

## THE FAITHFUL COVENANTER.

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### NOTE.

'The Faithful Covenanter' forms a portion of the miscellaneous sermons of 'Evangelical Sacrifices' (4to, 1640). Its separate title-page is given below.\* For general title-page, see Vol. V. page 156. G.

\* THE  
FAITHFUL  
COVENANTER.

In two Sermons upon GEN.

17. 7.

By

*The late Learned and Reverend Divine,*

RICH. SIBBS:

Doctor in Divinity, M<sup>r</sup> of KATHERINE Hall  
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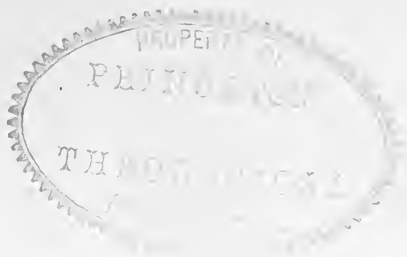
GRAYES-INNE.

NEHE. 1. 5.

*O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that  
keepeth Covenant and mercy for them that Love him.*

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*I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.*—GEN. XVII. 7.

GOD having framed man an understanding creature, hath made him fit to have communion and intercourse with himself; because he can by his understanding discern that there is a better good out of himself, in communion and fellowship with which, happiness consists. Other creatures—wanting understanding to discern a better good out of than in themselves, their life being their good—desire only the continuance of their own being, without society and fellowship with others. But man, having the knowledge of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, but especially of God the Redeemer, providing for him a second being better than his first, understandeth that his best and chiefest good dependeth more in him than in himself; and because his happiness standeth in acquaintance and fellowship with this God, which is the chief good, he desireth a communion with him, that he may partake of his good.

This communion and fellowship of man with God, was first founded on a covenant of works made with Adam in paradise. If he did obey, and did not eat of the forbidden fruit, he should have life both for himself and his posterity; the which covenant, because God would not have forgotten, he afterward renewed in the delivery of the ten commandments, requiring from man obedience to them in his own person, exactly, at all times, perpetually: promising life on the obedience, and threatening death and cursing if he continued not in everything the law required to do. But this fellowship being placed in man's own freedom, and having so weak a foundation, he lost both himself and it, so that now by the first covenant of works, Adam and all his posterity are under a curse; for we cannot fulfil the law that requireth personal obedience, perfect obedience, and exact obedience. He that 'continueth not in all is cursed,' Gal. iii. 10. The law then findeth us dead and killeth us. It findeth us dead before, and not only leaves us dead still, but makes us more dead.

Now after this fall, man's happiness was to recover again his communion and fellowship with God; and therefore we must have a new covenant before we can have life and comfort. God must enter into new conditions with us before we can have any communion with him.

God therefore, loving man, doth after the breach of the first agreement and covenant, when Adam had lost himself by his sin, and was in a most miserable plight as ever creature was in the world, falling from so great a happiness into wondrous misery; he raised him up and comforted him by establishing a second, a new and better covenant, laying the foundation of it in the blessed seed of the woman, Christ the Messiah, who is the ground of this new covenant, and so of our communion and fellowship with God, without whom there can be no intercourse between God and us in love. And because this covenant was almost forgotten, therefore now in Abraham's time God renewed it to Abraham in this place: 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee,' &c.

There are four periods of time of renewing this covenant: first, from Adam to Abraham; and in those first times of the world, those that were under the covenant were called the 'sons and daughters of God,' 'the children of the promise,' and the covenant of grace was called a promise of the blessed seed.

Secondly, From Abraham to Moses; and then it was called a covenant, and they the children of the covenant. 'I will establish my covenant.' A covenant is more than a promise, and a more solemn thing, because there be ceremonies.

The third period of renewing the covenant of grace was from Moses to Christ; and then it was more clear, whenas to the covenant made with Abraham, who was sealed with the sacrament of circumcision, the sacrament of the paschal lamb was added, and all the sacrifices Levitical; and then it was called a testament. That differeth a little from a covenant; for a testament is established by blood, it is established by death. So was that; but it was only with the blood and death of cattle sacrificed as a type.

But now, to\* Christ's time to the end of the world, the covenant of grace is most clear of all; and it is now usually called the New Testament, being established by the death of Christ himself; and it differs from a covenant in these respects:

First, *A testament indeed is a covenant, and something more.* It is a covenant sealed by death. The testator must die before it can be of force. So all the good that is conveyed to us by the testament it is by the death of the testator, Christ. God's covenant with us now, is such a covenant as is a testament, sealed with the death of the testator, Christ; for 'without blood there is no redemption,' Heb. ix. 22; without the death of Christ there could be no satisfaction, and without satisfaction there could be no peace with God.

Secondly, *A testament bequeatheth good things merely of love.* It giveth gifts freely. A covenant requireth something to be done. In a testament, there is nothing but receiving the legacies given. In covenants, oftentimes it is for the mutual good one of another, but a testament is merely for their good for whom the testament is made, to whom the legacies are bequeathed; for when they are dead, what can they receive from them? God's covenant now is such a testament, sealed with the death of Christ, made out of love merely for our good; for what can God receive of us? All is legacies from him; and though he requireth conditions, requireth faith and obedience, yet he himself fulfilleth what he asketh, giveth what he requireth, giveth it as a legacy, as we shall see afterward.

Thus you see that the communion and fellowship of man with God, must

\* Qu. 'from'?—Ed.

either be by a covenant of works or by a covenant of grace. And we must distinguish exactly between these two covenants and the periods of them.

When the covenant of works was disannulled by our sins, because we could not fulfil the law exactly and perpetually, God will have a new covenant. If we believe in Christ, we shall have everlasting life. Now, if we stick to the one, we must renounce the other. If it be of faith, it is not of works; and if it be of works, it is not of faith. This was excellently signified by Joshua and Moses. Joshua bringeth the people to Canaan, and not Moses. Moses doth not bring any to heaven. It must be Joshua, the type of the true Jesus, that must bring them through Jordan to Canaan. This was typified also in the ark. There was the law, the covenant of works in the ark, but the propitiatory, the mercy-seat, was above the ark, above the law, and from thence God made all his answers; to signify to us that we can have nothing to do with the law without the propitiatory. Christ is the propitiatory, the mercy-seat. In Christ God heareth us. He makes all his answers in the propitiatory, Christ. Therefore when the question is our salvation, how we have title to heaven, not by the merit of works, for then we reverse the covenant of grace; but our title is merely by God's mercy in Christ apprehended by faith. The evidence indeed to prove our faith to be a true faith, is from works, but the title we have is only by Christ, only by grace. Here we must appeal from Sinai to Sion; from the law to the gospel; from Moses to Christ. We must fly with Joab to the horns of the altar, 1 Kings ii. 28. That must be our refuge. Fly to Christ in the covenant of grace, and we shall not be pulled from thence, as Joab was from the altar. There let us live and die.

Remember, I say, that the covenant of grace is distinct in the whole kind from the covenant of works; yet this, they are both in the church, and both taught, one subordinate to the other; as thus, the covenant of works is taught to shew us our failing, that seeing our own disability to perform what the law requireth, we may be forced to the new covenant of grace. And therefore, saith Paul, 'By the law I am dead to the law,' Gal. ii. 19. It is an excellent speech, 'By the law I am dead to the law;' by the covenant of works I am dead to the covenant of works. That is, by the law's exacting of me exact and perpetual obedience in thought, word, and deed, I come to see that I cannot fulfil it, and therefore am dead to the law; that is, I look for no salvation, for no title to heaven by that; and therefore he saith, 'The law was added for transgression.' Why was the law added to the promise of salvation by Christ made here to Abraham? Why was the covenant of works added in the wilderness afterwards? It was for transgression, to increase the sense of transgression, that we by the law might see what we should do, and what we have not done, and that we are by that come under a curse, and so might fly to the promise of grace in Christ. I have stood the longer in the clearing of this, because it is a main point.

But to come to that which I specially intend. The words, as I said before, contain the renewing of this blessed and gracious agreement between God and man to Abraham, the father of the faithful.

'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.'

The words, you see, contain a covenant; and here are all things—all the articles and circumstances that agree to any covenant whatsoever.

Here are the parties, both that make the covenant and that are covenanted with.

