

THE ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING

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A theological exploration of the nature of covenants in Scripture, examining God's covenant relationships with humanity including the Covenant of Grace and its implications for the Christian life.

20 Chapters

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The Ordinance Of Covenanting

INTRODUCTION.

To illustrate the nature and present the claims of an observance so carefully kept by many of the best of our race as religious Covenanting, is an attempt so inviting as to seem not unworthy of the application of the greatest diligence and care, and the most varied and extensive resources of the human mind. What the word of God unfolds concerning it, is addressed to the most resolute consideration of all, and is capable of engaging the most extensive and prolonged investigation. And yet, though none have found this subject, like all God's judgments, else than a great deep, still in meditating upon it, the ignorant have been brought to true knowledge, and the wise have increased in wisdom. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." [1] Impressions of its importance have universally continued to appear on the heart of man; but with that varied indistinctness which may, and ought to be remedied, those have been marked. In the Scriptures alone, its precise character is drawn. Mutual federal engagements, concerning things religious and civil, whether entered into merely by simple promise, or confirmed by solemn oath, have been made from the highest antiquity to the present. The hostility to some such engagements, and also the proud disregard for their obligations, which have been evinced by some in all ages, demand a most careful examination into their nature and design. And the delightful approval of conscience awarded to right-heartedness in making and fulfilling such of these as were warranted, gives a reason for the careful study of their character, the most pleasing and satisfactory. Furnished with the key of Scripture, approaching the subject, we are enabled to open the mysteries in which ignorance and prejudice had shut it up; and equipped with the armour of light shooting forth its heavenly radiance, in safety to ourselves we assail the darkness thrown around it, and behold the instant flight of the spirits of error which that darkness contains. Standing alone in beauteous attractions descended from heaven upon it, this service beckons us to approach it, and engages to connect extensive good with a proper attention to its claims. The observance, under various phases, is described in Scripture as an undisputed and indisputable reality. There, its nature and the manner of performing it are defined; its character as a duty, the compass of its matter, and the obligation entailed by engaging in it are exhibited; the provision made for the continuance of it, its adaptations, sovereign appointment, sanction, and character as a privilege, and powerful motives to engage in it afforded in its signs, are presented; and its history, anterior and prospective, its recommendations found in the practice of the church in gospel times, its advantages, and claims, are distinctly revealed. Along with kindred institutions, all claiming an origin essentially Divine, but distinguished from them, it demands a regard at least not less than what they share. Embodying in itself all the others, in some aspects of its character it presents these united in a singular and beauteous whole. By reason of the light broken by error falling upon it, many who contemplate its features apprehend not the individuality it displays, but, reflecting on each part separately, connect them so as not to be impressed by the object presented in the union of all. Like the distinct objects which make up the entire landscape, when each one is examined by itself, the various religious exercises which enter into this, if each be recognised alone, leave no impression of the whole as it would appear if contemplated at once. Prayer and the offering of praise are universally admitted to be duties of religion. The Scriptures

announce a place among these for the exercise of solemn Covenanting. Nay, as including these services and others, though as different from each of them, they give its delineation. To enable those who ponder the scriptural representation of it to answer suitably the Divine demand, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" prayer for heavenly illumination upon it is not merely desirable, but necessary; and by all who have felt its advantages, supplication for this in greater measure will be habitually offered. In order to a proper investigation of the subject, care must be taken to avoid two extremes; -- that minute analysis of it that would annihilate the observance itself, by resolving it into its constituent parts; -- and that slight examination of it which would result in an estimate of itself and its elements, alike vague and undefined. What God hath joined let not man put asunder. And efforts should be made, and supplications offered, to obtain guidance on this point into all truth. Like a refracting medium which presents disjointed parts -- each also deformed, instead of one beautiful image of a resplendent scene, prejudice, on the one hand, instead of displaying the exercise with the fulness and splendour of unmarred truth, has obtruded its ideal misrepresentations of it, alike inconsistent with themselves and with its real character; while, like rapid motion preventing minute discovery, on the other a mere glance bestowed, where careful observation was requisite, insufficient for apprehending the whole as an inviting complex object of research, and much more unfitted to discover the admitted excellence of the duties it includes, has led to an exhibition of it also alike derogatory of the one and the other. There is but one situation where, like Mount Nebo affording to the man of God a view of the promised land, we can rightly examine it. If on the mount of Divine revelation with the eye of faith, which, like the eye of Moses, with age waxes not dim, we explore it, in its fairest proportions, like the land of Canaan, will we apprehend it; and like that distinguished patriarch, who was destined to enjoy blessings of God's covenant more valuable by far than a temporal rest, we will attain to extensive spiritual, and, in due time, eternal good. FOOTNOTES: [1] Psalm xxv.14.

CHAPTER I. NATURE OF COVENANTING.

A covenant is a mutual voluntary compact between two parties on given terms or conditions. It may be made between superiors and inferiors, or between equals. The sentiment that a covenant can be made only between parties respectively independent of one another is inconsistent with the testimony of Scripture. Parties to covenants in a great variety of relative circumstances, are there introduced. There, covenant relations among men are represented as obtaining not merely between nation and nation, and between man and man, in some respects, each respectively, independent of the other, but also between master and servant, and between rulers and their subjects. There too is described an engagement between God, and Adam as the representative of the human race, which, to say the least, cannot without the most obvious perversion of language be represented as other than a covenant. It is alluded to in the words, "They, like men (or, Adam), have transgressed the covenant."^[2] And was it not in reality a covenant? There is revealed the Covenant of Redemption -- that covenant which from the days of eternity was made between the Father and the Son, with the concurrence of the Holy Ghost, for the salvation of the elect. There too, that covenant is made known as established with men, that is, made with them or dispensed to them. Under this last aspect, it appears -- "The Covenant of Grace." And there, are men encouraged to enter into covenant with God by taking hold of this covenant. The conditions of a covenant, or the stipulation on the one hand, and the re-stipulation on the other, are the things promised in the covenant by the parties to one another. These may be mutual services, as is sometimes the case among men; or, obedience and good unmerited through God's favour bestowed, as in the case of man in innocence; or, obedience and sufferings, and a high reward for these exemplified in the Covenant of Redemption alone; or, the righteousness of Christ on the one hand, as in the last case, and free grace on the other, in the Covenant of Grace. Sinners redeemed are in covenant with God. The term covenant designating their relation to him as a people is not figuratively applied to it. Were it so, there should be no ground for admitting the fact of any covenant even among men. True, the term is put to denote the ordinances of the material universe.^[3] But to maintain that it is in precisely the same manner used to denominate any mutual relation among moral beings, is to prefer an assumption manifestly gratuitous, and completely at variance with the obvious truth, that for a race interested in the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, these ordinances after the sin of man were continued.^[4] Though it was ordained that men should enter into covenant, the covenant is not like the laws of the lower creation, an absolute appointment taking effect without regard to the resolutions of men. As assuredly as the ordinances of the material heavens and the earth will be conducive to the accomplishment of the ends contemplated by infinite wisdom in their appointment, will the covenant with God entered into by those accepted of him be made to fulfil its design. But this it will be employed to do in the character of a sovereign arrangement suited not to unintelligent creation, but to the moral agent man. As far above the interference of man as is the government of the external universe, is that designated the covenant, as ordained. But adapted completely to him as a creature exercising volition, and in a state of responsibility, is every such relation in its essential character. This relation is marked by features which distinguish it from a mere law. The expressions, to pass into, to enter into,

employed in the one case, are totally inapplicable in the other. The covenant is often represented as forsaken both as a covenant and as a law; but is exhibited as gone into only as a covenant. Men are represented as joining themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant. But none are so spoken of in regard to the law. The Lord said unto Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee,"[5] in terms which refer not to the covenant as if it were exclusively a law. Nor does the Lord promise to make with any a law, though he has given his promise to make with his chosen ones a covenant. This relation with God, as a covenant, has parties. Both by the Lord and by his people in Christ, it is as a covenant mutually entered into. "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."[6] Besides having parties, -- one essential of a covenant in its proper acceptation, this relation with God has conditions. On the part of the High and Holy One, these are the promises of good for believers made in the Covenant of Redemption, and made known in the revelation of the Covenant of Grace. Like the light of heaven continually beaming down upon our world; like the sound of many waters falling on the ear, these continuously are fully and freely addressed in the gospel. And like the beams of the sun appropriated and reflected by the dew of the morning, and the rain and snow that come down from heaven drunk in by the earth prepared for it, these are accepted; and thence shines forth the beauty of holiness, and appear those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David."[7] On the part of the believer, his faith and imperfect obedience, though necessary, are not a condition. His title to acceptance is founded on the perfect righteousness of Christ. In reference, not merely to the actual righteousness wrought in him, but also to the condition of that covenant on which he lays hold, which was fulfilled on behalf of all the children thereof, he says, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."[8] This relation is the Covenant of Grace. It was revealed as God's covenant. It is that covenant which God established with Noah, which he made with Abraham, swore unto Isaac, confirmed unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. It is none other than that covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, of which Jesus is the Mediator, and which has been commanded for ever. Covenanting in civil life is the exercise of entering into a covenant engagement, or of renewing it. The term is almost wholly confined to Covenanting with God, and shall be so used. In the ordinary intercourse of men the practice is common: in religion it is essential. Covenanting is the exercise of either entering, in an individual or a social capacity, solemnly and formally in to the Covenant of Grace, or of renewing it. From the definition it follows, that by Covenanting men do make a covenant with God. The renovation of a covenant is not less a covenant than was the original bond. In Covenanting is given that acquiescence in the conditions of the Covenant of Grace which is an essential of a covenant, and the free offer to enter into it being continued, acceptance in the service is enjoyed. As certainly, therefore, as that called the Covenant of Grace, is in reality a covenant, is every lawful engagement entered into by solemnly Covenanting with God possessed of the character of a covenant. But such a covenant is not distinct from the Covenant of Redemption, nor from the Covenant of Grace. It is dependent on that covenant as made with the Mediator, and consistent with it as established with men. In all the three cases, the God of grace is one of the contracting parties. In the Covenant of Redemption, the Redeemer himself, as the surety of the elect, was the other. In the Covenant of Grace, the people of God united to Christ, and drawing near to God through him, are the other party. And in the case of personal or social covenanting, that party may

be an individual or a joint number, approaching in dependence on the grace of Christ. The promise of the Covenant of Redemption was, a people elected to the blessings of time and eternity, these blessings themselves, and all the countenance which the surety should receive in fulfilling his work of righteousness, and all the glory that should come to him as the Mediator -- God and man -- in obtaining for his people and bestowing upon them the benefits of the great salvation. In all the three cases, that promise in all its extent is exhibited. In the Covenant of Redemption, that promise was made to the Redeemer himself. In the Covenant of Grace, and in every covenant with God into which his people by taking hold upon that covenant may enter, it is an object of their faith. The blessings of time and eternity constitute the part of the promise offered to believers, through Christ. But in taking hold upon that covenant, they testify to their satisfaction with that part of the promise that peculiarly belongs to the Saviour, and accept of the benefits offered to themselves. In all the three cases, the righteousness of Christ is the sole ground on which a title to the promise can rest. In the first case, it is that righteousness as wrought out by him. In the others, it is that righteousness imputed through grace to each believer. In all, obedience to the law of God is required. In the first, Christ gave that perfect obedience infinitely meritorious, which, along with his sufferings of infinite value, constituted his work of righteousness. In the Covenant dispensed, all duty is incumbent on those under it, to be discharged so as to afford not a ground of merit before God, but at least a testimony to the perfection of his laws. And all duty may be frequently engaged to, and special duties in given circumstances, as they present themselves, may be made the subject of a solemn covenant promise to God. Hence, a covenant made in the exercise of Covenanting, is a covenant not essentially new. As members of one glorious body united to Christ, the Head, all believers are in the Covenant of Grace. But their exercises in regard to that covenant, though in spirit essentially one, do in their number, and variety, and form, greatly differ. And of these exercises, none are more distinguished from one another than their solemn covenant engagements. Some with greater or less blame renew these seldom. Others faultily refrain altogether from renewing them in their social capacities. But when these are made and renewed with due care, there is, according to circumstances, a great diversity in their character. Each engagement has its own peculiar features; though each is associated with all the others in presenting some aspect of none other Covenant than that of Grace. God's covenant is the Covenant of Redemption; or the Covenant of Grace; or a covenant with God, made in the actual exercise of Covenanting. A covenant with God is a form of expression that will be applied only to the last of these cases. It must be admitted that the formal exercise of Covenanting is not indispensably necessary in order to the attainment of an interest in the Covenant of Grace. Through God's free favour, and not because of any service, however dutiful, that could be performed, are any brought into this relation. Many go the whole round of religious services, and yet remain uninterested in the benefits of salvation; while others, whose external privileges are by no means so abundant as the privileges enjoyed by those, may be enabled to cleave to God's covenant. It is God's prerogative to make efficacious what means of grace he will; and when and in what measure he will, to give them effect. The types and symbols of a former period were blessed to the souls of men, as well as the fuller revelations of succeeding times. And ordinances which in due time were to pass away, were, during the term of their appointment, to be acknowledged by the extension of his grace to those who waited on them, as well as the institutions to follow in their room. And sinners in every variety of circumstances have been brought into covenant with God. When the gospel is preached to the young -- unfitted to apprehend for the time being the nature or

design of some institutions of Divine grace -- the Spirit of God may lead them to accept of the offered Saviour. Or when the glad tidings of salvation are proclaimed, not merely to those favoured by the advantages of education and christian society, but even to the most untutored and degraded of the family of man, a willing mind may be vouchsafed from above to rely upon him. Then the blessings of his covenant are apprehended and accepted. And though many who profess to seek these good things, may, by reason of unbelief, fail to obtain them, they will afford to such objects of sovereign mercy, as the chosen of God, increasing reasons of gratitude and joy. Only they who are without Christ, are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. All who are in him, though once like those, who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by his blood. It is by faith in Christ that men become the children of God. While waiting on any of the means of grace, elect souls may, for the first time, be enabled to exercise it; and then, even at that time, becomes theirs the inheritance of the promise. God's covenant may, for the first time, be entered into in the exercise of Covenanting. It cannot be entered into at any time but by faith -- an element essential in covenanting. But it may be primarily laid hold upon in some instances in the formal performance of that exercise. An individual may wait on the ordinances of Divine grace, not being in covenant. He may have been plied by the expostulations of the servants of Christ, because of continuing regardless of the offers of mercy, not having acceded to them. The exercise of entering into covenant with God may have been pressed upon his attention. He is doubtful whether or not he has received the Lord Jesus. In reality he has not acted faith upon him. He studies the subject of Covenanting, endeavours to examine the claims which the exercise has upon him. He is convinced of sin, but has not been converted. He feels himself acted on by the fear of wrath, and drawn by the desire of good to cast himself upon the care of the Redeemer. He essays the work of preparation. God is leading him on by the common operations of his Spirit, though still he is in darkness. He endeavours to bring himself up to the resolution of giving himself away to God. Corruption within, however, opposes his purpose. Yet he is urged forward to an exercise which, if performed in a proper spirit, would be accepted, but which, of himself, in his present condition, notwithstanding all his fears and desires, he cannot enter upon aright. He attempts to pray and make supplication -- yea, even he endeavours to perform the service. Strength is given him to do it with acceptance; and, through marvellous grace, he stands among the children of the Covenant! He might have been still left to himself; his promises might have been insincere, and the covenant which he professed to make with his lips he might have profaned. But though at the commencement of his exercises there was no gracious emotion felt by him, he was led by an overruling Providence to adopt means of seeking Divine favour which God should bless. He was brought from the dream of desire to the reality of enjoyment; from the state of one in darkness, groping his way, to the light to which, by his own efforts, he could not have come; from the paralysis of moral imbecility to the strength which enabled him to stretch out his hand and take hold on God's Covenant. Or, when the people of God may direct their faces to the work of renewing their covenant engagements with him, some who might formerly have been far from God may be led to the use of preparatory means, and, when the time of Covenanting arrives, find themselves, for the first, gifted with strength to pledge themselves to his service, and thereafter feel themselves associated by ties indissoluble to his people, and blessed with the covenant heritage of those who fear his name. Such are not mere suppositions. They are consistent with the ordinary procedure of God in extending grace to those who wait upon his ordinances, however unworthy they may have been before. They are in

harmony with the spirit of the expression to take hold upon the Covenant of God -- which obviously implies, according to the state of those to whom it is applied, one or other of two things: -- to engage to the service of the Lord by covenant; or to renew such an engagement; and are warranted by such statements as the exhortation, "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten." Such an address may be made either to the wicked or to the righteous. -- To the wicked, that they may, with their whole heart and soul, depart from the evil of their doings, and give themselves to the Lord; to the righteous, that they may so give themselves again; to the wicked, that they may prepare their hearts to seek God -- but not by any effort of their own in a legal spirit, to commend themselves to him, and then to enter into his covenant; and to all, that in a becoming frame of mind they may take hold upon it. Whether or not many are brought to God in such circumstances it may not be easy to decide; yet it cannot be affirmed that none in this manner are joined unto him. To engage in the exercise of Covenanting with the hope of being converted, is to act under a misapprehension of its design; but who can say that God does not, when this is practised, bring to himself? None could have any encouragement to perform the service, were they satisfied that they would not act sincerely in it; but to perform it they are not the less called to make preparation. None can be accepted in the exercise but the covenant children, but the most abundant reasons there are why all should attempt it; and who can tell what God will do in a season of grace? In Covenanting, if God's covenant has been laid hold on before, it is then again solemnly acceded to or renewed. It is the people of God, not the wicked, who covenant. "Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?"^[9] The wicked, as in the former case, may be brought, in the use of means, to attempt the exercise, but if in that they are accepted, in the character of new creatures they perform it; but if the change produced upon the state and character does not take place at the moment of Covenanting, but before it, then the exercise is a renewal of the covenant. When, therefore, those who have been, for a period long or short, the people of God, engage in this, they transact a renovation. The young believer who performs the exercise does this, though his age in grace may not exceed a few days or hours of the blessed life. This, the Christian who has long been in progress towards the inheritance above promised in the covenant, going into that performance, effects. This renewal all the saints of God do make, when in any circumstances they draw near to him to consecrate themselves and all that concerns them to his service. THE VOW. A vow falls to be considered in connection with the subject of Covenanting. "A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone; and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto."^[10] A vow is made to God alone. In various passages of Scripture, it is said explicitly to be made to the Lord. David "vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob."^[11] "Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord."^[12] In others it is manifest from the connection that the vow was made to the Lord. "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."^[13] Hannah addressed him to whom she vowed, "O Lord of Hosts."^[14] In only one passage

of Scripture are any represented as vowing to another than God himself,[15] but there the judgments of God are threatened on them -- vowing vows to the queen of heaven, as guilty of idolatry. And even some who had been idolaters, so soon as they were taught the claims of Jehovah upon their obedience, made vows unto him.[16] A vow is a solemn promise to God. It is explicitly described as such. "That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform: even a free-will-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth." [17] It is of the like nature with a promissory oath. "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." [18] And from the fact that vows, by sacrifice and thanksgiving and otherwise, were paid to the Lord, this appears. "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows." [19] "So will I sing praise unto thy name forever, that I may daily perform my vows." [20] A vow is to be made voluntarily. The verb ([Hebrew: nador]) translated to vow, in its literal acceptation means to beat out grain from the sheaf on the thrashing-floor: hence, as the corn is thus scattered, it came to signify to scatter, or to be liberal; and thence, finally, to offer willingly and freely. The noun ([Hebrew: neder]) accordingly is put to denote the act of offering, or of making a promise, to God, and also what in this is spontaneously offered or promised. Moreover, in a passage formerly quoted, it is described as a free-will-offering. The vow is sometimes made in a spontaneous effusion of gratitude. Thus David swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob, after the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies. [21] Often it is made in order to obtain some benefit. "I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble." [22] And like that of Jacob at Bethel, who was overpowered with the vision of the ladder, and desirous of obtaining the promise there made to him, a vow may not unfrequently proceed from both gratitude and hope. A vow must not be inconsistent with the requirements of the Divine law. What the Lord hath forbidden, he will not accept. "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." [23] To promise to him what is beyond our power, is to mock him. Some vows of females and children were not accepted, because such interfered with services due by them to their families, over which, in things lawful, their husbands and fathers had supreme power. A vow is never made but in the exercise of Covenanting. The vow which Jacob vowed at Bethel was made upon the reception of God's gracious covenant promise there tendered to him. Again, "Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." [24] In this manner at Hormah, they testified that they agreed to that promise of the Covenant that had been made at Sinai, which is expressed in the words, "Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite," [25] and thus made a covenant. From the words, "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond," it may be concluded that either a vow taken, or an oath, binds the soul. That the former binds the soul is most manifest from the language, "Every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her." [26] The bond is a covenant bond, for it is said, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." [27] The word ([Hebrew: masoreth]) for bond, in the later prophet is a co-derivate with that ([Hebrew: issar]) for bond, used by Moses, and has the same import. THE OATH. The OATH also claims consideration as related to Covenanting. "A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the

person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred." [28] To SWEAR is to give or use an oath. "The men said unto her, we will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear." [29] "I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham." [30] And to make, or to enter into an oath, being the same as to give it, each of these is also to swear. It is by the Lord, or by the name of the Lord, and by him alone that all ought to swear. One of the verbs ([Hebrew: alah]) in the Hebrew which denote to swear, would seem to be derived from a word ([Hebrew: El]) which signifies God, and accordingly refers to the making of an affirmation by using the name of God. [31] And the corresponding noun ([Hebrew: alah]) for oath, in like manner bears literally a meaning expressive of a means of calling on that holy name. Both occur in the sacred original of the passage. "If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: then hear thou in heaven." [32] And where a verb of a different origin is employed, the same is manifest. Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, "I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth." [33] The Lord himself said, "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely." [34] And explicit is the injunction, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." [35] Nor is an oath to be made by the name of any other. "Men verily swear by the greater;" and therefore lawfully by God alone. The names of the gods of the heathen were not even to be mentioned; and hence were not to be used in making an oath. Nay, the Israelites were explicitly forbidden to swear by them. Nor by any creature, and consequently not by the name of such ought any one to swear. "Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." [36] The expression, the Lord liveth, is a form of the oath. "Though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely" [37] "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." [38] An oath is sworn with the lifting up of the right hand. In vision presented before Daniel, the man clothed in linen "held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever." [39] John declares, "the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever." [40] The right hand is principally used among men in general; and accordingly, as when neither hand is specifically mentioned in any case, the right is understood, so we may conclude that the oath was made by the angel while he held up his right hand. The Lord sware "by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength." [41] He sometimes speaks of his promise to give the children of Israel the land of Canaan, as being made by swearing, and at others, as made by the lifting up of his hand. [42] And accordingly, like Abraham, who in lifting up his hand in reference to the goods that had belonged to the king of Sodom, unquestionably sware an oath, all who warrantably swear, make oath with the right hand lifted up towards heaven. The swearing of an oath is a devotional exercise. Every act performed in holding intercourse with God is religious; and therefore this. The performance of it is introduced along with that of other actions that certainly imply the rendering of religious homage. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." It is included in the exercises that embody the worship of God. Parallel to the last quoted passage is this which follows. "Him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and

to him shall ye do sacrifice." To swear by his name is not to do sacrifice; and is therefore to perform another part of his worship. The oath was wont to come before the altar of the Lord, where sacred services alone should be performed. As a form of calling on the name of God, it was associated with the exercise of giving thanks to him, and is regarded as a tender of devout obedience to him by him who said, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." In the oath is implied a condensed adoration. It is made to God as distinguished from every creature, and recognises the whole revealed glory of his character. Whatever be the warranted form of the oath, it is made to the same all-glorious Being, and presents to him one celebration of his infinitely transcendent excellence. Declaring to him that the Lord liveth, it owns his wondrous self-existence. Offered to Him that liveth for ever and ever, it celebrates his eternal pre-existence and existence to eternal ages. Presented to him as God, it acknowledges that infinitude of perfection which none can by searching find out, but all moral creatures are bound to adore -- the incomprehensible Spirit whom, though infinite in being, no man hath seen, nor can see. Addressed to him as the God of heaven and of the earth, it hails with reverence the overwhelming display of might omnipotent, wisdom boundless, goodness unlimited, and sovereignty absolute, made in the creation and upholding of matter and immortal spirits -- and the holiness, justice, goodness, and truth evolved in the constitution of all created things. Made by his name as Lord of all, it gives acknowledgment to his infinitely wise and sovereign allotments to angels and men -- to his undivided sovereignty over the numerous hosts of creation -- to his title to the universal homage and continued obedience of all -- to the glory of the adorable Lawgiver to heaven and earth, the present witness and future judge of his moral, though rebellious subjects -- and to the unimpeachable rectitude of an administration that comprehends heaven, and earth, and hell, and extends from the origin of creatures to eternity. Sworn to him as the Amen, his truth and faithfulness keeping mercy and truth from generation to generation with gratitude it proclaims. And however used, it recognises him as the avenger of the oppressed, the friend of those who keep the truth, and the just God taking vengeance upon those who dishonour his name, or otherwise transgress his commands. But, above all, it gives honour to him as the God of salvation. To his sovereign mercy in providing deliverance for men from the days of eternity; to his sovereign kindness in proclaiming himself as a Saviour, and holding intercourse with men in order to their recovery from a state of condemnation; to his wondrous grace displayed in the government of all things for the good of his church, and in affording means of a reverential appeal to himself in the duties of religion, and especially in swearing by his name, it gives testimony in a manner peculiar to itself. Heaven, earth, and hell -- the past, the present, and the future -- the time that now is, the final audit, and an endless eternity -- and above all, God himself, who can be compared with none other, at once it recognises as present. How solemn the performance of the act! God it invokes in every aspect of his character. More fully than any other exercise, his perfections and administration it contemplates, and in a manner all-important shows forth his praise. The oath is a solemn appeal to God, invoked as witness, that some statement made is true. The declaration may be an assertion concerning fact, or a promise. No creature, besides the being that gives the oath, may know certainly whether the statement be true or false; but God always knows, and he is called upon in this, as knowing the truth. In every case in which it is used, whether in secret or in public, it is the most complete evidence that can be afforded of the sincerity of those who swear; and in public, it is the highest satisfaction concerning any averment that men could demand. It is used to give the weight of God's testimony to show that a given statement is made in truth. In the swearing of a lawful oath, a

covenant with God is made by the party that swears. Whatever be the nature of the responsibility connected with the act engaged in by whomsoever, it cannot be doubted that an unregenerate person cannot be accepted in it; but a true Christian in making oath lawfully, will be approved before God. To swear in suitable circumstances is the duty of all; but it is the privilege of those only who are in covenant with God. When the oath is given to confirm an assertion, it is sworn in confirmation of a covenant with God. First, when used, not in giving evidence before men, but in religious exercises strictly personal, the oath is never sworn but to confirm truth. An assertion made before God in giving adherence to truth, is an acquiescence in it, and being uttered in accordance with the requirement that truth be spoken, and implying an engagement to abide by it, is a solemn declaration of obligation to God. The Covenant of Grace presented under some aspect is thus agreed to; a covenant is made, and the swearing of the oath is its ratification. In these words, Israel were invited to take hold on God's Covenant. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove."^[43] And the oath prescribed for them on returning was explicitly an averment of truth. "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." Likewise, to swear at any time devotionally, "the Lord liveth," is most solemnly to acquiesce in the injunctions to believe upon him which his word contains, and thus to accede to his Covenant. And what is true regarding such an acknowledgment of him as the ever-living One, obtains regarding the act of swearing to him for the purpose of attesting any other important truth. To swear to the truth of any declaration, is to swear to him as the God of truth, and accordingly by covenant to take hold upon him as such. Secondly, when the oath given to confirm an assertion is required by men having a right to claim it, those call upon the party to be sworn, to promise to them to speak the truth, and to invoke God to witness that the truth is spoken. The juror agrees to the demand, he accepts the condition, that his word and oath will be relied on, and he in giving his oath at once comes under a covenant obligation to man to speak the truth, and confirms his promise by an appeal to the God of truth. Thus, in a court of justice, or before a church court, a witness makes in reality a compact with the lawful authority that requires his oath, and swears in confirmation of his engagement. It is of equal consequence to the present argument whether he swear to the truth of a statement made before the taking of his oath, or first give his oath, and then make his promised representation. In the latter case, which is the most common, there is most manifestly made a covenant transaction between the witness and those in authority; but in the former, there is constituted an engagement not less really of a covenant character. Although, as in the case of giving an affidavit, the assertion may seem to precede the oath, yet, in reality, that is not accepted, and therefore is not completely made till the oath be given: and consequently, as in the other case, the assertion is that which is promised in the oath. In each, the witness comes under an engagement to speak the truth. It is one indeed generally of a short period, yet not on that account the less an engagement. In giving his testimony, he fulfils his covenant promise; and its effects in settling controversies, or leading to the execution of justice, may not be less important than those of a covenant, the fulfilment of the conditions of which might occupy a much longer time. Nor, when an oath is claimed and received by those in authority, is there a covenant made merely among men; but also by the juror, a covenant is made with God. The law of God requires the fulfilment of every lawful promise made by man to man; a simple promise to man, however, though God may be acknowledged in it, is not strictly a promise to Him. But by the appending of an oath, God is at once appealed to as a witness and judge, and as a party to a covenant between the juror and himself; and an obligation to God,

as well as an engagement to men, is explicitly constituted. Were it not so, how could the addition of the oath by the juror increase the security given in the simple promise, and the Lord be called to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he might swear?[44] Under one aspect, the engagement with men entered into by swearing to the truth of an assertion, is different from the relation to God into which by swearing the juror is brought. Viewed as a covenant among men, God is not properly a party to it, but a witness. But those who require the oath being possessed of power deputed to them from above, the same engagement may be also considered as a covenant made with God by him who swears. The engagement viewed in the former light, appears as affording the matter of a covenant between the juror and Him by whom he swears; but, contemplated in the latter, stands forth as one made with God, through the instrumentality of his servants. The oath is sworn to himself; but He, and those whom he hath vested with office, will demand the fulfilment of it. When the oath usually represented as promissory is sworn, a covenant with God is thereby made. When such an oath is sworn to confirm a vow to God, made not before men, most manifestly a covenant with Him is constituted; but no less is a covenant with Him entered into when such an oath is given to men. By this species of oath is generally understood that which is used in reference to obligation to be fulfilled in the more or less distant future. It has been shown, that even the oath given to confirm an assertion, belongs to this class. Accordingly, all kinds of oaths are generally promissory. But while both species may not be implemented in some cases till the far distant future, some of an assertory nature may be performed at the time when they are sworn. Evidence has been given, that the latter kind of oaths, viewed as promissory, brings under an engagement to God. That both do so, even when taken by men, moreover farther appears. A vow is essentially a promise made to God, but to none other; and the fulfilment of the vow is required, at least in virtue of the making of it.[45] But not less does God require what is promised to another by oath, than what is vowed to himself. The vow binds the soul with a bond which cannot be else than the bond of a covenant with God; but that bond also which is made by swearing an oath to bind the soul being spoken of in the same manner as the bond made by the vow, cannot be another than the bond of a covenant with him.[46] God is properly a party to the covenant made in vowing to Him. When an oath is sworn at the desire of men, they are a party to the covenant that is entered into by him who swears; but God is party to a covenant that is also thereby made; and when the oath is sworn in secret to God, He alone is a party to the covenant into which the juror enters. In all the cases God is a party to a covenant to which he who swears is the other. Again, though Christ forbade unlawful swearing, yet when he says, "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all,"[47] he does not teach that the oath, when properly sworn, is not to be performed to God, but rather intimates, that when He is properly appealed to in swearing, he is thereby contemplated as having addressed to him a solemn promise or vow, the fulfilment of which he will demand. A severe penalty followed the non-payment of the vow,[48] and the punishment due to the non-performance of an oath sworn, even to men, is represented as incurred by failing to fulfil a covenant obligation to God himself. The children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, swore thus to their brethren of the children of Israel, "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know, if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,) that we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon." And testifying to their

conviction that a failure in the fulfilment of their promise would be a breach of an engagement to God himself, they said, "Let the Lord himself require it." [49] Accordingly, the giving of the "oath for confirmation", whether of a statement of fact or of a promise to be fulfilled in the future, is in every case a taking hold on the covenant of God. There is every possible variety in the matter of the engagements made by oath, but not one of them is disconnected from a covenant with him. As the hand given among men was in every age a pledge of friendship -- the maintenance of which is so palpably a design of a covenant, and betokened always an accession to conditions of peace; as when the hand was given on the occasion of swearing an oath, a covenant was wont to be made, [50] so when the hand, which, when lifted up in devotion, points out always reconciliation with God, in swearing is held up towards heaven, a sign that a covenant is being made with him is thereby given. Hence, when men, in making a league or covenant with one another, lawfully vow or swear to the Lord, they Covenant with him -- and this is, moreover, corroborated by the Scripture account of some such covenants. The covenant between Jonathan and David, made by swearing unto God, is denominated a "covenant of the Lord." [51] The covenant of marriage, made by vowing or swearing to the Lord, is recognised as the covenant of God. [52] A covenant between God and each of these different parties must therefore have been made. One reason of these designations of such covenants is, that they were according to God's appointment; but it would be absolutely gratuitous to deny that there is this other reason -- that those who sware in each case, by swearing came under an engagement to the glorious Object of all worship to fulfil the promises made by them to each other. Though marriage be not a sacrament, yet it is universally admitted to be solemnised either by the making of vows or by swearing to God; and if this covenant, and all others that are ratified by oath, afford not the matter of covenants with God entered into by the parties, there is not afforded by the scriptural forms of transactions with God concerning things essentially religious, that are ratified by oath, the least evidence of their being covenant engagements to him. A covenant transaction among men concerning lawful things civil, if ratified by oath, has the solemnity of an exercise that carries along with it an engagement, of its own nature, to God, not less than an exercise of Covenanting concerning things civil and religious, or concerning things exclusively religious. Nor is it any valid objection to the sentiment that every covenant -- not excluding those that are civil -- which is ratified by an oath, is to be fulfilled, in virtue of an engagement or vow to God made by the oath, that the designation of "a covenant of God" was applied to covenants confirmed by swearing, which were not kept, and probably had not been made in sincerity. [53] The transactions with God in such cases are designated by what they professed to be, and ought to have been: and with those who dishonoured God in conducting them it became Him to deal accordingly. From the foregoing statements regarding the oath, there may be deduced the two following conclusions: -- First, That the civil or moral use of the oath, in the intercourse of society depends wholly upon its spiritual character. The oath of an atheist or unbeliever is not necessarily of any value. The individual who cherishes no sense of responsibility to God for his actions will not always, if at any time, scruple to swear falsely. When a witness is not impressed with the fear of God, his oath is of no more value than his simple affirmation: both may be true, but no security is afforded by his character that both are not wrong. In civil and moral life, the presumption that a witness is competent is based at least upon the profession which he makes of a regard to Divine truth: and though many, even while they tell the truth, swear without reverential feelings to Him whose dread name they use, their evidence or engagement of whatever kind is estimated as trust-worthy, only because it is supposed to be accompanied with

the oath religiously employed. Second, That the oath is distinct from the vow. The vow is a solemn promise to God. He is properly a party to the covenant entered into in making it; and it may be made either on occasions of entering into engagements with men, or in other circumstances. The oath is an appeal to God; it may be made on occasions of covenanting, whether he be properly the party or not, and is an invocation of him, that he may witness and judge concerning a transaction entered into either with himself, or with himself and also with others. The vow is essentially a promise, but is made to God, who must be viewed necessarily as a witness to a transaction with himself; and, consequently, though the name of God may not be used in making it, as it is employed in the act of swearing an oath, yet, when it is made, the exercise of swearing is implied; or, every vow to God implies the giving of an oath, or the act of swearing by his name. The swearing of an oath always brings under obligation to God, and therefore always includes the making of a vow. When men covenant with one another, and appeal to God by oath, they come under an engagement to him, and also an engagement to one another; or, they vow and swear to God, and promise and swear to one another. When men in secret swear to God, what they swear to do, or the matter of their oath, is a vow; and their oath is sworn in formally calling on him to witness the making of their vow, and to judge them should they not fulfil it. When men covenant with one another and vow also to God, their vow carries along with it an oath, or the calling of God to act as witness and judge. The apprehension that God will punish for not making fulfilment to him accompanies equally the oath and the vow. In both is implied what may be denominated not properly an imprecation, but rather an acknowledgment of the justice of God's procedure in punishing should the engagement not be fulfilled. Both the vow and oath are made to God. The oath, besides, is made in the use of the name of God. When an oath is enjoined, so is a vow; for that which is promised to God in the oath is a vow. And as every vow is addressed to God -- who is necessarily a witness and judge of the transaction and the offerer -- every command enjoining it includes a mandate to use the oath. CONFESSION. The term CONFESS, and the corresponding word CONFESSION, are employed in reference to the subject of Covenanting. The former of these is sometimes used in regard to God as an object, and sometimes in reference to men. To confess to God, or to the name of God, means to perform services which include among them the exercise of Covenanting. In more than one passage of the prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, it denotes to Covenant. He said, "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers." [54] The sin to which the people of Israel were peculiarly exposed was that of idolatry. For that they were afterwards carried away from the land that had before been promised in covenant to their fathers. In practising that they transgressed the covenant. [55] When they should be restored they would take into their mouth, instead of the names of idols, the name of God, and that by taking hold upon his covenant. [56] Besides, the passage is parallel to the following: -- "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." [57] Both passages refer to the same event -- the restoration of Israel. The exercise of confessing the name of God, corresponds to that of joining to him in a perpetual covenant. The verb ([Hebrew: yadoh] -- [Greek:

