the reading of the book of the covenant in the audience of the people showeth that those that will enter into covenant with God should understand their duty, and be ready to fulfil it. Then he 'took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words,' ver. 8. The blood sprinkled on the people may be meant of the twelve pillars set up to represent the people; they take an obligation to obey; one party is not bound and the other free, but both bound to each other.

Thus the first covenant was not dedicated without the blood of a sacrifice. Well, then, God is the principal party covenanting, and binding himself to the people by his promises; and the people binding themselves to his precepts, that they might avoid the penalty threatened, and obtain the blessings promised; and this covenant was confirmed by blood, and this blood sprinkled, and so made inviolable.

There is but one circumstance more, and that is, ver. 11, 'And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink;' that is, these select and chosen men, the elders spoken of before, were not hurt and affrighted by God, and did feast in his presence, in token of their reconciliation with him, and joy in his grace. This was the way of entrance by the Jewish church, all which are mysterious and typical. God, that otherwise driveth a sinner from him, is made propitious to us, that we need not be affrighted at his presence; yea, may hope for all good things from him; yea, we may feast cheerfully in his presence.

2. The christian church doth also make a covenant with him by sacrifice. This will appear in three things—(1.) That Christ's death hath the true notion and virtue of a sacrifice; (2.) That this sacrifice hath respect to the covenant of grace; (3.) That our manner of entering into covenant with God is by the same moral acts by which they were to be conversant about a sacrifice.

[1.] That Christ's death hath the true notion and full virtue of a sacrifice.

(1.) The true notion: Eph. v. 2, 'He hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' His death is a mediatory sacrifice, a propitiatory sacrifice, for the expiation of the sins of his people. In all the sacrifices of the law there was shedding of blood, without which was no remission of sins. All were killed, flayed; some were burnt, some roasted, some fried on coals, some seethed in pots; all which were but shadows of the painful sufferings of our Lord Christ, which he endured for our sins. Christ is the only true and real sacrifice wherein provoked justice doth rest satisfied. Christ in this sacrifice was the priest, who, as God, did offer up himself: Heb. ix. 14, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.' As man, he was the sacrifice: Heb. x. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified, though the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' We may add also, that he was the altar whereupon this sacrifice was offered; for as 'the altar doth sanctify the gift,' Mat. xxiii. 11, so doth his godhead add an infinite value to his sufferings: Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'

(2.) It hath the full virtue of a sacrifice. For sacrifices had a threefold respect—to God, to sin, and to man. God is pacified, sin expiated, and man delivered and freed. All these concur in Christ.

(1st.) As to God, who in the mystery of redemption is considered as the supreme and universal judge, he is pacified and satisfied by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the party offended. So he pitied man, found out a ransom and sacrifice for our atonement. As the supreme lawgiver and judge of mankind, so he is to receive the ransom, sacrifice, and satisfaction, or else to punish us as we have deserved; for before this supreme judge man standeth guilty and liable to death. But Christ 'made his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. He undertook the penalty due to us for sin; and therefore he is said to give himself for us as a propitiation: 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins.' And God intended him as such: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;' 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Now propitiation implieth his being pacified and appeased, so as to become propitious and merciful for ever to sinful man, submitting to the terms of his covenant.

(2d.) As to sin; so he is said to expiate, abolish, and purge it: Heb. i. 3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.' As God would not be appeased without a sacrifice or satisfaction, so sin could not be purged without bearing the punishment. When the sacrifice was offered and made on behalf of sinful man, then was sin purged, or expiated, or made removable, upon certain terms determined by God, our supreme judge and lawgiver. The blood of Christ hath done that which will remove the guilt and pollution of it when rightly applied.