Here is the substance of the covenant, and the qualities of the covenant, and the condition of the covenant.

The party making the covenant is God, 'I will be *thy God*.'

God is the party covenanting. God indeed is both the party covenanting and the substance of the covenant: 'I will be a God to thee.' They fall both together in one. It is a most sweet sign of God's great love, that he will stoop so low as to make a covenant with us, to be our God; to be himself all in all to us. For consider but both these parties: God and we; the Creator and the creature; the immortal God and mortal man; the glorious God and 'dust and ashes;' the holy God and sinful man; the great King of heaven and earth, and rebels and traitors as we are. For him to condescend so low as to make a covenant with us, to enter into terms and articles of agreement with us, it is a wondrous sign of his gracious mercy and love. What can we but hope for from so gracious a God? But I shall have occasion to touch that afterward.

The parties covenanted with, are Abraham and his seed—his seed by promise.

The substance of the covenant is, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.'

The qualities of the covenant are, first, it is a *sure* covenant: 'I will *establish* my covenant.'

Secondly, It is an *everlasting* covenant: 'I will establish my covenant for an *everlasting* covenant.'

Thirdly, It is a *peculiar* covenant: 'I will establish my covenant between me and *thee and thy seed*; that is, only between me and thee, and thy seed; not with the refuse of the world, but only with thy seed by promise; only believers, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Fourthly, It is a most *free* covenant. It was made to Abraham, whom God called out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of an idolatrous nation, out of an idolatrous family; even as it was at the first most freely made to Adam in paradise, when he was in a most desperate estate. When he was as low as hell in a manner, ready to sink into despair, then the 'seed of the woman' was promised. So here it was freely made to good Abraham: First, the love of God was free to him when he called him, being an idolater; and then it was freely renewed afterward, when he was good, as we shall see anon.

And lastly, It is a covenant *consisting most of spiritual things*. It is a spiritual covenant. I mean especially, promising spiritual favours, although the other things, as appendices of the main, are likewise meant. For after that the covenant was made to Abraham and his posterity, they endured many afflictions. After the promise was renewed to Jacob, we know he fled from his brother Esau, to whom the covenant of grace was not made, and yet of Esau presently came duke such a one, and duke such a one, Gen. xxxvi. 15, *seq.*; and poor Jacob was fain to fly for his life in regard of the promise. So that I say it must be specially of spiritual blessings.

These are the qualities of the covenant. It is a sure, an everlasting, a peculiar, and a most free covenant, aiming specially at spiritual things.

And then, lastly, you have the condition of the covenant; and that, though it is not expressed, yet it is implied. 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.' Therefore thou shalt take me for thy God, carry thyself to me as to thy God, &c. It is usual in other places of Scripture, where mention is made of this covenant, to imply the condition required on our parts. Sometimes both the covenant and condition are mentioned together,

as in Zech. xiii. 9, 'I will say,' saith God, 'It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' The one springeth from the other. When God is a God to any, he makes the heart to answer, Thou shalt be my God, and I will be thine always. This is the condition on our part that we make with God in this covenant, to take him for our God, to be his people, and his peculiar ones.

'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.'

Though these words, 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed,' be the last words of the text, yet being the substance of the covenant, I think it shall be best to speak of that before I speak of the qualities of the covenant or anything else.

'I will be thy God.'

This is the covenant in the Messiah; but first, what is it to be a God?

I answer, To be a God, take it in the general, *is to give being to the creature that had no being of itself, and to protect and preserve the creature in its being*: in a word, to be a creator; for providence is the perpetuity and continuance of creation. This is to be a God. The office of God, as God, is a most glorious function. To be a king is a great matter, but to be a God, to give being to the creature, to support it when it hath a being, to do all that God should do, this is a most glorious work. But this is but creation. This is not intended especially here, for thus he is the God of all his works. Thus by creation and preservation he is the God of all the men in the world out of the church.

What is then to be thy God? 'I will be thy God.'

I answer, To be a God in a more peculiar manner, is to be a God in covenant; that is, not only to be a God to preserve and continue this being of ours in a civil life, but it is to be a God in a higher relation to us; to be a God in a reference to an eternal, supernatural estate in heaven; to be a God here in grace, and hereafter in glory; and thus God is a God in a gracious covenant, only by Jesus Christ, and to those that believe in him. 'I will be thy God'; that is, 'I will be thy God in Christ,' to give thee a better being than this world can afford; to free thee from the cursed estate thou art in by nature; to deliver thee from all ill, spiritually and eternally; especially to bestow on thee all good, spiritually and eternally; especially as we have it in the words of the covenant, Gen. xv. 1, 'I will be thy shield and thy exceeding great reward;' a shield to keep off all ill, and a reward for all good. So in Ps. lxxxiv. 9, 'God will be a sun and a shield,' &c.: a sun for all sweet comfort and good, and a shield in regard of defence from ill; a sun and a shield till we come to the possession of eternal happiness. This is to be a God in a peculiar manner, to give all things necessary for grace and life too—for this life and for a better; to do all things requisite to bring us to heaven and happiness through Christ, 'in whom all the promises are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20; to be all in all; to direct the protections and provisions of this life, of our estate here, to a supernatural happiness hereafter, to a state beyond nature. For God directs the favours of this life, so that he takes them away or he giveth them, as he seeth them advantageous, or hindrances to a better estate. So is God a God to those that are in covenant with him. To do all this, and to do all this in opposition of all enemies whatsoever; to do all this in weakness and in the impotency of the creature; to do all this when all second causes are contrary, as it were, to bring a man to heaven in spite of the devil and of our own corruptions, or all oppositions whatsoever—this is to be a God indeed.

But why doth he say only, 'I will be thy God'? Why doth he not say,

I will give thee grace and protection, I will give thee heaven and life everlasting ?

Because all is one, for all things in the world are in this one promise, 'I will be thy God.' See the wisdom of heaven, how much he speaks in how little. There cannot be more spoken than thus, 'I will be thy God.' For in saying, 'I will be thy God,' he implies that whatsoever he is, or hath, or can do, shall be thine too. 'I will be thy God;' that is, my wisdom shall be thine, to watch over thee, to find out ways to do thee good; my power shall be thine, to keep thee from danger, to defend and rescue thee from all enemies, and to subdue them by degrees unto thee; my providence shall be thine, to turn all things to thy good; my mercy shall be thine, to forgive thy sins; my love shall be thine, to bestow on thee all necessary comforts. There is no phrase in the Scripture that hath so much in so little as this here, 'I will be thy God,' if we could unfold and lay open this excellent promise. All other particular promises in the covenant of grace are members of this. What is the reason, as Saint Paul saith, 'all things are yours?' '*Because you are Christ's, and Christ is God's,*' 1 Cor. iii. 23. God is the God of Christ, and our God. We are in covenant with the God of Christ. Christ is the heir of all, and we are members of Christ. God who is the God of all things is ours. It is a wondrous comprehensive promise.

'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.'

The substance of the covenant then is, that God will be a God to us. The point to be observed is this, *that God graciously in the blessed seed, the Messiah, Christ Jesus, he takes upon him to be a God to all those that are in covenant with him;* that is, to be all-sufficient, to bring us to happiness—all-sufficient in this world and in the world to come, to be our portion, to be all in all.

This is the first and fundamental promise of all other. Indeed, it is the life and soul of all the promises, and it is the life and soul of all comfort whatsoever. For all other relations spoken of God tend to this, that he is 'our God.' This is before to be a Father, before to be anything. God first is a God, and then a Father, and then all in all to us. As he is first the God of Christ, and then the Father of Christ; as you have it usually in the beginnings of the epistles, 'God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' first the God, and then the Father. To be a God, then, is the fundamental and principal favour. From thence cometh our election; his choosing of us to eternal salvation before all time; his protection and preservation of us in time unto heaven.

I shall not need to speak more of this, having unfolded it before.

But you will say, How shall we know that this covenant belongeth to us ? that we are such as we may say, God is our God ?

I answer, first—to lay this for a ground—you must know that to be a God is a relation. Whosoever God is a God to, he persuadeth them by his Spirit that he is a God to. The same Spirit that persuadeth them that there is a God, that Spirit telleth them that God is their God, and works a qualification and disposition in them, as that they may know that they are in covenant with such a gracious God. The Spirit as it revealeth to them the love of God, and that he is theirs, so the Spirit enableth them to claim him for their God, to give up themselves to him as to their God.