exomologeomai]) in the Hebrew, when connected with the name of God in different other passages, has the same import. An instance from the Psalms is found in these words: -- "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks (confess) unto thy holy name." [58] The ground of the Psalmist's encouragement to utter this prayer was, that the Lord remembered for his people his covenant; and it could not be for less than that they should, after their recal, take hold on that covenant, that he made supplication that they should be gathered from the heathen. The verb in the Greek by which the Seventy translate the Hebrew term, we should conclude, must therefore sometimes have the same force. But that it frequently has in the New Testament that signification, is manifest from the connections in which it stands in portions of it that shall now be considered. We read, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles;" [59] and conclude that the vow here quoted from the Psalms, which should be adopted by the people of God in the presence of the Gentiles, was, that they would Covenant with him. It was the promises of that covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, that Christ came to confirm. The Gentiles could not glorify God for his mercy without cleaving to it; and it was by believers making manifestations of attachment to that covenant, of which Covenanting was one, that the Gentiles should be brought, in a manner more or less explicit, to adhere unto it. Before proceeding farther, we take the record of the infamous transaction between the chief priests and captains, and Judas, -- "And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised [Greek: exomologese]." [60] And we consequently infer that the word which designates Judas' conduct in completing his treacherous bargain, when used in a good sense, bears the construction to Covenant. Again, we read, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [61] And we remark, that to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, from this appears to be tantamount to an oath, and accordingly includes in it, to Covenant. The passage is a manifest application to the Redeemer of the prophetic words, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." [62] The last words that remain to be considered are another quotation of the same Scripture: -- "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." [63] They follow the statement, "For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;" but they do not refer exclusively to the final judgment. As the expression, "every knee shall bow to me," cannot be confined to that alone, so neither can that which immediately follows. They appear to be used to show that he to whom such homage by men shall be paid, will preside at the future judgment; and accordingly intimate, that throughout all time that homage shall be given. There is no reason afforded in the whole passage to conclude, that the homage will include in it less than all the services connected with the use of the oath. Another verb ([Greek: omologeo]) in the Greek of the New Testament is also rendered to confess. It is that from which the former, by the addition of a prefix, which gives emphasis to the meaning, is derived. It is used in the passage which describes the wicked promise of Herod to Herodias -- "Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask." [64] It therefore designates the act by which one enters into an agreement or a covenant with another. It has that import in classic writers among the Greeks. It is used by the Apostle in writing to the Hebrews and to others, in such circumstances as to preclude the idea that that meaning he did not

attach to it. One case may be selected. "By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (confessing) to his name." [65] Confessing here is manifestly parallel to the offering of the sacrifice of praise. The vow was frequently a sacrifice; and is the making of the vow not included in confessing to his name? When either of these terms in the Greek, without limitation, is employed, and God is the object, it bears the meaning to Covenant. In the cases supposed, each must be viewed as capable, severally, of every interpretation that it bears in specific connections, and, consequently, of the import that is contended for. The former, in these cases, sometimes means to confess sins -- at others, to confess gratitude, or to give thanks -- at others, to covenant; and at others, considered apart from its connection, it may not appear to intimate specifically any one of these in preference to the others. When thus indefinitely used, it must be understood as designed to bear individually each signification. Thus, the passages, "I will confess to thee among the Gentiles," "Every tongue shall confess unto God," each intimate the acknowledgment of sin, the giving of God thanks, and the exercise of Covenanting with him. The latter of the terms is used indefinitely only when God is the object: it is in the passage, "giving thanks (or confessing) to his name," the signification of which from the context, has been considered. When the object of confession in any passages is not adverted to, and the subject of confession is not stated, to confess there means, to Covenant. That object must be either God, or men, or both. In those passages it must be severally both; and, consequently, such bring before us, not only the making of acknowledgments to men, but the making of confession, according to its most diversified character, to God. This is the case in the passage, "With the mouth confession is made to salvation." To confess Christ signifies to Covenant. Its import is, to confess him to men, and also to confess him to God. And the passage last quoted, according to the interpretation given of it, proves that the latter is to Covenant. When confession with the mouth is made to salvation, it is Christ that is confessed. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation." [66] To make confession is to confess. The form of expression occurs twice in the English version of the Old Testament, and the passages, according to what has been shown, describe at once the exercises of confessing sin, and of Covenanting. And that the former of the passages records the latter of these exercises, moreover, is manifest; from the expressed resolution of king Hezekiah, of which that passage recounts the fulfilment. He said, "Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." [67] And the accomplishment was, "And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praising the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers." [68] The other passage states the character of an exercise in which Daniel as an individual engaged, and from its very structure, independently of the conclusion to which we have otherwise come, manifests him as taking hold on God's covenant, as well as acknowledging sin. "I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments." [69] The phrase TO PROFESS, is, when used in connection with godliness or true religion, in the New Testament, equivalent to that to Confess. It is a

translation of one of the verbs ([Greek: omologeō]), which is rendered also by the latter. To profess either the knowledge of God, or godliness, or a good profession, or faith, or subjection to the gospel, corresponds to the act of professing Christ. If performed to God, it is, according to the import of the expression confessing to him, to Covenant. If performed to men, it is to bear testimony to the truth. If not represented as performed either to him or to them, it is to be understood as being, according to their respective characters, performed to both; and, accordingly, to be interpreted as not merely to testify to the truth of God before the world, but also to engage in the solemn exercise of Covenanting. The exercise of Covenanting is accordingly to be understood as referred to in these scripture declarations: -- "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ." [70] "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." [71] "Women professing godliness." [72] "And hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." [73] "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." [74] The term PROFESSION, when used in the same connection, is equivalent to the term confession; and hence includes in its import the exercise of Covenanting. The proof of this which is obviously deducible from the meaning of the word confession is corroborated by the representation which is given in the epistle to the Hebrews, of Christ as the high priest of our profession. In this aspect of his character, the Redeemer was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and under this, taught the people to manifest in every possible manner their attachment to God's Covenant -- duties which they would not have performed, if in making confession to God they had not confessed their acquiescence in that Covenant. PERSONAL COVENANTING is an ACT OF ADHERENCE to God's Covenant. It is the definite exercise of giving acquiescence to that Covenant in its whole character. It is not simply acquiescing in that Covenant in the heart, but signifying that acquiescence in a positive service. The Covenanting believer, like the people of Israel with Josiah their king, in this exercise, stands to the Covenant. [75] That party in this exercise takes hold upon the Covenant, and cleaves to it; that is, not merely performs other services required in the Covenant, but absolutely engages to it. And here, uses such language as the words of Jacob, "The Lord shall be my God." But particularly, First, This is a solemn act approving of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. In every religious exercise an approval of this method of restoration to the favour of God is implied; in this it is specially intimated. To make that approval in this act there is afforded encouragement. It was to Israel represented as about to engage in Covenanting individually, that He who described himself, "The Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts," made the appeal, "Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God, (literally, rock.) I know not any." [76] This approval has been explicitly declared in this exercise. To invite to the performance of this act, there were used the words, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." And in Covenanting individually, not less than socially, accepting the invitation, these said, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." [77] The making of this approval has been commemorated. Certainly not less in taking hold on God's Covenant did David express his satisfaction in it, than in the pleasing record given by him in these words, "He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." [78] And in all those circumstances in which, by performing this act, the believer will declare himself to be on the Lord's

side, this approval will be made. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." [79] Secondly. This is a solemn act of accepting Christ and all his benefits. It has been performed by many who had previously known the grace of God. The nation of Israel, when about to enter the promised land, were generally a people who feared God. [80] They had heard of the promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and by faith must have been looking forward to the Messiah thus foretold. But on the occasion of their renovation of God's Covenant in the land of Moab, they were exhorted through Moses to make a choice of Him as their life, and of that life which comes by Him alone. "Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days;) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." [81] David illustrating the practice of many, in special exercises performed this. Take his record of one of these. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." -- "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot." [82] The vow here is emphatic, being made against swearing to another god, and intimating that the Lord, being his Lord, and the portion of his inheritance and of his cup, had been received by him according to a choice to which he still adhered. When Jesus appeared in the flesh, some who had believed in a Messiah to come, and who were accordingly true believers, in acts of Covenanting received Jesus as a Saviour that was come. John, the forerunner, was sanctified from the womb; but after Jesus had commenced his public ministry, that distinguished individual on one occasion, seeing Him coming unto him, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." [83] And this act of appropriation, as well as of bearing testimony, he afterwards repeated. Nathaniel was a believing expectant of the Messiah. Of him Jesus made honourable mention when he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile;" and he, immediately on perceiving proofs of his Divine character, professed his acceptance of him. "Nathaniel answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." [84] And Thomas and Peter, as instances of those who have received him, testifying in the exercise of Covenanting to their cordial acceptance of him, said in the solemn act of confessing his name, the one, "My Lord and my God;" [85] and the other, in language implying the same avouchment, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." [86] They receive the Father as a God in Covenant, who receive the Son; and they receiving the Son receive the Holy Spirit -- the Spirit of promise. The acceptance of the Redeemer therefore is the acceptance of a Three-one-God, as a Covenant God. In Covenanting, that acceptance is made by the saints. And all things are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Of the Father as reconciled unto them, as having drawn them to himself, and justified them, and adopted them into his family, they accept in that exercise. In that, too, they accept of the Redeemer as their prophet and king, and acquiesce in his priesthood held on their behalf. And in that, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, the Remembrancer, the glorious Agent who brings from death to life, who illuminates the understanding, who gives comfort and consolation, and who sanctifies, and proves the earnest of the purchased possession, they solemnly accept. And, accordingly, all that sovereign mercy has done for them, or wrought in them, or will accomplish on their behalf, in that they solemnly receive. Thirdly. This is a solemn act of renouncing the claims of

the devil, the world, and the flesh, upon the heart and life. When Christ is received, Satan is cast out; actually by Divine power, and resolutely by the subjects of Divine grace. And the resolution to abandon Satan and his cause enters into the covenant engagement. "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." [87] "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods." "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" [88] "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." [89] The injunction, "Be ye separate," inculcates not merely the performance of the act of separating from what is evil, but the exercise of Covenanting to accomplish it. The corresponding command in prophecy is, "Be ye clean." And the verb in the Hebrew is that rendered by the term purge in the passage, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me." [90] The Lord purged out the heathen from among the Jews who returned to Jerusalem, and who, under Nehemiah, entered into a covenant with God. These Jews themselves, at God's command, and to the accomplishment of his purpose, separated themselves from those heathens, not merely actually, but also by solemn covenant. In like manner, the Nazarite separated himself from certain things, not merely in reality, but likewise by vow. And since the separation was one, though the terms in the sacred original denoting that of the Nazarite and of the returned Jews were each different from that used in the prophets, we are warranted to conclude that the injunction of the Apostle, "Be ye separate," implies not less than the covenant engagement to separate, which those other cases of separation include. Fourthly. This solemn act includes voluntary self-dedication to God. It is a willing acknowledgment of the right which God, by creation and redemption, has in the whole man; it harmonizes with the claim, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name; thou art mine;" [91] and is expressed in the language, "Lord, I am thine, save me." [92] It is the cheerful offer of perpetual obedience to his law. It is thus required, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth," [93] and is thus tendered, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid." [94] "Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever." [95] "I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name." [96] Both to the world and to God himself, in vowing to him, "One shall say, I am the Lord's;" and of many, individually as well as collectively, it might be declared, as of those of Macedonia, that they "gave their own selves to the Lord." [97] These were saints; and, accordingly, this testimony was not borne to their first subjection to the gospel, but to an act of self-surrender to God, on the occasion of their making, in the spirit of true benevolence, provision for his poor. Finally. This is a solemn act in which is made to God a promise to perform certain specific duties. There is no exercise that would be acceptable to God, that should not come within the range of a promise made in such a service. Abstinence from besetting sins, increased diligence in the use of the means of grace, positive benevolent or religious services, the exercise

of all the christian graces, and whatever observance the enlightened mind may apprehend as peculiarly incumbent, in this act may be engaged to. Illustrations of this are afforded by the vow of Jacob at Bethel, the vow of Hannah, the vow and oath of David to provide a place for the ark of the Lord, the vow of the Nazarite, the vows paid by offerings laid on the altar of God, and all offerings of obedience acceptable through Jesus Christ. SOCIAL COVENANTING, Like that which is Personal, is an act of acquiescence in God's Covenant. They who are accepted in it are the saints. All invited to join in it are required to have regard to all the institutions of religion. When an injunction to engage in the service is delivered, the Covenant of God is exhibited; and the blessings of that Covenant are promised to those who will properly perform the exercise, and fulfil their obligations. First. This act is performed by the Christian church in a collective ecclesiastical capacity. One in opinion regarding her doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, her members, having one origin, upheld by the same grace, designed for one end, called to the same privileges, enjoined to perform the same duties, expectants of the same glorious consummation, and harmonious in their sentiments regarding special incumbent duties, and concerning the manner of performing them, come forward, and as one body in this unite. Unity of existence is necessary to the body confederated in the social covenant. Those who hold the truth cannot enter into it with the infidel, the unbeliever, the erroneous or profane. All who unite in it must have the same motives, and contemplate the same ultimate end. All must have the same sentiments of a Covenant God, and harmonize in their views of the means to be employed in order to the attainment of that end. There is no church so free from imperfection as not to need an enlargement or correction of its views. Yet no body of professing Christians are warranted in uniting in covenant with those who hold not the truth. The unity of the Spirit is necessary in the bond of peace. No church, in entering into Covenant, includes so much in her engagements as the word of God requires. And, hence, a standing of Christian profession higher than has yet been attained to by any, has to be aspired at. To secure that, a closer regard to what should be the character of the true church than has been paid, is requisite. To unite with the people of God is good; but to unite with any elsewhere than on the basis of truth, is not to be desired. Unions among Sections of the visible church may possibly be effected at the expense of deviations on either hand from the direct line from each to the perfection of the church's character on earth. And though, after confederation is effected, tolerable approximation to it may be made, the sacrifice required may often not be excused. But when each party aims at the truth, the more they advance, the more they will approach each other; and happy will they be and honoured who will arrive there. Deviations from the path of rectitude made by any Section of the church are not reckoned as trivial by Him who witnesses the conduct of all; and it is, notwithstanding these, (but not as if he disregarded them) that he continues to make, to those chargeable with them, manifestations of his favour. If some are nearer the consummation of Christian character and profession than many around them, let them not go back or wait on the others, but invite these to follow and unite, that all in due time may together go on to perfection. Secondly. This act is performed by Christians in a national capacity. Acknowledging the law of God as the basis of legislation -- ecclesiastical and civil; recognising themselves as individually and jointly called to obey it; as put in possession of common benefits arising from the dispensation of the law of Christ, in things civil as well as religious; and as called to promote the interests of the kingdom of Him who is king in Zion, the Governor among the nations, and Lord of all -- as one body they engage in this. The members of Christ's church are members of civil society, of which, too, he is the Head; and a reason not less

substantial than that for vowing in an ecclesiastical capacity, they therefore have for engaging as members of a civil community in the exercise of Covenanting with God. Only such a covenant as corresponds with his will is acceptable to Him. But there are reasons why all in a Christian nation should collectively enter into such. Were some whose sentiments or practice might not correspond with the Covenant, to seek to enter it, there would be every reason why the federal union with these should not be completed. Such individuals are not fitted to have a charge or trust in the State committed to them. Till they would exhibit signs of repentance and reformation, they should not be received. Were a party in power, or desiring it, possessed of such a character, even apparently disposed to enter into such covenants, wisdom would say, Enter not into confederacy with them. Thirdly. Various communities may be confederated together in one solemn Covenant with God. By this it is not intended that different churches holding many conflicting sentiments, and entertaining different plans of attaining even to a good end, may warrantably so unite in an ecclesiastical capacity. What prevents different churches from adopting the same standards, and holding communion with one another in waiting on all the ordinances of divine grace, is sufficient to prevent them from associating in league in this manner. Nor is it intended that by such a federal union merely a testimony against error should be given, without a solemn declaration of adherence to specified truths. It is not the fact of a given Section of the visible church adhering to a definite system that invests it with a right to Covenant by itself, exclusively of every other -- for that system might be very imperfect -- but because that it holds the truth, and is bound to go on to perfection. Its own imperfections are drawbacks upon its avowal of the truth; by uniting with others, who would refuse to give the truth which it might hold the desired prominence, it should not suffer that truth to be inadequately exhibited, or concealed. But the people of God in different states or kingdoms, or in different communities or churches in the same kingdom, may enter into various species of solemn covenants with one another, to carry into effect the design of the exhibition of the truth. It is the variety of opinion that exists among organised churches that prevents these from co-operating together in various benevolent or religious schemes, and that is sufficient to prevent some who maintain the duty of Covenanting, from associating with others in discharging it. Because of the church's imperfection, none of her procedures harmonize completely, either with one another, or with the truth. But individual communities are not therefore warranted in being content with proceeding to bear a testimony for it on a principle of approximative expediency. What different bodies could do together better than singly without sacrificing the cause of the truth on either hand, they are warranted to unite in solemn Covenant to effect. What each body could do for the interests of Christ's kingdom with more effect alone, let its members among themselves strengthen their obligations to perform. Were there to be formed federal unions that would lead to the investigation and discovery of the mind of God contained in his word, and to the diffusion of truth agreed upon, as well as to the reprobation of acknowledged evils, those who form them might by degrees be drawn so closely together, not merely in love and zeal, but also in sentiment, that, instead of being distinguished by so many differences as they now exhibit, they would appear as but one church united in a single consentaneous doctrinal and practical profession of the truth as it is in Jesus. Fourthly. This act implies all that is included in personal Covenanting. The community as a body engage in it. But without the concurrence of each individual the transaction cannot be the deed of the whole. The whole accept of the promise by each receiving it. The whole engage to duty by each entering into an engagement. Between God and each individual a covenant is made when the whole Covenant. The work of acceding to the covenant conditions on the part of each is

personal. The provision on which all as a body lay hold is accepted by each in particular. The promise may be one which is not suited to each individually, but adapted to a whole, made up of individuals, each of whom is interested in it. The services promised, one might not of himself have been able to perform; but, in order to the performance of them, each, with the others, might be called to unite. What is not required of all individually, may not be conjoined to form one demand on all. And what is not promised to men personally, cannot be offered to a community in general. The act of the Covenanting Society is complex, and is the aggregate of the actings of all who compose it. And the responsibility of the whole is a responsibility which each bears. Each, as a Christian, as interested in the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, as a voluntary agent engaged in promoting the truth, as called to endeavour to seek the welfare of men, and as seeking the advancement of the glory of God, -- each associates with the others in the transaction, and gives it its Covenant character.

Fifthly. This act is, on the part of the Covenanting community as a body, the acceptance of the benefits of God's Covenant in general, and of special benefits of it, in particular. It is a reception of the benefits, the attainment of which the Covenant as a mean contemplates. These benefits are offered in exhibitions of Divine grace. In the Covenant they are laid hold on by acquiescence and acceptance. The enjoyment of them may belong to a period near, or even long posterior, and may be attained to through the use of other means besides; but in Covenanting they are solemnly apprehended and appropriated. In reference to his repeated acceptance of the promises of God in this act,[98] there is borne to the father of the faithful, the testimony, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son." [99] And as a people, the Israelites in this act received the promises. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." [100] The Covenants must have been the different dispensations of the same Covenant -- the former dispensations, or the Old Covenant, and the last, or the New Covenant. It was at a renovation of the Covenant under the former dispensation, that the people of Israel received the law; and certainly not less the promises. Are the benefits contemplated in the exercise of Covenanting, individual or general reformation in religion or in practice, or the preservation of peace and truth, or any other blessings spiritual or temporal? These are included in God's Covenant promise, and in this act they are consequently accepted as thus embodied.

Sixthly. In this act the Covenanting community vow to God to render general and specified obedience. In that is expressed or implied the offer of obedience to the whole law of God, and to particular obvious requirements included in it. When the Covenant was made at Sinai, the people said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." [101] And at Shechem, before Joshua, this was their language, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." [102] At the return from the captivity, the oath taken included the promise to discharge specific demands of God's law; and every vow should be made, and every oath sworn, in order to perform some service required.

Seventhly. This act is a solemn federal transaction among the members of the Covenanting community. The fact of the public social character of the act shows that the engagements of a Covenant with God, have a reference to the relations to one another of those who Covenant. The reception of good from the hand of God, through the means of Covenanting, necessarily supposes that that good, at least in part, will come to each in some manner by those associated in the exercise. The promise of obedience to God by vow or oath, includes a promise of certain services to each member of the confederation. When a vow or an oath to God, to accept of good from one another, or to perform mutual services

among themselves is made, a corresponding engagement to each other is thereby made among them. The two engagements are distinct in themselves; but the latter flows from, or is constituted by, the former; nay, in so far as the former has a regard to mutual relations among the parties themselves, it was made that the latter might obtain. The vow or oath to God is not an engagement to men; but what is by vow or oath promised to God to be performed to men, constitutes the reality or substance of an engagement thereby made to them. Covenanting with God is the laudable means employed to bring parties together, to promise in the most solemn manner to accept of specified good from each other, and to render certain services in correspondence therewith to each. It is by engaging to God, that they engage to one another. And therefore conversely, it may be added, that their own engagement to one another, as well as their engagement to God, by which that engagement was made, is, according to the general definition of Covenanting that has been given, a taking hold upon the Covenant of Grace. The engagement to God is always substantial, whether by vow or oath, or by both; as is the engagement among the Covenanting parties. But one or other of the engagements may be either expressed or understood. The recognition of their engagement to one another may be implied, but not expressed, whilst the Covenant of the Lord to whom they vow or swear to give obedience, is explicitly adhered to. This was the case with the people of Israel when they engaged in the act, along with Josiah their king. "And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers." [103] Again, these mutual engagements, in some cases, may be expressed, while the Covenant of God is implicitly renewed. Zedekiah, and the people of Israel, at once, in express terms, entered into an engagement to set free their servants who were of their brethren, and before the Lord thus in covenant with him implicitly engaged to a duty which, on the occasion of the Covenanting at Sinai had been enjoined. [104] In other cases, both the engagement to God, and the engagement of those who Covenant to one another, may be explicit. "Jehoiada made a Covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people." [105] Eighthly. This act is a public acceptance of the truth of God, and a renunciation of error. It is a public confession to God of a heartfelt approbation of his holy oracles, and of the doctrines and precepts revealed in them -- a testimony to the perfection of his word and ordinances, and an abandonment of all that is inconsistent with them. It is the act of a witnessing body, appointed to bear testimony in that exercise for him. In reference to their Covenant engagements, the Lord says to his people, "Ye are even my witnesses." [106] In this act, they confess him before men. In vowing, or swearing to give obedience to his law, is implied an approbation of his holy oracles; and that approval in the act is also declared. They who keep his Covenant, keep his testimonies; and they who cleave to the one, adhere to the other. "I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me." [107] "Thy testimonies have I taken for an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart." [108] They who take the Covenant of God into their mouth, declare his statutes; [109] and if worthy, their resolution in sincerity is thus expressed, "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." [110] Lastly. This act is performed in the name of those who engage in it, and in the name of posterity. The Lord made a Covenant at once with Noah, and with

his descendants. The Lord made a Covenant with Abraham as the father of many nations. In the land of Moab, the Israelites and their seed after them, at once entered into such a relation. "Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." [111] And when the former did so, they were encouraged to choose life, that they and their seed might live. [112] The Covenant of the priesthood made with Phinehas, was not entered into merely with himself, but also with his posterity who should exist to far distant times; and at Sinai, when Israel engaged to be for the Lord, in the second commandment they had addressed to them a reason of obedience, implying that their engagement was not merely on their own, but also on their children's behalf. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." [113] PERMANENT MEANS OF COVENANT RATIFICATION. It has been shown that whenever a vow is made, or an oath is sworn, a covenant with God is made. It now remains to be proved that every covenant with God is ratified by oath. Though the oath is frequently exhibited without explicit reference to the Covenant, and the Covenant in like manner is spoken of without mention being made of the oath, yet since in no passage either explicitly or implicitly is evidence afforded that the one is ever dissociated from the other, and, since the two occur so frequently together, it may be warrantably concluded, that when the one alone is adverted to, the other is implied. In many passages are the ideas of oath and covenant so associated together, that the strongest presumption is afforded that the one is essential to the other; and, accordingly, that when a covenant with God is made, it is in the use of the oath. What on this point could be more conclusive than the language, -- "Thus saith the Lord God, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant?" [114] A verb ([Hebrew: shavoa]), signifying to swear, and two corresponding nouns are derived from a word for the number seven. That was a sacred number, or a number of perfection, not merely among the Israelites, but among other nations, and was used for the purpose of signifying an oath. A present of seven vouchers sometimes accompanied the act of swearing. "Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves. -- And he said, For these seven ewe-lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swore both of them." [115] The design of thus using the number being to give confirmation, such also must have been the end of using the oath. It is not improbable that the number seven may have been employed because that in seven days, according to the pattern set in the period of creation, and consequent sabbath, there are included the six days appointed for labour and the sabbath of rest. But, however that may be, we have the testimony of an inspired writer, that what was suggested in symbol by the number is the design of the oath. "An oath for confirmation is -- an end of all strife." Finally, a covenant with God, whether made in secret or in public, from its very nature cannot be entered into without an oath. Sometimes the vow and oath were used together. David "swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob." Mutual promises among men, though they confer obligation, do not always stand connected with a covenant with God, for they are made sometimes without a vow or an oath. But a promise made to God must be made either by vow or oath, or by both; and since no covenant with Him can be made without a promise, it follows that every covenant with Him is ratified by oath in its most explicit form, or by the oath

implied in the vow.FOOTNOTES:[2] Hosea vi.7.[3] Jer. xxxiii.20-25.[4] Gen. viii.22. See also Hosea ii.18.[5] Gen. xvii.7.[6] Zech. xiii.9.[7] Isa. lv.3.[8] Isa. xlv.24.[9] Ps. l.16.[10] Confession of Faith, chap. xxii.5, 6.[11] Ps. cxxxii.2.[12] Num. xxi.2.[13] Gen. xxviii.20-22.[14] 1 Sam. i.11.[15] Jer. xliv.25, 26.[16] Jonah i.16.[17] Deut. xxiii.23.[18] Num. xxx.2.[19] Nahum i.15.[20] Ps. lxi.8.[21] Compare Ps. cxxxii.2, 3, and 2 Sam. vii.1-3.[22] Ps. lxi.13, 14.[23] Mal. i.14.[24] Num. xxi.2.[25] Exod. xxxiv.11.[26] Num. xxx.9.[27] Ezek. xx.37.[28] Confession of Faith, xxii.1, 2.[29] Joshua ii.17.[30] Gen. xxvi.3. [31] Gesen. Lex. Heb. et Chald.[32] 1 Kings viii.31.[33] Gen. xxiv.3.[34] Lev. xix.12.[35] Deut. vi.13.[36] Mat. v.34-36.[37] Jer. v.2.[38] Jer. iv.2.[39] Dan. xii.7.[40] Rev. x.5, 6.[41] Is. lxii.8.[42] Exod. xxxiii.1; Ezek. xx.28.[43] Jer. iv.1, 2.[44] 2 Chron. vi.22, 23.[45] Deut. xxiii.21, 22.[46] Num. xxx.2.[47] Mat. v.33, 34.[48] Eccl. v.4-6.[49] Josh. xxii.21-23.[50] Ezek. xvii.18.[51] 1 Sam. xx.8.[52] Prov. ii.17.[53] Ezek. xvii.16-19.[54] 1 Kings viii.33, 34 -- See also ver.35, 36.[55] Josh. xxiii.16.[56] Zech. xiii.9 -- See ver.2.[57] Jer. i.4, 5.[58] Ps. cvi.47, 45 -- See also Ps. xviii.49.[59] Rom. xv.8, 9.[60] Luke xxii.5, 6.[61] Phil. ii.9-11.[62] Is. xlv.23.[63] Rom. xiv.11.[64] Matt. xiv.7.[65] Heb. xiii.15.[66] Rom. x.9, 10.[67] 2 Chron. xxix.10.[68] 2 Chron. xxx.21, 22.[69] Dan. ix.4.[70] 2 Cor. ix.13.[71] Titus i.16.[72] 1 Tim. ii.10.[73] 1 Tim. vi.12.[74] Heb. x.23.[75] 2 Kings xxiii.3.[76] Is. xliv.8; see v.6.[77] Jer. iii.22, 23.[78] 2 Sam. xxiii.5.[79] John vi.67, 68.[80] Jer. ii.2, 3.[81] Deut. xxx.19, 20.[82] Ps. xvi.2-4, 5.[83] John i.29.[84] John i.49.[85] John xx.28.[86] John xxi.17; see also Deut. vi.5.[87] Is. xxvi.13.[88] Hosea xiv.2, 3, 8.[89] 2 Cor. vi.16-18.[90] Ezek. xx.37, 38.[91] Is. xliii.1.[92] Ps. cxix.94.[93] Josh. xxiv.14.[94] Ps. cxvi.16.[95] Ps. cxix.43, 44.[96] Ps. lxi.4, 5.[97] 2 Cor. viii.5.[98] Rom. iv.20-22.[99] Heb. xi.17.[100] Rom. ix.4.[101] Exod. xxiv.7.[102] Josh. xxiv.24. See also, v.25.[103] 2 Chron. xxxiv.31, 32.[104] Jer. xxxiv.8-18; see also Exod. xxi.2.[105] 2 Kings xi.17.[106] Isa. xliv.8.[107] Ps. cxix.30.[108] Ps. cxix.111.[109] Ps. l.16.[110] Ps. cxix.15, 16.[111] Deut. xxix.14, 15.[112] Deut. xxx.19.[113] Exod. xx.5, 6.[114] Ezek. xvi.59.[115] Gen. xxi.27, 28, 30, 31. See Gesen. Lex.

CHAPTER II. MANNER OF COVENANTING.

Previous to an examination of the manner of engaging in the exercise of Covenanting, the consideration of God's procedure towards his people while performing the service seems to claim regard. Of the manner in which the great Supreme as God acts, as well as of Himself, our knowledge is limited. Yet though even of the effects on creatures of His doings we know little, we have reason to rejoice that, in His word He has informed us, and in His providence illustrated by that word, he has given us to see that He does act in wondrous condescension to his saints. Being an infinite, glorious Spirit, He does not perform the deeds of men clothed with flesh and blood, but being the upholder of all things, and the glorious fountain of all the means of operation which men employ, with them He can and does hold communication. In the ordinances of His grace He has made his chosen ones to know him. Proofs of His gracious regard to them He has in all ages given. In the earlier part of the history of time, their bodily senses he addressed: in all time their souls, by the inhabitation of his Holy Spirit, experienced the goodness of His grace. What He records of His transactions with His people is after the manner of beings possessed of material qualities, as well as gifted with undying spirits. Though not possessed of bodily organs, He spake to men; though not material, He hears and sees them; and He testifies to their deeds and thoughts. Unchanging, He acts not nor thinks as men do. But through the illimitable resources of His perfect character He has dealt with them as if He were possessed of the faculties not merely of an infinite, but of a perfect material, being. And what in the language of metaphor He has taught, or what He has presented before the bodily organs and minds of all, they are called to receive as bearing the character of truth. When His people, in vowing or swearing to Him, take hold on Him, He covenants with them. Receiving their various services offered to Him, He acknowledges them as covenant children. They vow unto Him; He made promises to them. They swear unto Him; He has sworn unto them. They avouch Him to be their God; He avouches them to be His people. On occasions of Covenanting, God has actually made promises, and sworn to men. To Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob; to the whole people of Israel at Sinai; to David and others in these circumstances He spake. To Noah once and again with enlargement the promise of His covenant He uttered. Abraham had addressed to Him the promise on various occasions of this nature, by the Lord holding converse with him as a friend. With the people of Israel the Lord talked face to face in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire. To Jacob he spake in a vision of the night at Bethel. And a covenant of royalty with David he made in like manner. And the oath of God at such seasons was given. He sware to Noah. Though the first inspired historian does not mention the fact, it is recorded. "This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." [116] To Abraham he sware, -- "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." [117] The oath of God was made to Isaac. [118] To Israel at Sinai: when the Lord brought them out of Egypt He lifted up His hand. [119] It is because not merely that with His finger He wrote the law on two tables of stone, but that in lifting up his hand in swearing to them there, while giving the law, that it is said, -- "From his right hand went a fiery law for

them." [120] And to David also, in making a covenant with him, the Lord sware. "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." [121] Even in those ordinary cases in which, on Covenanting, communion with God is enjoyed, He Covenants with them. This is implied in the very designation of the exercise; but it is otherwise obvious. We have no reason to believe that when Israel Covenanted in the land of Moab such manifestations of God's presence as were vouchsafed at Sinai were made. But then the Lord made an oath to his people, and thereby Covenanted with them. "That thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." [122] Yea there, after whatever manner, He avouched them to be His people. "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments." [123] Yea, except the contrary be stated or implied somewhere, we should not be warranted in maintaining that the oath of God was not always given on occasions of Covenanting, before the Canon of Scripture was closed. In the historic record of Jacob's life no account is given of God's making an oath to him. Yet we are certain that He covenanted with him. And that he actually sware to him, is one of the conclusions that may be legitimately drawn from the words, "As he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." [124] And that He, under this last dispensation, always Covenants with believers, when they vow and swear to Him, is manifest from those declarations in which he promises to make a covenant with them. Whether or not on these occasions he absolutely makes an oath, is not revealed. That we should know whether or not he does so, is not necessary, else the book of Divine revelation had not been completed. But even though, as under the law, when the sons of Aaron on entering on the priesthood, took vows upon them to fulfil its duties, he should not actually make a new oath, the vows and oaths of His people came up before Him as formerly they did from before his altar, and the oaths which He had sworn before, even on their behalf, are made available to them. Thus Israel were enjoined, "That thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." [125] And thus were encouraged those who should succeed these in drawing near to God. "The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain; and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." [126] Now, Covenanting must be engaged in intelligently. Not merely must there be a desire to perform the service; but there must be an enlightened apprehension of its nature. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry." [127] Applicable to the intellectual discernment that true faith includes, as well as to that grace in its spiritual character, is the declaration, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." [128] The Covenant children of God are taught of him, and draw near to him as if He were not unknown, but revealed

to them in his grace. Though none can by searching find out God, nor find out the Almighty unto perfection, yet those whom He saves know whom they worship. According to the instructions delivered in his word, must be the performance of every service of religion; and the character of God as revealed, is that which must be apprehended in the discharge of each. It was according to a Divine warrant and direction that the saints of old entered into Covenant; and every lawful approach to him by vow or oath requires a just appreciation of his character. "The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." [129] "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." [130] Secondly. Covenanting must be engaged in cordially. That is not religious homage which comes not from the heart. For an intelligent being in any case to utter any thing that is inconsistent with the thoughts of the mind is sinful; but in this case it is peculiarly foolish and daring. If the affections of the heart be sanctified, they will be elevated to God in every religious exercise, and especially in this. Those who value their own souls, will not be devoid of intense concern for their salvation, when before God they engage in testifying to their acceptance thereof. They who seek to glorify God, will in this draw near to him with their mouth, and with their lips do honour to him, but not remove their hearts far from him. If a transaction that concerns only a limited part of this world's good is often important, how much more that which concerns the enjoyment of God as a portion! If an engagement that concerns a few years' enjoyment is often found to engross all the feelings of the mind, how absorbent of all the best exercises of the heart should be a transaction for communion with God to eternity! The men of Judah, on a solemn occasion, afforded an important pattern in this. "All Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart." [131] And wherever the Covenant of God will be taken hold upon by men returning to him, the whole heart will be engaged. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." [132] Thirdly. Covenanting must be engaged in with deliberation. To avow the resolution, to abandon the service of satan and to fight under the banner of Christ, is an exercise that entails momentous consequences. And corresponding to its importance should be the fixedness of heart called to its performance. In it a solemn attestation and adherence to a choice of God as a Lord and Master, is made before him. Joshua's patriotic and pious address at Shechem was delivered, not that Israel should all choose God as if none of them had chosen him before, but that those who had not cleaved to his Covenant should then cleave to it, and that those who had taken hold upon it before, should again adhere to it. He said, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And all attempting such an exercise, should possess a devotedness such as that evinced by the answer returned by the people, -- "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods, for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." [133] Fourthly. Covenanting should be engaged in with sincerity, and with a resolution to perform the engagement made. Dreadful are the denunciations uttered against such as swear falsely. The Lord swears in truth: he

will not turn from it. And how daring on the part of any is it to swear falsely in making a covenant! In an oath given falsely, God is defied, his power to punish is challenged, and the stroke of his indignation is impiously invoked to descend upon the guilty juror's head. "If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." [134] The people of God swear, "The Lord liveth," in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment. With David they can declare, "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." [135] Each of them may be denominated, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." [136] And firm will be their purpose to keep their pledge given in vowing unto God -- "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." [137] Fifthly. In the first ages, the exercise was accompanied by sacrifice. The phrase ([Hebrew: karath b'rith]), which is most commonly employed to designate the making of a covenant, consists of two terms, each of which conducts us to the sacrificial rite. The latter of these, ([Hebrew: b'rith], a covenant,) would appear to be derived from a verb which, according to circumstances, bears the significations, to cut, to choose, to eat. The connection between all these and an expression which means to purify, is not obscure, nor is their relation to a word ([Hebrew: bar]), with which that so rendered is intimately connected, difficult to be traced. That which is eaten is made choice of for its purity, or because that by cutting, it is separated from what is less fitted for food, or even during the process of eating is cut. It is an opinion held by one class of commentators, that the reason why that term is put to signify a covenant, is, that it may be deduced from the verb bearing the meaning to choose, and to which there would appear no objection, provided that that meaning were reckoned to be secondary to the signification to eat. The idea implied in the verb to choose is essentially abstract. Not so is that included in either the verb to cut, or the verb to eat. From one of these, which may be considered as collateral primary meanings, it must therefore be deduced. And since it cannot be deduced from the one without the other, it must consequently be derived from the latter. But since, on the occasion of entering into covenant, feasts were wont to be kept, and since the flesh of animals slain for sacrifice was not seldom partaken of by those associated to present them, there is reason to conclude that food eaten on the occasion of solemn Covenanting included the flesh of sacred victims, and that while this term for Covenant may be considered as derived immediately from an expression signifying to choose, it is to be viewed as tracing its origin to the same expression viewed as denoting to eat, because the flesh of sacrifice afforded to the federal parties a means of convivial entertainment in the accustomed friendly feast. The other of these terms ([Hebrew: karoth]) means literally to cut. It is used in describing the operation of cutting in twain the animal sacrificed at the ratification of a covenant. "I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth." [138] The practice of so dividing the victim was evidently in accordance with the operation performed by Abraham, when the Lord made a covenant with him. [139] Indeed, in the record given of that transaction, a different term