(3d.) As to the sinner, he is delivered and freed from sin; that is, the sinning party, making use of God's remedy, is reconciled to God: Col. i. 21, 22, 'And you who were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death.' The sin is not reconciled to God, but the sinner is; and being reconciled, is pardoned: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' And also sanctified: Heb. xiii. 12, 'Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate;' that is, there is enough done to sanctify the party, and consecrate him to God. Yea, perfected: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needeth no other sacrifice, no other satisfaction; for by this sacrifice he hath obtained all things necessary to salvation. There needeth no more to satisfy justice, or to procure salvation for his people, in the way of a sacrifice.

[2.] That the new covenant is made and confirmed by virtue of this sacrifice, and without it there is no admission to the grace of it.

(1.) By it Christ is authorized to offer the terms and dispense the benefits of it: Heb. xiii. 20, 'The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' That 'blood of the everlasting covenant' hath a double reference there—to the God of peace, which is

the title of God: God's wrath was appeased and his justice satisfied by the full recompense which was made for our offences through the blood of the covenant; so he is the God of peace; and also to his bringing back Christ again from the dead, as having done his work, and satisfied to the uttermost farthing; and so God investeth him with his office, as being the great shepherd of the sheep; that is, a power of saving that which was lost, or recovering the poor stray sheep out of the power of the wolf, that they may be brought again into the pasture, and enjoy the privileges of God's flock.

(2.) By this sacrifice the benefits of the new covenant are sealed, ratified, and conveyed to us. As is evident from the words of our Saviour in the institution of the Lord's supper: 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,' Luke xxii. 20; or, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins,' Mat. xxvi. 28. Wherefore we have the new covenant, the blood confirming this new covenant, which is the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins, as the principal blessing of the new covenant; which promise had been in vain if Christ's blood had not been shed to satisfy divine justice; so that this is the firm and immutable basis upon which this covenant is fixed, otherwise a covenant between God and sinful man had not been stable. So in other places: Zech. ix. 11, 'By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, in which is no water.' All our deliverance cometh by the covenant, and by the blood of the covenant; not only as a promised, but as a purchased blessing. It is by the blood of the covenant that we are pardoned, by the blood of the covenant that we are sanctified, by the blood of the covenant that we are perfected for ever.

[3.] That our manner of entering or renewing covenant with God is by the same moral acts by which they were conversant about the sacrifices. To understand this, let us see what the sacrifices did import.

(1.) They were glasses to represent their misery, and the debt contracted by sin. And therefore the apostle calleth them 'the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and was contrary to us, Col. ii. 14: for by the killing of the beast it was testified that they deserved to die themselves. Their sacrifices were a public testification of their guilt, an acknowledgment of the debt rather than an acquittance; so Heb. x. 3, 'In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.' And that is the reason why it is said, Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart.' Every one that offered sacrifice was in a broken-hearted manner to profess and acknowledge that he was worthy to die for his sins. And doth not the same obligation lie upon us, if we would make a covenant with God, by virtue of the great sacrifice of atonement offered to God for the whole congregation of God's people? Surely the curse of the law bindeth us over to eternal wrath. And this must be assented unto, and subscribed by every man's conscience, with much brokenness of heart. Cold thoughts of sin beget but cold thoughts of Christ; for every man's value and esteem of the remedy is according to his sense of the misery. If we are not deeply affected with our lost condition, Christ is of little use to us. It is the

contrite and broken heart which doth most relish the grace of the Redeemer.

(2.) Sacrifices were figures of the mercy of God and the merit of Christ, viz., of his death and obedience: Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' So Heb. x. 5-7, 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' So that the sacrifices were to represent Christ to them, without which they did little else than qualify for legal privileges. Therefore it behoved every one that would make covenant with God to own the promised Messiah, the surety who died for sin, and the great sacrifice of atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ. And is not this incumbent upon us, who would make and renew covenant with God? What is required of us in the eucharist but to bless God for all his mercies, especially the gift of his Son to die for us? That which was promised and prefigured is now accomplished. Surely the death of Jesus Christ is the only true means of redemption and propitiation for sin, which must be acknowledged with all joy and thankfulness.