And the Spirit doth this, because friends cannot be in covenant and confederate without there be a likeness or an agreement. There must be more words then, on\* to a covenant. Though God's grace do all, yet we must give our consent; and therefore the covenant is expressed under the title

\* Qu. 'than one' ?—Ed.

of marriage. In marriage there must be a consent of both parties. In reconciliation between a king and subjects, that are fallen out, when they are rebels, there must be an accepting of the pardon, and a promise of new subjection. So then if God be our God, there will be grace given to take him for our God; to give him homage as a king; to give him our consent as to our spouse. 'Thou shalt be my God, and I will cleave to thee, as to my lord and husband.' 'Can two walk together,' saith the prophet, 'and not be friends?' Amos iii. 3. There can be no friendship with God, except there be somewhat wrought in us by his Spirit, to make us fit for friendship, that we may look on him as an object of love and delight. If we look on him as an object of hatred, what terms of friendship can there be? Now, that we may look on him as an object of love, fit for converse with him, he must make us such by consent and yielding to him, by framing the inward man to his likeness, that so there may a peace be maintained with him. You see the ground of it, of necessity it must be so.

Well, to come to the trials. But let me first add this to the former: *whosoever God is a God to, it is known specially by spiritual and eternal favours.* A man cannot know certainly that God is his God by outward and common things that castaways may have; for a castaway may have Ishmael's blessing and Esau's portion, blessings of the left hand, common graces. To know undoubtedly, therefore, that God is our God, must be by peculiar matters; for those whose God God is are a peculiar people, a holy nation, severed from others. First of all, then, know what the Spirit of God saith to thy soul; for they that are God's have his Spirit, to reveal to their spirits the secret and hidden love of God. But if the voice of the Spirit be silent in regard of testimony, go to the work of the Spirit; but go to the peculiar work of the Spirit. For though the Spirit may be silent in regard of his testimony, yet there are some works or other of the Spirit in a man, whereby he may know that God is his God; as the Spirit of God works in some sort a proportion in him unto God, and none can know better what God is to him than by searching of his own heart, what he is back again to God; for as God saith to him by his Spirit, Thou art mine, so they say to God, Thou art mine. Let us then come to the trial by our carrying ourselves to God. Can we say with David, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' or 'What is there in earth in comparison of thee?' Ps. lxxiii. 25. When the conscience can tell us that we make God our treasure and our portion above all earthly things, then we make him our God. A Christian singleth out God above all things in the world for his happiness. Lord, thou art mine! Whatsoever wealth is mine, or riches mine, or friends mine—I stand not upon that, but thou art mine. A rich man runneth to his wealth, and makes flesh his arm. He runneth to friends, to bear him out in ill causes; but a true Christian that hath God for his God, he may know it by this, he singleth out God for his portion, runs to him in all extremities. Lord, thou art mine. This is a sign that God hath said to his soul first, 'I am thy salvation,' Ps. xxxv. 3. How can the soul appropriate God to himself? How can he say, as Thomas did, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28, except the Lord have spoken peace to the soul before, and have said, 'I am thy salvation'? It is a sign we have made God our God, when we prize him and value him above all the world; and when, with St Paul, Phil. iii. 8, we count all things 'dung and dross, in comparison of Jesus Christ our Lord.' What we will do most for, that is our god. If we will do most for God, he is our God. If we do most for pleasures, they are our god. If we do



most for riches, break our rests and crack our consciences for them, that is our god. In a word, whatsoever we value highest, that is our god.

*Examine what affections we have to God:* for it is affection that makes a Christian. Single out some few that we are most offending in. As, first, for *fear*, it may shame us all. Indeed, a Christian upon his best resolution is better. But the ordinary carriage of men is, they fear men more than God; they fear everything more than him that they should fear above all. For instance, is the retired carriage of men to God such as their carriage is to the eye of the world? Will not they do that in secret oftentimes that they will not do openly? In secret they will commit this or that sin, and think, Who seeth? There are secret abominations in the closet of their hearts. They will not fear to do that in the eye of God, that they fear to do in the eye of a child of six years old, that is of any discretion. Is this to make God our God, when we fear the eye of a silly mortal creature more than the eye of God, that is ten thousand times brighter than the sun, that is our judge? Is God our God the whiles? Undoubtedly, when God is made our God, there is an awe of the eye of heaven upon a man in all places. Therefore this is the condition of the covenant, 'Walk before me,' or 'Walk as in my sight,' 1 Sam. ii. 30. How do we walk before God as in his sight, when there is such a great deal of difference in our carriage secretly, and before the eyes of men? when we labour more to approve our carriage to men, than we make conscience of our spirits to God? This may shame us. Even the best of us who are in covenant with God, and have made God our God, we have cause to be abased for this: and surely one of the best ways to make God's children abased and humbled, is to compare the different proportion of their carriage; how they carry themselves to men whom they respect, and to outward things in the world, and how they carry themselves to God. If God be our God, there will be an universal fear and care to please God in all times and in all places, because he is everywhere; darkness and light are all one to him.

Try yourselves therefore by this affection. *If we make God our God, we will fear him above all;* for there being such a distance between God and us—he the mighty God, and we creatures whose breath is in our nostrils—there can no other way be a covenant of peace betwixt us, but with much reverence. Therefore all Christians are reverent creatures; they do all in fear; they pass 'the whole time of the conversation here in fear,' 1 Peter iii. 2; they 'make an end of their salvation with fear and trembling,' Philip. ii. 12; they enjoy their liberties in fear. St Jude makes mention of a number of wretched people in his time, that ate without fear, ver. 12. You may know a man that hath not this grace of God in his heart, by his un-reverent carriage. He never thinks of the presence and all-seeing eye of God. A Christian that hath God to his God, knows that wheresoever he is, he is in the eye of heaven. Therefore he is jealous, even of his own most secret corruptions. He knows that they are lawless of themselves; and therefore he always sets himself in the presence of God. He is full of reverence, full of fear, even in the enjoying of his Christian liberties.

So likewise for the affection *of love*. If God be thy God, thou hast grace given thee to love him above all things. With whom God is graciously reconciled, he giveth them his Spirit to be reconciled back again to him. He loveth us, and we love him again; for we are by nature enemies to God, as he is to us. There is no wicked man in the world can love God; indeed, as God is a God that promiseth salvation, he loveth him—he would fain have that, and therefore would fain be in his favour—but he

cannot love God as he is in all respects ; but he hateth him, and he hateth his children. He triflcth with his name by oaths and blasphemy, and the like. He scorneth God. He wisheth that there were no God. Can this man say that God is his God, when he doth not carry himself back again to him in his affection as his God ? No such matter. He is God's enemy, and God is his enemy. So if God be our God, if he have set his love upon us, we cannot but love him again. If he be reconciled to us, we are reconciled to him. This is a sure sign that God is our God, if we love him above all.

Now, that may be known *if we be zealous when God is dishonoured any way* ; for whatsoever we make our god, we will not endure to have touched. If a man make his lust his god, if that be touched, he is all in a chafe. When that which a man loveth is touched, experience shews it, he is presently all on a fire. And here the best Christians have cause to be abased. Hath God their love, when they can hear him disgraced, and his name abused, without being greatly moved, and yet notwithstanding, in the mean time, will not endure their own credit to be touched, but they are, as I said, all on a fire ? Where there is no zeal, there is no love. Certainly when we can hear God's children misused, and religion endangered, and profession scoffed at, &c., and yet not be affected, nor cannot take God's cause to heart, this is great fault in our love.

And so for *joy and delight* : we make God our God when we joy in him above all things in the world ; when we make him our boast all the day long, as it is Ps. xlv. 8 ; when we make him our glory, as he is called our glory in Jer. ii. 11, 'They changed their glory.' God is our glory if he be our God. We count it our chiefest glory that we are his, and that he is ours. Whatsoever our estates be, we glory in God, and not in ourselves. A Christian when he would joy and glory, he goeth out of himself to God, he is his joy. But do not men joy in the creature, and delight in it oftentimes more than in God ? It is a great shame for us, and that for which even the best of us all may be abased, to consider what a deal of delight and comfort we take in the creature more than in God. We see Jonah, a good man, when his gourd was taken from him, that God raised up to be a shelter for him—a poor simple defence it was ; and yet we see how pettish the good man was. All the comfort he had could not keep him from anger and fretting when the gourd was gone ; and yet God was his God. So many men, whereas they should joy in God above all things, yet if God take outward comforts from them, they are as if there were no God in heaven, no comfort there ; as if there were no providence to rule the world ; as if they had no Father in covenant with them. I say this is a great shame for us.