([Hebrew: bathor]) is used to denote the performance of the division, but this the more establishes its fact. And though God's covenant is before spoken of as having been established, and though Noah, on the occasion of his adhering to that covenant immediately after the flood, offered sacrifice,[140] yet, it is in the account given of that with Abraham, and as if the practice of cutting the victim in twain had originated when it was entered into, that the phrase connecting the two terms or their modifications is first used. Thereafter, however, in reference to every variety of solemn Covenant engagements, the phrase is adopted. It is employed to describe the entering into covenant of men with men before the Lord, and consequently of both parties with him. The cases of David and the elders of Israel at Hebron,[141] and of Jehoshaphat and his people,[142] afford instances. Another such case is found in the account of the league between Joshua and the princes of the congregation, and the Gibeonites.[143] In the commands forbidding Israel to enter into covenant with the Canaanites, or their gods, the phrase is used.[144] It is used when men are represented as making a covenant with God. The record of that of Israel, under Ezra, gives an illustration.[145] And it is the form of expression by which the Lord himself is represented as entering into covenant with men. The records of the transactions at Sinai and Moab, of his covenant with David, and of his purposes to enter into covenant with his people, as those appear in his precious word of promise, as well as other passages, contain it. Yea, sometimes even where that word of the phrase which means covenant is omitted, the meaning of the other is most manifestly the same as that of the whole.[146] The bisection of the victim symbolized Christ slain and affording access to God through himself. The act pointed out precisely what was represented by the rending of the vail of the temple, when Jesus suffered on the cross. Both signified his death, and the opening up thereby of a way of access to God. The act of passing between the parts of the sacrifice was an emblem of the exercise of holding communion with God, as made known in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. As when the vail was rent the most holy place was no longer concealed, but might be approached with safety; so when Jesus suffered there was presented the reality of that provision for communion with God, which was typified by the cutting of the calf in twain and passing between the parts thereof. And the believing Covenanter employed in performing that exercise enjoyed substantially the blessedness which is in reserve for those who, in contemplation of the exercise of renewing their vows to God, are enabled with an apostle to say, -- "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;" and being strengthened with Divine grace, after engaging in it, he would feel disposed to do as these in similar circumstances in ages long future urged: -- "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised.)"[147] The act of swearing by the name of God was wont to be symbolized by the offering of sacrifice. It has been shown that the number seven was an emblem of the oath. One of the things, therefore, denoted by the offering of seven sacrifices was the swearing of it. Once, and again and again, did Balak at Balaam's suggestion build seven altars, and offer a bullock and a ram on every altar.[148] And whether we believe the religious homage presented on each occasion to have been in ignorance addressed to the true God, or to some idol, there is reason to conclude that the injunction of the false prophet was suggested by the practice of the people of God, and that the service was an emblematical representation of the religious worship offered in the swearing of the oath. Besides, was not his

design to curse Israel either by the true God, or by some gods of the heathen? And was it not in imitation of some such practices, as that which he attempted, that Goliath cursed David by his gods? But offerings of this kind were presented when federal transactions were ratified by the worshippers of God. After the three friends of Job had uttered all their hard speeches against him, the Lord addressed to them a command which included not less than the injunction, to enter into an amicable compact with the afflicted character whom they had so much misrepresented, and also to accompany it with a religious service.[149] The duty enjoined embodied likewise a confession of sin and an appeal to God for the truth of their acknowledgments. The covenant promise made to them was, that God would accept them through the intercession of Job, -- not as if that were of itself meritorious, but approved through the great Mediator. The offering of seven bullocks and seven rams was a confirmation of their friendly Covenant, and could not be less than an emblem of their oath to the Most High. Finally. In the first year of his reign, Hezekiah declared, "Now it is in mine heart to make a Covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." That He, the priests and Levites, the rulers of Jerusalem, and as many of the congregation of Israel as were present, carried his design into effect, for the first time, on the occasion of the solemnities which took place in the first month, appears from his command, uttered when he declared his devout intention. He said, -- "My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him and burn incense (or, offer sacrifice)."[150] That all Judah and Israel were enjoined to accede to the Covenant, in the second month, is manifest from the King's command to them -- "Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you."[151] That such of them as came up to the passover, at the King's command, by the word of the Lord, gave their adherence to what had been done before at Jerusalem, appears from the account given of them engaging in making confession to the Lord God of their fathers. And whether or not the keeping of the feast, for the accustomed seven days, and other seven days besides, symbolized the act of swearing to the Lord, with a cordiality which the repetition denoted, sacrifices were offered, both on the occasion of the making of the Covenant and on that of the people's latter acquiescence in it, and on the former when sacrifices were presented for Israel, the sin-offering -- testifying to the oaths that were then sworn, was offered by sevens. It is explicitly said, that a Covenant with God was made by sacrifice. It is not obscurely intimated in Scripture that the people of Israel, who fell into idolatry by offering sacrifice on high places, made a Covenant with idols instead of God himself. The practice must have been a corruption of the worship of God. The vow was made frequently not merely to offer sacrifice, but by the offering of oblation. "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a Covenant with me by sacrifice."[152] And Covenants were ratified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifice. A full account is given of the practice in the record of the Covenant transaction at Sinai. Moses "sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the Covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."[153] The blood sprinkled on the altar testified to the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifice and of the people who presented it, and to the Father's

acquiescence in and approval of the great propitiation that should be made for sin. The sprinkling of the blood upon the people signified the application of the blood of Christ for pardon, pacification, and cleansing, to the consciences of a ransomed community. The Lord Jesus being that sacrifice that was slain for the confirmation of the everlasting Covenant, his blood is represented as the blood of the Covenant. And the blood of sacrifice that was sprinkled was a type of his. To that sacrifice, the ancient covenanter, presenting his oblation, looked forward. To look to him so, in taking hold upon his Covenant, before his incarnation, there was given the encouragement -- "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." [154] And now, though oblation is no more offered in the same spirit in which Covenant was made by sacrifice, the Covenanting believer vowing to God comes to "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." [155] Sixthly. In all ages, the exercise is performed by faith. As without faith it is impossible to please God, so in this act it is not less requisite than in any other. In order to the right performance of it, faith in God, as having given it his warrant, and as having made precious promises to be laid hold on in engaging in it, and dependence on Divine grace for strength to accomplish it, is necessary. It is by faith that the way of salvation through Christ is approved; by faith, Christ and all his benefits are received; by faith, God, as a God in covenant, is recognised; by faith, are renounced the claims of the devil, the world, and the flesh; by faith, is the whole man dedicated to the service of God; and by faith, every promise of obedience, that God may be glorified, is made. Of Abraham taking hold on God's covenant by accepting of the promise, it is said, "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." [156] Swearing to the Lord in faith, "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." [157] And all who have properly engaged in this exercise will testify, "I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God." [158] With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And as in the first actings of faith, so in this solemn act, the Redeemer is received as able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Faith in him as the one foundation laid in Zion, in preference to every other, the believer endeavours habitually to cherish, and especially at seasons of solemn self-surrender to God, or of public vowing to him, seeks to have in vigorous exercise. At these, the mind is brought more than is usual to deal with the object of faith. The Lord Jesus in his exceeding glory, often speaks to the heart, and the whole faculties of the soul respond. So that, especially applicable to the believer's exercises, then, is what, in the following language of an eminent writer, is said concerning the universal tendency of faith in the righteousness of Christ: -- "When he discovers his own guilt and misery, and the absolute perfection and ineffable excellencies of this righteousness, the believer requires no force nor compulsion to embrace it. When the avenger of blood was at his heels, did the manslayer require any violence to urge him on to the asylum where he might lodge secure? When the deluge of wrath was descending, and all around becoming one watery waste, was any force necessary to shut Noah up in the ark, where he might abide in safety amidst the wreck and horrors of a sinking world? And when conscience writes bitter things against him, and makes him possess the iniquities of his youth; when the heavens are gathering blackness, and before him he sees, at the opening into eternity, the piercing eyes of Omniscience looking fully on him through the terrors of insulted, incensed omnipotent justice: does the believer need any compulsion to drive him out of his own lying refuges, and constrain him to betake himself to the Divine and All-sufficient righteousness of Immanuel? No. He repairs to it with eagerness,

and clings to it with a tenacity that time cannot relax, nor all the agonies of death dissolve. We speak of trust, dependence, and reliance, on this righteousness. These however are terms far too feeble to express the affection towards it, which the believer feels. He prefers it to his chief joy; glories in it as all his salvation and all his desire, and determines to know nothing else. Divinely precious and infinitely perfect as it is, there is no part of it with which he can dispense. Less than this cannot reach his wretched case, nor impart the blessings that he wants. His polluted and never-dying soul needs it all: and, therefore, he embraces it wholly, and rests on it alone[159]."

Seventhly. The exercise requires that it be engaged in devotionally. It is a part of religious worship, and claims that solemnity of mind that is due to every religious service. Every part of it is an exercise of religion, and the frame of mind that should be brought to each of them ought to be sustained in waiting on the whole. All things that could give solemnity to an observance unite to invest this with a devout character. The claims of its glorious Object, its own essential nature, and its design, all conspire in this. It was performed in the solemn assemblies of the people of God. The oaths of his people were wont to come up before his altar. The people of Judah and Jerusalem, both under Jehoash and Josiah, and those of Judah, besides many of the kingdom of Israel, observed the exercise in the temple. When performed not in religious edifices, but where the Lord himself approved, it was not the less observed in his presence, nor the less sacred a service. What gives to a religious assembly all its solemnity, is the gracious presence of God. And this, which gave to the house of God its holy character, confers on every place where his people meet, whether in houses built with hands or under the canopy of heaven, the character of a scene for the time set apart to his service. The scene and the nature of the services correspond. By the scene where this observance was kept, whether in the desert of Sinai, in the fruitful land of Moab, in the temple at Jerusalem in its earlier periods, in Jerusalem surrounded with ruins, but to be rebuilt, in houses erected for the worship of God, or in the fruitful vallies, or on the barren heath, -- a scene of communion with God, its character, as an exercise essentially devotional, is defined. It is a holy exercise. Both in the Old Testament and in the New, the Covenant of God is declared to be holy. He himself is holy, and he requires that his people be holy too. And dissuading Israel from confederating with the heathen, and in language addressed to all, calling them to the exercise of Covenanting embodied in fearing his name, he commands them to approach him as holy. "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." [160] It should be performed with godly fear and reverence. The Lord was made known not merely as the God of Abraham, and the portion of Jacob, but to intimate the same Covenant relation which these designations pointed out, as also the fear of Isaac. And as Isaac, in Covenanting with Him whom he acknowledged as his fear, could not but cherish towards him a holy awe, so all possessed of an interest in that covenant into which Isaac was taken, in vowing to the Lord, fear his holy name; and giving intimation of the reverential feelings that prevail in their minds while performing the exercise, in their practice they will verify the prediction, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." The exercise requires to be accompanied by confession of sin. It is as sinners seeking forgiveness that men, however much they may have enjoyed the blessings of the Covenant, perform it. Because of neglect or forgetfulness of Covenant engagements, because of imperfections numerous and great attaching to obedience rendered in fulfilling them, because of misapprehensions of their nature and design, and the want of that holy ardour that should never cease to urge to duties voluntarily engaged to, because of innumerably

varied infirmities manifested even while in a Covenant state, confession behoves to be made. The Covenant of Grace was revealed after the breach of that of Works. For removing the curse entailed by sin, its revelation was designed. A right apprehension of its design is accompanied by a sense of sin. When its terms are accepted, hatred to all iniquity is professed; and, because of the power of corruption in leading to disobedience, shame must be felt, and acknowledgment be made before God. On these occasions a sin-offering was wont to be cut.[161] The practice of making confession, then, was fully illustrated in the conduct both of Ezra and Nehemiah, and of Israel with them. Concerning Israel -- attempting the service, it is said, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." [162] And the Gentiles, being not less chargeable with sin than the seed of Abraham in the same circumstances, will not be less called than those to acknowledge it; so that to them, as sons of the spiritual Zion, may be applied the prophetic description of duty contained in the words uttered concerning the other, -- "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." [163] And, the vow is made in the exercise of prayer. The term ([Greek: euche]) by which the Seventy render the word for a vow in the Old Testament original, is used in the Greek of the New Testament to denote, now a vow and then a prayer. In the former sense it is employed in the original of the passage, "Do therefore this that we say unto thee: We have four men which have a vow on them." [164] And in the latter acceptation it is used in that of the following: -- "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." [165] Were the vow not made in the act of offering prayer we should be unable to account for this twofold use of the term. Again, taking prayer in its most comprehensive signification, -- as including adoration, confession, petition, and thanksgiving, -- no address to God, except the song of praise, can be made otherwise than in this exercise. The vow accordingly, as well as the oath -- which embodies an adoration, is made by prayer. And, finally, this receives corroboration from the fact that the manner according to which, in vowing, prayer should be made is revealed. In this and in similar passages, not merely Israel after the flesh, but the whole visible church of God, are instructed how at once they should vow and pray. -- "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." [166] Eighthly. This exercise is sometimes engaged in with the living voice. Whatever argument can be employed to establish the propriety of engaging vocally in any religious service is here available. The tongue is the glory of man; and with it the praise of God is proclaimed. "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory." That thought concerning God, which may not in some circumstances be expressed, may not be entertained. And if some features of his glorious character or administration are celebrated with the lips, so may all. Holy thoughts and affections unexpressed are sometimes like a fire shut up in the bones. Why should not these burst forth in the holy act of vowing and swearing to God, even as a flame, to the diffusion of a love and zeal for Him and his cause that would spread widely around? This the saints of God have felt when called to the service. In the land of Moab Israel avouched the Lord to be their God; and presenting an animating example, the kingdom of Judah, with Asa their king, "sware unto the Lord with a loud voice." [167] Lastly. A Covenant with God is sometimes confirmed by subscription.

Probably in imitation of the practice of the people of God, covenants among idolaters were written. "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled,"[168] (that is, covered or blotted out, as if it had been written.) The application of the seal was equivalent to the signature of the hand. It must have been made on occasions of federal ratification, and it might then have accompanied the subscription of the name. There is reason to believe that Nehemiah referred to an imitation of an ancient practice when he said, "And because of all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it: and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it."[169] But to whatever extent the practice may have obtained in the earlier times, it possesses the highest warrant during every period that should succeed. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord."[170] Hence, in the first place, religious Covenanting is an exercise distinct from every other. The vow cannot be mistaken for anything else; and the swearing of the oath is marked by a character of its own. Every religious act is, or ought to be, performed with a solemn regard to Covenant obligation. But each one of these is not Covenanting. The spirit of Covenanting enters into praise and prayer, and every other exercise of a devotional kind; but the exercise itself, performed in an explicit and solemn manner, is a part of worship different from all these. To argue that it is not, as some who are opposed to the explicit performance of it do, would be to go to the extreme of maintaining that Covenanting should be engaged in, not merely personally on one occasion, but habitually in the discharge of every religious duty; and thus to lead to a very frequent, and, we might add, therefore unwarrantable performance of the service, instead of discountenancing it altogether. To perform a vow is not to vow a vow. To vow to do one thing is not to vow to perform another that is distinct from it. To vow to do duty that might have been clearly apprehended before, is not to engage by vow to do duty for the first time now unfolded before the mind. Prayer includes praise; but to pray is not to sing praise. Covenanting may include in it every religious exercise. But to perform any or all of these, excepting the use of the seals of the Covenant, may not be formally to Covenant. Indeed, the exercise is the sum of all others of a religious description; and as embodying not merely the spirit, but the observance of the spiritual services performed in all of them, ought with due solemnity on meet occasions formally to be engaged in. Sacrifice accompanied vowing in former times; but sacrifice was offered on other occasions besides. Sacrifice was presented frequently in order that the vow might be paid; but sacrifice was not the making of the vow. Faith is always in exercise when Covenanting is engaged in aright; but it is also in operation when Covenant engagements are not made, but in some measure fulfilled. Covenanting is performed with holy fear and reverence; but are these feelings never in exercise except when the oath is sworn or the vow is made? The people of God fear him habitually, even though not engaged in positive religious services. Covenanting is engaged in along with confession of sin; but the exercise itself is not the confession of sin. Sin is sometimes acknowledged before God when no new positive engagement is made. Covenanting is engaged in by prayer; but prayer is of a varied character, and though every vow is made in prayer, yet every prayer is not offered in entering into Covenant. But, in the second and last place, hence also appears the error of the opinion, that seeing this exercise is performed in certain acknowledged duties, therefore by itself it is unnecessary. It is not denied that the oath is used to confirm civil obligations. But no one is therefore warranted in maintaining that to apply it so, is to use it in things religious. It is one thing to admit that vowing is a part of the duty implied in receiving the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's supper; it is another to maintain that the vow or oath should not be used in other circumstances. The vow is defined in Scripture, but

the things to be vowed, and the cases in which it should be made are also in general pointed out. To declare that the vow should be made, for example, merely on sacramental occasions, would be to assume, that a part adopted by men should stand for the whole appointed by God. Is it said, that in these two sacramental exercises there is made a general engagement, that comprehends every duty that could possibly be performed, and therefore it is unnecessary to engage in formal Covenanting? On the same principle it might be said, that the sinner who has received Christ at first has no need to act faith upon him again; -- that the believer has even no need to receive the ordinance of baptism for his children, or that of the Lord's supper for himself; -- that the individual who has believed should not Covenant personally in an explicit manner; yea, -- that he who has sworn to the Lord, in attending to the ordinance of baptism or of the supper, has no need in any case, even in reference to matters civil, to swear again. It might as well be said, that, in receiving the ordinance of baptism, vows are taken on, which include every case that could occur, and that, therefore, after that there is no necessity for waiting on the ordinance of the supper; -- or that the waiting on that ordinance on one occasion would afford a reason for neglecting both the dispensation of it and of the ordinance of baptism ever thereafter. In one word, it might be answered, that the opinion makes no provision for the believer's growth in grace, but by dealing with him as if he were perfect in all respects, rather tends to keep him from attaining to perfection. One approved exercise is not to be sacrificed to others. On the same principle that Covenanting might be given up because vows are made to God in receiving the sacrament, might praise be given up because God is thanked in prayer; or prayer be discontinued because He is adored and thanked, and presented with confession of sin, and supplications for mercies, in songs of praise. But, besides, as the Lord's supper ought not to be substituted for baptism, nor baptism for the Lord's supper, so neither ought either or both to take the place of various other specific exercises of vowing to God. The vow made on the reception of baptism is suited especially to the occasion. Other vows are not less suitable to other circumstances than that is to its own. The vow made at the Lord's table may include the sum of all duty; but where is the evidence that it ought not in other circumstances also to be made? At that holy communion each believer swears individually to a profession of his faith with his brethren, and to specific exercises consistent with his own condition; but that is no reason why the oath to perform certain requirements of God's law should not be explicitly and openly sworn. Apart from the sacramental symbols, the exercise of explicit Covenanting may embody the making of vows to perform every duty, and include every part of religious worship. And as it was attended to under the Old Testament economy, when neither the rite of circumcision nor some other observances of the Levitical dispensation had been instituted, nay, even when that rite after its institution was not being applied, so under the present dispensation it may be engaged in when the seals of the Covenant are or are not dispensed. The magnitude, and variety, and demands of the objects embraced by it, define the times necessary for engaging in it. Changes in providence should lead, and in some measure direct in observing it. It is in certain occurrences in providence, ordinary though they be, that we are presented with the season meet for every other religious act. The morning and evening, and the times of partaking of the necessaries and comforts of life for the nourishment of the body, especially afford opportunities for offering supplication and thanksgiving. Deliverances from afflictions, and support under them when vouchsafed, call for the acknowledgment of the great goodness and tender compassion of God. The suffering of individual and social distress, and the pangs of bereavement, call for the recognition of his holy sovereignty with the deepest humility and resignation; and not

less should the changes for evil or good that take place in society, and the obvious necessities that attach to our own spiritual condition, and the wants of our fellow-creatures around us and over the habitable earth, urge us to those exercises of special solemn Covenanting with God, which are peculiarly fitted to meet their demands. FOOTNOTES:[116] Isa. liv.9.[117] Heb. vi.13, 14.[118] Ps. cv.9.[119] Ezek. xx.5.[120] Deut. xxxiii.2.[121] Ps. cxxxii.11.[122] Deut. xxix.12.[123] Deut. xxvi.17, 18.[124] Deut. xxix.13.[125] Deut. xxix.12-15.[126] Is. lvi.6, 7.[127] Prov. xx.25.[128] Heb. xi.6.[129] Is. xix.21.[130] Jer. xxxi.33, 34.[131] 2 Chron. xv.15.[132] Jer. xxiv.7.[133] Josh. xxiv.15-17.[134] 1 Kings viii.31, 32.[135] Ps. cxix.106.[136] Ps. xxiv.4.[137] 1 Chron. xii.18.[138] Jer. xxxiv.18-20.[139] Gen. xv.8-18.[140] Gen. ix.11.-viii.20.[141] 2 Sam. v.3.[142] 2 Kings xi.4.[143] Josh. ix.6, 7.[144] Exod. xxiii.32.[145] Ezra x.3.[146] 2 Chron. vii.18.[147] Heb. x.19-23.[148] Num. xxiii.[149] Job xlii.7-9.[150] 2 Chron. xxix.10, 11. See also, v.20-24.[151] 2 Chron. xxx.8.[152] Ps. l.5.[153] Exod. xxiv.5-8.[154] Zech. ix.11.[155] Heb. xii.24.[156] Gen. xv.6.[157] Is. xlv.24.[158] Ps. xxxi.14.[159] The Rev. Dr. Hamilton, late of Strathblane, "On the Assurance of Salvation." 2d edition. pp.122, 123.[160] Is. viii.12, 13.[161] 2 Chron. xxix.21.[162] Jer. xxxi.9.[163] Jer. i.4, 5.[164] Acts xxi.23.[165] James v.15.[166] Hos. xiv.1, 2.[167] 2 Chron. xv.14.[168] [Hebrew: kupar] Is. xxviii.18.[169] Neh. ix.38.[170] Is. xliv.5.

CHAPTER III. COVENANTING A DUTY.

The exercise of Covenanting with God is enjoined by Him as the Supreme Moral Governor of all. That his Covenant should be acceded to, by men in every age and condition, is ordained as a law, sanctioned by his high authority, -- recorded in his law of perpetual moral obligation on men, as a statute decreed by him, and in virtue of his underived sovereignty, promulgated by his command. "He hath commanded his covenant for ever." [171] The exercise is inculcated according to the will of God, as King and Lord of all. Being a part of his worship, it is thus urged, -- "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." -- "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice." [172] And explicitly, in the same connection are the various observances included in it presented in precept. "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." -- "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." -- "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." [173] The observance is a debt of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, as possessed of all power in heaven and in earth. He is King of Zion, the Governor among the nations, and Head over all things to the church, which is his body. As all are called to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, the service that is due to God, as the righteous Ruler of all, is due to the Son -- holding a universal mediatorial dominion which shall not pass away. The law of God is the law of Christ, and obedience to Christ is subjection to God. The Lord Jesus commands the performance as duty to himself. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." [174] In terms applicable in every age, as their Lord and Master, he said to his disciples, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." [175] And he having both died and risen, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living, claims the individual parts of the exercise as homage to his name. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." [176] Believers engaging in personal Covenanting, act as being not without law to God, but under law to Christ. As the servants of God they thus transact with him. Jacob, as well as others who have vowed to God without being condemned, being represented as God's servant, [177] must in such acts have served him. Addressed individually as well as collectively in these terms, "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen," those yield obedience, when in their practice is fulfilled the prophecy, itself a command, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." That the churches of Macedonia Covenanted with God is manifest from the words, -- "This they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their ownelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." [178] But in writing to the Thessalonians -- one of those churches, an apostle describes them, as in that, and in

consequent performances, serving God. "They themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God." [179] Nor without entertaining an enlightened apprehension that in that exercise he served God, could the Psalmist performing it say, -- "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid." [180] Moreover, every believer is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Each one of them is called by His authoritative command, as well as by the effectual influences of his Spirit. "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." [181] Each, like the governors and people of Israel, who, on a memorable occasion, at God's command, offered themselves willingly -- each made willing in a day of his power, resolving and vowing to follow the Lord fully, does obedience to the Lord of Hosts: bows to the mandate, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:" [182] and dutifully engages by covenant and oath to serve him -- given for a leader and commander to the people. Besides, each one who lawfully vows to God, in vowing discharges a function of a loyal subject of God's government. In the vow God is invoked as King. "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray." [183] As the swearing of allegiance to an earthly monarch is an act of obedience to law; -- as when all the princes and the mighty men, and all the sons, likewise, of King David, submitted themselves, [184] -- or by oath promised fidelity to Solomon, the king, they performed an act of subjection to his authority; so in vowing or swearing to God there is paid to him a tribute of duty. And, finally, in this service the Lord is obeyed as God. The titles of, a master, a lord, a captain, a king, among men, are valid only when held in subjection to the King and Lord of all. The highest supremacy that belongs to creatures is limited, and exercised only by deputation from Him who is over all and blessed for ever. And as the claims of those in power, because armed with His authority, cannot without rebellion against him be set aside; much more, his, without aggravated hostility to him, cannot be disputed. Accordingly, his power and authority -- unspeakably glorious -- extending immeasurably beyond the province of every creature; his dominion and all-wise determinations, they who invoke his dread name, in vowing to him acknowledge and approve. The refusal of his enemies to call upon him manifests their rebellion. His people avouching him to be their God obey him. It is in compliance with the mandate, -- "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," [185] that men take hold on his covenant, and in commemoration of their act, in terms recording the highest deed of appropriation, with the Psalmist say, "I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God." [186] Social Covenanting engaged in by the Church of God, in an Ecclesiastical capacity, is an act of obedience to his word. That community, in its organization and laws essentially distinct from civil society, one throughout every age, and embracing the saints of every land, as one body, He designates, "My Servant." Whatsoever, therefore, is practised by the church in her collective capacity, however denominated, and without rebuke, is performed by her in this character. And hence, whether introduced as "Israel," or "Jacob," or "My People," or as bearing any other honourable epithet, and vowing or swearing to the Lord, she appears under the aspect of a chosen society performing duty; and each promise and prophecy delivered concerning this, as well as each other allowable exercise, assumes the features of a precept, and each performance of it in truth, the marks of a warranted service. And the church, in this, is said to serve God. At Horeb, before the mission of Moses to Egypt, for the deliverance of Israel, the Lord, with regard to the solemnities of Covenanting that were there to occur, said to him, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon

this mountain." [187] Commanding and exhorting to engage in solemn covenant renovation, Hezekiah said to Israel, -- "Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves (margin, give the hand) unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you." [188] And not less, than under a former dispensation, is the exercise represented as an act of obedience in New Testament times. There is no reason for maintaining that the apostle enjoined not the exercise of social, but merely that of personal Covenanting, when he thus addressed the Church of God at Rome, -- "I beseech you there-fore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [189] The exercise of Social Covenanting with God, performed by his Church both in an Ecclesiastical and a National capacity, is a part of his service. Being a religious observance, this cannot be performed by the members of the Church collectively, whether united ecclesiastically or otherwise, if not associated as the Church of God. But also when, united both ecclesiastically and in a national capacity, they address themselves to it, they discharge an obligation incumbent upon them. The Lord Jesus is King of saints. [190] Ruled by his laws, these, not merely in their ecclesiastical, but also in their civil relations, do homage to him. Under two aspects in their social capacity they appear. First, in subjection to Him as King of Zion. United to Christ their spiritual Head, and to one another in him, they are members of one glorious body. And being members of his Church -- which he has distinguished by the ministry of reconciliation, by his oracles, and by special ordinances, they are under Him, as its sole Head, and Lawgiver, and Governor, and King. As one community, in their faith, their worship, their discipline, their government, and communion, they are under his authority. Judges, and magistrates, and kings, having power in civil society, are recognised with divine approbation. But there is no human head of the Church. There are who rule therein; but over his house, He alone is Head and King. In civil life, there are who sway the sceptre among men. He, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, rules over these. But in his house there is none other than Himself, who is Lord or King. He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things (or rather, among all) he might have the pre-eminence. [191] The apostles of our Lord were among those who, in the council held at Jerusalem several years after his ascension, acted as rulers in his Church by enacting a law which applied to the Christians at Antioch and elsewhere. And applicable to their conduct on such an occasion, and to that of all others exercising authority in the Church of God, were his words addressed to them before his death, -- "Be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." [192] The jurisdiction of the rulers in the Church is distinct from that of civil rulers. The powers of the former are spiritual, and with these powers the latter have no right to interfere. Each class of rulers have a sphere of their own; and only at their peril do those of the one class invade the authority of the other. By men the laws of a nation may be altered without being made contradictory to one another, or to oppose the law of God. But the laws of the Church were enacted by Christ himself. Suited to the circumstances of the Church has been their character in every age, and the changes that have been produced on these were made by Him alone. It is from a special revelation of his will that the precise character of the laws by which his Church ought to be ruled is obtained; and those ordinances for the government of his house, which are not revealed as His, are without authority. Since the close of the Canon of Scripture, no new light concerning the things of religion

has been, or can be, given; and the laws of the New Testament Church are therefore fixed beyond the influence of change. There are various forms of civil government, all of which are consistent with the immutable law of God; and any one of which, accordingly, may warrantably be adopted according to circumstances. But in the Church of God, only one form of government is of Divine right: every other is an invention of man, and destitute of authority. In the course of providence, the institutions of the Church, like the doctrines of religion, will receive accessions of rich illustration; but, like these heavenly doctrines -- beyond the resolutions of men, they are, according to the will of God, to stand. Next, as members of civil society, under Him as King of nations, they appear. Distinct from the organization of the Church, but also under Christ, is the constitution of civil society. In order to promote communion with God, were the ordinances of the former appointed. In order that God might be obeyed by men in their mutual intercourse with one another, the laws of the latter were decreed. That God might be glorified immediately, the former was constituted; that he might be glorified mediately, the latter was founded. The erection and government of the Church originated in Divine grace. The whole structure of civil government is derived from God as the moral Governor of the universe, but is put under Christ as the Mediator. The laws of the Church of God remain immutable, amid the changes that overtake the various communities of men. The laws of civil society may vary with the course of providence, and yet be still consistent with the perfect standard of moral procedure. The laws of the house of God are applicable to men of every clime. Like all the commandments of the decalogue -- which, indeed, they embody, they are binding on men in all possible circumstances and conditions; but, according to the state of society, may civil enactments vary in their absolute character, without transgressing the limits fixed by the moral law. The facts occurring in providence, enlarge not the compass of those laws that were promulgated by the King of Zion to her communion, but demand their application. The laws of civil society ought never to conflict with the principles of eternal righteousness; but with observation and discovery, and every change else in providence, it behoves them to keep pace. In the former, the Lord Jesus is recognised as the immediate lawgiver; in the latter, too, he is acknowledged as supreme lawgiver, -- and, as having given to men civil power to be exercised, not otherwise than agreeably to the revelations of his will, -- which unfold the mutual obligations, of nations and their rulers to one another, and of both to himself. Not less than as members of his Church, are men, as worthy members of civil society, the servants of Christ. Now, that in vowing and swearing to God in both capacities they serve him, appears from various considerations. Repeatedly are the people of Israel represented in Scripture as a nation, and as in their national character engaging in Covenanting. Both on the occasion of the solemnities at Sinai and in the land of Moab they are so designated. That they sustained this character under the kings of David's line is also manifest. That the whole people will, in gospel times, be united in such a relation the voice of prophecy would seem to indicate.[193] That, in whatever civil incorporations they may stand, they will be subject to Messiah, King of nations, is certain. Under the theocracy, they Covenanted as a nation, at Horeb, in the land of Moab, and at Shechem. Under Asa, and also under Josiah, the people in their civil capacity with their rulers Covenanted too. As a nation, after the return from Babylon, under Nehemiah, the whole people and their rulers also entered into covenant with God. On all these occasions the Church of God engaged to obey his law, not only regarding things ecclesiastical, but also things civil. Under the theocracy, Israel, in things civil and religious were called to obey God as their king. Under the kings of Judah, they were no less called in all relations to acknowledge God as their Lord. After their restoration, they will acknowledge

