

mount Sier came againſt Judah, God ſet the enemy one againſt another, 2 Chron. xx. 23. 'The children of Ammon and Moab ſtood up againſt them of mount Sier to ſlay them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Sier, every one helped to deſtroy another.' In the powder-treaſon he made the traitors to be their own betrayers: God can do his work by the enemy's hand. God made the Egyptians ſend away the people of Iſrael laden with jewels, Exod. xii. 36. The church is the apple of God's eye, and the eye-lid of his providence doth daily cover and defend it.

5. Let the merciful providence of God cauſe thankfulneſs: we are kept alive by a wonderful working providence. Providence makes our clothes warm us, our meat nourish us. We are fed every day out of the alms-basket of God's providence, That we are in health; that we have an eſtate; it is not our diligence, but God's providence, Deut. viii. 18. 'Thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for he it is that gives thee power to get wealth.' Eſpecially if we go a ſtep higher, we may ſee cauſe of thankfulneſs: that we ſhould be born and bred in a goſpel climate; that we ſhould live in ſuch a place where the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhines; this is a ſignal providence: why might we not have been born in ſuch places where Paganism prevails? That Chriſt ſhould make himſelf known to us, and touch our hearts with his Spirit, when he paſſeth by others: whence is this, but from the miraculous providence of God, which is the effect of his free grace?

*Uſe 3.* See here, that which may make us long for that time when the great mystery of God's providence ſhall be fully unfolded to us. Now we ſcarce know what to make of God's providence, therefore are ready to cenſure what we do not underſtand; but in heaven we ſhall ſee how all God's providences (ſickneſs, loſſes, ſufferings) carried on our ſalvation. Here we ſee but ſome dark pieces of God's providence, and it is impoſſible to judge of God's works by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and ſee the full body and pourtaiture of God's providence drawn out into its lively colours, it will be a glorious ſight to behold: then we ſhall ſee how all God's providences helped to fulfil his promiſes. Never a providence but we ſhall ſee had either a wonder or a mercy in it.

---

## THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

Q. XII. I. Proceed to the next queſtion, *What ſpecial providence did God exerciſe towards man in the eſtate wherein he was created?*

*Ans.* When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge, upon pain of death.

For this, consult with Gen. ii. 16, 17. ‘And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die.’ The subject then of our next discourse is, *the covenant of works*. This covenant was made with Adam and all mankind; for Adam was a public person, and the representative of the world.

*Q.* For what reason did God make a covenant with Adam and his posterity in innocency?

*Ans.* 1. To shew his sovereignty over us; we were his creatures, and as God was the great monarch of heaven and earth, God might impose upon us terms of a covenant. 2. God made a covenant with Adam, to bind him fast to God: as God bound himself to Adam, so Adam was bound to God by the covenant.

*Q.* What was the covenant?

*Ans.* God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge; God gave Adam leave to eat of all the other trees of the garden. God did not envy him any happiness; only meddle not with this tree of knowledge, because God would try Adam’s obedience. As king Pharaoh made Joseph chief ruler of his kingdom, and gave him a ring off his finger, and a chain of gold, only he must not ‘touch his throne;’ Gen. xli. 40. In like manner God dealt with Adam, he gave him a sparkling jewel, knowledge; and arrayed him with a fine vesture, put upon him the garment of original righteousness: only, saith God, touch not the tree of knowledge, for that is aspiring after omniscency. Adam had power to have kept this law; Adam had the copy of God’s law written in his heart. This covenant of works had a promise annexed to it, and a threatening. 1. The promise, ‘Do this and live.’ In case man had stood, it is probable he had not died, but had been translated to a better paradise. 2. The threatening, ‘Thou shalt die the death;’ Heb. ‘In dying thou shalt die;’ that is, thou shalt die both a natural death, and an eternal, unless some other expedient be found out for thy restoration.

*Q.* But why did God give Adam this law, seeing God did foresee that Adam would transgress it?

*Ans.* 1. It was Adam’s fault that he did not keep the law; God gave him a stock of grace to trade with, but he of himself broke. 2. Though God foresaw Adam would transgress, yet that was not a sufficient reason that Adam should have no law given him: for, by the same reason, God should not have given his written word to men, to be a rule of faith and manners, be-

cause he foresaw that some would not believe, and others would be profane. Shall not laws be made in the land, because some break them? 3. God, though he foresaw Adam would break the law, he knew how to turn it to a greater good, in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second, and a better. Well, concerning the first covenant, consider these four things.

1. The form of the first covenant, in innocence, was working; 'do this and live.' Working was the ground and condition of our justification, Gal. iii. 12. Not but that working is required in the covenant of grace: we are bid to work out our salvation, and be rich in good works. But works in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion, as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not required to the justification of our persons, but as a testification of our love to God; not as a cause of our salvation, but as an evidence of our adoption. Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength, as in the strength of another: 'It is God which worketh in you,' Phil. ii. 13. As the scrivener guides the child's hand, and helps him to form his letters, so that is not so much the child's writing, as so much our working as the Spirit's co-working.