Again, If God be our God, *we will trust in him*, rely and depend upon him above all things ; for whatsoever our trust is most in, that is our god. Now if our conscience tell us that we trust most in God, more than in wealth or friends, and will not, to displease God, please any man, it is a sign that we have made God our God, because we trust in him. And surely, if we would examine ourselves, the best of us all, it would bring us on our knees, and make our faces be confounded, to consider what a deal of atheism there is in our heart (though we are not altogether atheists, yet what a deal there is), that must be mortified and subdued. For if an honest man, and that we know is faithful, should say to us, I will be yours ; I will take upon me to provide for you, to defend you, to protect you, to stand by you against all adversaries ; we believe and hope that he will do

it. But do we so to God? Hath he our trust and affiance? Alas, no! so far forth, I mean, as we are not subdued to God. A Christian, indeed, in some measure is enabled to make God his trust and confidence, but there remains abundance of atheism even in the best of us. If God be our God, why do we not trust in him, depend upon him for all things; depend upon him for protection and deliverance from all ill, spiritual ill specially, from sin, Satan, hell, and wrath; depend upon him for all good, the good of grace specially, for the change of our nature and the forgiveness of our sins, for spiritual privileges, adoption and sonship, for the inheritance of heaven, &c. It is a sign, I say, that God is our God when we trust in him above all the world, and trust other things only from him and for him. I will trust man, but man may deceive me. I will not trust him therefore with an absolute confidence. No. That were to make a god of him. What is the reason that God confoundeth proud men at last? David shews the reason. 'This man he took not the Lord for his God.' When men will, in contempt of religion, set up themselves and somewhat else to rely on, besides God, God at the last brings it to pass, that the world shall note them out, This man trusted in his greatness; he trusted in his policy, in his wit, in his friends; this man took not the Lord for his God.

Again, If we make God our God, *we may know it by our obedience*, especially by the obedience of the inward man. When the inward man is vowed to God, when a man yieldeth inward obedience to God, it is a sign that God is his God. When a man can arraign his thoughts and desires before God, and when lusts rise in his heart contrary to the Spirit, he checks them presently. This becometh not those that are God's; it becometh not those that walk after God, that have God's Spirit for their leader. Therefore he is ashamed presently of base tentations.\* A Christian can perform the first and last commandments, which are the most spiritual commandments. He can make God his God in his affections. His affections are placed upon him alone, as I have shewed before. He can yield up all his inward affections of fear and love and joy, and such like, unto God, which is the sum of the first commandment; and he can be content not to have his lusts rage and range, suppresses his very thoughts and desires, will not suffer anything to rise in his heart unchecked and uncontrolled, which is the sum of the tenth commandment. I mean, he can do it in some measure. And there is an inward passive obedience too. It is God, as David and other saints said. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good in his own eyes,' Ps. cxix. 68. I am God's, and he shall dispose of me. The soul that knoweth God to be his God hath an inward obedience of contentation with his estate. God is my portion, and it is large enough. The earth is his, and the fulness thereof, Ps. xxiv. 1. Therefore I will be content to be at his disposing, whether it be more or less; and if any murmuring arise in his heart, against God in respect of his estate or otherwise, he presently suppresseth it, as being contrary to the blessed government that a Christian is under, that should resign his whole soul unto God.

Thus by our affections, by the trial of them, we may know whether God be our God, if we give him the affections of the heart, which religion most stands in; when we make the whole inward man stoop, and bow, and bend unto him; when we make him our king, and give him the supremacy; when we set the crown upon his head; when he hath our fear, our joy and delight, our love, our trust; I mean, when he hath the supreme of all, for we may love man, as God deriveth† good to us by him, and so for the rest.

\* That is, 'temptations.'—G.

† That is, 'communicateth.'—G.

But God must be supreme. Others must be loved and feared, &c., in him and for him, but he chiefly, when we depend upon him for all deliverance out of ill and for all good, and shew our dependence on him by our subjection to him in all his ways, by our yielding to him obedience answerable to all this ; and especially when we shall shew it by performing inward worship to him, when we walk before him perfectly and sincerely, as it is in the beginning of this chapter, 'I am God all-sufficient: walk before me and be perfect.' By this we may know that God is our God. I need not enlarge it. The practice of the first commandment will teach us what is our God. Whatsoever we give the supremacy of the inward man to, whatsoever we love most, whatsoever we trust most, whatsoever we fear most, whatsoever we joy and delight most, whatsoever we obey most—that is our god. 'I am the Lord thy God,' in the first commandment. There is the ground. What follows? 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me ;' that is, thou shalt love nothing in the world, nor fear nothing, nor trust in nothing, nor joy in nothing more than me, no, nor with me ; but all things else thou shalt trust them and fear them, &c., in me and for me. Otherwise what is our love is our god, what is our trust is our god, what is our greatest fear is our god. If we fear man, fear him to do ill, man is our god ; if we love the creature, or sin, that is our god ; if we crack our consciences for wealth, the covetous man's wealth is his god ; if we crack our consciences for pleasures, or for our bellies, our pleasures and our bellies and our lusts are our god. We make not God our God except we give him the supremacy of the inward man.

But to proceed, and to come to some few familiar signs more that will try us, though these may try us, in the intercourse that is between God and us.

Whosoever hath God for their God, *they have the Spirit of supplication and prayer*, to cry unto God, to run unto him, especially in extremity. All God's children have the Spirit of adoption to cry, 'Abba, Father !' They have the Spirit to give them boldness to God, when otherwise their nature, and likewise trouble joining with nature and tentations, would make them run from God ; yet the Spirit of God in them makes them bold to go to God in Jesus Christ. God's children, that are in covenant with him, can at all times pray to God. If they cannot pray, they can 'chatter' and sigh to God. There is somewhat they can do. There is a Spirit in them that groaneth and sigheth, as Rom. viii. 26, and God heareth the voice of his own Spirit. They are cries in his ears. 'My groans and sighs are not hid from thee,' saith the Psalmist, Ps. xxxviii. 9. The Spirit of supplication will shew God to be our God, because if he were not ours, we could not be bold to go to him, in the time of extremity especially. This sign you have in Zech. xiii. ver. 9, 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them ; they shall be my people, and I will be their God.' Invocation and prayer is a sign that God is our God, when we go to God presently in all our wants and necessities by prayer. Pharaoh and reprobate spirits say to Moses, 'Pray you for me,' Numb. xxi. 7 ; but as for a spirit of supplication in themselves, they have not. They may speak of prayer, but they cannot pray. Whosoever is God's, he can cry to God. A child, we know the first voice is uttered as soon as it is born, it cries ; so God's new-born children they can cry unto God. Paul in Acts ix. ver. 11, you shall find him praying as soon as ever he was converted ; and certainly those that use not to pray morning and evening, and upon all occasions, that acquaint not themselves with God, God is not their God. If he were their

God, they would seek to him, and be acquainted with him. The Spirit will teach them to go unto God as to a Father.

Again, We may know that God is our God by this, *by our separating from all others, in ourselves and out of ourselves*. There is a separation in ourselves, for there is the first separation. God, whose God he is, he giveth them his Spirit, and that like fire severeth the dross, and gathereth the fold together. And as heat in the body, that severeth good nourishment and separateth that which doth not nourish the body, so where the Spirit of God is, he works a separation between the flesh and the spirit. The Spirit will know what is spiritual, and will discern what is in us that is fleshly, and will join to spiritual things, and the Spirit will be one as it were. There will be a sweet agreement in the word, in the sacraments, in good company, in holy meditation and the like, and a separation from the flesh. A Christian knows that he is redeemed from himself, as far as he is naught.\* We are redeemed from ourselves and our own base nature, as well as from hell and damnation. Therefore there is first a separation in ourselves from ourselves. It begins there. We have nothing to do with our corruptions. We will not own them.