Messiah at God's right hand as in all things their sovereign Lord. "My servant David shall be their prince for ever." [194] And the Gentile nations, in due time, will all do homage to Him as the Prince of the kings of the earth. Now, it has been shown before, that in Covenanting at Horeb Israel served God. If, then, they served him there in that exercise, they must have served him when again they engaged in it under the patriarch who led them, and also when they performed it under Joshua his successor. And as on such occasions, as a church and nation recognising God as their king, they obeyed him, so, not ceasing to recognise Him as in all relations their Lord and Master, the house of Jacob, under kings ruling in His fear, or judges acting according to his commandment, whether before or after a first or succeeding restoration; and the Gentile nations in gospel times, in vowing and swearing to Him in their ecclesiastical and national characters; must be viewed as willing servants obeying his commands. Covenanting is commanded in the Moral Law. In the ten commandments, containing a summary of that law, and in other passages that variously unfold its import, the exercise is presented as a duty. It is enjoined in the first three precepts of the decalogue. The manner of injunction is prohibitory of contrary practices; and accordingly intimates, with great force, that the duty is to be so steadfastly performed that departure from it, even in one instance, is not to be attempted. The first precept -- forbidding all respect to other gods before God, implies, that He, before whom all things are manifest, claims not merely the misdirected homage paid to his creatures, but all the devout obedience of men; and that, demanding that adoring thoughts be entertained of Him alone, He commands that He be accepted and served as the only true God. To prefer God to others is not merely to cast them and their services off, but to acknowledge and reverence Him as the object of supreme regard. Man cannot be without some thoughts of a divinity. Even among those who would seem to have fallen most from the knowledge of God, something about their own characters or circumstances virtually usurps His place. The law of the ten commandments, written at first on the heart of man, and afterwards proclaimed by the voice of God, contemplated and anticipated every departure from the service due to Him that should occur throughout all time. Originating in the perfect nature of God, it is perfect. It reproveth the rebellion of those who would worship the creature instead of the Creator, and is directed alike against the polytheist and him who, worshipping himself, says, -- "no God." The first commandment condemns the idolater, of whatever class; includes that, instead of Covenanting with the gods of the heathen, as many in early times did, men, in every age, should make that acknowledgment of himself which entering into covenant with him essentially implies; and is obeyed when, like Joshua and all Israel Covenanting at Shechem, they choose the Lord to serve him. [195] In the second commandment is implied an injunction to serve God. The fact that vowing and swearing to God are a part of his service is manifest, as we have seen from sundry passages of Scripture. Consistent, therefore, with the commands implied in these portions of the Sacred Volume, but distinct from them, is the injunction embodied in this precept, that men enter into covenant with him; and the performance of every part of that service, as exhibited throughout the whole of Divine revelation, according to circumstances, it enjoins. The third commandment -- forbidding the irreverent use of God's name, and threatening those who take it in vain, authoritatively inculcates the holy use of it in Covenanting. There is no passage of Scripture in which it is said or implied, that to vow or swear, in every case is to take God's name in vain. The saints, in calling upon his name, have vowed and sworn to him. In commands to call upon his name, swearing by him is not forbidden. The oath and vow, therefore, in calling upon him, may be made lawfully; the abuse of them only in this precept is condemned, and the use of them receives

the highest sanction from this. It is enjoined in statutes of perpetual moral obligation, that illustrate the ten precepts of the law. These statutes are, Commands to glorify God. God is glorified when the perfections of his nature, and his execution of his purposes in the works of creation and providence, are celebrated. The Scriptures contain the most abundant and full representations of the excellence of his character and administration, and the confession of which, in an adoring frame of mind, is glorifying to him. Obeying the precept, "give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," his saints have this said of them, -- "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory." If every spiritual act of worship is glorifying to God, then all of them are glorifying to him also; and Covenanting with him, including them all, is not less glorifying to his name; and if the exercises of vowing and swearing to him are glorifying, certainly when he commands that his name be glorified, these are not excluded. Does the Lord claim the subjection of every capacity of man? Does he command, -- "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?"[196] Does he say to his people, as well as to his Anointed, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified"? Has he appointed that the heavens should declare his glory; and that the earth should be filled with the knowledge thereof? And when he commands that his most gifted creatures on earth, -- whom he has formed for the purpose of displaying most widely that glory, do proclaim it, does he not call upon them to do so in those exercises of avouching him to be their God, and pledging themselves to his service, in which all their spiritual capacities are most devoutly engaged, and all the institutions of his grace by being used are most honoured? The people of God accordingly interpret in this manner these commands. Was it said, -- "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel?" In obedience to the requirement which the Psalmist as an instrument was employed to declare in these terms, did he make the vow, -- "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him."[197]Commands to worship God. Religious homage was paid with the bowing of the head, the inclining of the body, or the bending of the knee. The term ([Hebrew: shachoh]), employed to designate the act of one offering worship, means literally, to bow himself down. The position was a token of the intentness of the mind; and those terms that pointed that out, came accordingly to have a spiritual application. When therefore it is said, -- "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," we are taught that the act of swearing to God should be performed, not always in kneeling, but in that religious frame of mind which is indicated by the bowing of the knee, but which, in some circumstances, was also denoted by the worshipper bowing the head, or falling down in deep prostration. And as the act of bowing before the Lord sometimes accompanied and indicated the exercise of swearing by his name; so when attention to his worship is urged by his authority, no part of religious duty is uninculcated, but, like every service thereof in its due season, that of Covenanting with him in times suited to its performance, is enjoined.Commands enjoining faith. In every variety of circumstances is the duty of believing on God incumbent. Without faith it is impossible to please him. In every general command to exercise that grace, we are warranted to read an injunction laid upon us -- in every part of obedience to act under its influence. Vowing and swearing to God cannot be properly performed without faith; and when faith is commanded without special reference to some duties, it is inculcated with respect to all, and therefore regarding Covenanting. How would the believer be straitened were he uncertain of the circumstances in which a command to look unto God with confidence should be obeyed! And how comforting to his heart is the sound conclusion of his understanding, that every encouragement to cherish

confidence as well as hope in God, and love to him, when circumstances are not named, is available to him in situations of every character! His soul, therefore, can, to the extent of its happy experience of advantage from cherishing such a conviction, answer, to the glory of God, his appeal, -- "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?"[198] Commands forbidding federal transactions with what is evil. The Israelites were forbidden to enter into treaty with the Canaanites or their gods. "Thou shalt make no Covenant with them, nor with their gods." And the reason was, that, had they done so, they would have fallen from the service of God as a people who regarded not his Covenant. "They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare, unto thee." [199] Joshua and the princes of Israel did not violate the statutes that were of this description, when they made a league with the Gibeonites. To whatever extent the Israelites may have sinned by believing the false reports that were made to them, and acting precipitately in the whole matter, and however culpable might have been the conduct of these Hivites in making an imposing misrepresentation of their case, the compact entered into was valid: -- the Lord himself, long afterwards, punished for the violation of it. The Covenant that was made did not provide for, nor countenance the worship of the gods of Canaan, but brought the supplicating people into a state of subjection to the nation of Israel that was inconsistent with the maintenance of idolatry, yea, which appears to have resulted in their employment, under the name of Nethinims, though in a subordinate capacity, about the sanctuary and the temple. These had misapprehended the nature of the statute forbidding alliance with the heathen, by supposing that it forbade a compact even on terms of submission to the ordinances of God. Their punishment was, that they should stand in a state of great subjection; through the mercy of God, however, it would appear to have terminated in good. But again, at a later period of their history, the people of Israel were thus warned, "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." And to show that disobedience to this command would have led away from the exercise of avouching the Lord himself as a Covenant God, it is added, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." The spirit of these commands has descended to New Testament times. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" The reason why the sacred writer here dissuades from associations with the heathen, is evidently, that their worship was idolatrous, and calculated to lead from obedience to God. And treaties, of whatever kind with the enemies of God, that are condemned, are to be shunned as a snare to the soul. Wherever they are forbidden, there is implied an exhibition of the duty of adhering to His service; and even independently of abundant evidence otherwise, that they include express mandates to observe the exercise of vowing and swearing to Him, is substantiated in the beautiful language of the Apostle used in confirmation of his declaration on this subject. -- "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." [200] Commands, enjoining the vowing of the vow. There is only one passage in Scripture in which the vow is commanded in the most explicit form; but along with others, in which precepts, inculcating the exercise, are implied, that one is sufficient as a rule to guide our

practice. That passage, -- "Vow, and pray unto the Lord your God," which commanded obedience under a former dispensation, no less commands it now. As there is no evidence in Scripture that the injunction has been abrogated, those who would proceed, as if it were, would act an unwise part. Though the things vowed, in some cases, under the present economy, may differ from those vowed under the preceding, no such change has been produced on the circumstances of men by the transition from the one to the other, as could render the vow itself unnecessary or unlawful. Changes, in the matter of the vow, even in the first ages, were continually being produced in the course of Divine providence; yet the performance of it continued to be obligatory. The changes that have occurred in the circumstances of the Church of God, by the abolition of the Levitical typical institutes, have been no more effective than the other, in changing or taking away its obligation; nor will all the vicissitudes that can occur in the Church's condition, till the consummation of all things. The principles on which the vow is made, are immutable; and while the Church is on earth, it will continue to be obligatory. As well might it be said that prayer and praise, and meditation on God's word, which were obligatory in the earlier times, are not duties incumbent now, as that the vow should not be made; or that any service essentially spiritual, necessary for the perfection of the saints, in a former period, is not requisite in this; or that a dispensation, confessedly not less spiritual, but as, in regard to the want of many types and symbols, and to the more abundant effusion of the Spirit, more spiritual than any that had gone before, should not be favoured with the use of so many spiritual means of grace, as were vouchsafed under these. The two passages of Scripture that represent the exercise of vowing, as not obligatory in certain cases, may be explained in perfect consistency with the general command enjoining it. These do not imply that the neglect of the vow may be in general allowable; nor do they teach, that it may be vowed, solely, or at all, according to caprice. They manifestly admit that vowing is lawful in certain cases, and is therefore enjoined, but show, that given circumstances may be unfavourable to some species of the exercise. Even as the other religious observances are not obligatory at every season, vowing should not be engaged in to the exclusion of any incumbent duty. Circumstances might occur, in which there would be no warrant from Scripture or providence for making a given vow. If it be impossible to make performance, the engagement is not required; and hence, if made, it would not be valid, but involve the party to it in sin. The first of the passages referred to, is the following -- "If thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee." [201] The statement does not give scope to a disregard of the vow, but implies that the law of God does not enforce it where it would prove oppressive, or otherwise injurious. It does not in the smallest abate the claim of the law enjoining an engagement by vow to perform every definite duty; but teaches that it is not sinful to abstain from vowing in some circumstances vows that ought to be vowed in others. Some duties are so definite and so constantly obligatory that they ought to be vowed by all; others, obligatory only on some in certain circumstances, ought by such, in these circumstances alone, to be engaged to. Thus, in all times and conditions, it is dutiful for all to vow to keep the sabbath. It is dutiful for some to give themselves to the work of the ministry, and to vow to do its duties; but not dutiful for all. It is dutiful for the parties entering into the marriage covenant to vow to fulfil the obligations of that relation; but it is not incumbent on those who are not called in providence to enter into that relation, to vow to perform its duties. Under the law, some things were, by His express appointment, holy to the Lord. As he had an explicit claim upon them, these might not be devoted to him in the same manner as some other things were, but they behaved to be offered. Those other things depended on the peculiar circumstances of the people, and

accordingly were of a changing amount, and had a great variety of character; but not less than the things that might be vowed according to circumstances, were those that were denominated, "holy to the Lord," vowed to him. Israel, at Sinai, vowed to present the first-born of their males and their first-fruits to the Lord; and that vow they homologated when they Covenanted again. On such occasions they could not vow specific offerings to the Lord; but their engagements then made implied in general that they would vow to the Lord thereafter according to the showings of his providence. At other times the specialities of providence called for the explicit vows, which could not have been made when their circumstances were not anticipated. The vows of the people, on occasions of public solemn Covenanting, and also in secret, implied obligations to perform the duties of the various relations into which they might enter; but they did not embody an explicit engagement to perform the special duties of many of these. These public vows included, for example, that such of the people as should be called to the priest's office, should enter into the covenant of the priesthood, and keep it, and that such of them as had in providence a call to become a Nazarite, should take the requisite vow at the proper season, and thereafter perform it. But on the former occasions referred to, it was not incumbent to swear the oaths that were probably requisite on an entrance to the priest's office; nor was it required, nor even possible, thus to take the vow of the Nazarite. The priesthood were devoted to the Lord, and when the time appointed came, such of them as were qualified for their office entered upon it. The Nazarites, also, were devoted to the Lord, but according to a different arrangement. The priest had no alternative but to enter upon his office. The individual who was more qualified for becoming a Nazarite than to act in any other sphere, was no less called to enter upon his functions, than the sons of Aaron were to enter on theirs. The call addressed to the former was so explicit, as to be easily apprehensible by all; that tendered to the latter, was not less solemn nor emphatic, nor obligatory, though presented through a providence which was not so very capable of being interpreted as that which gave transmission to the claims laid upon the other. It is only when the making of the vow would be at variance with the requirements of duty, that forbearing to vow would be no sin. All are called to vow to abstain from all sin, and to perform all duty; but as providence makes varied provision for men in different circumstances, so in regard both to the absolute amount of service to God, and to the nature and the time of it, there ought necessarily to be a variety in the making of the vow. The second passage is, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." [202] The declaration does not bear, that if one were not inclined to pay, it would not be sinful to omit vowing; but means that it is sinful to make a vow falsely, and omit the performance of what should have been sincerely vowed. It is the paying of the vow -- the performance of some duty, that the language is employed to inculcate. When the heart of any one is opposed to duty, he cannot vow sincerely. That he is not disposed to vow when the duty presents itself is his sin. And to vow falsely -- else than which he could not do in his circumstances, would also be sin in him. He is, therefore, called upon, not to do a sinful act, but, in the use of means, to endeavour to obtain a disposition to vow with cordiality, and then to perform the duty. It is better for him to supplicate God to change his heart, than to insult him by promising to do what he is unwilling to perform. It is better for him not to attempt to change his own heart -- for that he cannot do -- but to pray to God to carry on a good work within him, and along with that, to yield himself to Him. Duties should be performed in a certain order; and those who transgress the arrangement for these laid down in the Scriptures, act culpably, as well as those who do not perform them at all. The statement refers to the order in which the duties, among which stands the

exercise of vowing, should be performed. The observance is incumbent on an individual in a certain condition; but his heart is against it. Two duties at least are, therefore, obligatory on him then; -- to seek a disposition willingly to vow, and then to make the vow. He would sin were he to do the latter without the former, or before it. Both are obligatory at the same instant of time, and both might possibly be performed in one moment. But the order of first acquiescing in the call to vow and then vowing, must be observed, and cannot be inverted without transgression. Commands inculcating the swearing of the oath. These are of two classes. First, those which in general terms explicitly enjoin it. -- "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." [203] "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." [204] And next, that which, in addition, thus enjoins the manner of swearing. -- "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." [205] Since the oath is never disconnected from a covenant with God, therefore, when it is enjoined, the duty of Covenanting with him in a formal manner, is enjoined. Every command that sanctions it, sanctions every exercise of Covenanting in which it is used. When the oath is commanded, Covenanting with God concerning things civil is commanded. When the oath is commanded, Covenanting with God concerning things religious is inculcated by his authority. Yea, the exercise concerning things both civil and religious, in such a case, is enjoined. Lawful oaths between nations, or between a people and their sovereign, bind all parties, not merely to one another, but also in solemn engagement to the Most High. Oaths taken in courts of judicature, civil or religious, and the marriage oath, bind the parties in like manner. The vows made on entering into church fellowship, which include an oath, and the explicit oaths which, in different ages of the Church, have been sworn in such a case, as well as the vows or oaths made by a minister at his ordination, or by a parent receiving baptism for his child, or by believers at the Lord's table, do, in each case, confirm a covenant with God. And oaths are sworn, ratifying covenants with God, made either in secret, or in a public, social manner. When the oath is enjoined, Covenanting is enjoined, -- not merely concerning some duties, but in reference to all, -- concerning not merely things civil, but also things religious, -- concerning not merely the less, but also the greater, -- regarding not only apart, but the whole, -- regarding not merely some things important, but all that is so, -- yea, in reference to every possible case, the exercise is enjoined. The duty of swearing the oath has not been abrogated, and therefore that of Covenanting is of perpetual obligation. With comparatively few exceptions, it is generally admitted that the use of the oath is lawful in things civil; and on the grounds on which this rests, it must be concluded that swearing is obligatory in those also that are religious. The Lord himself, in an extraordinary manner, called Abraham once and again, formally to enter into Covenant with him, and accordingly to swear; but after the resurrection -- the dawn of the present dispensation -- the Redeemer addressed Peter in terms warranting him to reply in the use of the oath -- "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." [206] In His instructions, He did not condemn the use of the oath on every occasion. He said, "I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." [207] But in these words he does not forbid every use of the oath. The passage, along with another [208] of kindred import, must not be considered as condemnatory of swearing by the name of God in some cases; for that holy name is not mentioned among those things that

may not be used in swearing; but may be viewed as reproving the practice of swearing irreligiously in common conversation, as well as the idolatry of swearing by the creature in any case, with or without the intention of thereby appealing to God. The oath, therefore, coeval with other institutes of religious worship, with them, through every age, shall continue to be observed. It stands enjoined among those precepts that are inculcated for every dispensation. Till the consummation of all things, the law enjoining it will not be fulfilled; nor before that period will it pass away; and with it the exercise of Covenanting will endure. In every age there will be found those who, entering into explicit engagements with the Lord by oath, will obey his words, -- "Let him take hold of my strength,[209] that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." [210] Finally, Commands enjoining the exercise in all its parts. That such have been promulgated, there is distinct evidence. "He hath commanded his Covenant for ever." That He delivered statutes, enjoining the keeping of his Covenant, these words imply. One of the duties of this Covenant was Covenanting. "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." They indicate, therefore, that this was enjoined. And of these statutes, like the foregoing, this other is explicit, "Be ye mindful always of his Covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations." [211] The exercise is inculcated in threatenings of Divine judgment uttered against such as disregard it. In language peculiarly strong, it is said, "The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." And if it was culpable and dangerous to refuse a sign of the Covenant, is it not peculiarly so to refuse to accede to it in actually taking hold upon it? Hence, neglect of the duty has been denounced. "The Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them." [212] Among the observances engaged to by Israel at Sinai, were those of vowing and swearing. But for disobeying the words of that Covenant, and consequently, for not observing the exercise of Covenanting, many were threatened with a curse. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God." [213] To show that the sin of refusing to engage in this exercise is corresponding to that of breaking the Covenant of God, and consistent with it, those who have broken their vows, and those who have not in vowing sought the Lord, are classed and threatened together. "I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off ... them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him." [214] The sin of refusing to Covenant, when found in the visible Church, is the breach of an anterior Covenant obligation to engage in the service, and is punishable as a breach of Covenant. And finally, what a powerful motive to perform the duty is afforded in the Saviour's denunciation, -- "He that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God!" And, it is also commanded in those denunciations that are uttered against such as do not perform it aright. Were it not lawful declarations concerning the manner of doing it would not be made. In the Scriptures there is no such thing as the

condemnation of insincerity in making an evil engagement; but every such compact is forbidden. When, therefore, as in many passages, swearing falsely is denounced with a heavy curse, swearing properly is virtually enjoined, and consequently, there is in like manner enjoined, every species of Covenanting in which the oath is applicable. Personal Covenanting is commanded. Every individual, willing or unwilling, is a moral subject of the Mediator. On every one, therefore, as an individual, obedience to his law is obligatory. To every one He says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." These words were indeed addressed at first to the Israelites; and they imply the existence of a Covenant relation between God and them. But they address a command to engage in Covenanting to all to whom they are known. On the same principle, that the application of them would be confined to the people of God, might every precept of the moral law be reckoned obligatory on believers alone. But even as the epistles of the inspired servants of Christ, though addressed to saints, commanded the attention of all who were in the churches that received them, and invited the regard of them as under an obligation to sustain in reality the character which they professed, so those precepts which were addressed to the Church of God in every age, not merely commanded obedience to the duties inculcated in them, but enjoined all to endeavour to attain to the character of the Covenant people to whom they were first delivered. The saints of God alone can render acceptable obedience; but all are commanded to obey. Commands enjoining Covenanting must be obligatory on men, in an individual, or in a social capacity, or in both. But they cannot be obeyed by men in an incorporate condition, without being obeyed by each member as an individual. The whole engage, only by each giving consent. If the whole society were reduced to one, the moral duties engaged to by the whole, ought, according to his circumstances, to be engaged to by that one alone. And as the duties frequently incumbent on a given person could not be explicitly engaged to by a society, so he himself is called to Covenant to discharge these duties; and each precept, enjoining the service in general, may be considered as addressing each one as an individual. Social Covenanting is commanded. The exercise is acknowledged in the Scriptures as a fact, and stands there uncondemned. And seeing that the law of God ought to be viewed as extending its authority to every exercise that may be performed, those commands that inculcate the service in general, should be interpreted as enjoining the performance of this. Besides, though each of these commands is delivered to all individually, yet many of them are addressed to men in an incorporate relation, and cannot be understood as enjoining duty merely upon them singly. Again, social duties, not less than duties of a personal character, are sanctioned in the Divine law, and no reason can be given for vowing to perform those of the latter class, that does not countenance the exercise of socially Covenanting to discharge those of the other. And, finally, this view is beautifully illustrated by the designation of the people of God as his "witnesses," "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." [215] Their witnessing for him is a part of his service, and is therefore commanded. The witness testifies not unfrequently by the oath; and a testimony in its most general acceptation must be considered as accompanied by the use of it. The people of God testify for him in the use of the oath. It is not singly alone, but also in their social capacity, that they do so; nor is it merely in secret, but likewise before the eyes of the world. Even as the witness swears to the truth of his deposition; even as various witnesses by oath testify to the same facts observed by them; the people of God, by Covenanting, harmoniously testify to His precious truth in swearing by his name. To this they are called by his high authority; their oath sworn in their social capacity is prescribed by his command. But particularly, Covenanting, in an Ecclesiastical capacity, is commanded. The

visible Church of Christ is a moral subject. The Redeemer "gives it existence, organises, incorporates, and purchases it, -- confers upon it interesting properties -- accomplishes important ends by it -- institutes its ordinances -- prescribes the qualification of its members -- appoints, qualifies, and invests its office-bearers -- renders its administration effectual, and diffuses and perpetuates it." [216] Individual churches, sound in the faith, having a lawful and regular ministry, and enjoying the ordinances of grace properly dispensed, being Sections of the true Church, are each accordingly subject to the Mediator; and the precepts prescribed to the whole, they receive as addressed to themselves. All the laws that enjoin the exercise of Covenanting, were delivered to the Church. Her members, in an individual capacity, are bound by all these. These laws demand, too, the obedience of the whole Church in her associate capacity, and consequently that of each of her Sections. Possessing a constitution essentially distinct from that of every other community, she is under peculiar obligations; and because of her subjection, and of the delivery of Divine statutes to her, in her proper character she is called to vow and swear to fulfil these. There is no Section of the Church but ought to attempt the service. If Sections of the true Church simultaneously exist in the same land, and accordingly be in one class of circumstances, each of these ought to renounce its dross and tin, and endeavouring to the utmost to maintain the Lord's testimony, unite with the others, in one enlarged Section of the Church, in displaying a banner for the whole truth, and confirm their union by entering into solemn Covenant engagement with the Lord. While these Sections, however, separately exist, not one of them, if consistent with its own profession, can say that the others have separately a right to engage in Covenanting, or in any other exercise, according to those views of any of these others which are a ground of difference between it and them, but are warranted in affirming that it is their duty to engage in the exercise in that way which, as to its manner, and by the nature and extent of its engagements, is right. What would justify each of such Sections of the Church in approving of every Covenant engagement of all the others, would not merely warrant but demand, a union in one ecclesiastical body among all of them, and their vows as one society dedicated to the Lord. And this might be extended even overall the earth. Though the circumstances of a Section of the Church in one land, might not precisely correspond with those of Sections of it elsewhere; though, for example, a testimony might have to be borne, principally against paganism in one case, against mohammedanism in another, against popery in a third, and so on; yet as all ought, generally, to testify against all error, and to maintain all truth, all might be united in one ecclesiastical connection. Were the churches to see eye to eye, there might be adopted, by solemn oath, a testimony so universal in the exhibition of truth, and condemnation of error, as would suit the exigencies of the Church in every land; and these, submitting to one form of government, holding the same doctrine, abiding by the same worship and discipline, and carrying their final appeals to one general council, instead of being reckoned merely sister churches, would appear as one church, by solemn Covenant explicitly devoted to the Lord, and jointly witnessing for Him. And wherever such a federal union would take place in some lands, what encouragement would be afforded that it would be extended to all! And how would the general confederation testify to a glorious work of reformation! And how might the whole visible society, though imperfect still, be expected to proceed from strength to strength! Societies, -- such as Socinian and Popish, that hold not the truth, ought not to be reckoned as a part of the Church of God. Any change for good among such would be to their dissolution and reconstruction on principles which they do not now hold. They cannot be reformed, but are to be destroyed. Were the members of them to receive the truth, and jointly to cleave to it, these

societies would thereby perish. Having become corrupt, they are under the curse entailed on those who break God's covenant, and not one privilege of the true Church do they enjoy. It is the duty of all connected with them to mourn for the sin of their breach of God's covenant, to give up all connection with these, to join themselves to the Church of Christ, and thereafter to act under impressions of solemn Covenant engagement to be for the Lord, and for none other. Covenanting in a National capacity is commanded. Nations are moral subjects. The Mediator is, "the Governor among the nations," "higher than the kings of the earth," "King of nations," "Prince of the kings of the earth," "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He gives nations their origin. Civil government is an ordinance of God, as well as an ordinance of man. "By me kings reign and princes decree justice: by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." The Providence of God that relates to nations is directed by the Mediator. He counteracts their disobedience, and causes it to be overruled for good. He punishes them for sin. He has made known his law for the direction of men as individuals; and as the rule of the conduct of subjects, of rulers in their official capacity, and of nations in their public collective capacity.[217] In the laws that enjoin the duty of Covenanting they are not excluded. In their public character they owe to God obedience, which cannot be rendered in any other. And in these laws they are called to pledge themselves to that obedience by entering into Covenant with Him. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." It has been shown that Covenanting is described as a part of the service of God. In the words, "serve the Lord," it is therefore enjoined. To kiss a sovereign is to acknowledge his dominion, and submit to his authority. This is done in Covenanting. The command, "Kiss ye the Son," therefore enjoins the service. In the passage, kings and judges of the earth are commanded to do this; and none without making an arbitrary assumption can say that they are not thus enjoined in their official capacity. Nor are the people under their authority, here unaddressed. That they are specially intended, too, appears from the promise, -- "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him;" and moreover, from the language that precedes the passage. -- "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." [218] The threatenings appended, show the danger of refusing. But the same is taught besides in another passage. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." [219] The sacred original corresponding to the first part of this portion of Scripture is not wrong rendered here, but it might have been otherwise rendered. The verb (in Hiphil, [Hebrew: yodeh]) under the modification here employed, meaning literally, to declare with the outstretched hand, imports, in its most general acceptation, to confess. It is so rendered in the passage, "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication to thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven." [220] "To praise," is included in the expression, "to confess." But more is included in the latter besides. To have translated the passage from the Psalms in this manner, would have been more in accordance with the extensive signification of the verb, and in order to unfold the full scope of the text had been requisite. The verse ought therefore to run, -- "Let the people confess thee, O God, let all the people confess thee." And hence is enjoined, in the whole passage, on the people of Israel, and on all nations on the earth, the exercises of confessing sin, and praising God, and the

duty of entering into Covenant with him with the hand extended in swearing by his name. And that the exercise of Covenanting is specially intended there, moreover appears from the end to be accomplished by the shining of God's face upon his people, one of the means of attaining to which is that special method of confessing his name. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." [221] Thus it is manifest, that nations in their organised capacity are called to engage in this service. Rulers, both in church and state, in their official capacity are bound to do so. The people themselves collectively are called to this; and laws, civil and ecclesiastical, sanctioning the exercise should be made, so that the contravention of the ends of the Covenant entered into should be condemned, and that those who would be hostile to the design of it, should be kept from places of power and trust, both in church and state. The enactment of such laws, and the carrying of them into effect, would not be persecution. Rulers should not compel any man to take the Covenant; but they should punish the man who would obstruct its fulfilment, as they would punish the transgressor of any civil statute. Being entered into by the whole nation, the Covenant would be eventually national: and even, as the whole nation consider every man bound by the laws of the nation, so they ought to consider every one, whether willing or unwilling, as bound by the Covenant. Were the matter of the Covenant against the law of God, it would not be obligatory on any one; and rulers would punish the frustration of it only at their peril. Were the matter of it right, the people would all be under obligation to adhere to it, both in consequence of the Divine law enjoining it, and also of their voluntary engagement as a people to perform it. The individual who would fail in attaining to any place of influence, because of not acceding to the stipulations of the Covenant, would have no more reason to complain of being persecuted, than those who, because of being under allegiance to a foreign hostile power, might in vain seek authority in the land; or than those who, manifesting by their breach of the laws of the land that they contemn them, in vain seek the protection and privileges secured to those alone who respect and keep them. Were a nation voluntarily to enter into such engagements of this nature as are lawful, the whole people would be bound by them, and in the eye of the law would be under obligation; nor would disobedience to the law enjoining the fulfilment of these, any more than to any other statute, be reckoned as the right of any. For any to seek power in the land without submitting to the obligations come under by such covenants, would be for them to set at defiance the law, and thus to take means to introduce rebellion, if not revolution. Such as would not cheerfully aid in carrying the scheme of the Covenant into effect, while aspiring at influence, would be using endeavours to obtain power in order to counteract its operation; and therefore should not be put in possession of the desired trust. Ecclesiastical authority cannot compel any to perform the duties of religion and morality; but it can subject to discipline those who neglect them, and can hinder such from exercising the power belonging to the office-bearers, or other members, of the Church. In like manner, civil rulers cannot compel men to perform various duties of a civil and religious character; but they can, and ought to, restrain those who are guilty of violating the commandments of the moral law that regard our duty to God, as well as those who transgress those that relate to the obligations of men to men; they ought to keep from exercising authority those who live in open disregard of all or any of them; and having enacted laws for the purpose of carrying into effect a lawful Covenant engagement with God, they should visit with a penalty those who break them. It remains for those who maintain that the magistrate should not legislate against the breach of some statutes in the first table of the law, to show why he is warranted in punishing, in any manner, the

crime of perjury; and how some species of penalty may be attached to the refusal to swear a lawful oath in certain circumstances, and also to the breach of its engagement: while an individual who might object to engage in the exercise of Covenanting when invited to it in some cases, or would act in opposition to what a whole nation, either by themselves or by their representatives, properly swore to perform, might not be reckoned as unworthy of the valuable civil or religious privileges of the community. But whatever difficulties may be connected with its application, the truth, that men in their national capacity are by the law of God called to Covenant, is manifest. "Nations, as the moral subjects of Messiah the Prince, are under obligation to recognise his rightful authority over them, by swearing allegiance to him. It is the duty of a subject to swear allegiance to his lawful sovereign; at least he must stand prepared to do so when required. So is it with nations. Not only are the inhabitants of a nation, as occasion calls for it, to enter into sacred confederation with one another, in order to secure and defend their valued rights and privileges; but the nation, as such, through the medium of its authorized functionaries and by its usual forms of legal enactment, ought publicly to avow its attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ as its King and Prince, to recognise his legal authority, and to bind itself to his service by an oath." [222] They cast contempt on an ordinance of God, who do not, both in an ecclesiastical and a civil capacity, enter into Covenant with him. The Mediator is, at once, King of Zion and King of nations. The people of God are members of his Church, and also of civil society, -- over which, as well as over the Church, he rules. For an individual, merely as a member of his Church, to acknowledge God, is to do his duty but in part. When the rulers in a nation as rulers, and the people as subjects, do not Covenant, they appear regardless of a part of character which, for the glory of God, they should maintain not less tenaciously than their ecclesiastical relations; they fail of availing themselves of the benefit of a most powerful system of motives to serve God, as his willing creatures, in a relation in which, as well as in the fellowship of the Church, they are called to obey him; and though they even attempt to honour him as King of Zion, yet, in failing to testify to the utmost of their capacities to his dominion, refusing to acknowledge him in this exercise as Governor among the nations, dishonour him in both, and tend to rob him of the glory which belongs to him as Head over all things to the Church, which is his body. Nations, whose constitutions are immoral and unscriptural, are commanded to perform the duty. By such are intended those which have the truth diffused in them, but have not had the frame-work of their civil polity modelled according to the law of the Mediator; and likewise those that may have had their constitutions in whole, or in part, based on scriptural principles, but who have changed them, so that to these they are now in opposition. Nations of this character are in an attitude of defiance to the power and authority of the Lord Jesus. Those who approve of their polity countenance what is hostile to his government, and thus act as his enemies. Those who swear to support them, do, -- unwittingly, the spirit of charity would claim for many, swear to maintain what he has threatened to destroy. Those nations, as such, have not a right to enter into Covenant with God; but it is their duty to do so. When a mind, willing to reform every discovered abuse, and a resolution to change their whole constitutions to conformity with the will of God, are infused into them, they will have a right to discharge the service, and will be accepted in it. Those who, having the truth among them, did never in things civil submit to the law of Christ, and those who, in their political procedures, have apostatized from his service, are both under his rebuke; -- the one for refusing to hear his voice calling them to acknowledge him as Lord; -- the other for breaking their engagements to him. Both are exposed to his wrath; both on grounds of opposition to him -- but each of the classes according to the manner

and aggravations of its manifestation of that opposition to his authority; both are called to repentance, are threatened with judgment in case of continued disobedience, and are commanded to acknowledge the Mediator as their sovereign Lord, by renouncing severally their wicked constitutions, framing each a new civil organization, according to his law, and swearing allegiance to him. Nations that have not yet heard the gospel, are not guiltless for not Covenanting. These are regulated in part by the light of nature. Of the law of nature, made known at first to man, but also made known in revelation, they are in various degrees greatly ignorant. Seeing that in that law the exercise is enjoined, if any of these possess so much of the light of nature as may contain a command to engage in it, they will feel themselves in some measure urged to give obedience. In reference to this, as well as to any other matter inculcated upon them, their consciences will either approve or condemn them. None of these, however have adequate ideas of the Saviour; all of them are under the dominion of satan; and for neglecting this duty, as well as for their disregard of various requirements of the law besides, they will be dealt with according to the arrangements of Him who ruleth over all. Their sin, indeed, not being committed under gospel light, is not so aggravated as that of others; but is still displeasing in the sight of God. When the gospel is sent to them, the statutes that enjoin the service will exhibit to them their obligations; and power from on high will urge many to obey. They, even they that dwell in heathen nations, shall in the day of spiritual illumination be enabled to confess to God; and many in the times of reviving that shall yet come forth from the presence of the Lord, will thus be delivered from the wrath to be poured out on the heathen that know not, nor call upon his name. Should not the state of those who are perishing for lack of knowledge, move to sympathy for them those who know the obligations on men of the service of avouching God to be their God, and the sin and danger in which all who do not perform this are involved? All are commanded, and believers are encouraged to unite in various capacities in Covenanting. For some purposes, men may unite in this, though they be in different ecclesiastical communions. Scripture warrants for the service do not recognise the position of any section of the visible Church as absolutely perfect; but refer to duty to be performed by the people of God individually and socially. A Section of the visible Church Covenants because the Church of God, in her organised capacity, is called to do so. The Church of God, in a national capacity, Covenants because it is the duty of men in their civil relations to acknowledge Him. A Church Covenants, believing that she sees the truth in part, and is disposed to accede to it. So does a nation. Were it necessary, in order to the Church exercising the rights conferred upon her by her Head, that her outward state should be fashioned by men, then her members could not act socially for the glory of God in any other capacity than as standing in a public connection with that communion which, because of human constitution, might arrogate to itself the character of being alone the true Church. But while the outward state of the Church of God, in so far as that corresponds with his will, is from his hand alone, and is therefore infinitely more sacred than the work of any creature; and while there are certain things that cannot be performed by believers socially except as members of the Church in her constituted capacity; still, owing to the imperfections of men, some things that might be done by her members in any capacity, cannot be performed by them so efficiently in any distinct ecclesiastical standing as otherwise; and Covenanting, for some purposes, seems to be one of these. Neither is any Church nor nation perfect. Neither can accomplish all the good they might intend. They find that to do good is incumbent upon them, but that in some cases they cannot, by themselves, accomplish their design so efficiently as they would in union with others, who, seeking to promote the glory of God,

contemplate the same end. They know that certain parts of duty, such as communicating in receiving Baptism or the Lord's Supper, can be performed only in a strictly ecclesiastical capacity, but that others can be done either by individual efforts of the members of the Church, or by communities of Christians associated in church fellowship, or on a more general principle. Hence, by engaging in Covenanting in the more general capacity in which those who hold the truth can associate, they do not disregard the Church as a constituted body called to duty in her organised condition, but endeavour to perform some duties which may be done by them in a variety of relations, but which may be best performed by many in a collective state. To the anticipation, though not to the loss, of a part of the argument contained in the succeeding chapter, two or three illustrations may be given of the principle here stated. And first, it may be remarked that general assemblies called not necessarily either by civil or ecclesiastical authority, but by general consent, for the purpose of arriving at unanimity of sentiment regarding the doctrines of Scripture, may be formed in the exercise of Covenanting. It is a ground of humility to each Section of the visible Church that every other, in some things, differs from it. Deliberation among deputations from all of these, in order that they may be of one mind, is therefore greatly to be desired, if means of arriving at harmony of sentiment be afforded in an assembly where truth is discussed in a becoming manner. To attend to what may be stated there for an important end, and to weigh it, is a duty. To state and maintain truth there is obligatory, and to promise and vow to do so, in certain circumstances, would be not merely allowable, but incumbent. Thus, those who are not altogether of one mind may meet to implore Divine illumination, in order to the investigation of truth, for the advancement of true religion; and together to vow and swear, individually or collectively, to endeavour faithfully to attain the object of their meeting, that the Churches may be united, not merely in affection, but in opinion. The sentiment is not new. It was acted on to effect in a memorable period of the history of the Church in Britain. Were there more of the spirit of Christ poured down on the Churches, it might be reduced to practice again. Secondly, it is presumed that Bible Societies should engage in Covenanting. To circulate the pure word of life, unaccompanied by the traditions of men, is among the noblest objects of Christian philanthropy. Collectively, Christians can give diffusion to it with an efficiency vastly beyond the sum of all their insulated efforts. As to the end, all such are agreed. That it is a duty, they are satisfied. As to the means, there can be but little if any variety of opinion that can greatly perplex; and as to the manner, information abundant and easily explicable is found in the Scriptures. If the duty of Covenanting is obligatory on an individual, on a church, or on a nation, it is incumbent on the members of a Bible Society in their associate capacity. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company (that is, army, and therefore sworn,) of those that published it." [223] And it is practicable. Prayer for success to the endeavours made, is habitually offered; and the praises of God are also celebrated on occasions when the objects of such a society are attended to and promoted. In order to carry into effect their design, the members come under mutual obligations to one another. Why should they not jointly come under explicitly avowed obligations to God? It is not enough that in their secret vows these engage to promote the spread of the word, as well as all other interests of the kingdom of Christ. Why should not He, whose are the silver and the gold, -- whose are the hearts of those called to the high duty of giving the word diffusion, -- yea, whose is that precious word itself, -- why should not he be acknowledged by all of them in vowing and swearing to Him, that they shall use faithfully the means of attaining the high end contemplated by them, which he has put into their hands to be employed for him? How have not the efforts of these societies been