2. The covenant of works was very strict. God required of Adam and all mankind, 1. Perfect obedience. Adam must do all things written in the 'Book of the law,' Gal. iii. 10. and not fail, either in the matter or manner. Adam was to live up to the whole breadth of the moral law, and go exactly according to it, as a well made dial goes with the sun; a sinful thought had forfeited the covenant. 2. Personal obedience: Adam must not do his work by a proxy, or have any surety bound for him; no, it must be done in his own person. 3. Perpetual obedience: he must continue in all things written in the 'book of the law,' Gal. iii. 10. Thus it was very strict. There was no mercy in case of failure.

3. The covenant of works was not built upon a very firm basis: therefore it must needs leave men full of fears and doubts. The covenant of works rested upon the strength of men's inherent righteousness; which though in innocency was perfect, yet was subject to a change. Adam was created holy, but mutable: he had a power to stand, but not a power not to fall. Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, but he was not sure he would not break. Adam was his own pilot, and could steer right in the time of innocency; but he was not so secured, but that he might dash against the rock of a temptation, and he and his posterity suffer shipwreck, so that the covenant of works must needs leave jealousies and doubt-

ings in Adam's heart, he having no security given him, that he should not fall from that glorious state.

4. The covenant of works being broken by sin; man's condition was very deplorable and desperate. He was left in himself helpless; there was no place for repentance; the justice of God being offended, sets all the other attributes against mankind. When Adam lost his righteousness, he lost his anchor of hope, and his crown: there was no way for man's relief, unless God would find out such a way, that neither man nor angel could devise.

*Use 1.* See the condescension of God, who was pleased to stoop so low, as to make a covenant with us. For the God of glory to make a covenant with dust and ashes; for God to bind himself to us, to give his life in case of obedience: entering into a covenant was a sign of God's friendship with us, and a royal act of his favour.

2. See what a glorious condition man was in, when God entered into a covenant with him. 1. He was placed in the garden of God, which for the pleasure of it was called paradise, Gen. ii. 8. He had his choice of all the trees (one only excepted) he had all kinds of precious stones, pure metals, rich cedars; he was a king upon the throne, and all the creation did obedience to him, as in Joseph's dream, all his brethren's sheaves did bow to his sheaf. Man, in innocency, had all kinds of pleasure that might ravish his senses with delight, and be as baits to allure him to serve and worship his Maker. 2. Besides, he was full of holiness; paradise was not more adorned with fruit, than Adam's soul was with grace. He was the coin on which God had stamped his lively image; light sparkleth in his understanding, he was like an earthly angel; his will and affections were full of order, tuning harmoniously to the will of God. Adam was a perfect pattern of sanctity. 3. Adam had intimacy of communion with God, and conversed with him, as a favourite with his prince. Adam knew God's mind, and had his heart: he not only enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise, but the light of God's countenance. This condition was Adam in, when God entered into a covenant with him: but this did not long continue: 'man being in honour abideth not,' Psa. xlix. *ult.* lodged not for a night; his teeth watered at the apple, and ever since it hath made our eyes water.

3. Learn, from Adam's fall, how unable we are to stand in our own strength. If Adam, in the state of integrity, did not stand, how unable are we now, when the lock of our original righteousness is cut? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? We need more strength to uphold us than our own.

4. See in what a sad condition all unbelievers and unpenitent

persons are; so long as they continue in their sins, they continue under the curse of the first covenant. Faith intitles us to the mercy of the second covenant: but, while men are under the power of their sins, they are under the curse of the first covenant; and if they die in this condition, they are damned to eternity.

5. See the wonderful goodness of God, who was pleased, when we had forfeited the first covenant, to enter into a new covenant with us. Well may it be called *fœdus gratiæ*, a covenant of grace; it is bespangled with promises, as the heaven with stars. When the angels those glorious spirits fell, God did not enter into a new covenant with them to be their God, but let those golden vessels lie broken; but hath entered into a second covenant with us, better than the first, Heb. viii. 6. It is better, because it is surer: it is made in Christ, and cannot be reversed; Christ hath engaged his strength to keep every believer. In the first covenant we had a *posse stare*, a power of standing; in the second we had a *non posse cadere*, an impossibility of falling finally, 1 Pet. i. 5.

6. Whosoever they are that look for righteousness and salvation by the power of their free-will, or the inherent goodness of their nature, or by virtue of their merit, as the Socinians and Papists, these are all under the covenant of works: they do not submit to the righteousness of faith, therefore they are bound to keep the whole law, and in case of failure they are condemned. The covenant of grace, is like a court of chancery, to relieve the sinner, and help him who is cast by the first covenant: it saith, Believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved; but such as will stand upon their own inherent righteousness, free-will and merit they fall under the first covenant of works, and are in a perishing estate.

*Uſe 2.* Let us labour by faith to get into the second covenant of grace, and then the curse of the first covenant is taken away by Christ. If we once get to be heirs of the covenant of grace, we are in a better state than before. Adam stood on his own legs, therefore fell; we stand in the strength of Christ: under the first covenant, the justice of God, as an avenger of blood, pursues you; but if you get into the second covenant, you are got into the city of refuge, you are safe, and the justice of God is pacified towards you.