And where this sweet covenant is, that God is our God, as there is a separation from ourselves and our corruptions, so there is a separation from all that joineth with our corruption; a separation in affection from delighting in all that is not God, from all such occasions and company as strengtheneth our corruption. A Christian knows what he hath of God's in him, and what he hath of Satan, and that he must weaken. Therefore he severeth himself from that which strengtheneth the one and weakeneth the other. This trial is expressed in 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, 'Come out from amongst them, separate yourselves, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people.' He speaks for direction, especially in our society and acquaintance, for that is the thing he aimeth at. How shall we know that God will be our God? We must separate ourselves, and touch no unclean thing, nothing that will help rebellion. Therefore those that have an indifferent disposition to all companies, and can solace themselves in any society, though never so corrupt, that bear themselves plausible to all, and would be thought well of all, and so will venture upon all occasions, it is an ill sign that they are carnal people. When in the nearest league in friendship or amity, or in intimate familiarity, they will join with any,—all are alike,—it is a sign they have not God for their God. For then they would have common enemies and common friends with God; common enemies with God. Whom God hated they would hate. As God in covenant blesteth them that bless us, and curseth them that curse us, so they that are in covenant and friendship with God will hate with a perfect hatred whatsoever it is that hateth God; they will have nothing to do in intimate familiarity further than their callings press upon them; they will give them their due in humanity and courtesy, but no more. Their love and delight will be in God and those that are his, that represent him, that have his Spirit and image. How oft is this 'I am the Lord your God' repeated by Moses as a ground of separation from idolatry? It is expressed almost everywhere; and indeed, if the Lord be our God, there is ground enough of separation from all that is not God. It cannot be otherwise.

Another sign and evidence that God is our God is victory over our base corruptions in some measure. This you have in Rev. xxi. 7: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; I will be his God, and he shall be my

\* That is, 'naughty' = wicked.—G.

son.' How shall I know that God is my God, and that I am his son? If by the power of his Spirit I am able to overcome and conquer in some comfortable measure base tentations and my base corruptions and lusts; when I lie not as a beast or as a carnal man under sin, but God hath given me in some measure spiritual strength over sin.

Undoubtedly these and such like works of the Spirit, together with the testimony of the Spirit, will be wheresoever God is our God.

In a word, to name no more trials but this, whosoever God is a God to, *there will be a transforming unto God, a transforming unto Christ*, in whom God is our God. For we must know that we are renewed according to the image of the 'second Adam.' Our comfort is by God revealed in Christ. If God be our God in Christ, we will be like to God; and that will be known that we are like to God, if we be like to God in the flesh, God incarnate. For we are predestinated to be like God incarnate. God, first he is Christ's God before he is ours; and as Christ carried himself to God, so if we be God's, we must carry ourselves like Christ, be transformed unto him. How did Christ carry himself to God? God was his God. '*My God, my God,*' saith Christ upon the cross. Now the gospel sheweth that he obeyed his Father in all things, in doing and suffering: '*Not my will, but thy will be done,*' Luke xxii. 42. You know how full of mercy and compassion he was; how he prayed all night sometimes. Though he knew God would bestow things on him without prayer, yet he would pray in order to God's appointment. You know how full of goodness he was, going about continually doing good, Acts x. 38; and that in obedience and conscience to God's command. In a word, look how Christ made God his God, and carried himself to God. So must we; for we are predestinated to be transformed to the image of the 'second Adam,' Christ. Especially observe one thing—I touched it before—whom we run to and trust to in extremity, is our god. Christ in extremity, when he felt the anger and endured the wrath of God, being a surety for our sins, yet '*My God, my God*' still. So if we make God our God, chiefly in the greatest extremity, in the time of desertion, as Christ did, it is a good sign. I do but touch these things. The point, you see, is large. I only give you matter of meditation. You may enlarge them yourselves in your own thoughts. These I think sufficient trials, whereby you may know whether God be your God.

Having now thus unfolded these terms, let us see what we may draw from thence for our use and comfort.

1. First, then, if by these trials we find that God be not, or have not been, our God, alas! *let us never rest till we make it good that God is our God.* For what if we have all things, if we have not God with all things? All other things are but streams; God is the fountain. If we have not the spring, what will become of us at last? Ahithophel had much wit and policy, but he had not God for his God. Ahab had power and strength, but he had not God for his God. Saul had a kingdom, but he had not God for his God. Herod had eloquence, but he had not God for his God. Judas was an apostle, a great professor, but he had not God for his God. What became of all these? Wit\* they had, strength they had, honour they had, friends they had, but they had not God; and therefore a miserable end they made. What miserable creatures are all such, when they shall say, Friends have forsaken me, wealth hath forsaken me, and health hath forsaken me; terrors lay hold upon me, the wrath of God hath over-

\* That is, 'wisdom.'—G.

taken me. But they cannot say, God is my God. Oh, such are in a miserable case, in a fearful estate indeed. Nay, suppose they have all these, suppose they could say they have a world of riches, they have inheritances, they have friends, &c., yet if they cannot say, God is my God, all is vanity. The whole man is this, to have God to be our God. This is the whole man, to fear God and keep his commandment, Eccles. xii. 13. If a man have all the world, and have not God for his God, all is but vanity and vexation of spirit. Never rest therefore till we can prove ourselves to be in the covenant of grace, till we can say, God is my God.

But, secondly, when we have found God to be our God, *then make this use of it, a use of resolution.* Is God my God? then I will resolve to please him, though all creatures be against me. This was their resolution in Micah iv. 5, 'Every nation walketh in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' Resolve with Joshua and others to please God, whosoever saith the contrary; to walk after the commandments of God, whatsoever others do or say. In all discouragements from men or devils, let us set this as a buckler, God is my God. Arm ourselves with resolution against all fears and threatenings of men, of men of terror, against the arm of flesh. They say they will do this and this; ay, but God is my God. All that they do they must do in his strength. Arm ourselves with this against the power and gates of hell. Fear not the devil. If we fear man or devil more than God, fear them so as to do anything to displease God, we make them god. If our conscience rightly tells us that what is to be done by us is the will and command of God, and that herein I serve God, we need not fear any opposer; but oppose this as an armour of proof against all creatures, against all discouragements whatsoever. And certainly experience telleth us, and approveth it to be true, that nothing can dismay a man that doth things in conscience to God, and knows God will bear him out in it, though not from danger in this world; and yet for the most part he doth that too. Those that are the stoutest men for God are oftentimes most safe, always freed from inward dejection. Yet God disposeth of it so as that he that keeps a good conscience shall always be a king, and rule over the world; and therein he performs his promise. Whatever discouragements he endureth outwardly, yet no discouragement can cast down that soul that looks to God. In his conscience he knows that he takes God to be his, that he serveth him, and that it shall go well with him at last, that God will be all-sufficient to him; and this raiseth him above all, makes him rule and reign over his enemies, and be a terror to those that do him hurt.

3. Again, If God be our God, *then let this stop all base and covetous desires after earthly things.* If God be our portion, why should we grapple too much after the world then? What need we crack our consciences and break our peace for the muck of the world? Is not God our portion? Is he not rich enough? Is not he Lord of heaven and earth? Hath not he promised that he will not fail us nor forsake us? 'I am thy exceeding great reward,' saith God to Abraham. Is not this enough? What doth Satan for us when he getteth us to crack our consciences by gripleness\* after earthly things? He promiseth, thou shalt have this and that, but I will take God from thee, as he did Adam in paradise. Thou shalt have an apple, but thou shalt lose thy God. All his solicitations to base and earthly courses tend to nothing else but to take God from us. Now, when

\* That is, 'grippingness,' = greed, rapacity.—G.

God is our God, and he hath promised to be our portion, let it be sufficient for us ; let us not, for the displeasing of him, take any condition from Satan or the world upon any terms.