accompanied by this method of recognising the Author of inspiration? How have not the Churches of Christ gone into this exercise, as called to feel and acknowledge the vast solemnity of their endeavours? How have the contributions of the faithful, for this end, been merely offered to men, but not vowed openly to God? Even the contributions of the Macedonian Churches, given for the poor saints at Jerusalem, were offered in this manner.[224] How have their prayers -- moving heaven to pour down the Spirit to accompany the reading of the word, not been accompanied by the vow or oath to the Most High God, binding themselves to bestow with their hand the means of sending it that are or that may be in their power, and to continue to beseech Him for his blessing, until he cause the knowledge of His glory to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? Would that we could add as an additional illustration a reference to all existing Missionary Societies, supported even by those who belong to the true Church of Christ; and that grounds identical with those which separate those Sections as ecclesiastical bodies from one another, did not exist to make it unwarrantable for them to associate in such a general missionary enterprise as has sometimes heretofore been conducted. It is not competent to the design of the reference that is here made to this subject, to show in detail how different Sections of the visible Church appear not to be justified in supporting in common missions directed by missionaries holding some scriptural views of various denominations, without concurring in their sentiments on church government and other matters. Suffice it to remark, that differences in regard to these things, are by no means unimportant. The principle adopted in the constitution of the most influential of such societies, that the peculiar views of no given sect, but the evangelical sentiments entertained by all, should be inculcated, however, is perhaps best fitted to promote the ends of an institution calling into operation such a variety of missionaries as it employs. Yet it provides not for diffusing the whole truth. It may perhaps be unnecessary here to say, that it is the desire that such an institution should be improved and become more and more efficient, which has led to make the foregoing reference to it. The end of its praiseworthy projectors and supporters should command the admiration of all; the piety and devotedness of its missionaries have attained for them in the hearts of true Christians an enduring place; and the success of its endeavours, by the blessing of God, due not to its imperfections but to its excellencies, leads to the hope that it and others may come to possess a character in all things unobjectionable. It is not beyond the reach of hope that these societies may, by changes occurring in the views of their members, come to possess each a constitution becoming increasingly more perfect; and that their improvement in all things, and their influence for good may greatly increase, must be the cordial wish and prayer of all who are right-hearted. Missionary Societies connected with given churches are not exposed to the same kind of objection as that applicable to the others. Though each Section of the Church may not acquiesce in the means employed by any other, they may view those of every other as conscientiously, though not unobjectionably, giving diffusion to the views of the truth which those entertain. And what is wanting in such is principally the rectification of their views: their endeavours are harmonious and consistent. But to proceed. Were Missionary Societies, contemplating the exalted end of evangelising the heathen, to employ warranted means for accomplishing their purpose, they, as well as other societies, ought by Covenanting to engage to the use of these. Such societies would present each a decided community of Christians banded together for a purpose worthy the most sacred devotedness of all the noble energies of man. Will not the people of God yet come forward to send the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth, by not merely promising to one another and praying to the Lord, but in Covenanting with Him, swearing

by his name? What prosperity might be expected to accompany missions, were such a course to be followed? How can the utmost success be expected to follow a partial use of the means of Divine grace? God will not fully mark with his blessing a system of means which is defective. All the institutions of religion ought to be acknowledged. Covenanting with Him will draw down His blessing on missionary institutions, because it is, not meritorious, but sanctioned by his authority. And it may not be too much to affirm, that the prosperity of these will be in some measure proportionate to the spirit of that exercise that may be infused into them. How is so much justly expected from the prayers of saints on behalf of missions, and apparently so little from solemn Covenant engagements that might be made at least once, or occasionally, to carry them into effect? Do not men do but a part of their duty when they promise to one another, but do not Covenant with God? Is it not He who in His word unfolded the missionary chart, and by His own finger pointed out where they should be sent; who told that nations should be born at once; and the isles should wait for his law; and who made known, that out of Zion should go forth that law? "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children." [225] And as to his people Israel, engaged by Covenant to obey him, he thus spake: He says to his servants, Covenanted to his service, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." [226] An elegant and powerful writer, in a work on Missions, wherein, among other important collateral duties, entire consecration to the missionary enterprise is urged by the highest motives, remarks regarding the work in reference to Missions, that would seem to have been allotted to the Christian communities in Britain, -- "But Christianity had marked the island for its own. And although its lofty purposes are yet far from being worked out on us, from that eventful moment to the present, the various parts of the social system have been rising together." [227] And in responding to this, may it not be asked, Has there not been, on the part of the Churches in these lands and elsewhere, as to kindred objects of Christian exertion, especially to the missionary enterprise, an injurious want of solemn Covenant devotedness? Could resolutions to prosecute this be embodied so well as in a solemn Covenant engagement with God? In this manner might there not be made arrangements regarding missions, more solemn than has heretofore been attempted? To many causes may the comparative smallness of success that has attended these be attributed. But it is little less than certain, that it is on account of the want of that resolute heroic Christian spirit which Covenanting calls forth and embraces, that our missionaries are not even now diffused over all the earth, and our nation is not, by a reflex hallowed influence, throughout all its extent, as the garden of the Lord. Hence, in conclusion, None may be excused for not engaging in Covenanting. Those who perform the duty in secret, are called to discharge it on some occasions in public. To vow in secret, is but partially to do duty. Secret prayer is not a sufficient substitute for that which is public. The doing of duty to our neighbour and to ourselves, cannot be reckoned as the fulfilment of our obligations to God. And vowing to Him in an individual capacity, will not be accepted for vowing and swearing to Him in a public associate character. Again, those who vow neither in secret nor in public, are called to do both. Is it urged, that it is a dreadful thing by the vow or oath to come under obligations that might not be fulfilled? It is answered, Is it a fearful thing to do what God commands? What ought to be vowed ought to be fulfilled, whether

vowed or not; and if duty be vowed falsely, or not vowed at all, sin is committed. Is it not a dreadful thing, by refusing to do this duty, to rebel against Him who said, "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God?" He is guilty and degraded who breaks an oath; but low indeed is the moral state of him who, lest he should not perform his obligation, refuses to swear. And how wretched is the condition of those who will neither vow nor swear, lest they might, as they certainly would, be thereby bound to duty! The swearing of an oath is a solemn act. To disregard it, whether by refusing to take it when called to it, or by not performing it when lawfully taken, is highly criminal and dangerous. The doom of the impenitent and Covenant breaker is awful; but those who do not, in one way or other, truly vow to God, have no hope. Refraining from vowing to him, man sustains a character no higher than the wicked who restrain prayer before God. It is not the right of any one, according to his pleasure, to abstain from entering into Covenant with God. It is a duty to obey God's law; Covenanting is one of the duties of that law; it is therefore a duty to engage in its performance. No man has a right to refuse to do so. It is our duty to serve God. It is our duty to promise to serve him. In certain cases, it is our duty to vow and swear to serve him. What it is our duty to do, it is our duty to engage by Covenant with Him to do. If men neither serve God nor vow to serve him, they are chargeable with two classes of sins; -- that of disregarding the duty of Covenanting with God, -- and that of refusing to perform duties, one of which is the performance of that exercise. If men vow to serve God, but do it not, they greatly sin; being chargeable with an omission of duty, in one case at least, they have rebelled. If they do not vow to serve God, whatever may be the nature of their obedience, that, by being deficient as to Covenanting, is imperfect. To hope to be more safe from condemnation by not vowing than by vowing, is to cherish a love to sin, and to betray the workings of a heart which regards not how God may be dishonoured, provided the sinner can escape with impunity. They who vow and swear falsely, or who perform not their oath, are exposed to an appalling curse; but dreadful also is the condemnation that hangs over those who vow not, because they do not desire to pay. All who love the Lord, desire to show to the utmost that they delight to honour him. In order to direct and encourage them to do so, he has vouchsafed the institutions of his house; and among them, the exercise of Covenanting, as enjoined on all by his high authority, and engaging the observance of his people, stands acknowledged an Ordinance of God.FOOTNOTES:[171] Ps. cxi.9.[172] Ps. xcv.3, 6, 7.[173] Deut. x.14, 17, 20.[174] Ps. xiv.10, 11.[175] Mat. x.32, 33. See also v.25.[176] Rom. iv.9, 10, 11.[177] 1 Chron. xvi.13.[178] 2 Cor. viii.5.[179] 1 Thess. i.9.[180] Ps. cxvi.16.[181] Rev. xvii.14.[182] Isa. lv.3, 4.[183] Ps. v.2.[184] 1 Chron. xxix.24. Literally, gave the hand under.[185] Jer. vii.23.[186] Ps. xxxi.14.[187] Exod. iii.12.[188] 2 Chron. xxx.8.[189] Rom. xii.1.[190] Rev. xv.3.[191] Col. i.18.[192] Mat. xiii.8-10.[193] Ezek. xxxvii.22.[194] Ezek. xxxvii.25.[195] Jos. xxiv.14-23.[196] 1 Cor. x.31.[197] Ps. xxii.23-25.[198] Jer. ii.31.[199] Exod. xxiii.33.[200] 2 Cor. vi.14-18.[201] Deut. xxiii.22.[202] Eccles. v.5.[203] Deut. vi.13.[204] Deut. x.20.[205] Jer. iv.2.[206] John xxi.17.[207] Mat. v.34-37.[208] Mat. xxiii.18-22.[209] [Hebrew: Ma'oz], a rad. [Hebrew: 'azoz], firmus fuit. There is a striking connection between the import of this word, and that of [Hebrew: El], -- that name of God, which literally means robur, strength, and from which comes [Hebrew: alah], an oath.[210] Is. xxvii.5.[211] 1 Chron. xvi.15.[212] Jer. xi.9-11.[213] Jer. xi.3, 4.[214] Zeph. i.4, 6.[215] Is. xlili.10.[216] See the Rev. Dr. William Symington, on "The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ," chap. vii. -- a work of acknowledged high merit, which cannot, at any time, be too extensively known. [217] "Med. Dom." chap. viii.[218] Ps. ii.10-12.8.[219] Ps. lxxvii.3, 4.[220] 1 Kings viii.33, 34.[221] Ps. lxxvii.1, 2.[222] "Med. Dom.," second

edition, pp.294, 295.[223] Ps. lxxviii.11. See margin.[224] 2 Cor. viii.1-5.[225] Ps. lxxviii.5, 6.[226] Ps. cxiii.1-3.[227] "Great Commission," p.193.

CHAPTER IV. COVENANT DUTIES.

It is here proposed to show, that every incumbent duty ought, in suitable circumstances, to be engaged to in the exercise of Covenanting. The law and covenant of God are co-extensive; and what is enjoined in the one is confirmed in the other. The proposals of that Covenant include its promises and its duties. The former are made and fulfilled by its glorious Originator; the latter are enjoined and obligatory on man. The duties of that Covenant are God's law; and the demands of the law are all made in the revelation of the Covenant. It was unlawful for the Israelites to make a Covenant, either with the gods of the heathen, or for the purpose of rendering to them any service. In like manner, it is still unlawful for any one to make a Covenant either with or for what is evil, in such a manner as to give it countenance or support. Of two words in the Greek language, employed each to denote a Covenant, the one is applied to the cases where the parties are in some respects on a level. The other ([Greek: diatheche]) is used where the parties are represented as in the relations of superiors and inferiors. Its etymology points out that the conditions of the Covenant were dictated in some manner; and the use of it shows, that to have been as the issuing of a command. By it is the principal term for Covenant in the Old Testament rendered by the Seventy. One example may suffice: -- "Will he make a Covenant ([Hebrew: b'rith], [Greek: diathecheu]) with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?"[228] The book of the Covenant of God, was the book of the law. The curses of the Covenant were written in the book of the law.[229] In that book, too, the promises of the Covenant were contained. The statutes and Covenant of God are conjoined, and both are commanded; -- the one that they might be obeyed, the other, that it might be taken hold upon, and that its duties contained in those statutes might be observed. "Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my Covenant, and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant."[230] And that which is made known as the everlasting Covenant, is given as a law. "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations: which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant."[231] Covenanting, whether Personal or Social, ought to embrace present and permanent duty. The Ten Commandments are of perpetual obligation on all; and so is every moral precept included in them. And not less than these, is every positive statute which is applicable to this last dispensation. But the words of the Covenant of Grace were written on the tables of the Covenant. "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."[232] Hence, every Divine statute, obligatory on men, being in accordance with the decalogue, or forming a part of it, every duty that can be performed, whether at present or afterwards, is incumbent, and ought to be engaged to as a Covenant duty. Certain observances, not merely because they were signs of the Covenant of God, but were also duties of it, were denominated a covenant; and their continuance during an appointed term, was enjoined. And if circumcision and the seventh-day sabbath being thus denominated, and commanded for specified periods, were duties of the Covenant, ought not all services, decreed by Divine authority, even as they were, not merely to be performed because enjoined in the Divine law, but also to be preceded

by solemn Covenant engagement to discharge them aright? In reference, not merely to one statute of the Divine law, but likewise to each, is uttered, therefore, to all in the Church of God, the command which, with respect to the keeping of the second commandment, was delivered to Israel -- "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you." [233] And in remembering that the saints vow and endeavour constantly to keep all these commands, thus the Psalmist vowed, "So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever." [234] And thus the people of God, as a nation of kings and priests, chosen, and called, and consecrated, to his service, have the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. All that God requires of man, is commanded as the keeping of his Covenant. There is no statute of inspiration concerning faith or practice, which might not, in innumerable ways, be shown to be included in its appointments. All the exhibitions of Divine truth, are representations of the provisions and duties of it. And however they may be described in the sacred volume, the statutes ordained for the regulation of the conduct of men, embody completely its demands. To unfold the dictates of the Divine law, is to present the claims of that covenant; and to endeavour to obey those dictates, is to use means to satisfy these claims. I. A covenant with God ought to engage all to duties to each one's self. The Divine law inculcates upon men, not selfishness, but love to themselves. The evils forbidden therein none should perpetrate, either on others or on himself. The good to all that is there represented as due, ought to be done not less to the individual who obeys, than to others. In the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," it is implied that men ought to love themselves. Calculated to show at once the duty of all, and the practice of those who fear God, is the declaration, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." [235] Those who do not make use of all the means which God has appointed for promoting the true happiness of all individually, do not love themselves. Aware of this, the believer, entering into a Covenant engagement with God, vows to perform to himself the duties which correspond to his condition. These are, The cultivation of personal religion. Vowing and swearing to God in secret are a part of this. That, and the other observances of it, are incumbent, and behove to be kept; and as they ought to be regarded, they ought to be promised in covenant. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." [236] Self-examination should be Covenanted. Not less was it obligatory to vow that duty than to exhort to the performance of it in these terms, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." [237] Religious meditation should be vowed. "I will meditate also of all thy work." [238] "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." [239] So should prayer. "As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice." [240] So also should godly fear. "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." [241] And the glad offering of praise should be vowed. "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." [242] In one word, to the whole worship of God the soul that clings to His Covenant will cordially bind itself in his dread presence. "As for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." [243] "I will praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." [244] Sobriety and temperance. These are to be distinguished from austerities

devised by men, and are commanded in the Scriptures. They are maintained when this world is used so as not to be abused;[245] and are cherished when the causes of sin are altogether avoided, and its occasions are shunned to the utmost limit compatible with duty. Along with other excellencies of character, they are inculcated in the command, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." The force of habit alone is insufficient to keep them, at all times, safe from invasion; much less is the momentary tumultuous resolution to resume these, that may be made by those who have suffered by falling from them. Divine grace alone can enable to adhere to them in an acceptable manner. To be distinguished by them is not beneath the resolution of the most free from the corruptions of the world. In order to be observed, they must be vowed. Thus, the sin that doth most easily beset is to be laid aside; thus, the purity of heart and life that adorns the Christian is to be assumed. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."[246] The cultivation of the various powers of the soul. When these are directed to good objects, and are wisely employed, they are healthfully expanded, and rendered capable of enlarged application for good. It is the bounden duty of men, gifted with such a precious boon, to improve it. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." The heart, in the Scriptures, means, in addition to the bodily organ known by that name, the soul; the seat of the various affections; the understanding; the seat of the will: and it has attributed to it the functions of an active, voluntary intelligence, and accordingly, the faculty of conscience approving or reproving, as the case may be. The injunction, "My son, give me thine heart," claims the surrender of all these to God, not in an enfeebled and inactive state, but in their utmost; vigour; and demands the promise, by vow, that; they shall be so called into dutiful operation as that they may become efficient. It is obeyed when there are used, the words of the Psalmist's engagement, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." [247] It is bowed to where any other like noble application of the intellectual or moral faculties is vowed; and is honoured when that purity of heart, which cannot be attained to without the direction of the exercises thereof to God, is aspired at in the act of drawing nigh unto him in Covenanting. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." [248] The proper application of every capacity. Each is given that it may be employed. The gift demands the voluntary use of it for the end intended; and the Giver requires that the gift be consecrated to him. By setting every attainment, whether natural or acquired, apart to his service, all are called to glorify God with their bodies and spirits, which are his. Without making thus a resolution to serve Him by the legitimate use of every capacity, there cannot fail to be incurred the charge preferred against some who, either by neglecting the duty of vowing to God, or by disregarding their solemn obligations, voluntarily accepted, had sinned so as to have it said of them, "Their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." [249] The Apostle does not mean less than that there should not merely be an acknowledgment of incumbent obligations to serve God, but, by the exercise of Covenanting, a strengthening of engagements to duties specified, when he says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." [250] And the Covenant engagements of those faithful servants who, having improved the talents committed to them by their Lord, were commended of him, are a pattern for all. Being servants, they were engaged by Covenant to obey him. That they should occupy till he would come, they had therefore solemnly

promised. Others, who are denominated citizens, hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. These had either refused to Covenant to obey him, or had promised to him deceitfully. Their end was destruction. It was not merely because that the faithful servants performed the service laid upon them, but because that they had engaged to do it, and while others declared their resolution to rebel, kept their promise of fidelity, that they were ultimately approved. As their obedience without their engagement would have been deficient, so the use of every talent committed to man is insufficient without the exercise of vowing that use; and equally with the one is the other required.[251] All such vows are widely different from those restraints which have no higher recommendation than human authority. "Popish monastic vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself." [252] The latter are countenanced by no class of vows lawfully made, either in Old Testament times or in a later period. The vows of the Nazarite were dutiful under the former dispensation. There is no good ground for the statement made in reference to that class of vows, that "they are merely arbitrary, prior to the making of them." Had not Providence, by the light of the word, with a precision not less complete than the tenor of any definite precept, dictated the service vowed, it had been unlawful to vow it, or to keep the vow. When the vows of the Nazarite were made lawfully, their matter was not indifferent. And even as these were acceptably made when duty presented itself, vows may be made with acceptance still, when duty by whatever means is made manifest. No more did there exist under the former dispensations a class of services that might or might not be performed, than there does under the present. And though there may be no evidence that the things vowed by the Nazarite are incumbent in these last times, yet the laws that enjoin the duties of vowing and paying, were not less applicable to the observances, which, on the mistaken ground that they were obligatory only according to the will of men, have been improperly denominated "indifferences," than they are to every duty, however exhibited, that is obligatory now. If certain things which may be done by some in given circumstances, but not in others, may be denominated "indifferent," then those things which should be performed only by some in given stations in the Church or in civil society, may be called indifferent too. The manner of representation is altogether objectionable. Nothing is indifferent. Men may err in their sentiments concerning duty, and call some things indifferent either in regard to time or to matter; others not. But there is nothing which ought to be done, that is strictly indifferent. There is nothing which men ought to do merely of their own good pleasure. What God makes known, and that alone, should be vowed and performed. II. Covenanting should engage all to duties to society in general. Imperative upon all is the command, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." [253] The constitution of the various relations of human society, and the law and varied providential arrangements of the Most High -- all require that mutual regard for the welfare of one another, should be cherished by all. And as those who love not their brother give no evidence that they love God, so they who fear Him ought to manifest their love to Him by using all those means, of which Covenanting is one, by which the utmost efficiency for good may be given to their resolution to serve the Lord, and to their interest in the prosperity of their neighbour. These duties -- that ought not merely to be performed but vowed, are owing, First, to Families. The relations of the domestic circle are of Divine appointment.[254] To be mutual helpers to one another, husband and wife are associated by marriage; and the duties of parents to their children, and of these to their parents, are numerous and definite. The

common obligation of all of them to God, behoves in vowing to Him to be acknowledged, -- not merely as individuals, but as members of families, ought all to perform the duty in secret, and in a public social capacity. "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." [255] Each member of a family in secret ought to Covenant as a member of the family with God, and the whole family on warranted occasions of public solemn Covenanting, even though there might be no more associated in the service than themselves, ought to engage to duties not merely to others, but to themselves in their domestic capacity. The wrath of God is threatened on those families which, not calling on the name of God, do not vow to Him. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." [256] Noah and his family in their associate capacity Covenanted with God. And by their families did Israel in the land of Moab, taking hold upon his Covenant, present themselves before him. [257] In the marriage covenant husband and wife bind themselves in the presence of God to the duties of that relation. But though that engagement may not be repeated, these are called on suitable occasions to vow the performance of definite duties that may be incumbent upon them in their associate capacity. Submission to one another in the fear of the Lord, which is manifested in the service of vowing to him, is inculcated upon them. "Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." [258] And to support, and govern, and bring up their families in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is incumbent on them, and ought to be the subject of solemn vows. The children of believing parents are the Lord's. "Children are an heritage of the Lord." They are his gift. In them he possesses a Covenant right. He has his eye upon them for good. They ought to be set apart to himself. In baptism they are dedicated to him; and even as the reception of any other gift of God, brings under an obligation not merely to improve it for his service, but also to vow to do so; the inheritance of children demands that solemn Covenant engagements in reference to them, should be habitually made to the Most High. The people of Israel Covenanted to obey the command, -- "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." [259] And the following words of the Psalmist, speaking the language at once of inspiration and of believers, must be considered both as a promise and a vow which should be adopted by all. "I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful work, that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." [260] Not less than the performance of the duties of parents to their children ought the obedience of children to their parents or guardians to be Covenanted. When the duties of the moral law are promised in covenant, these are vowed. The performance of the duties of the fifth commandment is due to parents. That and the service of vowing to discharge these duties all owe to God. Obedience to parents in the Lord cannot be fully performed without the resolution to render it solemnly expressed to the Lord. In one word, the various duties to one another obligatory on members of families ought to be performed, by being specially Covenanted, in and to the Lord. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." [261] What

a blessedness would reign in families, were they thus consecrated to the Lord! Then love in the midst of them would not be an impulse that might be neutralised by selfishness or any other evil propensity, but a flame kindled and sustained by the grace of God, and diffusing an influence for lasting good; fanned by every fresh breath of Divine influence drawn in by the soul living on the provision of God's covenant, sanctified by the word and prayer -- including the solemn vow, intense as the flame on God's altar kindled from above, holy because from the Holy Spirit of promise, it would go out on the members of the hallowed circle, subduing as the power of an ever active principle, ennobling as all the gifts of God, and as the bond of a glorious union, that may not be broken in life, beyond the dissolving power of death, to survive to eternity. Secondly, to civil communities. "Honour all men,"[262] is an injunction imperative on all. It includes that the duties owing to all in their various relations, should be discharged because of God's appointment. Masters should honour their servants by recognising the just claims which these have upon them. Servants should honour their masters by showing that respect, and rendering that obedience, which they owe to them. Rulers should honour their subjects, by recognising them as the channel through which in the providence of God their just title to reign was transmitted, and by acting towards them as in possession of rights committed to them by the Moral Governor of the universe, which rulers deputed by him are bound to acknowledge and preserve entire. And nations are called to honour lawful civil rulers by rendering to them all that homage and subjection which is consistent with the dictates of the Divine law; and all should honour all men by vowing to perform the duties owing to them. If men do not vow unto God in a secret and in a public manner to fulfil to the various lawful civil communities with which they may be connected, their obligations, by reckoning those as unworthy of the solemn promise to God to obey them, they do not honour them, and thus by disobeying His command, they dishonour God. The duties of masters and servants to one another, are duties which each respectively owe to Christ. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will, doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."[263] And if one duty to Christ ought to be vowed, ought not all, and consequently those? A master and his servant by promises come under mutual obligations to one another. And seeing that God has made promises to men, and at the same time enjoined duties, ought not they to accept of these promises, and engage to perform these duties? And if at all, why not in special deliberate solemn Covenanting? Equally therefore, with every other class of duties to which men should engage, should the respective duties of masters and servants to one another be vowed to God, as obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The duties of lawful civil governors and of the people under them owing by these classes respectively to one another ought to be vowed. They are duties to God. "God is the King of all the earth."[264] They are therefore included in the oath of allegiance which both kings and subjects ought to swear to Him. The people of Israel set an example in this, which should be imitated in these and all succeeding times. "Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people."[265] If a civil constitution be according to the word of God, if the rulers who carry its ordinance into effect be men fearing God and hating covetousness, and if

they dispense in a righteous manner its just laws, obedience is due by the people, and ought to be vowed to God. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." [266] That cannot be done completely for the Lord's sake, which is not vowed to him. Whatever is done for His sake, is done in obedience to Him, as having required the discharge of duty and solemn engagements to himself to perform it. And, what kings and others in power in civil society ought to swear to the people, and in joining with their people on occasions of public Covenanting, ought to vow and swear to the Lord, is to rule according to the law of Christ. What was addressed to Joshua concerning the books written by Moses is, in reference to all the precepts of God's law permanently obligatory, applicable to all who rule. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have I not commanded thee?" [267] And lawful civil rulers are represented as the ministers of God, and consequently as acting in the capacity of servants, voluntarily devoted to His service, not merely in their personal, but also in their public character. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." [268] It is the duty of the civil magistrate to legislate against all evil denounced in the Scriptures. He may not assume to himself the authority of sitting lord over the consciences of men, nor legislate where no human law ought to extend; but he ought to forbid all vice and impiety, and encourage every excellence. He should not consider himself to be called upon to prohibit only some practices clearly evinced to be sinful. He is called to interpose his authority, on behalf of civil society, against those who invade its just rights; but is not at liberty to disregard, in his administration, what man owes to God. While he should enforce the observation of the duties of the second table of the law, he ought to inculcate the observance of those of the first. For the suppression of evil human laws requires penal sanctions; these penalties also must be regulated by the word of God; and, in inflicting them, the Divine will be consulted in opposition to the vague or biassed judgment of man. Nor must the supposed comparatively innoxious effect of any evil upon civil society ever lead to wink at or slightly punish it, if branded with the mark of Divine displeasure, and threatened with awful vengeance. The protection due by a civil government to the people under it is extensive and varied. To its care natural, and civil, and religious rights all belong. Besides preserving external peace and concord, administering justice, defending and encouraging such as are and do good, the civil magistrate should be found promoting the interests of true religion; not by dictating to the Church of God, or legislating in it, but by countenancing with his civil sanction all its ordinances, by exerting his influence in her outward support and defence against all external enemies, and by keeping from places of power and trust in the nation all hostile to her interests. He should employ his power on its behalf; and not on any account should the principle of expediency in any cases, whether of legislation or jurisprudence, be adopted to give scope to measures denounced in the word of God. The people, both in regard to the choice of rulers and to obedience to them, have important duties to perform. As to the first -- between the character of a law and the qualifications of those who dispense it, there ought obviously to be an intimate correspondence. Of no law, however excellent, could the benefits be extended, were

individuals either ignorant of its nature or opposed to its precepts engaged in its administration. While an irreligious or immoral governor would pervert the course of justice in the administration of laws truly excellent, he would be utterly incompetent to the improvement of those that might be defective. The acts of the best of civil governments -- even those founded upon the statutes of Divine truth -- from the very nature of society, require frequently to be modified. And, since the modelling and increase of laws, as well as their dispensation, are very much dependent upon the agency of rulers, how important would it be to have supreme and subordinate authority committed to those who, having learned from the source of all true wisdom, and having been rightly impressed with the great responsibility connected with the situation of those who, by the authority of God, judge between man and man, and legislate for his declarative glory, alone are fitted to bear rule over mankind! Every human system is liable to change for the better or worse. To admit then into the councils of a nation, or to the administration of its laws, men opposed to their salutary spirit, would be not merely to show no regard for its welfare, but to employ means for its destruction. Those who suppose that the votaries of false religions, and error of whatever kind, however liberal might be their professions, would pay respect to institutions favourable to truth, are ignorant of that unholy zeal with which the abettors of delusive systems, carry into effect their designs. And they who would imagine that men, uninfluenced by any moral or religious feeling, would promote in their administration the distribution of justice, are sufficiently blinded to conceive that error is equally with truth worthy of support, or that false systems are unproductive of evil. Different from the sentiments of such were those which dictated the advice of Jethro, delivered in critical circumstances to the Hebrew lawgiver. "Moreover," said that wise adviser to Moses, "moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge." [269] And with that advice, which from its adoption would appear to have been confirmed by a Divine warrant, harmonize the words of David, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." [270] If it is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, and if the throne be established in righteousness, can that nation be prosperous in which the wicked walk on every side, the vilest men being exalted? "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" [271] In regard to the choice of rulers, the duty of a people enlightened with the knowledge of Divine truth, is clear and plain. When the qualities demanded by the law of God are not possessed, no right to rule, on the footing that ancestors, in the providence of God, had reigned, or on any other ground, can be claimed. Like that of wealth, the possession of power depends solely upon the sovereign will of God: even just rulers, without the express promise of God, have no reason to expect that their power will be continued exclusively to their families. The distribution of the gifts of God is sovereign; and when because of sin, in chastisement or judgment, He leads to the transference of royal dignities from one house to another, the claims of hereditary or other privilege will be of little avail. On no account can a people who yield subjection to the King of Zion and the Lord of all, commit into the hands of men, unqualified by irreligion or otherwise, the reins of a government framed, as each ought to be, according to the standards of Divine truth. Although, as after the invasion of property, when sometimes time appears to give a right to possession, the usurpation of royal prerogatives, in the course of years, by a degraded and servile people, may be not merely

submitted to, but acknowledged as lawful; yet, as the thief or the robber, though his heirs to the third and fourth generation may possess the fruits of his spoil, cannot fail to stand chargeable with crime before God's throne, so the ruler, whose throne is founded on iniquity, or ascended through cruelty or injustice, though millions applaud his government and confirm to his descendants the power that may be unjustly claimed by him, cannot, but in the eye of the Eternal, be viewed as a usurper. And concerning those who submit willingly to his authority, the Lord will say, "They set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not." [272] Next, as to the obedience which a people owe to their civil rulers. The nature and extent thereof are defined in the word of God. To the law of God, all mankind are under permanent obligations; and all, in their peculiar relations, are bound to render obedience to those rulers who are vested with authority from Him. Between rulers and the people under them, the compact ought to be mutual and voluntary; and wherever a just title to sovereign power can be shown, there obedience can be claimed. For the government of mankind in things civil, God has been pleased to appoint the ordinance of magistracy; and He himself, in his providence, calls to the exercise of its supreme and subordinate functions. This call is addressed through the people, who alone possess the right to raise to power and trust over them those possessed of qualifications for office. When the attainments of those chosen to rule accord in some measure with the requirements of the Divine law, the power communicated is of Divine authority, and obedience as unto God is due by the people; but when the compact between the ruler and the people is opposed to the doctrines of Divine truth, there is no obligation upon either party. Both are chargeable with sin for entering into their engagements; but the people are free from their promised allegiance, and the ruler is destitute of authority. This we may say in general, without condescending upon the precise limits, transgressing which, power on the one hand is null and void, and obedience on the other is not obligatory; or, inquiring what in systems of government, partly good and partly evil, is essential to their authority. We can conceive of some civil governments as originating from the obscure intimations of the light of nature concerning sin and duty, and as under the superintendence of men possessed of qualities compatible with the views of those whom they rule over or govern. Here the compact, though very imperfect, would be mutual and consistent, and the duties recognised by each party completely obligatory on both. An increase of knowledge, however, would demand reformation; and so far as such would not be attempted when manifestly necessary, so far would the law of God be disregarded, and so far would the government be opposed to His authority. Kings and others in power are required, as the light of duty breaks in upon them, to conform their public procedure to its exhibitions; and the people under their dominion are called to obey. If reformation, however, begin not with those in possession of power, subjects, perceiving its necessity, are not warranted to abstain from attempting it. Those attempts, however, should be of such a character as not to endanger, unnecessarily, the peace of communities. The duty of rulers should be perseveringly set before them, and the minds of all assiduously called to reflection. And while obedience should be given to no unjust law, and no recognition of any unlawful institution should be made, the utmost care should be taken to bring all to a sense of obligation, so that, if possible, there might be averted the crisis when the voice of a people, enlightened by Divine truth, having been altogether disregarded, there ought to be taken the final step of expelling from the seat of power those who, by contemning alike the law of God and the sentiments of their subjects, declare themselves unworthy of supreme authority. But to rulers possessed of scriptural qualifications, cordial obedience is due. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." [273] Also, in the

acknowledgment of their lawful authority, that their persons may be blessed, their governments may be established, and prosperity may distinguish their reign, prayer must be made to God on their behalf. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." [274] And whilst, agreeably to the injunction, "Honour the king," respect, far transcending that homage which evaporates in hacknied expressions of loyalty employed in reference to majesty, is due, the defence and support of rulers in the due exercise of their power -- a support even extended to the making of every lawful sacrifice on behalf of the interests of truth and righteousness, devolves on all placed under a Christian government. And in order that such subjection be properly maintained, a salutary fear, not merely of the wrath of man, but of the wrath of God, and a conscientious regard to duty, must be cherished. "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." [275] When the fear of the sanction annexed to the transgression of any law is the only motive to obedience, that obedience cannot be genuine. Not merely the lower, but also the higher principles of our nature, must lead to that course of conduct which is estimable in the sight of men, and what is more important by far, acceptable to God. The moral being whom the fear of punishment alone would deter from doing evil, by threats would be equally hindered, and perhaps more so, from doing good. And he whom a sense of duty would not urge to right conduct, would not always be led to it by a view of the consequences resulting from doing evil. They who love the law of God will obey it, because of his holy will; and his authority will be recognised in the commands of those who rule for him, according to its manifestation, not less than in the express dictates of his word. All the institutions of God, and all the means which he has appointed for the promotion of his own glory and for the good of men, are dear to his people; and while they seek to declare the glory of God, and endeavour to promote the best interests of men, at once they will fear and hate to sin. The people of God, however, have not always, nay have seldom, in His providence, been privileged to live under civil governments, sanctioned by His high authority. In their unfavourable circumstances how ought they to conduct themselves towards those who rule over them? Ought they to join themselves with the people of the lands wherein they dwell, in supporting thrones of iniquity? or, are they to uphold the authority of those who rule not for God? Since the enjoyment of outward privileges -- such as the protection of life and character, and property, brings under obligations, which may be acknowledged, without the recognition of any attribute of a government, nay even with a dissent from its enactments and constitution of evil, these obligations, in living at peace with all men, in giving scope wisely and consistently to every good law, and in the paying of dues lawful in themselves, they ought to acknowledge; even in cases where the imposts of such a government are so combined, as that it may be difficult or impossible to distinguish between what is required for lawful, and what for unlawful purposes, within certain limits, they will not withhold their contributions, but protest against the sinful uses to which the revenues of the nation may be put. But when, by direct contribution or otherwise, they are required to support or countenance measures palpably sinful, or to give a pledge of loyalty by oath, or otherwise, to systems immoral or unscriptural, accounting it better to obey God rather than men, this they ought at all hazards to refuse. And when privileges, ensnaring in their nature, and in the acceptance of which is implied an acknowledgment of such governments, [276] are held out to them, reflecting that the oaths sworn and the various other public actions performed by the representatives of the people, are accepted in the name of the one and the other, and are

attributable to both, and that those who bear rule, are in general viewed as pledged to promote the system for which they act, these they ought conscientiously to reject;[277] -- pondering the question addressed to