(3.) They were obligations to duty, and that worship and obedience which we owe to God; for a man by offering a beast did in effect devote himself and all his power and strength to God; the worshipper was to consecrate himself wholly to his service. So Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' This was the interpretation of the rites of the law, and the reasonable part of that worship. And are not we to give up ourselves to God, with a sincere firm resolution of new obedience? Thus for our humiliation the sacrifices revealed our misery; for our consolation they propounded the remedy of grace; and in order to our sanctification they taught us gratitude and new obedience. But their chief and first relation was to Christ, without whom our misery had been in vain discovered, and holiness of life to little purpose required, for we have all from him.

Use. To press you to enter into covenant with God, especially being encouraged thereunto by the atonement and reconciliation made by Christ. You have no benefit by it till you personally enter into the bond of it. It is true, God being pacified by Christ, offereth pardon and acceptance on the conditions of the gospel, but we do not actually partake of the benefit till we perform those conditions. Though the price be paid by Christ, accepted by the Father, yet we have not an actual interest, through our own default, for not accepting God's covenant. The covenant of nature lieth upon us whether we consent or no, because that is a law, but this is a privilege; and therefore we must man by man make out our title and claim. What shall we do?

1. Bless God for this grace, that when man had irreparably broken the first covenant, and fallen from his state of life, and all the world

left under guilt and a curse: Rom. iii. 19, 'All the world is become guilty before God;' that God took occasion by this misery to open a door of hope to us by Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' and hath set up a new court of righteousness and life, where sinners may appear, where grace taketh the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule of proceeding is the gospel, and upon faith and sincere obedience we may be accepted. Oh! let us run for refuge to this court, take sanctuary at this grace: Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' The Lord standeth with arms open to receive us, if we will but acknowledge our iniquities: Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God;' 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' judge and condemn ourselves for them: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' With penitent and contrite hearts; the self-condemning sinner is acquitted: Luke xviii. 13, 14, 'The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

2. Own Christ as the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world, and the fountain of your life and peace; for till we own the mediator of the covenant, we have not the benefit of the covenant. Though his blood be shed, it is not sprinkled on us: Heb. xii. 24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Nor can it be pleaded by us with any comfort and satisfaction. Therefore you must own him: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' At least prize and esteem him: Phil. iii. 8, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' And use him to the ends for which God hath appointed him: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace;' and 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Let him be to you what God hath appointed him to be, and do for you what God hath appointed him to do for poor sinners: Micah v. 5, 'This man shall be the peace;' that is, in him alone will we seek it; this is the blood of the covenant.

3. Devote yourselves to God, to serve him and please him: Isa. xlv. 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 hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel;' and Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' Now this must be done sincerely; not only with a moral sincerity not to dissemble, but with a supernatural sincerity: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh! that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.' It is done to God, who will not be mocked. And every consecration implieth an execration. But for the present, see no lust be reserved. If you live, or resolve to live, in any

known sin, or do not resolve against it, God will say, 'What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth,' Ps. l. 16. If there be any insincerity, the covenant is marred in the making: Ps. lxxviii. 37, 'Their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' If there be any partial reserve, the heart is not right. All former vanities must actually be renounced.

4. Having made covenant with him, you must be exact in keeping it: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' Therefore be ever mindful of it: 1 Chron. xvi. 15, 'Be ye mindful always of his covenant;' Deut. iv. 23, 'Take heed to yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God.' Do not deal falsely in it, upon any temptation whatsoever: Ps. xlv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.'

5. Take heed of an unmortified heart. For an unmortified professor will never be faithful with God: 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,' Mark ix. 49. Remember God's judgments upon those that have broken his covenant: Lev. xxvi. 25, 'I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant;' Isa. xiv. 5, 'The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, they have broken the everlasting covenant.' Entering into covenant is called entering into a curse: Neh. x. 29, 'They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments, and his statutes.'