4. Again, If so be we know this for a truth, that God is our God, then let it be a use of exhortation *to stir us up to keep, and maintain, and cherish acquaintance and familiarity with him*; as it is in Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with God.' If we be acquainted with him now, he will be acquainted with us in time of sorrow, in the hour of death ; therefore cherish acquaintance with him. Wheresoever we may meet with God, be there much ; be much in hearing, in receiving the sacrament, in praying to him and making our suits known to him in all our necessities ; be much in the society of saints, God hath promised to be there. Therefore cherish the society of all that are good. What a friendly course doth God take with us ! He seeks for our acquaintance, and therefore giveth us his ordinances, the word and sacraments ; sendeth his messengers, the good motions of his Spirit, to our hearts, to leave the world and vanities of it ; to make us out of love with bad courses, and join with him in friendship and familiarity. Oh let us make use of these blessed means, check not these good motions, but yield unto them and obey them, grieve them not ! The Spirit is sent to make God and us friends, who were enemies. Grieve not the Spirit, entertain his motions, that we may be acquainted with God. But do we do so ? Truly no. Indeed, if God will be our God to save us, and let us live in our swearing and lying and deceiving, and in other base courses, we would be content with him upon these terms ; but to be our God, so that we must serve him, and love him, and fear him, and joy in him above all, and have nothing in the world without his favour, then let him take his favour to himself, we will have none of it. Though men speak it not with their mouths to the world, yet the inward speech of their hearts is to this purpose. If we must be the people of God upon these terms, to renounce our pleasures and profits, let him be a God to whom he will for us ! If he will save us, then welcome his favour, we will be glad of his acquaintance ; otherwise we will have none of it. What is the speech of the world but this ? These men, when they shall at the day of judgment claim acquaintance with God, and say, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' 'we have known thee in the streets,' &c., what will God say ? 'Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I know you not,' Mat. xxv. 41. You were acquainted with me indeed outwardly in the ministry of my word, but you kept not an inward and spiritual familiarity with me in my ordinances ; you used not the society of the saints, you entertained not the motions of my Spirit, which I sent to you, to leave your ill courses ; I know you not. This shall be the answer to such wretched persons.

5. Lastly, If by these comfortable signs we find God to be our God, *then here is a spring of comfort opened to a Christian*. If God be mine, then all that he hath is mine ; he is my Father ; he is my husband ; he is my rock ; his goodness, his wisdom, his providence, his mercy, whatsoever he hath is mine. If we had any man in the world that had all wisdom in him, and all the strength of the world, and all goodness, and all love in him, and all this for us, what an excellent creature were this ! God hath all this, and a Christian that hath God for his God hath all this and much more ; for whatsoever is in the Creator\* is much more in him. Hereupon cometh all those styles and sweet names that God hath taken upon him in the Scripture, because he would have us to know, that all comforts are

\* Qu. 'creature'?—ED.



together in him. The names of all the creatures that are comfortable, God hath been pleased to take upon him, to shew us what a God he is. He is water to refresh us, a sun to comfort us, a shield to keep evil from us, a rock to support us, chambers to cover us in the time of danger, and such like ; and in every creature God hath left footsteps and beams of himself, that man, being an understanding creature, might find out God in them. In water there is a beam of his refreshing power ; in the sun, a beam of his cherishing power, and the like ; and when we receive comfort from the creature, which hath but a drop, a beam of his goodness, we should consider how good God himself is. If this be so comfortable, what is God that is my God ! Here we use the creatures to refresh us, and God deriveth his goodness usually to us by them. What will he be to us in heaven, when he will be all in all ; and whatsoever comfort God hath, Christ hath ; because God and Christ join together for our good. For God is in Christ ‘reconciling the world to himself,’ 2 Cor. v. 19 ; and if God be ours, Christ is ours ; and if God and Christ be ours, all things are ours, because all things are God’s. Angels are ours, cherubins are ours, because God is ours. It is a point of wondrous comfort. A poor Christian, when he hath nothing to trust to, he may perhaps say sometime, that he hath no friend in the world, and he hath many enemies. Ay, but he hath a God to go to. If he have not the beam, yet he hath the sun ; if he have not the stream, yet he hath the fountain ; if he have not particular benefits that others have, yet he hath better. Whatsoever portion he have in the world, he hath a rich portion, for God is his portion. ‘God is my portion,’ saith the church in the 3d of Lamentations, ver. 21, ‘therefore will I hope in him.’ The poor church had nothing else in the world to comfort it, for it was in captivity, in the midst of enemies, had no wealth, nor friends, nor anything ; yea, but God is my portion, saith my soul, and therefore God being mine, in him I have friends, and wealth, and pleasure, and all whatsoever ; and so hath every Christian soul, and never more than when the creature and the comfort of it is taken away. He never finds God more his God than when he is deprived of those means that usually derive comfort to him, for then God immediately cometh to the soul and comforteth it ; and the disposition of a true Christian is, at those times, to take advantage by grace to get nearer to God, to cling faster to him, to solace himself more in him as his portion. What a spring of comfort is here arising to a Christian in all estates ! If God be his God, then he may claim him upon all occasions and at all times, as the saints in the Scripture have done. David, Jehosaphat, and all the saints, what do they allege in their prayers to God ? ‘Thou art our God,’ ‘we are thy people,’ ‘the sheep of thy pasture,’ ‘the vine that thy right hand hath planted,’ ‘the Lord is my shepherd,’ &c. What made the disciples, when they were ready to be drowned, to cry out, ‘Master, save us,’ but because they knew that they were servants in covenant, that he was their Master. We should use this as a plea to God in all the calamities of the church. We are thine, thou art ours ! Doubtless thou art our God, saith the church, though Abraham have forgotten, and Israel be ignorant of us, Isa. lxiii. 16. It is a point of spiritual wisdom, when we know we are in covenant with God, to improve it as an argument to persuade God to help us in any strait. ‘I am thine : Lord, save me,’ saith David, Ps. cxix. 94. Thou art my God ; Lord, look to me, protect me, direct me, ease me, receive my soul. This is a plea that obtaineth anything of God in all extremities whatsoever.

‘I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee,’ &c.

I come now to the qualities of this covenant; and before I speak in particular of them, I beseech you observe one thing (which I will but touch, to make an entrance to that which follows), from the manner of setting down the covenant; it is not here set down as it is in other places of Scripture: ‘I will be thy God, and thou shalt be my people;’ but here is only the first part, the main of the covenant of grace recited, ‘I will be thy God.’ Why doth he not say, too, Thou shalt take me for thy God? Because where the first is, he ever works the second; our part depends upon his. All our grace that we have to answer the covenant, is by reflection from God. He chooseth us, and then we choose him. He knoweth us, and therefore we come to know him. He loveth us first, and then we love him. He singeth us out to be a peculiar people, and we single out him above all things to be our portion. ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee?’ Ps. lxiii. 25.

It is therefore—to come to the first quality—called a *free covenant*. It cometh from God merely of grace. It is of grace that he would enter into any terms of agreement with us. It is of grace that he would send Christ to die to be the foundation of the covenant. It is of grace that he giveth us hearts to take him for our God, to depend upon him, to love him, to serve him, &c. All is of grace, and all cometh from him.

So you see that it is a free covenant. That is the first quality.

Again, secondly, it is a *sure, a certain covenant*. I will establish my covenant. But in whom is it established? how cometh it to be sure? It is established in Christ, the mediator of the covenant, in the Messiah; for ‘in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,’ Gen. xii. 3. That is the fundamental promise. All other promises, the promise of the land of Canaan, the promise of the multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, they were all but accessary. This is the grand promise: in thy seed, in Christ, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. So it is a *sure covenant*, because it is established in the Messiah, Christ, God-man. And Christ being God and man, is fit to be the foundation of the covenant between God and man, for he is a friend to both parties. As man he will do all that is helpful for man; and as God, he will do nothing that may derogate from God; and so being God, and being God and man, he brings God and man together comfortably and sweetly, and keepeth them together in a sure and firm agreement. For first of all, he takes away the cause of division that was between God and us, because by his sacrifice and obedience he did satisfy God’s wrath; and that being satisfied, God and us are at peace and friendship; for God till then, though he be a fountain of goodness, yet he was a fountain sealed. The fountain was stopped by sin; but when there is a satisfaction made by Christ, and we believing on him, the satisfaction of Christ is made ours. It is a sure covenant, because it is established in Christ the blessed seed.

And as it is a sure covenant, so, thirdly, it is an *everlasting covenant*. ‘I will make an everlasting covenant with thee.’ So it is set down here.