Jehoshaphat, -- "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?"[278] To systems of government, therefore, under which the unlawful authority of the rulers is homologated by the servile acquiescence of a majority of the people, a minority are not bound to yield subjection. The laws of a nation, only when accordant with the statutes of the Eternal, confer obligation; and no acts of men can annul the demands of statutes formed according to His word, and consequently deriving their authority from Him. When will Zion be built up if her children testify not against the principle of those rulers who, divided as to means, but united in design, assail, as it were, with axes and hammers the institutions of religion, like the carved work of God's sanctuary, and defile the same by attempting to cast them to the ground? Let the voice of a distinct testimony for the prerogatives of Messiah the Prince, be resolutely lifted up. And though it would not, nay could not, in many cases be faithfully uttered in the councils of a nation, nor amid the shouts of many who, praising civil power, and a Church so degraded as to act as its creature, cry out in the spirit of the men of Ephesus, who said, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," would for a time be not much heard through some portions of the land: yet by the blessing of God it would be the means of exhibiting the nature of true reformation, and, if accompanied by uprightness of deportment, would be productive of benefits that should be enjoyed, when the works of the abettors of tyranny would have for ever perished. Rulers greatly miscalculate when they reckon as obedience the apparent submission which without hypocrisy is given to their laws, by those who deny their power to legislate to be of Divine authority. That quiescence possesses neither of the features which together constitute an act an offering of genuine obedience. It proceeds neither from wrath, that is, from the fear of their wrath, nor from a conscientious sense of obligation to obey them. To do what unqualified rulers command, is one thing; to do that from a regard to their pretended authority may be another. The sentiment is wrong, that a thing may be done for wrath, which cannot be done for conscience' sake. The acts done under incompetent rulers, by those who disapprove of their claims, come from neither. Their observance of good laws administered by such rulers, is not maintained either from a dread of the power of those to inflict a penalty, or from an approving regard of their claims to authority, but proceeds from the fear of the wrath of God, and from conscience of duty to Him. Wicked commands cannot be obeyed at all. An act performed for wrath, is not lawfully done if not done for conscience' sake also; and no service that men do under an unlawful government should proceed from either of these, in reference to those in power. Such rulers act as if the doing of what they require were obedience to them; but, when their demands are lawful in themselves, the performance of them should neither be made nor received as obedience to them, but rendered as service to God: when they are unlawful, they should be wholly disregarded. The doctrine is evil, that so long as any law exists, it ought to be obeyed. If a law be good, what it requires ought certainly to be done. But though rulers demand obedience to every existing law, whether it be good or bad, yet when they give effect to those that are bad, they are chargeable with crime, and the people who yield are culpable. It is true, that bad laws should be changed: but most erroneous, that till they be regularly removed they should be obeyed. "It is criminal voluntarily to support, for a single hour, laws which are immoral, unscriptural, and anti-christian; and an oath promising such support cannot but be sinful. It is a grievous error to maintain, that it is a duty to obey and support any law, however wicked, so long as it remains in the

statute-book. There is a law above all the laws of men, the authority of which remains for ever unchangeable; and when any human laws are in opposition to the divine, it is our duty to obey God rather than man. Laws framed by men in opposition to the will of God, ought to receive no countenance or support, in any form whatever, from the followers of the Lamb." [279] There is the same reason for discontinuing to obey a bad law as there is for annulling it and substituting for it a better. Difficulties that might arise in consequence of a people refusing to obey an evil law before its abolition, afford no reason why it should be observed till removed in what is termed a constitutional way, but are chargeable on those who made it and gave it scope. To promote the real welfare of the civil communities to which they belong, is the duty of all. Those who wink at the evils connected with them do not do so. Those who obey their unjust laws do not do so. Those who do not take means to reform them do not do so. Those who would seek to overthrow their good institutions are malignant enemies not merely of their country, but also of all mankind. Those who, from revenge, or envy, or selfishness, or any other evil principle, or all combined, would attempt to change their institutions, are the bane of society, and a curse to their race. Only those who fear God are the true friends of civil society. Those are called, and feel urged, in greater or less measure according to their attainments, to many varied duties, all of which tend to the one end of improving it. The diffusion of information regarding, the scriptural constitution of civil society, the duties of all ranks within it to God and to one another, the qualifications of rulers, and the obligation of the law of Christ in regard to all its concerns; the protection of its good institutions at once from the effects of tyranny and anarchy, whether from within or from without; the resistance of its laws that may be in opposition to the revealed will of God, and consequently to the best interests of the community; the reformation of its institutions that are evil, but that may be improved, and the destruction of those that are essentially corrupt; the adoption of new measures suited to the progress of the development, physical, intellectual, moral, and religious, of the society; and above all, the countenance and support of the Church of God in the enjoyment of all her privileges; are objects claiming the devoted attention of every one who has the least claim to be considered a worthy member of civil society, and which, from the very nature of society, according to the law of God, are incumbent on every one who enjoys its privileges. To classes of men of whatever kind. Every one ought to promote the welfare of his neighbour. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is, in every age, the motto only of the murderer. The wretchedness or guilt of our neighbour ought not to repel us from, but rather to attract us to him, to alleviate his sufferings, or administer admonition, or give direction, or encouragement, or assistance, of whatever nature. From those who are members of evil confederations we should not be kept back, but, while avoiding the means of temptation to sin, be led to urge them to dissociate themselves from societies that would lead them to ruin, and to connect with others that tend to happiness and peace and honour. The ignorant we ought to instruct and endeavour to reform; the irreligious we ought to warn, and, in a spirit of true compassion, to use means to turn from the error of his way; and the obstinately wicked we ought to mourn over, and beseech to seek unto God. "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." [280] And our enemies we ought to forgive, and by kindness seek to reclaim. To the good we should be drawn, not merely for our own advantage, but for theirs. Their excellencies we ought to imitate, and to endeavour, if possible, to increase and render more effective; and their society, in order to the advancement of the interests of truth, we should cultivate. To the intelligent and wise we should be drawn, that we may be wise, and their influence for good may be reflected

back to the utmost, even though in measure small, upon themselves; and to the religious, that, encouraged in prosecuting the way to the eternal inheritance, they may have, in increasing measure, the happiness of being accompanied and followed by many who will be helpers of their joy. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." [281] These various duties of the members of civil society are proper matter of solemn Covenant engagement. That they have but little entered into vows on the part of many who have bound themselves to other services, also required, is no reason why they should not be Covenanted. That they are enjoined in the law of Christ, obedience to which is the keeping of God's Covenant, is the reason why they should be distinctly described, and introduced into secret and public social solemn vows. Thirdly, to the Church of Christ. These are of high importance; by the authority of God they are inculcated, and to the highest of all ends they directly tend. Not enjoined by the authority of man, even deputed to him from above, but by Christ himself, they bind the conscience by a bond that men could neither have imposed nor relaxed. They are vowed in Baptism, engaged to in the Lord's Supper, and ought to be the matter of solemn engagements of an explicit public nature. These are, -- To abide by all the ordinances of Divine grace. These are the appointment of the Redeemer, and tend to the good of his Church. The relations of the members of the Church to one another, originating in his sovereign appointment, call them to these special duties to one another; and his explicit commands give definiteness to their obligations. To wait on these ordinances, is at once a duty to God and to his Church. To keep the Sabbath, to celebrate the sacraments, to hear and preach the gospel, to engage in the reading of the word of God, and in praise and prayer, to make and keep secret and social vows, to associate with his people, and to attend to whatever observances of discipline he has made known, are indispensable services. "I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints." [282] To support the ordinances of religion where they are enjoyed. The Lord gave to ancient Israel the institutions of his house as a trust. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." [283] And to all his people he has given the promise of a heart to observe his statutes for their own good, and the good of their children. "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." [284] Even the promise of outward support to the ordinances of religion, should enter into solemn vows. It is by the contributions of the people of God that these are to be continued. For offering to Him the lame and the blind, the Lord was displeased with Israel; but his blessing was promised to those who devoted liberally of their substance to Him. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." [285] To maintain the rights and privileges of the Church. These are a part of the charge committed to her by her Head; but they are also an inheritance which her members are bound by their relation to her to preserve and transmit. Against two classes of enemies, in particular, it is necessary to defend these. The abettors of corrupt systems of religion, by weapons of every character, assail them. These claiming for communities that were once distinguished by the truth,

but who have greatly, or nearly altogether relinquished it, the character of the true Church of God, are not scrupulous to represent societies that do hold the Head as not entitled to the Church's immunities; and consequently at once they tyrannically attempt to blind men, and to prevent them from uniting with those who have the light among them. Against such, as cruel and tyrannical usurpers who would bring the Church of God into bondage, and deny that her privileges are valid, those who are in her communion are called to testify. Prelacy and Popery are both corrupt systems, though not equally. Both claim for those who adhere to them the character of being the only members of the true Church. Both deny that any in societies not in communion with them, have a right to be reckoned the ministers of religion, or to dispense any of its ordinances. Both having attempted to rob the Church of Christ of her privileges, the latter consummates the impiety of one who sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God; and the former, by giving to an earthly monarch the place over His Church which belongs to Christ alone, being an accomplice in crime, approves. Against these systems, that the blinded who are attached to them may be delivered from their bondage, that the truly pious who are within them may be brought out of them, and that their invasions of the privileges of those who hold the truth may be limited, the rights of God's people behove to be held forth by testimony and maintained. A regard to the claims of the house of God on each of its members, should lead to the duty; and, in consequence of engagements by vow and oath, that should be performed. But next -- many civil rulers form another class which exacts upon the privileges of the Church. Assuming for civil authority a supreme power over all causes, ecclesiastical and civil, they practically attempt to deny to the Church of Christ her privileges, -- those rights which no mere civil society is competent to sustain, which the Lord himself purchased for and bestowed upon her, which she is bound by her allegiance to Him to keep entire and perpetuate, which she is destined to use for extensive good in the promotion of true religion, for which she is answerable to Him alone, which the rulers of this world -- which no creature can give or take away, which her Lord will conserve, even to the overthrow of every system -- whether civil or ecclesiastical, that will persevere to dispute them or use means to wrest them from her hands; and thus they give occasion to her members, in virtue of their communion with one another and common obligations to Christ, to testify by oath and otherwise against their pretensions as, rebellion against Him, and injustice and tyranny to the society of which He alone is the Head. To unite the various Churches of Christ. That these will be incorporated in millennial times, we have reason to believe. That different Churches have been brought into one, is matter of history. That the Lord in his providence has overruled outward circumstances for associating his people, in order that they might act for Him, is a truth worthy of careful consideration. On the ground that the illuminating and sanctifying agency of God's Spirit is altogether independent of the condition of men, we are forced to conclude, that many who by reason of the imperfections of the human heart have heretofore been but little disposed to make joint efforts on behalf of religion, may by means other than those of outward distresses, or along with these, be brought to co-operate, if not ultimately to incorporate, with one another, toward the high end contemplated in common by them. It is good to maintain sound views of the declarations of the word of God. It is proper to examine others. It is good for all to endeavour rightly to apprehend the sentiments of those who may differ from them in opinion concerning Divine truth; and necessary to exhibit such sentiments in their true character. It is desirable that mutual communications regarding the truth should be interchanged among those who desire, but are unable yet to see eye to eye; and to be greatly wished, that all such, in what measure and manner

is competent to them, would strengthen each other's hands to give diffusion to their common views. The different communities of the Church should not stand in intrenchments inaccessible to each other. They are each a place of greater or less strength raised for defence, not against the others, but against a common foe. They cannot yet hold free communion; but various means of communication may be employed by them, without laying themselves open to the inroads of enemies. By encouraging some kinds of intercourse among themselves, they would not expose themselves to any assault, but secure, or rather alter for good, their positions. In order to the overthrow of the enemy, without giving him inadvertently even an inch of advantage, mutual aids might be communicated among them. Were proper means taken, their various positions, by being subjected to improvements, might ultimately come to be one system, within the lines of which no enemy would penetrate, and all whose parts acting in concert would present the reality of an outward Zion -- emblem of that which is spiritual, fortified with walls and bulwarks. So long as there are even two communities of the people of Christ, whose sentiments regarding various things are not in harmony, so long is a loud call addressed to all who fear Him, to take means to lead to unity, and to come under common solemn obligations thus to build up, even as the walls of Jerusalem, the walls and bulwarks of Zion. To enlarge the Church. In the providence of God, the truth is widely diffused through the operation of many outward causes. According to the provisions of his grace, it is intended for dissemination through the voluntary agency of those who love it. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." [286] Through Bible Societies. The fact is singular, that the operation of these is the first great exemplification made in the last times, as it is among the highest applications, of the principle of co-operation on the part of many for good. It shows that God in his providence, in a wondrous manner, leads men to do what he has enjoined in his word; honours his own institutions; and teaches the lesson, that in accordance with the facilities presented by him, should be the dutiful energetic endeavours of all towards the exhibition of his truth. Was it dutiful for fathers to teach their children the law of God? Was it dutiful for the priests to read it to the people of Israel assembled at their solemn feasts? It is dutiful for all who have the whole word of God, to use every lawful means in their power to make others know it. Was it dutiful to make use of one copy of the law for instructing the people, when only one could be obtained? It is dutiful so to make use of as many copies of the Scriptures as can be found, nay, to aid in producing copies of them to the utmost limits of our ability, that they may be sent to those who are in darkness. To the greatest extent of the capacities of all, it is dutiful for them to obtain and distribute copies of the blessed word. Every member of the Church of Christ, from the days of infancy to those of extreme old age, should be a member of a Bible Society; and, till the many millions of the human family have the word in their hands, that it may take possession of their hearts, it should be distributed. Every discovery in science, every acquisition in literature, every improvement or invention in art, should be devoted to the multiplication, in all languages, at the least possible expense, and accordingly to the utmost extent, of copies of the word. And all should give themselves to aid in the dutiful effort. Contributions of money; devotion of talent, and energy,

and time; and prayer to God: for this, should all be made, and, in solemn individual and public vows, be offered to God. Through Missions. First, at home. The claims of countrymen perishing for lack of knowledge, on those who know the truth, are strong. The claims of the whole Church upon each of her members for devotedness to her interests, are the strongest that society can put forth, and when made on behalf of those who are united by many near ties, harmonize with the former. Every one should nourish and cherish his own body. The duty is common to an individual and to the Church of Christ. That community which does not improve in the region where the means of healthful increase are afforded, is in an unhealthy state. When a portion of the visible Church does not, by affording to those around it who are in a state of corruption the means of life, assimilate them to itself, it is not in vigorous action; its members sustain not the character of living ones; and except it be restored, its decay cannot be far distant. To lead the communities of the faithful to invade the ignorance and sin and misery that surround them, the voice of humanity, a sense of obligation to the calls of duty, the delightful prospect of good to many who will either receive or give instruction, and of glory to God by the salvation of sinners, do all unite. Before the appeals of these the insensibility and even opposition of those who are in degradation and guilt, should be esteemed as no ground of discouragement; but, in the spirit of devotedness to a great work which cannot lose its gracious reward, should, with resolution and prayer in consequence of solemn devotedness on the part of one and all, be perseveringly and patiently, though even painfully, encountered. Secondly, to the heathen. To use endeavours that a system which tends but to good be developed to the utmost, is not to manifest ambition, but to display the working of true benevolence. To seek the increase of the Church's power -- essentially benignant in the world -- is to aspire at what has been reserved for her, and to aim at what each of her members is under obligation to favour. Her enemies alone tend to hinder her advancement. The providence of God is directed to her welfare. The designs of satan are overruled for her good. The Lord himself watches over her, and leads her forth to her high destination. And ought not her children, by making and keeping solemn vows, to enlighten the subjects of darkness, to promote her prosperity? When the number of the faithful is increased, so is their efficiency; the enemies of truth are diminished and discouraged by all brought to receive it; and the communion of saints, by the addition of every believer, is swelled to the pleasing anticipation, the grateful remembrance, and substantial satisfaction in the enjoyment of present good, of every one therein. Who that loves the prosperity of Zion, does not desire to see her communion extended? Who that has an interest in her welfare, does not joyfully anticipate and pray for, and endeavour to use other means, that men may see the glorious things said in prophecy concerning her? Who that is a worthy member of her communion, does not feel himself urged, by a sense of obligation to her, to add to the joy of each of her faithful ones, by being instrumental in leading the heathen nations to the truth? How glorious a thing it would be to see those nations associated, by the strong ties of fellowship, and a common relation to one glorious Lord, to his other believing people! How delightful to think of the many who had not known God being brought to a substantial and eternal union to others made to enjoy his favour! -- to meditate upon the heathen brought, through the instrumentality of men, to do homage to that Lord whom all his saints delight to see honoured! -- to know of the heathen that had been given to Him for an inheritance, being taught willingly to receive and acknowledge him, and by special Covenanting, to give themselves away unto Him, taking hold upon him as given for a Covenant of the people, and presenting the fulfilment of the precious words, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." [287] Thirdly,

to the Jews. Their fathers first brought the glad tidings of salvation to the Gentiles. The Apostles, and others of them, proclaimed the truth in every nation under heaven. From the ten tribes in captivity in the east went forth missionaries to India, and China, and to other nations around them. The ancient Israelites at Sinai, at Horeb, and elsewhere, Covenanted to afford the means of grace to those of other nations of the world. In the covenant made with Abraham, provision was made for the introduction of the stranger into the visible Church of God, by granting to him the privilege of circumcision. The people of Israel were the children of that Covenant, and recognised its engagements as obligatory upon them. Among them, accordingly, every circumcised person, not excluding the stranger, had a right to eat of the passover. In the decalogue, the stranger dwelling among them is recognised. In the covenant made at Sinai, express provisions, besides, were made for such. "The stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." [288] In that it is said to the priests, "That ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." [289] These were therefore to teach it to the stranger also. In all these things Israel, by Covenanting, acquiesced, when they were first proposed, and also at succeeding times when the covenant of Sinai was renewed. The Church is therefore under a debt to their descendants which should be paid in kind. In order to confer upon her the honour of fulfilling the high obligation, her members should make and keep Covenant engagements to send missionaries to all the remnants of Israel. To her and to each other, individually, they owe it thus to use means to add to the communion of saints, the descendants of Jacob, -- whose restoration will be so advantageous, -- "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" [290] How pleasing to think of Israel again grafted into their own olive tree! -- to reflect upon the fulfilment of the promise, "And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins!" [291] -- and to look forward to that universal joy which shall be expressed, when, the fulness of the Gentiles having been brought in, and all Israel gathered, the kingdom shall universally be acknowledged to be the Lord's! III. Covenanting should engage all to duties to the Mediator as Lord of all. It is by God that all live, and move, and have their being; and to him all are called to live. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." To seek the Lord, and to walk after the Lord, are the sum of all the obedience to Him which he requires; and are the substance of what all are required to vow and swear to perform. "And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul." [292] "And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant." [293] These duties to God ought to be performed to Christ; for he hath said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" [294] and it is the will of God, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." [295] These duties are, it maybe remarked, in general, To declare the glory of God. All the duty that He requires of man is included in this. Every thing that occurs, independently of the will of moral creatures, is glorifying to God. Every evil thing is overruled for the manifestation of his glory. The willing services of unfallen angels and redeemed men, directly tend to display that glory. All that God requires of man, and consequently

the use of all means appointed for glorifying his name, ought to be vowed. By commands to all; by promises, by invitations and encouragements, to his people; by denunciations and warnings addressed to his enemies; he urges men to show forth his glory. To vow and swear to do so is therefore obligatory upon them. The obligation is acknowledged in the Psalmist's vow, -- "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore." [296] And as a consequence of offering worship to God, and therefore, in some instances at least, of vowing to Him, the glorifying of God's name is predicted. "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." [297] But particularly, To maintain the truth by the profession and practice of it. Idolatry, or the whole of false religion and all its practical consequences, is represented both as a withholding from God of the glory due to him, and as a surrender of the truth. [298] Christ is the Truth; and accordingly those who receive him cleave to his truth by vow and consequent obedience. The Spirit of promise is the Spirit of Truth. They who, by Covenanting, receive him in the former character, accept of him as sent to lead into all truth. [299] The Lord is "a God of Truth." All who take him as their God accede to his truth. It is to the truth of God that those devoted servants, whom he denominates "My Witnesses," give testimony, in their profession, and life, and conversation. It is to his truth that they testify in the same manner, when they act as his "Messenger." [300] The truth of God was committed to his people in the charge which, from time to time, they accepted in Covenanting. [301] The Redeemer commands that it be held fast. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent." [302] The Covenant people of God are "the righteous nation which keepeth the truth." [303] Each of them declares, "I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me." [304] And each adopts the vow, "I will walk in thy truth." [305] The truth of God's character ought to be maintained. That his name might be glorified, he was pleased to make himself known. That men might in some measure apprehend him, he revealed himself. That they might not forget but hold communion with him, he appointed the ordinances of his grace. That they might be led to celebrate his greatness, he gave them command and afforded them facilities to pledge themselves to his service. They are called to contemplate with wonder and admiration, the transcendent excellencies of his nature, and to speak of them with reverence and awe. And Himself, whose being and attributes are all infinite, they are created and preserved to praise and adore. The distinct personality of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; the divinity of each of these glorious persons; the unity of the Godhead; and the essential glory of the Three-One-God; are truths implied in the very nature of solemn Covenant engagement; and in order to the keeping of these, require to be held. The truth of God's government ought to be maintained. The underived majesty of the Eternal; the power and authority of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, extending over all creatures from the beginning to everlasting; the reality and nature of God's purposes, and their fulfilment in creation and providence; in opposition to the atheist, the fatalist, the deist, the sceptic, and every other who does not believe in the truth of Divine revelation; are made known, and claim to be contended for and professed. The relations of the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, confederated in the everlasting Covenant for the salvation of man, behove to be maintained. In the Scriptures, the Father is represented as having given his Son to be a propitiation for the sins of his people, accepted of his work, and conferred upon him a glorious reward; -- as the God of grace, calling, justifying, adopting, sanctifying, and receiving to glory, his people; -- the Holy Ghost is exhibited as given to the Redeemer, as renewing, illuminating, sanctifying, and comforting his elect, as a Spirit of grace and supplication, as dwelling in their

hearts, as given to them as an earnest of the purchased possession, as the Comforter, the Remembrancer, the Spirit of promise; -- and the Redeemer is presented as the great Mediator between God and men. To the faith of God's elect, such manifestations are made. They must be confessed. The mediatorial character and glory of Christ ought to be maintained. The revelation of Divine truth is due to Him as the great Prophet of his Church. He is the great High Priest of his people's profession. He is their King, and Head over all. The illuminating influences of the word and Spirit of Christ have been felt by all his people. They are taught in the Scriptures; they proceed from him as the great Teacher sent from God; they require to be proclaimed. The atonement and intercession of Christ lie at the foundation of the sinner's hope of acceptance and enjoyment of the favour of God. Being distinctly revealed, like all other doctrines of God's word, they should enter into a testimony for the truth. The Headship of Christ is a most important part of the truth, to which testimony must be borne. The Father "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." [306] His Headship over the Church is real in every age. In all time, however, by some it has been disputed. It could not be disproved, though it has often been disregarded. So often as the ordinances of Divine grace have been undervalued or misimproved; so often as men have taken upon them to make changes in the worship of God; so often as there have been taught for doctrines the commandments of men; so often as the government which Christ instituted in his house has not been observed; so long as the ordinance of discipline has been neglected or improperly administered; so often as rites and ceremonies in the worship of God have been added or modified according to the caprice of men; so often as men unqualified have assumed to themselves the functions of the ministering servants of Christ; so often as the ministers of religion have acted as lords over God's heritage; so often as one individual in it has sat as head of the Church; so often as one has sat in the temple of God showing himself that he was God; so often as civil rulers have stepped out of their own sphere to legislate in the Church, to overrule the proceedings of its courts, to visit with restrictions, whether by pains, or penalties, or otherwise, those who used a lawful power and authority therein; so often and so long as an earthly sovereign has sat as head of any department of His Church; so often and so long, ignorantly or otherwise, has the Redeemer, as King and Head of his Church, been dishonoured. For his glory so set at nought, his people, in protesting against the opposition thereby shown to his just claim, and in maintaining all these claims, are called to testify by vow and oath. The Headship of Christ over the nations is taught in Divine revelation not less clearly than that over the Church; not less than that, it has been misapprehended and disputed, and often practically denied. But equally with the other, being true, the doctrine has stood unshaken amidst every assault. It is manifest from all the references of Divine truth to civil matters: -- from its delineations of the duties of the civil magistrate, and of those under his authority, to Christ and to one another; of the qualifications of lawful civil rulers; of nations as called into existence by the Mediator, under his cognizance, and at his disposal; of the duties of nations to the Church of Christ, -- to establish the true religion, restrain ungodliness, and otherwise aid in the promotion of her interests: and appears from designations representing Him as possessed of all power and authority over men. But, even as his authority over the Church, it has been set at nought by many. Civil constitutions not framed according to his law, nor under the care of those impressed with the fear of God; that give equal countenance to error and truth; that support delusive systems, while they do not encourage the spread of truth; that attempt to subordinate the Church to the civil power; that seek the alliance of

any idolatrous system of religion to support their authority; that seek the continuance of power by attempting to bring the nations to which they belong, at the risk of the exterminating penalty of poverty or destitution, under the yoke of ignorance, to be fastened on by the educating or training of the young of the lower classes by the priesthood or other agents of the "mystery of iniquity" alone; or that seek to secure their influence by any means at variance with the law of Christ; are all in opposition to his revealed will, are unpossessed of authority from him, are the voluntary agents of "the Prince of the power of the air," and cannot be countenanced without rebellion against Him who is the Governor among the nations. Whosoever there may be that fear God among those who rule or govern in connection with such constitutions, by being connected with them and putting forth their claims, are not in the path of duty. The obligation incumbent on such, nay, on all -- whether in power or not, who support them, is either to give up their adherence to them, or to change them so as to bring them up to the scriptural standard. With the supporters of such constitutions unamended, some who disapprove of them, have in some respects to co-operate. But never can any act, without sin, along with these, in such a manner as to recognise the claims of the power maintained by these constitutions, to be the ordinance of God.[307] Joint procedure with such can be warrantable only when directed to an end good in itself, and when accompanied by an expressed or understood disapproval of the character and authority of the civil power. Against such, that they may be modified for good, or succeeded by what is glorifying to God, a substantial testimony ought to be lifted up. In order to the extension of the acknowledgment of the Mediatorial power over all the kingdoms of the world, an exhibition of the prerogatives and claims upon these of the Redeemer, should explicitly be made in testifying for him, by a scriptural profession, and practical observance of his commands. And in solemn Covenanting such attestations required to be embodied. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me; I will not know a wicked person. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me."[308] "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever." "I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works." "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."[309] And the truth of the depravity of man and his inability to restore himself to God's favour ought to be maintained. The entire corruption of the human nature by sin, original sin, the dominion of sin in the unconverted, the power of sin even in the people of God, are all made known as by a sunbeam in the Divine word, consistent with the conduct of men, necessary to be admitted in order to the acceptance of the blessings of the great salvation, the subject of solemn confession to God, and a ground of humiliation in his sight. These should enter into a solemn profession of the truth. "I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."[310] "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me."[311] To testify against error and its consequences. Heathenism it is necessary to denounce according to the word of Divine truth. It is desirable to condemn it, as originating in the corruption of true religion, making progress by assimilating to itself the corruptions of the human heart under the influence of satan, and tending towards the ruin of the soul. The manner in which it is described in the sacred volume, and represented there as certainly to be dissipated,

should be made known by those who come in contact with it. And the glorious truth of God, in contrast with it in its character and tendencies, should be displayed. In like manner, should infidelity -- whether Jewish or Gentile, Mahomedanism and Socinianism on the one hand, and Popery and Prelacy on the other, and every other false system, be dealt with. To assault such by the exhibition of the truth of God, and to vow to do so, his people have every warrant and encouragement. They fear him, and under his banner as his Covenanted servants, are called to the duty. "Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." [312] Hence, in conclusion, First, Covenanting should engage all to every former good attainment. The obligation of a permanent duty cannot be dissolved; but the observance of it may and ought to be vowed successively. For a reason, the same as, or similar to, that for which it was vowed at first, it may, on some occasions, be promised by vow and oath again. The Divine law holds every moral being bound to duty; yet it admits, nay, commands, the making of promises in Covenanting to do it. As the original command to obey, does not render the vow unnecessary, so neither does one vow remove the necessity for another. It is in vain to object, that as the vow or oath of marriage need not be repeated by the parties, so neither need any other. Though on account of the esteemed and real solemnity of that original covenant, it is not requisite that it should be renewed in the formal manner in which it was made at first, it is, nevertheless, manifest from Scripture, inculcating the use of the vow, that the parties may thereafter vow to God to continue to fulfil their first engagements. Were one duty that was formerly obligatory not to be engaged to in Covenanting, then might none other. Hence, only duties becoming incumbent at present could be vowed, and accordingly, as all the duties of the moral law were incumbent before, none of these could be vowed at all, and therefore, in no circumstances whatever, could the vow be made. The absurdity of the conclusion is sufficiently manifest. We are warranted to maintain that what was Covenanted before, no less than it should be performed, should be vowed again. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." [313] Secondly. In Covenanting, there should be made engagements to cleave to new correct views of truth and duty. The apprehensions of men are subject to continual change. Nor are those of the people of God exempted from this. Nay those should alter to improve. No new aspect of truth can any one warrantably disregard. Every increase made in the knowledge of God demands a corresponding acknowledgment. According to each, ought new vows to be made. When one enemy of his kingdom appears, vows should be made to resist and overthrow his influence. When many foes appear new vows of an appropriate kind should be entered into against them. When duty presents itself Covenant engagements should be made to perform it. With the enlargement of the field of duty, should proceed the enlargement of Covenant promises, in dependence on Divine aid to overtake it. According to the display of God's glorious goodness and mercy, should be the solemn engagements of his people to give it celebration. If one view of his glory calls to the exercise, every one brighter will invite to it, till both engagements and their fulfilment merge into eternal unbroken obedience in heaven. Thirdly. In Covenanting, there should be made engagements to abandon whatever evil unobserved there may be in the vow made, or whatever may be inconsistent with its lawful parts. A vow may sometimes be sinful, notwithstanding the use of the utmost care to make it in consistency with the calls of duty. The sinful parts are due to the imperfection of the individual who makes it; the lawful part alone is obligatory. The making of the good part of a vow ought not to be refrained from on account of a dread of associating with that a part that might be evil. Were an evil part to be introduced under the

apprehension of its enormity, daring crime would be committed, to which we could not conceive of an illuminated individual being accessory. Vowed in ignorance even, evil involves in sin. When discovered in its true character, it ought to be discarded. When the vow is made, there should be included in it the engagement, to refrain, so soon as it is discovered, from performing any part of it, which, having been sinful, and therefore possessed of no obligation, ought not to have entered into it. Nothing, indeed, but a sense of propriety can hinder men from claiming the performance of engagements, even of an evil character, that are made to them. But God who commands that only what is good be vowed, disapproves of such a demand, as well as of the engagement on which it is based. Finally. Covenanting does not shackle inquiry. It is a wrong interpretation of the words, "It is a snare after vows to make inquiry," that represents them as condemning every endeavour made, after vowing, to increase in knowledge, even in reference to the vow. The passage would seem only to designate as sinful, the practice of endeavouring to make inquiry, for the purpose of evading an engagement made by a vow of a lawful nature. Were a vow perfect, it would not need revisal, and would therefore be altogether independent of the increase in knowledge of the party under its obligation. An imperfect vow, on account of its imperfection, would require correction. The least discovery of imperfection in such, should lead to its improvement. Correct views of a vow, as altogether wrong, should lead to its abandonment, or a total reconstruction of it. To engage absolutely to perform any act, is not obligatory. It is only when the Lord will, that even duty can be done, and a vow should be made to perform it, only if he will enable. Moreover, it is only what he requires that should be done, whether vowed or not. Accordingly, a Covenant engagement, in which there is promised more than what is dutiful, is not lawful. In order to lead to duty alone, an engagement by vow should be made. It is alike foreign to the nature and to the end of a covenant, for those who enter into it to make their engagement independently of a reference to circumstances that may be unforeseen. Not to vow to engage in duty is evil. To vow to accomplish an act, whether it may be found afterwards to be sinful or not, is also evil. To vow to do what appears to be dutiful, instead of committing to a given course, independently of the light of duty that may break in, is rather to engage to the use of means to discover whether or not the performance vowed be lawful, and to the duty that may be obvious at the period of fulfilment, and which, in that season, ought to be done.

FOOTNOTES:[228] Job xli.4.[229] Deut. xxix.21.[230] 1 Kings xi.11.[231] Ps. cv.8-10.[232] Ex. xxxiv.28.[233] Deut. iv.23.[234] Ps. cxix.44.[235] Eph. v.29.[236] Ps. xviii.3.[237] Lam. iii.40.[238] Ps. lxxvii.12.[239] Ps. cxix.15, 16.[240] Ps. lv.16, 17.[241] Ps. cxix.62, 63.[242] Ps. cxlv.1, 2.[243] Ps. v.7.[244] Ps. cxxxviii.1, 2.[245] 1 Cor. vii.31.[246] Rom. vi.12, 13.[247] Ps. xviii.1.[248] Jas. iv.8.[249] Ps. lxxviii.37.[250] 1 Cor. xv.58.[251] Luke xix.12-27.[252] Confess. xxii.7.[253] Gal. vi.10.[254] Ps. lxxviii.6. Ps. cvii.41.[255] Jer. xxxi.1.[256] Jer. x.25.[257] Deut. xxix.18.[258] Eph. v.21, 22, 25.[259] Deut. vi.6, 7.[260] Ps. lxxviii.2-7.[261] Col. iii.23. See also ver.18-21.[262] 1 Pet. ii.17.[263] Eph. vi.5-9.[264] Ps. xlvi.7.[265] 2 Kings xi.17.[266] 1 Pet. ii.13, 14.[267] Josh. i.8.[268] Rom. xiii.4.[269] Exod. xviii.21, 22.[270] 2 Sam. xxiii.3.[271] Ps. xciv.20.[272] Hos. viii.4.[273] Rom. xiii.1.[274] 1 Tim. ii.1, 2.[275] Rom. xiii.5.[276] Such as, in the British dominions, so long as the civil constitution is not scripturally reformed, the use of the "Elective Franchise," or the office of a ruler, or legislator.[277] In order to direct attention to the duties of civil society favoured with the word of God, especially to the obligations of the members of every community existing under an immoral and unscriptural civil constitution, we beg leave to refer, in addition to the "Mediatorial Dominion," before noticed, to the "Claims of the Divine Government applied to the British Constitution, and the use of the

Elective Franchise." Thomas Neilson, and Charles Zeigler, Edinburgh; and John Keith, and William Marshall, Glasgow -- 1843. -- A pamphlet, the argument of which from Scripture is clearly and powerfully brought out; and the perusal of which is earnestly recommended, particularly to all who love the prosperity of their country, and cherish the desire that all ranks within it would perceive duty incumbent upon them, and be led to the advantages and true honour arising from performing it, especially in a day when civil power is put forth to cherish various ungodly systems, to extend the dominion, not merely of prelacy, but of popery under its darkest aspects, and to rob the true Church of the blood-bought privileges bestowed upon her by her Lord.[278] 2 Chron. xix.2.[279] "Claims of the Divine Government," &c., p.53.[280] Jas. v.20.[281] Gal. vi.10.[282] Ps. lli.8, 9.[283] Rom. ix.4.[284] Jer. xxxii.38, 39.[285] Mal. iii.8-10.[286] Is. liv.2-5.[287] Is. xlii.4.[288] Lev. xix.34.[289] Lev. x.11.[290] Rom. xi.15.[291] Rom. xi.26, 27.[292] 2 Chron. xv.12.[293] 2 Kings xxiii.3.[294] Mat. xxviii.18.[295] John v.23.[296] Ps. lxxxvi.12.[297] Ps. lxxxvi.9.[298] Rom. i.21, 23.[299] John xvi.13, 14.[300] Is. xlii.19.[301] Deut. xi.1.[302] Rev. iii.3.[303] Is. xxvi.2.[304] Ps. cxix.30.[305] Ps. lxxxvi.11.[306] Eph. i.22, 23.[307] Appendix A. [308] Ps. ci.3, 6.[309] Ps. cxlv.1, 5, 10-13.[310] Ps. xxxviii.18.[311] Ps. xix.12, 13.[312] Ps. lx.4.[313] Phil. iii.16.

CHAPTER V. COVENANTING CONFERS OBLIGATION.

As it has been shown that all duty, and that alone, ought to be vowed to God in covenant, it is manifest that what is lawfully engaged to in swearing by the name of God is enjoined in the moral law, and, because of the authority of that law, ought to be performed as a duty. But it is now to be proved that what is promised to God by vow or oath, ought to be performed also because of the act of Covenanting. The performance of that exercise is commanded, and the same law which enjoins that the duties thereby engaged to be discharged, finds the Covenanter, or the Covenanting community, bound by the deed itself to fulfil them; and thus, by the service, the party under original obligation to obey, is brought under one that is superadded. The Covenanting party, not as independent, but as under the authority of God, by means of the exercise binds itself to duty. He commands to vow, that men may be brought under additional obligation; and when they obey, he recognises them as voluntarily engaged, and, according to his will, additionally called to fulfil. "The obligation arises entirely from the act of the creatures, using a divine ordinance, by vowing unto God, and covenanting with him, whereby they bind their souls with a bond to serve the Lord."^[314] It is wrong to imagine that the obligation comes solely from the will of those who vow. Were not the exercise of vowing commanded, nor the law of God to hold those who engage in it bound by their own act, these should not be under obligation. By vowing, they bind themselves, not as by themselves, but by the authority of God. Or, by vowing, they submit to a requirement of his law, in yielding obedience to which they become bound, not by themselves but by his authority, to perform the duties vowed.

SECTION I. Personal and Social Covenanting both entail obligation on the Covenanting parties. First. Various general representations exhibit this. Several scriptures present such as bound. In reference to the truth that a wicked ruler is destitute of right to claim the allegiance of his subjects by oath, or in any other manner, it is asked, "Shall even he that hateth right govern (bind)?"^[315] Reproaching his servants, Saul said to them, "All of you have conspired (bound yourselves) against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse."^[316] The Psalmist said, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride, (or rather the binding, that is, conspiracy,) of man."^[317] And concerning an oath or vow, thus it is written, "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."^[318] To show how essentially the idea of binding is connected with that of Covenant engagement, it may be remarked that in the original of each of these passages, the verb signifying to bind, is different from that in the original of each of the others, and that all of the verbs are emphatic.^[319] And what should be most carefully observed here, the binding spoken of in each of these cases is connected with the voluntary actions of the parties brought under obligation. Again, other scriptures point out, that in Covenanting men are joined to the Lord. "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."^[320] They imply not less than that the covenants made should be adhered to. The same is expressed in passages, in one of which some are said to take hold of the Lord's strength, in the other, of his covenant.^[321] A covenant is designated as sure. That of Nehemiah and Israel is so represented.^[322] And finally,

those who engage in the exercise are said to cleave to the Lord. That is represented by Moses as the design of the discharge of the duty. "That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him." [323] "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." [324] By the emblem of the girdle which cleaves permanently to the loins, the truth of the appointment of Covenanting as a means of securing devotedness to the Lord is taught. "For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord." [325] The girdle which the prophet had been commanded to hide, in process of time was marred; it was profitable for nothing. It represented not the faithful in Israel who cleave to the Lord, but those who, having vowed and sworn to him deceitfully, fulfilled not their obligations. And David said, "My soul followeth hard (cleaveth) after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me." It was in the exercises of vowing to God and fulfilling his obligations that he did so, for he said, "But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory." [326] Secondly, God enjoins obedience as the fulfilment of Covenant duties. He gives command to do the words of his covenant. "Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." [327] By his authority he calls on men to keep the words of his covenant. "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." [328] The obedience thus inculcated was not merely made known by the glorious Lawgiver, but acknowledged as obligatory by men. In two channels, from one source, its claims proceeded. First, directly through the promulgation of the Divine law to men; and next, through the acknowledgment, by Covenant engagement, of that law as holy, just, and good. Had obedience been claimed to the duties inculcated, as if they had been merely requirements of the law, they had not been spoken of as performed in fulfilment of Covenant engagement. Because the words of the Covenant are done or kept when those are performed, they are incumbent on account of the making of the Covenant. By submitting to the rite, every one that received circumcision became a debtor to do the whole law. And in like manner, by Covenanting, each one who vows to God becomes bound, by His command, to keep or do the words of his law as the words of his Covenant. And finally, the Lord commands that his Covenant be kept as a charge. That which is kept, or to be kept, is a charge. That his law and covenant are a charge is manifest from his words, "If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore." [329] But his charge, or his law and covenant, as a trust, he explicitly gives his people commandment to keep. "Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway." [330] "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." [331] In such injunctions, it is implied that two things, or the same thing under two aspects, should be kept. The statutes of God are at once the commands of his law and the dictates of his covenant. These are kept as his law, when obeyed, because of his authority as righteous moral Governor of all. They are kept as the requirements of his covenant when recognised as not merely issued according to his sovereign will, but as having received the acquiescence of the heart, and been acceded to by solemn oath and vow. That the acceptance of them in Covenanting brings under obligation is therefore most manifest. They are permanently the Lord's charge. His law remains so, whether or not it be obeyed by men. It remains so when presented, and acceded to in its covenant form. But when it is accepted in vowing to God, it is so conveyed over to the believer, that at once he is called to keep it sacred to the Lord's service, and to stand chargeable in his sight for the use

he makes of the precious trust. If he fail to draw upon the blessings promised therein, he is liable to rebuke; if he obey not the duties enjoined in it, he is exposed to chastisement. Both evils he is commanded and encouraged to avoid. That he may not dishonour the God of his salvation, by making little progress in the use of precious means of spiritual improvement, and that he may not be found unfaithful, he endeavours to manifest the deep-felt sense cherished by him of the reality of his obligation acknowledged, when he says, "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart." [332] Thirdly. The Lord commands that the vow be paid. A lawful promise to men binds to performance; and why not a vow to God? If the vow made, whether in the use of the oath implicitly or explicitly, be not paid, the truth will not have been spoken; and accordingly, not merely the ninth, but the third precept of the moral law will have been transgressed. The command enjoining that truth be spoken, and that forbidding that God's name be taken in vain, both inculcate, therefore, the fulfilment of the vow. But various explicit statutes enjoin the same. Such are these -- "Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God." [333] "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed." [334] "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee." [335] From such dictates there can be no appeal. Even were we altogether ignorant of the reason why they were uttered, we should, because of the authority of God, willingly acquiesce in them. But the ground of them he has been pleased to make known. Were it not in order that the service promised in vowing might be performed, the vow had not been enjoined. Without the paying of the vow, the vowing of the vow were unnecessary, nay, sinful. A disruption of ends from means, grosser than the separation of the fulfilment of the vow from the making of it, could not be perpetrated. The vow is nothing; yea, worse than nothing; injurious to those who make it, and dishonouring to God, if it be not performed. Nor, because under the law, a commutation for some vows was accepted, are we to conceive that the passages in which the payment of the vow is commanded are not to be interpreted according to the utmost force of their obvious import. It is true that some things vowed might have been withheld, but not without the offering of a definite sum of money. These might have been redeemed by the payment of a price exceeding by one-fifth part of it, their value estimated by the priest, or when the parties were poor, by the giving of the amount at which the priest might value them. [336] By whichever of the two methods that might be adopted, the vow was virtually paid. The payment actually of the vow, or that of the compensation, was commanded; and either the one or the other behoved to be made. Nor when either of them was resorted to, seeing that any one of them was warranted, was the vow left unpaid. This variety of manner in the payment of vows, was suited to the circumstances of the Church under the Levitical institutes. By using any one of the methods, the vow was substantially fulfilled, not merely according to the will of man, but agreeably to the express appointment of God. As, had there been only one way then of fulfilling the obligation of the vow, it had been incumbent to proceed by that alone; so, under the present dispensation, the single method of implementing Covenant engagements that has been inculcated, because that no other is of Divine appointment, must be adopted. Even as under the law there were some things which, having been devoted to God under a curse, could not, because of the manner of their dedication, be redeemed, [337] so under the gospel, what is vowed to the Lord cannot without sacrilege be kept back. Fourthly. The Lord threatens those who keep not his Covenant. Temporal and spiritual deprivations enter into his denunciations on such. [338] "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the

day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God." Nay, even eternal ruin awaits the impenitent violator of Covenant engagements. "Covenant-breakers, ... who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." [339] Were not the acceptance of the law of God in its covenant form to entail obligation, the breach of it would not be denounced as a breach of covenant; nor would his wrath descend on men as unsteadfast in his covenant, or as having broken it, but as having violated his holy law. Substantially then, by their own act, must they be brought under solemn obligation to God, who, having vowed to him, by failing to perform their promise, would become exposed to the stroke of his just vengeance. Where there is guilt there is sin, and where there is sin there was obligation, and where there is punishment, there were all. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The people of God acknowledge themselves as bound by their oaths and vows. What was uttered by Jephthah regarding a vow which was unlawful, must have been employed by the fearers of God in reference to vows of which He approved, -- "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." The Psalmist said, "So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows." [340] "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." [341] "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." [342] The language was dictated by the Spirit of inspiration. It was therefore lawful to use it. It ought to be used by all. The principle that vows and oaths require that they be fulfilled, is implied in it. That was therefore held by the saints in former times. Because of the words of God from which they drew it, it ought to be universally maintained. SECTION II. Social Covenanting entails obligation on the Covenanting society, even throughout its continued existence, till the end of the Covenant be attained. First. Because such covenants are made, not merely in the name of the individuals who enter into them, but also in the name of posterity. On recorded occasions of warranted Covenanting, such was the manner of entering into the engagements made. In addition to what has been said before in proof of this, merely the language employed at one of these seasons will here be quoted. "Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." However, it may be necessary to add the explanation, that, by those who are represented as not present, we are to understand the descendants of the congregation of Israel; inasmuch as in reference to the duties then performed by the assembled people, it was said, "Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Hence, whatever, in consequence of entering into such federal engagements, is incumbent on those who make them, is binding on their successors; and since a covenant transaction binds the parties to the making of it, it therefore binds all those, though not present, whom these parties represent, and for whom also it was made. Whatever reason the transaction affords for binding the former, it supplies for holding the latter bound. The engagement made by and for the living Covenanters, is not less explicit than that thereby made by them for those who shall succeed to their privileges and duties. And as it is the engagement which binds, the latter are, not less than the former, brought under obligation by it. The federal compact could not be made without constituting an obligation. That could not be entered into without conferring that obligation on all the parties represented at its formation. And from its acknowledged nature, those to whom the functions of the Covenanters should descend, are included among those, and those therefore are thereby bound. Secondly. Because the Church is one in all ages. Her glorious Head

is one. All her true members are spiritually united to him. All of them are united in love to one another. The Church is distinct from the world. By the ordinances given to her by the Lord Jesus, she is distinguished from civil society. She possesses a real incorporate character. The Church consists not of a limited number of those who at any time fear God, but of all of them. The individual members of the Church from day to day are changing; but she remains one. Some are constantly being added, others are removed from her communion on earth, but her characteristic absolute identity remains. Under the Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian dispensations, she is one. As one body enduring from generation to generation by her Lord, she is spoken of, and is recognised by her members. To Jeremiah was given the commission, "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." "Israel was holiness unto the Lord." "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress." [343] In days long posterior to the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the Church sang, "He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him." [344] The Church, posterior to the advent of Christ, is represented as a house in which Moses had served, but which Christ had built, and over which, as well in the days of the patriarch as in the last times, He ruled as a Son. [345] And to the Church existing in all times, unquestionably belongs the inimitably beautiful description, -- "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Since the Church, then, is a body, her standing is independent of the individual members who may be in her communion; as a responsible agent, even as an individual, she may come under obligation and fulfil it; and through every age of her existence, be held bound to duty by her engagements. The same principle which is applicable to the Church as a whole, behoves to be contemplated by every Section of her in given circumstances. If the whole Church might enter into covenant engagements, as in Abraham, which would entail obligation throughout successive ages, ought not every community thereof, as a part of the whole, to bind itself before the Lord to services to be performed by its successors? If a whole society may Covenant, ought not an individual of that society to do so singly? And if the obligations come under by the one person, not less than those of the whole body, ought to be discharged, ought not those of a given Section of the visible Church to be fulfilled by it, as a body forming a part of the general community, even as the covenant duties of the whole. Thirdly. Because of the Church's social character. As it is not merely in their individual, but also in their social capacity, that her members enjoy privileges, so in both they are called to duty. The actions of an individual are not those of any society to which he may belong, except he act for them, and according to their appointment. But the deeds of a society are those of every member thereof, who does not disapprove of them; nay, of every one who, because of these deeds, does not leave its communion. The engagements of society are understood to be acceded to by every member of it existing when these are made, and of every one who may become connected with it before they be fulfilled. Every one who joins a society is understood by his act of joining it, to approve of its organization, to accept of its privileges, and become engaged to its duties. It would be impossible for society to continue, were obligation to cease so soon as the individuals who may have come under it should leave it, by death, or otherwise. Were the duties of social bodies to cease in this manner, it might be held that these communities should be re-constructed on the death of every

individual member of them, and also on the accession of each one who might become connected with them. What accomplishes the same end which such practices would lead to, is secured in a far better manner by the whole body coming under, and fulfilling, obligations which do not become void either by the increase or the diminution of its members. Every individual capable of making a choice, who, by receiving the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, becomes connected with the Church, engages to accept its privileges, and to perform its duties. In the most solemn manner, by vow before God, this is done. All that is incumbent on each member of the Church, then, devolves also on him. The obligations that bind it, may have been conferred ages before; but when he makes his profession, even then, by his own act, they descend upon him. The representation given of such a one, shews that formerly he was a heathen, or else one living in a Christian land, without the pale of the true Church. Before making his solemn acknowledgment, he was under obligation to become connected with the Church, and the evils that are threatened against those who are far from God hung over him. By entering the communion of the Church, he becomes an integral part of her society, and whatever advantage or responsibility attaches to membership within her, is extended to him. The children of Church members, are members of the Church, and are therefore under obligation. Because of their relation to their parents, children are in possession of the peculiar privileges of the families to which they belong; and to perform the duties of these, they are under obligation. Every child of a citizen, or free member of civil society, in consequence of its birth, is entitled to the protection and other privileges of that society, and is viewed as bound by the laws of that community. In like manner, every child born of those in communion with the Church, is viewed as the care of the Church, and as under the obligations of its members. In the providence of God, children are cast upon the care of parents and of civil communities; and are they not committed to the regard of the society of the faithful? Duties are incumbent upon them, in consequence of their civil relations; and are none obligatory on them because of their relation to the Church? The Lord himself recognises the children of believing parents as the members of his Church. In order to manifest his claim upon them, and acceptance of them as such, He instituted the ordinance of circumcision in a former period, and that of baptism to be obligatory in the present. Children are, therefore, bound by the obligations of the Church. Is that moral obligation which binds the father, not binding on the son? If the parent, by Covenanting, ought to vow to observe a system of moral duties, ought not the offspring? Is what is good for the one, bad for the other? Would it be consistent for a father, after having willingly engaged to duty for himself, to say such may or may not, according to his pleasure, and in either case, too, without any blame, be done by my son? Certainly the earlier that an obligation to do good can be conferred, the better. And if a parent can lawfully act for his child in any other matter, why not in performing this? The privileges enjoyed by the children of those in communion with the Church, manifest them to be under obligation. Duty and privilege are universally connected; and hence, where the one is wanting, the other cannot be found. In the beneficent arrangements of Divine love to the young, the latter is first extended. The enjoyment of it by them is a palpable evidence that obligation rests upon them. It is an adage among men, that what one inherits from his ancestors he owes to his descendants; and it is also manifest, that along with privilege, duty is hereditary. In regard to the things of religion, both of these things are most obvious. Would not that parent deal unjustly with his child, who, instead of bequeathing to him some privilege for his acceptance, would say, I do not know whether or not he will conform to the duties connected with it, and therefore I will sacrifice it or leave it to another? And would a child to whom some peculiarly

valuable privilege has been bequeathed, and of the fruits of which he may have largely partaken, be warranted in reckoning as unlawful an entailed obligation to corresponding duty? Do not the laws of a nation find an individual bound so soon as he opens his eyes on the light of the sun? And ought not moral obligations, entered into willingly by Covenanting parents and ancestors, also, to hold the rising race completely bound? The privileges of civil society are available to youth long before they are able of themselves to take an active part in its public affairs; and thus these are brought under an obligation to support its good laws so soon as they voluntarily and effectively can. The privileges of a Christian community are, to a certain extent, enjoyed by its youth long before they can exert themselves actively for its interests; they are, therefore, under obligation, and so soon as they can perceive the importance of its voluntary Covenant engagements, they ought explicitly, to accede to them. Would it be cruel to cut off children from the privileges of civil society because of their feebleness? and would it not be cruel to deprive them of the advantages of covenants made for a defence to ourselves, which they equally need? Would it be hideously wicked to expose them to the knife of the murderer? and would it not be unspeakably criminal, by disregarding their education and failing to make engagements to instruct them, to abandon them to be poisoned by infidelity, superstition, error, or immorality? And if, by Covenanting and the fulfilment of the solemn engagements made on their behalf, the best privileges that could be bequeathed to youth, are conveyed to them, are they warranted to cast off the pleasing yoke of obligation, so gently laid upon them, and by resolving to neglect duty, to manifest themselves as unworthy of all the care that had been employed on their behalf? But it cannot be: all who have enjoyed the positive spiritual blessings that are conferred, in the mercy of God, on those who have entered into public solemn Covenants with him, will acknowledge themselves as his servants, and, far from reckoning themselves as under no descending obligation to duty, will rejoice, give thanks to him for laying a claim upon them by these, and gladly take hold on his Covenant again in their social capacity, that others to succeed them, even as they did, may gladly confess themselves to be devoted to him. Fourthly. Because Social Covenanting, approved in Scripture, conferred descending obligation. Abimelech required Abraham to enter into a covenant with him, which the patriarch would keep, by not dealing falsely with himself, nor with his son, nor with his son's son.[346] And accordingly that engagement, which was ratified by oath, was viewed by both parties, and unquestionably properly, as binding on all the individuals specified. By oath, the children of Israel made with Joseph a covenant, by which their descendants in fulfilling it, acknowledged themselves as engaged to carry up his bones from Egypt.[347] The covenant made by Joseph and the princes of the congregation of Israel with the Gibeonites, was kept by the descendants of both parties: and the breach of it on one occasion by Saul, was followed by tokens of Divine displeasure.[348] The covenant of the Rechabites, and that of David with Hiram -- which obtained also between that individual and Solomon, are other illustrations. Such covenants were lawful. The sentiments entertained concerning the descending nature of their obligations, being uncondemned, were correct. A disregard for these obligations in one case having been followed by punishment, they must have been complete. There was nothing about any of these covenants that gave to their engagements a claim to continuance beyond those of other covenants, in which the welfare of posterity is contemplated. The obligation of such, therefore, even as those of the covenants specified, behove to continue. Fifthly. Because the ends of such covenants may not be attained during the existence on earth of those who entered into them. Nothing is more common in the providence of God, than for one to begin, and another to finish. Indeed the grand end of the

Church's continuance in the world, is aspired at by the efforts of all her true members. Guided by Divine teaching, the fearers of God adopt means for declaring His glory. In His providence, however, their lawful purposes are in general carried only partially into effect. The work which he gives countenance to some to undertake, according to his own good pleasure, he commits to others. Hence his people are employed in filling up what others had designed, and also in arranging what their own successors may complete. A glorious Lord rules over every occurrence in the Church's history. Schemes of reformation set on foot by his servants he acknowledges. When he will, they are enabled to complete them; otherwise they are wound up by others. To resolve to use means to bring the Church to a state of excellence, to which, according to the promise of God, she will yet come on earth, is obligatory on them who fear him. To vow to use those means, they are under obligation. Though they may not live to fulfil all that they intended, yet they will be preserved till the work assigned to them be accomplished. Their removal does not manifest their Lord's displeasure at them, but his intention to bestow upon them a gracious reward. Nor does the blank left in the Church by their decease, manifest that the works which they had undertaken, behoved not to be fulfilled. Others, the Lord of all, will call to the service, and accept of the obedience rendered by them as the fulfilment of obligations to obey him, which had been made by others, not merely on their own behalf, but on behalf of such as he might employ to serve him. What his people lawfully vow to him, he will afford means to perform. And in carrying his purposes into effect, he will make them at once to serve him, and to accomplish what others in dependence on Divine grace had pledged themselves to use every means in their power to perform. Sixthly. Because the people of God view themselves as bound by anterior engagements of his Church. In the land of Moab Moses said, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." [349] Many of those whom he addressed in these words were not then born. The obligations of their fathers must, therefore, have descended to them. In many passages of Scripture do the saints acknowledge themselves as included in the covenant made with Abraham, and, consequently, as brought under its obligations. [350] By a prophet of the Lord Israel are exhibited as recognising themselves to have been represented in the covenant transaction of Bethel. "He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us." [351] The words of Peter to the people of Israel on this point are explicit, -- "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." [352] Expressing the sentiment, that their fathers had entered into Covenant engagements with God, in which they were recognised, Moses, and all Israel, on the shores of the Red Sea, thus sang, -- "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." [353] And in language acknowledging explicitly obligation to obedience that had been transmitted by the deeds of parents or ancestors engaged to God's service, the Psalmist offers praise -- "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." [354] Finally. Because the Lord himself always views his Church as bound by the Covenant engagements thereof, competent to its circumstances, made in all earlier periods. By the covenant which he made with his servant Abraham, and once and again renewed to him, he held his people bound. At the ratification of that covenant the scene was impressive. It is thus described, -- "I am the Lord that brought thee out of

Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.... And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram."[355] The lamp of fire was an emblem of God's gracious presence as a Covenant God. The smoking furnace symbolized the people of Israel who were to be tried in the iron furnace of affliction in Egypt. These were not then born. Yet in Abraham they were present. By the lamp of fire passing between the parts of the sacrifice, the Lord's ratification of the covenant was denoted. And by the smoking furnace also, proceeding between the parts, it was pointed out, that they even then were taken into covenant with him. That covenant the Lord kept with the whole house of Israel, even as if they had all of them been then present. "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham: and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him, to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous."[356] And the duties of the covenant, as if all Israel had been before him when it was made, he enjoined on them. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations."[357] Moreover, he commands all to keep his covenant as made, not merely with his people at any given period, but as entered into by the faithful who went before them. "He hath commanded his covenant for ever." We have seen that these words inculcate the exercise of Covenanting. It is manifest, also, that they intimate that a covenant with God by each one, should be kept by those who make it. But the full scope of the passage is not brought out, if we do not view it as inculcating, not merely that the duty of Covenanting should be performed throughout every age, but that, until all the engagements of the people of God, made in every period, be implemented, they confer obligation on their successors. And he is angry with, and threatens those who keep not the covenants of those who represented them, as if they had broken a covenant with him made by themselves. "They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them."[358] Hence, in conclusion, First, Covenanting entails obligation even on the unbeliever who vows and swears. Were it not to do so, then no command of God would be binding on the wicked; the moral unfitness of man in a state of nature, would shield him from the claims of God's law, and any ordinance of God might be abused with impunity. But, God will not be mocked. Whosoever attempts duty will be either accepted or found guilty. Divine institutions must be respected. Every law of God contemplates an immediate and an ultimate end. If a vow be made in sincerity, God will give grace to fulfil it in some measure; and if neglect in the supposed case follow, chastisement will be inflicted. If a vow be made deceitfully -- otherwise than which the wicked cannot make it -- a double obligation is contracted: -- an obligation to punishment for

dealing falsely with God; and a debt of obedience because of submitting, though feignedly, to an ordinance appointed by him. The law of God, enjoining the duty of Covenanting, is founded on His own nature; the imperfections of man, therefore, cannot abate its claims. Even as the observation of the other ordinances of God brings under special obligations, so the exercise of attending to this confers one peculiar to itself. It is lawful to pray, but it is sinful to do so without sincerity. God will not answer the supplication that is not presented in faith; but he will demand the obedience which the grace prayed for, if asked aright, would afford strength to perform. It is necessary to read the word of God, but sinful to peruse it thoughtlessly, or in an irreverent frame of mind. But, however it may be read, he will call for the duty which a proper reading of that word by His blessing would afford a resolution to perform. Thus, also, God will not accept the vows of the wicked; but He will claim what they vow, and will punish them if they do not make it good. Thus Israel, though many of them did not enter into it with sincerity, were charged with breaking the covenant with God which they professed to make in the wilderness at Sinai, and punished for the sin thereby contracted.[359] Thus, also, Zedekiah suffered for breaking the covenant which he made with the king of Babylon by oath.[360] Indeed, it is the wicked alone who break the covenant of God. They never sincerely have entered into it, but their disregard of it, after having professed to accede to it, is represented as a violation of it; and over such impends a fearful woe. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." [361] How dreadful, then, is it for sinners to speak to God perfidiously! And how important, according to his commandment, to draw near unto him in making solemn vows, in dependence on that grace which it is his to give, in order that the vow may be acceptably made, and also performed! Secondly. Though some connected with the visible church do not engage in the duty of formal Covenanting, they are not therefore free from covenant obligation. All who are not in the communion of the true Church, are exposed to the wrath threatened against those who are far from God. A connection with that Church brings under obligation. The vows of God are upon all, received by Baptism or the Lord's Supper into its communion, whether worthy members or not. The spiritual blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed -- even to all the faithful -- belong to the people of God therein; and all the duties incumbent on those to whom great and precious promises have been made, devolve on them. Till it be paid, every vow made by a member of the Church, whatever be his character, he is under obligation to perform. Till they be paid, all the vows vowed by those in the Church of God who represented him in all past time, are upon him. The vows made, and that should have been made lawfully by the Church in all past time since the days of the Apostles -- those vowed at that distinguished period, and those entered into in all preceding eras, even up till the time when the Covenant was revealed, in so far as their matter was not peculiar to given dispensations, but adapted to all, unite to bring him under one obligation. Through every age that was gathering weight. Viewed as accumulating and being transmitted through the voluntary agency of man, it is manifestly mighty; contemplated as conferred by the authority of God, it appears to be infinite. Divine grace alone can enable to pay the debt of duty. Happy they who look by faith for that! Thus, in proportion to her acquaintance with the covenant transactions of the past, the Church ought to feel herself under obligation. With her progress her real responsibility will increase. Like the force of gravitation towards a central orb, the force of obligation propelling her, will increase with time; and with a celerity due to all her solemn covenant engagements, she will enter the latter-day glory, responsive to the almighty call of Him

who draws his people to himself, and who having given them to enjoy on earth such a foretaste of the future, will introduce them to the scene where the Lord himself will be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. Thirdly. A minority in a church, or that in a nation, are bound by the lawful public vows made by the whole body, even though the community as a whole, may have cast them off. Though a nation, or a body professing to be a church, after having come under obligations to duty, were to resolve that truth is error, or that duty is sin, yet such a resolution could not bind the community. No authority whatsoever will dissolve the obligation of an oath. Hence, when lawful covenant engagements are disregarded by a community, the excellence which gave it an attractive power is gone. Then the glory is departed. And the degraded society, like the robe which once covered the living body, but is afterwards cast off, is faded and corrupt. The living principle embodied in some members of such a community, behoves to become separate from it, and to show that, indeed, that body which came under obligations that are not exhausted, is in succeeding times to exist in a new but glorious sphere.[362] It is not the envelopment, but the living faithful body, that is the care of the covenant. Each member owes a debt of covenant duty. And though apostasy may paralyze the body, so that by it as a whole, that obligation may not be felt, let that which lives, therefore, act in fulfilling it, even through a disruption and consequent re-organization. Devotedness to duty will be visited with an energy which will increase in the face of every difficulty. To flee individually from obligation, is to shun the wholesale ruin of the whole unfaithful mass, but in order to be taken and fall -- each one personally for his iniquity. Fourthly. Covenanting does not implicate conscience. By this, it is intended that the exercise does not bring under any obligation to do what is evil, or to abstain at any future time from modifying the engagement made, so as to render it more and more perfect. It is admitted, nay, contended for, that the exercise brings under obligation: but that is only to duty. The duty is not to be abandoned because it cannot be properly performed. If it were, then, for the same reason, every other might be disregarded. No covenant engagement is perfect. Either in its matter or manner, each of these may have many defects. Indeed, were one to vow all the duty unfolded in the Scriptures, the engagement would be sound. Every believer virtually does that. But special vows are necessary. The former, exclusively, is competent only to a period of the Church's future history, when her attainments will far exceed those heretofore made by her. But in order that such a step as that may be taken, by vowing habitually and performing, the Church ought to make assiduous preparation. Men ought to enter into Covenant as duty presents itself. If we perceive that we have vowed to sin, let us not perform, but pray to God for forgiveness, and engage to what is lawful. It is foreign to the scope of the ordinance to give countenance to sin. None, however, on that account, can excuse himself for not coming under and fulfilling a good obligation. Though we cannot do other duties perfectly, we would not be warranted in refusing to perform these. We have no might in ourselves to do any good thing: nay, even the services of the saints, performed in faith, are all imperfect; but we are, nevertheless, called to duty. The dread of doing evil ought not to prevent from making efforts to perform what is good. One may be left to enter into a wrong engagement; but he is not on that account to abstain from endeavours to engage and perform aright. Man has a claim upon his brother in consequence of his engagements made with him. If one, however, promise what is evil, and another demand fulfilment, both are faulty, -- the one for engaging to do evil, the other for urging an unwarranted claim. Covenant engagements should not, however, be neglected, but be wisely made and kept. By Covenanting to do duty, we are neither foolishly nor sinfully committed. God will require what is right, and that alone. We ought to make

every lawful effort to perform duty. Our best efforts to serve God are but approximations. They ought, however, to be continued. Are we to abandon any one means of doing good, because the improper use of it would do injury? The bond of a covenant with God is a holy bond: it cannot come in contact with what is evil. With various condemnation, it allows all such to pass; but it constrains to good. The evil in a bond professing to sustain that high character mars it. Better that were changed, by the removal of the evil, than to remain imperfect because of the continuance thereof. The evil impairs its dignity and excellence, nay, tends to make it void. Evil confers no obligation. The admission of it into any engagement is sinful. The good part of every compact accords not with it, but demands its expulsion. Let those who acknowledge themselves to be called to obedience not refrain from vowing: but in doing this duty, let them be cautious, and endeavouring to perform, let them fear to break, their engagement to duty, and also to keep what they ought not to have promised. To neglect either of these things is sinful. To vow, however, notwithstanding the dreadful consequences of sinfully doing so, and of not performing, is indispensable. To do so, is to use an appointed means of arriving at the knowledge of God, to make progress towards spiritual perfection, and to prepare to attain at last to the great end of all his arrangements for sinners -- even complete conformity to the will of God, and the promotion of His glory. Finally. That men are bound by previous descending Covenant obligations, is no reason why they should not themselves engage in Covenanting. Have not all the chosen of God to be brought successively nearer and nearer to him? And ought not this exercise, designed for facilitating this, to be carefully had recourse to? Are not the Scriptures to be read? Are not all the means of grace to be used for this? Covenanting is a means of the restoration of men to Him from every imperfection, whether in an unconverted or converted state. Engaging in it, they are described as returning to God.[363] By it, all ought to return from every departure from him. Throughout their lives, believers will be imperfect, and will be called to use this means of attaining their expected end. The obligations entailed from the past bind to the duty. The very first obligation, voluntarily accepted by personally or socially discharging it, binds additionally to it. Every new performance thereof adds to the motive to engage in it again; so that, instead of the obligation to Covenant being diminished by the doing of the duty, it is rather increased. And as the believer goes on to perform it, his call to the service will wax indefinitely great. His is the state of mind cherished by the Psalmist declaring himself cordially bound, when he vowed in these words, -- "Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will render praises unto thee." [364] FOOTNOTES: [314] P.37 of "Observations on the Public Covenants betwixt God and the Church," by the Rev. Dr. Mason, late of Wishawtown, -- a work presenting a rich scriptural view of the subject. [315] Job xxxiv.17. [316] 1 Sam. xxii.8. [317] Ps. xxxi.20. [318] Numb. xxx.2. [319] These are, [Hebrew: chavosh, kashor, rakhosh, asor]. [320] Jer. I.5; see also Is. lvi.3; and Zech. ii.11. [321] Is. xxvii.5; and lvi.4-6. [322] Nehem. ix.38. [323] Deut. xxx.20. [324] Deut. x.20. [325] Jer. xiii.11; see also ver.1-10. [326] Ps. lxiii.8, 11. [327] Jer. xi.6. [328] Deut. xxix.9. [329] Ps. cxxxii.12. [330] Deut. xi.1. [331] Rev. ii.25, 26. [332] Ps. cxix.111. [333] Ps. lxxvi.11. [334] Eccl. v.4. [335] Deut. xxiii.21. [336] Lev. xxvii.1-25. [337] Lev. xxvii.28, 29. [338] Jer. xi.3, 4; see also v.10-12; Deut. xxix.18-21; Jer. xxxiv.18-20; Ezek. xvii.18, 19. [339] Rom. i.31, 32. [340] Ps. lxi.8. [341] Ps. cxvi.14. [342] Ps. cxix.106. [343] Jer. ii.2, 3, 20. [344] Ps. lxvi.6. [345] Heb. iii.2, 6. [346] Gen. xxi.23. [347] Exod. xiii.19. [348] Jos. ix.15, and 2 Sam. xxi.1, 2. [349] Deut. v.2, 3. [350] Some of these are, Ps. xlvi.9; Is. xiii.16; Luke i.72-74; Gal. iii.7. [351] Hos. xii.4. [352] Acts iii.25. [353] Exod. xv.2. [354] Ps. cxvi.16-18. [355] Gen. xv.8-12, 17, 18. [356] Neh. ix.7, 8. [357] Gen. xvii.9. [358] Jer. xi.10, 11. [359]

Deut. xxxi.16, 17.[360] Ezek. xvii.18, 19.[361] Is. xxiv.5, 6.[362] 2 Cor. vi.17, 18.[363] As one of many passages which show this, see Jer. iv.12.[364] Ps. lvi.12.

CHAPTER VI. COVENANTING PROVIDED FOR IN THE EVERLASTING COVENANT.