Everlasting in these respects. For when we are in Christ, and made one with him by faith, he having satisfied God’s wrath for us, and made him peaceable, then God is become our father, and he is an everlasting father. His love to us in Christ is like himself, immutable. For even as Christ, when he took upon him our nature, he made an everlasting covenant with our nature, married our nature to himself for ever, and never layeth aside his human nature, so he will never lay aside his mystical body, his

church. As Christ is God-man for ever, so mystical Christ, the church, is his body for ever. As Christ will not lose his natural, so he will not lose his mystical body. 'I will marry thee to myself for ever,' saith God in the prophet. So then it is everlasting in respect of God, he being immutable. 'I am God,' saith he, 'and I change not,' Mal. iii. 6; and Christ, the foundation of the covenant, is everlasting.

And then again it is everlasting in regard of us; because if we be not wanting to ourselves, we shall be for evermore, in grace here and in glory for ever. The fruits of grace in us—that is, the work of the Spirit—it is everlasting; for howsoever the graces we have be but the first-fruits of the Spirit, yet our inward man grows more and more, till grace end in glory, till the first-fruits end in a harvest, till the foundation be accomplished in the building; God never takes away his hand from his own work.

Everlasting also in regard of the body of Christians. God makes a covenant with one, and when they are gone, with others. Always God will have some in covenant with him. He will have some, to be a God to, when we are gone, so long as the world continueth.

So that we see it is in every respect an everlasting covenant. God is everlasting, Christ is everlasting, the graces of the Spirit are everlasting. When we are dead, he will be a God unto us, as it is said, 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,' their God when they were dead. He is the God of our dust, of our dead bodies. He will raise them up, for they are bodies in covenant with him. I am the God of whole Abraham, and not of a piece; therefore his body shall rise again. It is an everlasting covenant. That is the third quality.

Lastly, It is a *peculiar covenant*. 'I will be *thy* God, and the God of *thy* seed. All are not the children of Abraham, but they that are of the faith of Abraham. God is in covenant only with those that answer him, that take him for their God, that are a peculiar people. It is not glorying in the flesh; but there must be somewhat wrought that is peculiar before we can be assured we are of Abraham's seed, and in covenant with God.

And we may know that we are God's peculiar by some peculiar thing that we can do. What peculiar thing canst thou do? To speak a little of that by the way. Thou lovest and art kind; but, saith Christ, what peculiar thing canst thou do? A heathen man may be kind and loving, but canst thou overcome revenge? Canst thou spare and do good to thine enemies? Canst thou trust in God when all means fail? What is the power of the Spirit in thee? Doth it triumph in thee over thy natural corruption? Canst thou do as Abraham did? He left all at God's command; canst thou do that if need should be? Canst thou leave children, and wife, and life, and all at God's command? Canst thou sacrifice Isaac as he did? Canst thou more trust in the promise of God than in the dearest thing in the world, yea, than in thy own feeling of grace? Whatsoever is not God, canst thou be content to be without? Canst thou rely upon God when he appeared\* to be an angry God? Abraham knew that there was more comfort in the promise than in Isaac. If thou have comfort in the promise more than in anything else, then thou art one of Abraham's seed, thou hast sacrificed thy Isaac. Never talk of Abraham else; never think that thy portion is great in God, be what thou wilt by profession, if there be no particular thing in thee which is not in a natural man. If thou art covetous, as gripple† for the world, as very a drudge in thy calling, as licentious in thy course as carnal men are, thou art none of

\* Qu. 'appeareth'?—Ed.

† That is, 'greedy, rapacious.'—G.

God's peculiar ones, thou art none of Abraham's seed. God's people have somewhat peculiar that the world hath not. It is a peculiar covenant.

Thus you see the qualities of this covenant. It is a free covenant; a sure covenant, established in the blessed seed, the Messiah; it is an everlasting covenant; and it is a peculiar covenant.

To make some use of this, in a word.

Here, then, you see *is another spring of blessed comfort opened to a Christian*. If he findeth God, though his assurance be little, to be his God in regard of peculiar favours, let him remember it is an everlasting favour. His love is everlasting. The foundation is everlasting; the graces of the Spirit are an everlasting spring, always issuing from Christ our head. Grace is never drawn dry in him. God is our God to death, in death, and for ever. All things in the world will fail us: friends will fail us; all comforts will fail us; life will fail us ere long; but this is an everlasting covenant, which will not fail.

It is a point of comfort in the loss of friends, in the loss of estate in this world. If I lose friends, yet I cannot lose God; if he be mine, he is mine for ever; a friend now, and a friend ever; my portion now, and my portion for ever. Whatsoever God takes away, he never takes away himself; and in him I have all that is taken away. All the comfort that he doth still derive\* to me by friends, he resumeth to himself. It is not perished with the party.† He can immediately, by himself, convey whatsoever comfort was derived to me by others. He is God all-sufficient; that is, put the case all the world were taken away; not only friends, but the sun, the light, the earth, food and raiment, all, as it shall be at the day of judgment; if all be taken away, yet I have him; yet I have him that made all, that supporteth all. Cannot he do all in a more excellent manner? Is not he all-sufficient, though I lose all things else? It is a point of wondrous comfort. God knew it well enough. Therefore he laboureth to establish the heart of the father of the faithful, good Abraham, here, with this instead of all, 'I am God all-sufficient, and I will be thy God.'

Again, If this be so, that God will be a God to us for ever, let us comfort ourselves hence *in all the unfaithful dealings of men*. They are friends to-day and enemies to-morrow; but God is my God; and whom he loveth he loveth to the end, John xiii. 1. An ingenious spirit certainly esteemeth it the greatest cross in the world; and if anything will whet a man to heaven, this is one, that those whom he trusteth will prove false, and at length deceive him. Man is but man; in the balance he is lighter than vanity; but he that is in covenant with God, his promise, and love, and faithfulness never faileth. A Christian in all the breaches of this world hath this comfort, that he hath a sure God to trust to. He that hath not God to trust to, and is unfaithfully dealt withal in the world, what a wretched man is he! This was David's comfort. When he was beset with calamities and miseries, all took from him, and the people were ready to stone him, he trusted in the Lord his God. I come to the extent of it.

'To thee and to thy seed after thee.'

Why doth he make the covenant with his seed as well as with himself?

I answer, *We apprehend favours and curses more in our seed oftentimes than in ourselves*; and it will humble a man to see calamities on his posterity, more than on himself; and a man more rejoiceth to see the flourishing of his seed than of himself. It is said that Josiah did die in peace, though he died a bloody death, because he saw not the ruin of his house and

\* That is, 'communicate.'—G.

† Cf. Vol. III. page 2.—G.

family, which was worse than death. God saw how Abraham apprehended and valued seed, when he said, 'What wilt thou give me, since I am childless?' Gen. xv. 2. Therefore God, intending a comfortable enlargement of the covenant of grace to Abraham, extends it to his seed: 'I will be the God of thy seed.' It is a great blessing for God to be the God of our seed. It is alluded to by St Peter in the New Testament, 'The promise is made to you and to your children,' Acts ii. 39.

But what if they have not baptism, the seal of the covenant?

- That doth not prejudice their salvation. God hath appointed the sacraments to be seals for us, not for himself. He himself keepeth his covenant, whether we have the seal or no, so long as we neglect it not. Therefore we must not think if a child die before the sacrament of baptism, that God will not keep his covenant. They have the sanctity, the holiness of the covenant. You know what David said of his child, 'I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me;' and yet it died before it was circumcised. You know they were forty years in the wilderness, and were not circumcised. Therefore the sacrament is not of absolute necessity to salvation. So he is the God of our children from the conception and birth.

But how can God be the God of our children, when they are born in corruption, children of wrath? Can they be the children of wrath and the children of God both at one time?

I answer, Yes; both at one time. For even as in civil matters, in our city here, a man may be a freeman of the city, and yet be born lame or leprous, or with some contagious disease—this hindereth not his freedom—so the children of a believing father and mother may be freemen of the city of God, and in the covenant of grace, and yet be tainted with original sin, that overspreadeth the powers of the soul notwithstanding.

Whence we see a ground of baptizing infants, because they are in the covenant. To whom the covenant belongs, the seal of it belongs; but to infants the covenant belongs; therefore the seal of it, baptism, belongeth to them. If circumcision belonged to them, then baptism doth; but circumcision belonged to them, for the eighth day they were circumcised; therefore baptism belongeth to them.

Anabaptistical spirits would not have children baptized if they believe not. Why then were the children of the Jews circumcised? They were circumcised because they were in covenant; and is not the covenant of grace enlarged? Wherein doth the new covenant differ from the old, but, among many other things, in the enlargement of it? There is now a new people, the Gentiles, in covenant, that were not before, new priests, new sacrifices, new sacraments. All is new in the covenant of grace. If all be enlarged in the covenant, why should we deny the seal of the covenant to them in the new that had it in the old, even children? It is senseless. The Scripture, to meet with such, applieth baptism to them and circumcision to us, to shew that in the covenant of grace they are all one in effect: 1 Cor. x. 2, 'All they were baptized under the cloud;' and St Paul saith, Col. ii. 11, 'We are circumcised with circumcision without hands.' We are circumcised, and they were baptized; to shew, I say, that all are one in Christ. Christ is all one, 'yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8: 'yesterday,' to them that were under the law; 'and to-day,' to us under the gospel; and 'for ever' to posterity. And therefore, if children had interest in Christ then, so they have now. This is clear and undeniable: God is the God of our children.

This should be an encouragement to parents to be good, if not for love

of themselves and their own souls, yet for their children and posterity's sake, that God may do good to their children for them. They cannot deserve worse of their children than to be naught\* themselves.

How many examples are there in Scripture that God plagued and punished the children for the fathers' sins! Though in the main matter he will not do it sometimes, because he is gracious and good; he will be good to the children, though their parents be naught,\* as Joshua and Caleb came into Canaan, though their parents were rebels, and died in the wilderness. Yet it is a discomfortable thing. When parents are naught,\* they may look that God should punish their sin in their children.

There is a great deal of care taken by carnal parents here in the city (and everywhere too, but in the city especially) by covetousness, a reigning sin; they will not make God their God, but the wedge of gold to be their god. They labour to make their children great. If they can leave them rich men, great men in a parish, to bear office, to come to honour, that is their main endeavour; for this they drudge, and neglect heaven and happiness. But, alas! what is this? Thou mayest leave them much goods, and the vengeance of God with them; thou mayest leave them much wealth, and it may be a snare to them. It were better thou hadst left them nothing.

Look into the state of the city. Those that are best able in the city, do they not rise of nothing? And they that have been the greatest labourers for these outward things, that they may call their lands after their own names, Ps. xlix 11, God hath blown upon them, and all hath come to nought in a short time, because they have not made God their portion. Of all things, parents should labour to leave them God for their God, to leave them in covenant with him; lay up prayers in heaven for them, lay the foundation there; sow prayers there, that they may be effectual for them when you are gone.

And this likewise should be a comfort to poor Christians, that have not much to leave their children. I can leave my child nothing, but I shall leave him in covenant with God; for God is my God, and always hath been, and ever will be; he will be the God of my seed. I shall leave him God's blessing; and a little well gotten goods that the righteous hath is better than a great deal ill gotten. God addeth no sorrow with that. There is no 'fearful expectation' another day, as there is of that which is ill gotten; when the father and child shall meet in hell, and curse one another; when the son shall say to the father, You ensnared yourself to make me happy, and that turned to my ruin. This shall make wicked wretches curse one another one day. A poor Christian that cannot say he hath riches to leave his children, yet he can say, God is my God, and I am sure he will be their God; though I have but little to leave them else, I shall leave them God's blessing. Good parents may hope for a blessing upon their children, because God is their God, and the God of their seed.

For the sacrament, a word.

The sacrament is a seal of this covenant, that God is our God in Christ, and we are his people. God to his word addeth seals, to help our faith. What a good God is this! how willing is he to have us believe him! One would think that a word from him, a promise, were enough; but to his promise he addeth a covenant. One would think a covenant were enough, but to that he addeth seals, and to them an oath too: 'I have sworn to David my servant,' Ps. lxxxix. 3. Thus he stoops to all condi-

\* That is, 'naughty,' = wicked.—G.

tions of men ; he condescendeth so far to use all these means that he may secure us. You know that a promise secures us, if it be from one that is an honest man. We say that we are sure to have it because of his promise ; but when we have his covenant, then we are assured more, because there is somewhat drawn. Now, we have God's covenant and his seal, the sacrament ; and then his oath. If we will take him for our God, and renounce our wicked courses, we shall lose nothing by it ; we shall part with nothing for God but we shall have it supplied in him. If we lose honour, wealth, or pleasure, we shall have it abundantly in him.

What do we hear in the sacrament ? Do we come only to receive his love to us ? No ; we make a covenant with God in the sacrament that he shall be our God, and we promise by his grace to lead new lives henceforth. We have made a covenant with God at first in baptism, now we renew it in taking the sacrament ; and it is fit, for if he renew his covenant oft to us in love to be ours, we should renew ours oft with him, to take him to be our God. Seven times in Genesis he renewed his covenant to Abraham, because he would have him trust what he said.\* Then we should seven times, that is, oft, come to the sacrament, and renew our covenant with him, to take him for our God ; and remember what it is to sin after the receiving the sacrament. Sins against conscience break off a covenant renewed. Sin hath an aggravation now. You that mean to receive, if you sin willingly after, it were better you had not received. What makes adultery worse than fornication ? Saith Malachi, 'It was the wife of thy covenant,' ii. 14. Adultery breaks the covenant of marriage. It is worse than fornication, where there is not a covenant. So you have made a covenant with God in your baptism, and now you come to renew it. If you sin now, it is an aggravation of the sin. It is adultery, it is disloyalty against God.

Remember, therefore, that we do not only take here God's kindness sealed in the sacrament, but we re-promise back again to lead new lives. All must resolve by his grace to obey him henceforward, and to take him for our God. The way, therefore, will be to put this into the condition of your promise now, and prayer after. Lord, I have promised this ; but thou knowest I cannot perform the promise I have made, and the condition thou requirest, of myself. But in the covenant of grace, thou hast said that thou wilt make good the condition. Thou hast promised to give the 'Spirit to them that ask him,' Luke xi. 13 ; thou hast promised to 'circumcise my heart,' Col. ii. 11 ; thou hast promised to 'teach me,' Ps. xxxii. 8 ; thou hast promised to delight over me for good ; thou hast promised to 'wash me with clean water,' Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ; thou hast promised to put thy fear in my heart,' Jer. xxxii. 40 ; thou hast promised 'to write thy law in the affections,' Jer. xxxi. 33. I would fear thee, and love thee, and trust in thee, and delight in thee ; thou knowest I cannot fulfil the conditions. Thou art able and willing ; thou art as able to make me do these things as to command me to do them.

Thus we should desire God to give the grace that he requires in the use of the means ; for that must not be neglected. We must attend upon the ordinances ; use the parts that are given us ; and in that, 'to him that hath shall be given,' Mat. xiii. 12. Thou shalt not need any necessary good to bring thee to heaven, if thou wilt claim the promise of the covenant in the use of means. We shall want degrees perhaps ; but in the covenant of grace, it is not degrees that brings us to heaven, but truth.

\* Cf. Vol. V. p. 63.—G.

Now, in our renewing the covenant with God, let us not despair of his performance; let not that hinder us from coming to the sacrament, but come cheerfully, and know that he that hath made the covenant with thee to be thy God, and to give thee all particular grace, in the use of all good means, will perform it. He will perform it if we come in sincerity of heart. If we come to 'daub'\* with God, and after to follow our sinful courses, this is to mock God. This made David take it to heart so much, that 'his familiar friend, that ate at his table, lift up his heel against me,' Ps. xli. 9. May not God complain of us, that we come to the communion, to his table, with false, Judas hearts, and afterwards betray him? He may say, My familiar friends they came and ate with me, yet they have lift up the heel against me; they are rebellious; they will leave no sin that before they were enthralled to. So, instead of a blessing, we bring a curse upon us, a just reward of our disloyalty. Oh remember that it is a great aggravation of sin after the sacrament.

I speak not this to discourage any, but to encourage us rather. If we come with sincere hearts, and with resolution to please God, we may look for all the promises from God. All that he hath promised he is ready to perform, if we in faith can allege the promise, 'Lord, remember thy promise, wherein thou hast caused thy servant to put his trust!' Ps. cxix. 49.

\* Cf. Ezek. xiii. 10-14, and xxii. 28.—G.