The duty of Covenanting is founded on the law of nature; but it also stands among the arrangements of Divine mercy made from everlasting. The promulgation of the law, enjoining it on man in innocence as a duty, was due to God's necessary dominion over the creatures of his power. The revelation of it as a service obligatory on men in a state of sin, arose from his unmerited grace. In the one display, we contemplate the authority of the righteous moral Governor of the universe; in the other, we see the claims of that law which cannot be abrogated, put forth along with manifestations of sovereign good-will to men. Had God dealt with men according to their iniquities, that law which, in the first of men, they had violated, would have demanded their final punishment; and they, unable, because unwilling to give obedience, and unprovided with the means of deliverance, had fallen to ruin. In order that his mercy might be manifested, the Lord, from the days of eternity, secured to sinners a fitness for duty, to stand as a substitute for that spiritual strength which they should lose by transgression, and acceptance through a great Mediator, which else had not been enjoyed. On man, in a state of innocence, and also in a state of sin, the duty of Covenanting was enjoined. By reason of sin, strength given to him at first to perform it, was for ever forfeited. But to many, by a wondrous scheme of Divine love, it is given to enjoy, from engaging in it, benefits which cannot be lost. SECTION I. In regard to sinners, the exercise was provided for in the Covenant of Redemption. This was made from the days of eternity. It is described as the "Everlasting Covenant." [365] The phrase cannot mean less than that it extends from eternity to eternity. In adoration of the Lord, made known as a covenant God, it is said, "from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." [366] The Mediator "was set up from everlasting:" [367] -- necessarily by entering into covenant. Thus, his "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." [368] The covenant is a reality. "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant. -- My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." [369] When was the Father's servant covenanted to him, if he stood not engaged to him from eternity? The conditions and promise of the covenant are recorded. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." [370] And the mutual satisfaction of the Father and Son with the conditions and fulfilment of the covenant, is also revealed. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." [371] "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." First. In the Covenant of Redemption, Christ, represented all the elect. Even as the faithful descendants of Abraham were comprehended in the covenant which God established with him, but in a far higher sense, the elect were included in that

which was made with the Redeemer. And as Adam was the representative of the human family, so Christ became the Head of all who should be saved.[372] It was on account of the people who were given to Him that the covenant was made. By an electing decree they were chosen in Him. And the covenant was entered into with him as their legal representative. From eternity, therefore, by a legal, though not an actual union to Christ, they are a covenant people. And even then the blessings of the covenant were provided for them. Till they be joined to Christ, the elect are not entitled to the blessings provided for them. But still they were contemplated in the covenant. That gave them the privilege of being joined to the Redeemer. God, the Father, made with Christ, for each of his people, an everlasting covenant. They are therefore bound to Covenant. Do the deeds of our ancestors bind us to enter into covenant? That high deed in this takes precedence. The law of nature imposes the obligation; the forbearance of God affords opportunities for fulfilling it; the Covenant of Redemption, from which even the forbearance of God proceeds, leads to the duty by a claim infinitely strong. The elect were all taken into covenant; in their name, the Surety engaged that they would enter into covenant; on their behalf He promised an obedience which none other than himself could give; but he promised also the obedience that they should render -- not necessary nor required for fulfilling the conditions of the covenant, but requisite, to show, to the glory of God, the certainty of the fulfilment of these; and the Father accepted the offer. Covenanting, according to God's immutable law, is included in the obedience. It is therefore provided for in the covenant. How high then are the motives to the observation of this? It was Covenanted, not by the chosen of God themselves; not by Abraham, or the Church, or any mere man; yea, not by any creature. Rising above all such transactions engaged in by men, though in accordance with them, the covenant in which it was secured was entered into by the Three-One God, and ratified by Christ. They who will not perform the duty are none of his. He represented each of his people. Each is therefore called individually to Covenant. He represented his people in their associate capacity as his Church. In that they are called to enter into covenant with God. He represented them in all their approved social relations. In all these they are bound by his engagement to take hold on God's covenant. Secondly. All the promises accepted in Covenanting were made to the Surety in the Covenant of Redemption. In a promise including that of every benefit which those should enjoy through him, a seed was presented to him. The promise of the Spirit, and all His glorious effects through the word, was made not merely to the Church but to Christ himself, and therefore to him in the everlasting covenant. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." [373] To Noah, to Abraham, to Israel under Moses, and to the Church in succeeding ages, the Lord gave the promise that he would establish his covenant with his people. [374] And a promise equivalent to this he made when he engaged to establish his called and chosen, as a holy people to himself. [375] But a promise including each of these was given to Christ. In a passage where the very same verb ([Hebrew: kom], to establish,) that occurs in the portions quoted, is employed, it is found. "I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." [376] And in another, where a verb ([Hebrew: kon]) of a kindred import, but from a different origin, is used, it is recorded. [377] It is the promise of God that is laid hold on in Covenanting. He commands to draw near to him in the exercise. He has prescribed the matter of vows which he will accept. But in order to give encouragement to perform the duty and fulfil its

engagements, he has also made promises of good. To the sinner these could not otherwise come than through Christ. To Him at first they were made, and that for men. When the saints accept them, they cleave to what comes to them as not standing alone, but interested in the work of the great Surety; and accordingly, as the children of a covenant appointed to sanction, among other practices glorifying to God, a service by which the once-rebellious should, from age to age, testify, against the sin of refusing the offers of Divine favour, and to the justice of the claims which the Giver of all good has upon the most solemn resolutions to serve him, which men can present as a tribute to his honour. Thirdly. It is on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, by which he fulfilled the obligations of the everlasting covenant contracted by him, that his people Covenant with God. From among many passages in which this is taught, that may be familiar to every careful reader of the Scriptures, the following may be selected for illustration: -- "Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles (NOBLE ONE) shall be of themselves, and their GOVERNOR shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."[378] The NOBLE ONE here mentioned is Christ. He is also the Governor who should proceed from the midst of Israel. The description given of him is not applicable to any earthly ruler of the house of Jacob. It corresponds to Him alone, who, in other prophecies, is denominated "My servant David,"[379] and in the Psalms is celebrated as "the Governor among the nations."[380] In fulfilling all righteousness, obeying the law of God, and suffering and dying for his people, and in making intercession for them, he approached unto God. To that, he was engaged when the prophecy was uttered; he had been so from eternity. To his drawing near and making an approach unto God, the establishment of the congregation of the Lord before him, His recognition of them as his people, and their acknowledgment of Him as their God, are manifestly attributed in the passage. It was by faith in him, that the saints, in early times, while they offered sacrifice by Covenanting, acknowledged the Lord to be their God. It was by faith in him, that all to succeed them should in this manner avouch the Lord. He is the way unto the Father. By Him his people have access unto the grace wherein they stand. He drew near to present an acceptable sacrifice; and as a priest, he makes intercession. It is by Him that his people draw near. While they profess their faith in him, it is by Him that they draw nigh in the full assurance of faith.[381] It was by his sufferings and death that the everlasting covenant was ratified. And when he died, the way to all duty and privilege was opened to all who should believe upon him; and the title of the saints who had gone before to the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance, and who had Covenanted to accept its blessings, was shown to be secure. Fourthly. Believers, as a people who would Covenant and fulfil their obligations, were given to the Mediator in the everlasting covenant. As a covenant people, the heathen were given to Him for an inheritance.[382] According to an interpretation of an apostle, He himself says, "Behold, I, and the children whom God hath given me -- ."[383] And that such were promised as a people who should discharge the duty of Covenanting, and the other engagements of the covenant, appears from the words, "How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt call me, my Father; and shalt not turn away from me."[384] He received also the promise -- implying, that a people in serving Him should habitually take hold on him in Covenanting, -- "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation."[385] These, and corresponding declarations, teach how intimately connected with the

gift of a people to the Redeemer was the provision made for the obedience to be claimed and accepted at their hands. They mercifully intimate that one of the reasons for which they were given to him, was that they should obey God in taking hold of his covenant. It was in the everlasting Covenant that they were promised by the Father, and accepted by the Son. On the condition here specified, they were received. They are, therefore, urged to the duty, in consequence of that infinitely glorious compact; and, by the offer of the Father, the acceptance of the Son, the Covenanted aid of the Spirit, by the bowels of Divine love, to this, and consequently to all its engagements, they are bound. Finally. The elect were chosen in Christ that, in union to him, they might perform this duty. To all that is included in holiness, these were chosen in him. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." [386] It is in that spiritual union to him, which was secured by their election and the gift of them in the everlasting Covenant, that they discharge every duty. [387] It was because of the sovereign love of God that his Church was chosen, and united to Christ in the character of his Covenanted Spouse. In consequence of that love, which is manifested even by the infliction of chastisement, being branches of Him -- the true vine -- they are purged that they may bring forth more abundantly those fruits of righteousness, among which stands the act of taking hold on God's covenant. [388] These fruits include not merely the obedience of the life, but the homage of the heart expressed by the lip. And by the lip, fruit is brought forth when God's name is called upon in vowing and swearing to him. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (confessing) to his name." [389] The elect are chosen "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;" [390] and consequently to Covenanting, as well as every other act in which faith is exercised. By faith they vow and swear; and that is connected with union to Christ. Whatever view of the Spirit's procedure in the day of regeneration may be entertained, union to Christ is then effected, faith is given, and the believer proceeds to endeavour after obedience. Some have maintained that faith precedes union to the Redeemer; others, that union to Him anticipates that grace. And, accordingly, though both classes maintain that these occur simultaneously, yet they entertain opposite opinions regarding the relative order in which they take place, or what is denominated "the order of nature," in reference to this. If it were necessary to admit that an order of nature is observed here, the latter supposition would seem to have the better claim. But though in many things connected with the believer's progress there is unquestionably an order of nature, perhaps there is no necessity for introducing that idea in reference to this particular case. By maintaining that such an order obtains here, there is manifested a tendency, as if to represent the two things as proceeding like two points in a straight line, which moves in the direction of its length, and so to conceive that one of them must necessarily be first; while, by abandoning the notion of such an order, we might compare the two to two points, both of which are carried by the line moving only in a direction perpendicular to itself, and so conceive that at any instant both would be first. And the latter supposition, indeed, seems to correspond with the circumstances of the facts. At the same moment that Divine power is put forth in order to conversion, both union to Christ, and the faith which recognises that union, are at once vouchsafed. Then indeed a new life is begun, and the manifestations of life necessarily begin to appear. Lastly, the faith of the believer is exercised by him in resting on Christ as the one foundation laid in Zion; and reposing on him, he habitually takes hold on the Covenant of God, instead of a refuge of lies -- the covenant with death and hell, which shall be swept away. [391] It is to the glory of God that Christ is confessed. [392] It is in union

to Christ as the true foundation that this is done.[393] The glory of God as a strength is spoken of as being founded. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength (founded glory)."[394] Where there is Divine power and Majesty, there is glory. "Strength and beauty (glory) are in his sanctuary." [395] Resting on the one foundation, as a temple to the glory of God, the Church engaging in the act of confessing Him in Covenanting, and otherwise keeping his Covenant, will therefore realize the promise, "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." [396]

SECTION II. Covenanting, under every dispensation of Divine Grace, was provided for. In the scheme of Redemption, all the means by which it should be carried into effect were provided. From that proceeded the means of grace adapted to the circumstances of the Church in every period of history. From that followed those arrangements that were suited to the Patriarchal, Levitical, and later times; and from that arose all the various dispensations themselves. Exhibitions of Christ, the chief blessing of the Covenant, were common to all of them. Nay, to make these exhibitions, all of them were devised. The world was adapted to man, whether in a state of innocence, or in a state in which he should be invited to return to God. According to the wondrous plans of Him who foresaw and arranged all things, the world, after transgression, behoved not to be lost, but to be made the scene of events glorifying to God. To suppose that the earth was formed for the purpose of carrying into effect the plan of salvation is allowable. To imagine that that plan was being carried into effect in Eden, even before the sin of man, is in opposition to the spirit of the declaration that Christ came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance -- to the truth that the salvation of man, was a salvation from sin, and that the God of salvation is He who pardoneth iniquity, nay, to the whole tenor of Scripture. To admit, however, that the world was a scene on which man in innocence, throughout whatever period God might have willed, might have enjoyed good, the wisdom of Him who arranges not, nor commands what may not be fulfilled, requires. But the sentiment that the Covenant of Works secured the continuance of man upon the earth, even after the fall, is not merely gratuitous, but in direct opposition to the consideration that the world was destroyed by the flood on account of the sin of man, and that God's covenant with Noah secured those outward advantages of which not merely the righteous but the wicked were to partake. It seems inconsistent with the sentiments which we should entertain of the wisdom and other attributes of God, to suppose that the world was created either for man in a state of innocence exclusively, or for him exclusively in a state of sin. Even facts show that the world was adapted to both. That the facts of providence upon our world, however, which have occurred in consequence of a system of forbearance, which depends on the arrangements of the Covenant of Redemption, and others that show his grace, flow directly from these, is most manifest. The erection and continuance of the Church in the world, directly flow from that covenant. Faith in God in every age, interests in Christ the surety, and through him in all the blessings of the covenant. Even before some of its signs were given, those to whom it was given to believe upon Him, were taken into covenant. "We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." And in every age, they who believe are the children of the covenant. In the first ages of the world, we find a righteous Abel, an Enoch who walked with God, men who had the name of God called upon them, the sons of God, and Noah, a preacher of righteousness. And we find that all who, like Abraham, believe in God, have their faith counted to them for righteousness: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had,

yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." [397] It was in the acceptance of God's promise to him of a seed of whom Christ should come, that Abraham believed God. It was, therefore, in the exercise of Covenanting. It was as the representative of a Covenant seed that Abraham was the father of all them that believe. The Covenant made with Abraham, as the father of the faithful, endures. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though, it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." [398] The covenant which God made with Noah, even as that which he made with Abraham, he designates "My Covenant." All, therefore, who believe, in whatever time, are interested in one covenant with God. That was confirmed of God in Christ. [399] Its ratification by the death of Christ, the testator, was the ratification of the Covenant of Redemption. [400] The blessings of it are the blessings of the Covenant of Redemption. That covenant -- the Covenant of Grace -- is, therefore, the Covenant of Redemption revealed and dispensed to man. The latter flows from and was provided by the other; and this appears also from the fact, that the true Church in the world is characterized by her adherence to God's covenant. True religion, and all its institutions, are represented in Scripture as a covenant with God. The different dispensations of Divine grace are each denominated a covenant -- the first dispensation, the "Old Covenant" -- the last dispensation, the "New Covenant." Promises made, duties inculcated, and signs given for the direction of the faith of God's people, are each exhibited as a covenant. These facts can be explained only on the principle that all of these things so presented, proceed from the covenant of God -- which was from eternity, but was made known to man -- and take their common designation from their connection with that Everlasting Covenant. The adoption of this obvious rule of interpretation would have saved the many vain attempts that have been made to deny the existence of the Everlasting Covenant, and to misrepresent the true nature of those different dispensations of Divine grace, which have been denominated from it. It would have prevented from absurdly maintaining that what is represented as God's covenant with his people, is not, in reality, a covenant, but merely a law. By tracing all the dispensations of grace to one great source, it would have acknowledged them, as they are presented in the sacred record, to be consistent with one another, and would have prevented all the spiritual poverty that arises from refusing to accept of the flood of light which the Old Testament record casts forth towards the illustration of that of the New; and would have shown, that while some services of a former period, having served their purpose, have indeed passed, others, and, among the rest, that of Covenanting with God, which have, along with those, been by many consigned to abolition, are indeed among those institutes which, till heaven and earth pass, shall not pass away. But to proceed. The revelation of the will of God is in Scripture represented as a covenant. A term, ([Hebrew: chazuth]), meaning literally a vision, and consequently a revelation, is put also to denote a Covenant or agreement. In various passages it occurs in the first acceptance. [401] In the last, it is employed in the original of the following: -- "And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." [402] Now, though this passage does not refer to a covenant with God, yet it alludes to a transaction of a covenant character; and, consequently, may be understood as containing, in reference to what is evil, a form of expression that might be employed regarding a covenant with God. Indeed, from various representations of Scripture, made in different terms, the act of Covenanting would seem to be compared to a seeing of God; [403]

and, also, to what corresponds with that -- a seeking of his face.[404] It therefore follows, that the revelation of Divine truth is the revelation of the Everlasting Covenant; that men, in holding communion with him, learn concerning that Covenant; and that, in Covenanting with him, they take hold upon it as dispensed to men, and on it alone. By keeping the Sabbath, by receiving circumcision, by performing, besides, the other duties of the law of God, by recognising the obligations of the Church imposed in former times, and by entering into solemn engagements on their own behalf, and on behalf of their children, believers at every time, under former dispensations, acknowledged the Church's federal character; while, by recognising the Lord as their God, and acting faith in a Saviour then yet to come, they acknowledged that the Covenant into which they were taken, was that revealed and dispensed by him, and which was a manifestation of that to which He had acceded, who said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." [405] And after the work of Him who came "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," was accomplished, the people of God, by observing the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, by vowing and swearing to him, and by attending to the other institutions of his grace, continue to acknowledge their faith in him, as "the Mediator of the New Testament," and as the "one Mediator," in whom the Covenant was confirmed with Abraham, and who was present with his people in Sinai; [406] and to manifest their decided conviction, that the appointment of all the means of grace, flowed from that glorious transaction concerning which it is said, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." [407] First. In the Everlasting Covenant, provision was made for Covenanting under the Patriarchal and Levitical dispensations. The acknowledgments and conduct of believers in those times illustrate this. These showed an acquaintance with the subject peculiarly striking. Where the engagements into which Noah and his family were brought are spoken of, no hint is dropped that the nature or design of the duty was new to them. The terms in which the covenant of God was made known to him, would appear to have been quite familiar to him; and the alacrity with which he engaged in performing the rite of sacrifice, would seem to indicate that neither he nor his family were strangers to that, as an accompaniment of Covenanting. The manner in which certain distinguished individuals, who lived anterior to the Mosaic economy, employed and desired the oath, showed that the information concerning it, which must have been communicated by Noah and his family, had been, by some at least, carefully preserved. Not merely Abraham, who may have received special information from above concerning the exercise, but some of his contemporaries in the region of Canaan would appear to have known well the character and tendency of covenant obligation. At the death of Joseph, his brethren manifested a complete acquaintance with the subject; nor were their descendants, two hundred years after, when emerging from bondage, unwilling to acknowledge the debt of duty which, by the oath of their fathers, was imposed upon them. At the solemnities of Sinai, Israel would appear to have recognised the obligation of vowing and swearing to God, as well as that of any other requirement of his law. It does not appear that any one of the Hebrews of those ages ever thought of calling in question the duty of attending to, and acquiescing in, every declaration made to them through an appointed channel from heaven. That they were a rebellious people is beyond a doubt; but that fact is not inconsistent with the conclusion that, in consequence of the force of habit or example, they might give a verbal acquiescence to requirements, the importance and necessity of obeying which they might not feel. As others are, they were assailed from without and within with

temptations to fail in their duty; and before those they fell. Most of them were under unbelief, and they would not obey; but when addressed by Moses, or any other servant of the Lord, while a wonder or miracle was wrought and duty was enjoined, testifying to the duty of giving obedience when God commands, however soon they might forget, they said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." [408] There is only one principle on which this intimate acquaintance with the claims of the service can be accounted for. The obligation of the duty must have been taught to man from the beginning. That is implied in the law which was written on his heart in innocence. The duty incumbent on him as a sinner must have been revealed to him immediately after the fall. There is no reason to suppose that, seeing that sacrifice and covenanting for a vast length of time, were observed together, they were not coeval. But however that may be, equally with the one, the other, in the first ages, was known; and to one fact both are to be traced. The duties co-ordinate in their bearings -- the one pointing to the great propitiation, the other recognising the claims of the Author of that salvation which the "One Sacrifice" was to secure, both have their origin in that one glorious Covenant, by which the method in which it should be bestowed was arranged. Provision was made through promises. Some of these were that the duty would be engaged in; [409] others of them, that the keeping of engagements made would be followed with good; [410] others, that all the blessings of the covenant would be bestowed. [411] The passages belonging to each of these classes are numerous. Containing a proposal of conditions on God's part, they lead directly to the duty. What is wanting, is the acceptance of them on the part of man. So often as they are read or meditated on, or pressed on sinners in the preaching of the gospel, the sinner is invited to take hold in God's covenant. The invitations addressed through them are made by the Redeemer as the Prophet of his Church, and as the Lord of all. They exhibit the will of the Father, that his people should acknowledge him as the God of grace. They testify to the love of the Spirit, whose work it is to lead to accept of them. They unfold the purposes which were of old. They are the echo of the promises of the Everlasting Covenant, made to the great Mediator between God and man. Through types. Covenanting itself is not a type or shadow, but a substantial reality. With many other things, however, which in some aspects of their character were types of good things to come, under other of their features it may be associated in presenting an emblem of what is spiritual. Thus, every institution of Divine grace may be understood as testifying to the excellence and necessity of every other, and to the reality of the exercises of the heart which ought to accompany their outward observance. Many things connected with the former dispensations, accordingly, vouch for the high origin, and nature, and claims of Covenanting. We contemplate them doing so, not as types of good things which had no existence when they occurred, but as emblems of good connected with vowing and swearing to God, which was common to every era of the history of the Church. By these, not less explicitly than by the voice of speech, instruction is addressed; and not less than the most explicit tender of good or obligation are their dictates to be received. Enoch, who clave to God; Noah and Abraham, each a covenant head; Aaron and Phinehas, each the representative of a Covenanted priesthood; and David, the federal head of a royal posterity; as individuals, were emblems of many devoted personally and socially by Covenant to the Lord. The Israelites, servants of God: the first-born among these, dedicated to the Lord: the Goel, or, Kinsman-redeemer, under a descending obligation to interpose in behalf of a relative: the voluntary bondservant, who, from love to his master and family, explicitly engaged himself to his service through life: sojourning strangers, not Canaanites, allowed and encouraged by the Israelites to wait on all the ordinances of religion: the Hebrew kings of David's family vested with

rule according to a perpetual covenant: the Nazarites, peculiarly set apart to the service of God: the Aaronic priesthood, under the bond of an enduring covenant: and the Nethinims, a people employed about the sanctuary, descendants of the Gibeonites, who, though like Jacob they did not do well in the choice of means to obtain the blessing, were taken into covenant with God: -- these were classes of persons who symbolized many explicitly engaged by covenant to the service of the Lord. The cities of refuge[412] -- Kedesh, a holy place: Hebron, society, friendship, the end of a covenant: Shechem, a part or portion, as the lot of a covenant inheritance: Bezer, cut off and broken, as the sinner is from all vain confidences: Golan, exile, as separation from every visitation of vengeance: and Ramoth, eminences, or high places, as the stronghold provided in the covenant to prisoners of hope; true to their designations, as emblems point out the facts of a covenant made on behalf of many, who by sin are exposed to ruin. Canaan, a land of inheritance promised in covenant: Jerusalem, the vision of peace, and city of God: the tabernacle, the temple, and Mount Zion, -- places where manifestations were made of the presence of God in covenant: -- all denoted scenes, where his people, in every age, in giving themselves to the Lord, cleave unto him. The Ark prepared by Noah was entered by him and his house, betokening the accession of men, in all ages, to the covenant of God by faith in the Redeemer. The Ark of the Covenant, containing the book of the law: the table of shew-bread, representing the means of exhibiting Christ, the bread of life: the altar of incense, from which arose offerings, as of the praises and supplications of God's people, perfumed with the sweet incense of Christ's intercession: the golden candlestick, shedding forth light, as of the influences of God's Spirit: the laver, for washing, representing the means of purification from all defilement: the altar of burnt-offering, from which arose the flame of sacrifice, that betokened the offering of Him who made his soul a propitiation for sin; were sacred utensils, all of which referred to the ratification of God's covenant, and the dispensation of its blessings to those who are enabled to lay hold upon it. The Sabbath, returning every seventh day: the periodic feast of unleavened bread for seven days, following upon the Passover: the Sabbatic year, completing an interval reckoned by seven: the year of jubilee, occurring always after seven times seven years were completed; were all seasons that pointed out times of waiting upon the ordinances of that Covenant which was ratified by the oath -- represented by the number of perfection that should be waited on in ages most remote. Typical purifications; the ordeal for freeing from the imputation of murder, conducted by slaying the heifer, and washing the hands over it, while there was made a protestation of innocence, that embodied an oath:[413] the means of removing ceremonial defilement of various kinds: and the bitter water which, according to the innocence or guilt of the party to whom it was administered, acted innocuously, so as to denote the effects of a lawful oath, or as the oath which, by being sworn falsely, is converted into a curse; were all of the nature of an appeal to God. Oblations in general; the sin and trespass offerings, which were never merely voluntary: the burnt-offering: the peace-offerings, that were wont to be presented when vows were paid: in particular, the offering of salt, the symbol at once of communion and friendship, of durability and incorruption, and of sincerity of mind, and which was commanded to be presented with every offering -- the emblem of an enduring covenant:[414] the pascal lamb, which represented Christ slain, the blood of which was sprinkled, as his blood was, for defence from wrath, and the flesh of which was eaten, so as to afford a vigour symbolizing that of those who, having eaten of his flesh, like the hosts of Israel from Egypt, go forth from bondage to liberty and peace; the Covenant sacrifice of Abraham, consisting of the red heifer, whose ashes were for purification; the she-goat of three years, for a sin-offering;

the ram for a burnt-offering; the turtle-dove and the young pigeon, for a purification sacrifice and for a sin-offering, intimating that not merely did he, as a covenant-head, represent the rich who should present of their flocks and herds to the Lord, but of the poor, who of their poverty should present offerings absolutely less valuable, but not the less acceptable; -- these offerings pointed out that the Covenant of God should be laid hold upon when the shadows which preceded the glorious reality of the "One Sacrifice" that had been foreordained would have come to an end, and there should succeed sacrifices spiritual in their stead, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And circumcision, prefiguring Christ given for a covenant of the people, who, in the nature of man shedding his blood, should ratify God's covenant; and marking the people of God, sealing to them the Covenant of Grace, and pointing out their newness of life, regeneration, and deliverance from the vileness of sin, testified to the claims of obedience to the mandate of God in Covenant, which none could, but at the greatest peril, disregard. These types and others all pointed to the Redeemer. To the work which he had, from the days of eternity, Covenanted to perform, they gave prospective testimony. But of the effects of his mighty working upon the hearts of men, in leading them to keep his Covenant, they were not the less appointed symbols, nor were they less designed to teach that, but for the arrangements of that Covenant which had been made with him, there had not been made such manifestations of the power of his grace. Through miracles. These were wrought in order to declare how near the chosen of God, as a people, were brought unto him, and how great was the covenant provision that had been made for them. The flame of fire which appeared on many solemn occasions, held a signal place among these. The "flaming sword," or the flame that dries up, or that which burns, displayed between the cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden; the flame of fire in which the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses out of the midst of a bush, when He made himself known to him as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the flame of fire which appeared on the top of Mount Sinai when the Lord made a covenant with Israel; the pillar of fire by night, which accompanied Israel during their journeyings in the wilderness; the fire which was wont to descend and consume, in token of the acceptance of them, the sacrifices laid on God's altar -- all testified to the gracious nearness of God to his covenant people. The cherubim, emblems of the ministry of reconciliation, first displayed immediately after the sin of man, represented afterwards in the act of looking upon the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle and temple, presented in vision before Ezekiel about to be sent to the rebellious house of Israel, and which, though denominated seraphim, were in like manner seen by Isaiah, when about to go forth to proclaim messages to the same people; through many ages pointed out that the servants of God in his house, by his appointment were set apart to unfold the truths of his Covenant. The dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, and the passage of Israel through the midst of it; and the presence of the cloud, in which, as well as in the sea, they were baptised;^[415] and the cutting off of the waters, and the passing over of Jordan on dry ground, after the feet of the priests that bare the ark rested in its stream -- manifested the almighty power of Him who had Covenanted to bring his people to a land of inheritance. The provision of bread from heaven, and water from the rock in the wilderness, showed in part how great were the resources of Him who had promised to his people, but not in vain. And the miracles wrought by the Redeemer in our world, from the over-ruling of external nature, to the feeding of the hungry with food, the healing of diseases, the casting out of devils, the raising of the dead, and his own resurrection, taught that He had come to manifest his power, to give that eternal life that was promised in the Everlasting Covenant to all who were ordained to it. The subject of the import of

the miracles that were wrought by Him and by the Holy Spirit, is exhaustless. Yet all of them are to be viewed as having been performed in order to the accomplishment of the Covenant's design. Through the teaching of the prophets. That was addressed in the name of the Lord as God in Covenant: to Israel as a covenant people, it was extended: and it embodied only the revelations of the Covenant. It included sketches of the history of the Covenant alone; under imagery, the most varied and expressive, as well as by direct explicit statements, it unfolded the relations subsisting between God and his privileged people; and, in like manner, presented the future history of the Church, incorporated by solemn confederation. Through the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. The scope of these in general, and of many representations of them in particular, illustrates the bearing of every fact in the history of the Church upon the Covenant. As illustrations, some designations both of Christ and his people, may be adverted to. He is introduced as a Husband,[416] and, consequently, as the Head of his people, engaged to him by vow.[417] He is exhibited as the Captain of the Lord's host, and as a Leader and Commander to the people.[418] That he might be presented as at once of the lineage of David according to the flesh, as the author of everlasting righteousness, as allied in the capacity of the First-born among many brethren to the Church redeemed by his blood, and as the Builder and the Head thereof, and Head over all things to it, he is denominated the Branch.[419] As the Covenant of the people he is revealed, to denote that he is the Mediator of the Covenant, and that in that capacity he received the gift of the people of the Covenant, fulfilled its conditions by obeying the law and presenting himself as a covenant sacrifice, appeared as a sign of the Covenant, and was to carry into final effect the whole scheme of it. As the Days-Man,[420] he is made known, to intimate that, by Him alone, and only in a covenant relation, men chargeable with sin can hold communion with God. As the Ladder,[421] he is spoken of, to point him out as, in the natures of God and man, the only means of communication between earth and heaven. As a Witness[422] to the people, he is described to be given by the Father, and consequently according to his own voluntary engagement. And as Shiloh, he was promised, and his people thus received him as their Peace -- provided in the Covenant.[423] And his Church is denominated his portion, and the lot of his inheritance. In various passages she is described as peaceable or perfect, and is thus presented as in Covenant.[424] And as Israel, the loved of the Lord, she appears under his promised protection. And, to give and conclude with one illustration more belonging to this place, reference may be made to two terms. First, atonement ([Hebrew: kaper] -- [Greek: chatallage].) "The idea that seems to be expressed by this word, is that of averting some dreaded consequence by means of a substitutionary interposition. It thus fitly denotes the doctrine of salvation from sin and wrath, by a ransom of infinite worth." Secondly, reconciliation. "This term occurs in both the Old and New Testaments several times. But it is generally, if not always, used as a translation of the original words above explained. Indeed, as has already been remarked, it is quite synonymous with the term atonement, involving the same ideas and serving the same purposes. It supposes bringing into a state of good agreement parties who have had cause to be at variance, as is the case with God and his sinful creature man." [425] The two terms, therefore, manifestly stand connected with the representations given of a covenant state. The Hebrew term of which each of them is a translation, accordingly means both the ground of covenant privilege, and also that privilege enjoyed by men. The term cannot be interpreted independently of a reference to the Covenant of God. But for that Covenant, there had been no atonement. With the forgiveness of sin, atonement is indissolubly connected. The latter is never presented in Scripture without reference to the

former. It was not alone the slaying and offering of sacrifice, but also the sprinkling of blood that made atonement. Where the blood was not sprinkled, sin was not put away, and no atonement was made. Where the blood was sprinkled, and accordingly sin was representatively put away, atonement was always effected. Only the following passage will be referred to here in corroboration of this. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom (an atonement)."[426] The reason for giving deliverance therefore was, that an atonement was found. Had the atonement been found for two, accordingly two would have been delivered. Had it been found for all, all would in like manner have been delivered. But all will not be delivered. An atonement, therefore, was not made for all. Indeed, the atonement was devised and effected in order to the deliverance of the elect alone. Had it not been for them, there would have been no atonement. But for them, there had been no Everlasting Covenant. And only for the ratification of that Covenant, the atonement was designed. The atonement cannot exceed the comprehension of the covenant for the ratification of which it was effected. As no soul will be saved that was not given to Christ in covenant, so no soul that was not thus given to him has an interest in the great atonement. "The Scriptures represent the divine persons as entering into a federal agreement for the salvation of men. In this covenant of peace, the Father is the representative of the Godhead, and the Son representative of those who are to be redeemed. He is, on this account, called the Mediator and the Surety of the covenant. Whatever he did as Mediator or Surety, must, therefore, have been done in connection with the covenant. His death was the condition of the covenant. It was stipulated, as the condition of his having a seed to serve him, that he should make his soul an offering for sin; that he should bear their iniquities; that he should pour out his soul unto death. In reference to this, the blood of the ancient sacrifices was called the blood of the covenant, while of his own, the Saviour testifies, this cup is the new testament in my blood. The blood of Christ was not shed by accident, it was not poured out at random or on a venture. No: he laid down his life by covenant. The terms of the covenant must, therefore, define the designed extent of the objects of his death. If all mankind are included in the covenant, -- if the Surety of the covenant represented, in this eternal transaction, the whole human race, then the atonement of Christ must have been indefinite. But if the children of the covenant, as is admitted, are only a given specified number of the human family, then must the atonement of the Mediator be restricted to them. There seems no evading this inference. To give the designed objects of the Saviour's atonement a greater extension than the covenant of grace, is to nullify its character as the stipulated condition of the covenant, and to render nugatory and unavailing the consolatory address by which the heart of many an awakened sinner has been soothed. 'Behold the blood of the covenant.'"[427] Secondly, and lastly. In the Everlasting Covenant, provision was made for Covenanting under the last or present dispensation. This was practically acknowledged by believers in the apostolic age. The common fund that was raised from the contributions of the Church assembled and addressed by Peter on the day of Pentecost, was devoted by solemn vows. From what was said by that Apostle to Ananias and Sapphira his wife, this appears. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"[428] If a promise or vow to God to give up their substance had not been made, the language of reproof

addressed to them would have been inapplicable. It is true, that when one lies to men, he disobeys God. But the language, "thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," must intimate that the possession of the two individuals had been, either publicly before their brethren, or secretly, or in both ways, vowed to God. The conclusion is corroborated by the obvious consideration, that the practice of acting in this manner, although not to such an extent, was quite in accordance with that of vowing things to God under the dispensation that had then been brought to a close; and especially by the very language of Peter, "Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" precisely agreeing with the words of the Old Testament record, "But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee." Again, the practices of making confession, and of professing, which we have found to be in reality the making of Covenant engagements, would appear from the references made to them by the inspired writers, to have been ordinary occurrences of their times. And, lastly, the conduct of the Macedonian Churches, in giving themselves to the Lord, to which we have had occasion to refer, is worthy of being remembered as an authenticated source of Covenanting in those times, that had been performed by many, in one of the spheres where the truth had most manifestly taken effect. The practice was provided for through the direct injunctions of the last inspired writers. These, dissuading from idolatry,[429] taught the necessity of the practice, the reverse of that, of recognising God and acknowledging him by vowing and swearing to him as a covenant God. Teaching the necessity of faith and other graces, they showed that it is dutiful to engage in that and those other exercises in which these are requisite. They explicitly enjoin the exercise of Covenanting.[430] Inculcating the holding fast of the Christian profession,[431] an apostle teaches that such a profession should not merely be adhered to, but also made. And delivering the express words of the Redeemer, the last of the apostles, teaching the duty of entering into covenant engagements, and keeping them till Christ should come, tendered the command, "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." [432] The practice was provided for through the whole of the New Testament writings. The New Testament contains the same kinds of expression in reference to the Covenant of God as the Old, and employs them for the same purpose as that for which those statements of that Testament are used. It makes use of figurative and other language of the same origin as that of the Old Testament, for the purpose of inculcating nothing else than the keeping of the Covenant. By an apostle, there is strikingly brought into view the truth taught in the prophets, -- that the Lord created, or formed, or fore-ordained, a people, to enter into Covenant with him, and by obedience also, otherwise to keep it.[433] The imagery of the foundation[434] employed in prophecy to point out Christ, and the sureness and continuance of the Covenant, is also used by two apostles for the same purpose. Their references to it illustrate the doctrine, that, in the New Testament, types, though realized in Christ, and also partly illustrated in the blessings at any time bestowed by Him, are not to be disregarded but studied, that the good things prefigured by them, but as yet unattained, may be enjoyed. The designation of the Holy Spirit, as the "Spirit of promise,"[435] teaches that He was given in consequence of the arrangements of the Covenant of God; and consequently, that all the benefits bestowed on believers, not merely in Old but also in New Testament times, were to come to them in connection with the acceptance of the gift of the Spirit, as included in the promise of the Covenant. The idea of reconciliation, dwelt on by the apostles, necessarily implies the notion of a covenant agreement, as being not merely made but maintained, between God and men -- once exposed to his curse, but afterwards put in possession of an interest in the atonement of Christ. References made by the apostles to purification cannot be

explained independently of the principle of, a covenant ratified by the blood of Christ being the channel of the communication of faith and the other graces, and of sanctification -- that results from the implantation, support, and direction of these by the Holy Ghost. The sprinkling, whether of blood or of water, referring to the operation of the Spirit, is introduced by an apostle as enjoyed by those who take hold on God's covenant.[436] Even as circumcision was, baptism is, a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.[437] In the Lord's Supper, the bread is a symbol of the body of Christ -- broken in the sufferings endured by him on behalf of his people; and the wine is a symbol of his blood -- shed for the remission of their sins. Commemorating the Redeemer's dying love, and receiving a seal of all the benefits of his death, by partaking of these elements according to his command, they signify the actings of their faith on him in an act of Covenanting.[438] Preaching peace, Christ, and after him his apostles and other servants in the ministry of the gospel,[439] proclaimed the Covenant of Peace, and urged the duty of acceding to it; and speaking peace to his disciples,[440] He declared it to be his prerogative to bestow on all his people the blessings of that Covenant. The Redeemer, foretelling his address to be delivered at the day of judgment to his enemies of all ages of the world, -- "I never knew you: depart from me," intimated that he would not recognise them as covenant children; and declaring of his people, -- "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine," he taught that they know him, as they alone do who take hold on God's covenant.[441] Allusions to the seal imply the doctrine of Covenanting. The declaration, -- "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true,"[442] refers to a solemn covenant attestation to the truth. The people of God designating the Redeemer, as the "High Priest of our profession,"[443] recognise him as bestowing grace upon them, to take hold on God's covenant, and to continue to cleave to it. In the Epistles, there is distinctly brought into view an inheritance which is not else than the blessings provided in God's covenant, and appropriated in adhering to it.[444] The designations, -- "Children of the kingdom,"[445] "Followers of God as dear children,"[446] "Friends (of Christ),"[447] "Heirs of God,"[448] "God's heritage,"[449] "the bride, the Lamb's wife,"[450] "Perfect,"[451] or possessed of integrity, healthful, safe, willing, complete, "sanctified," are all calculated to point out the covenant relation and privileges, and duties, of the people of God; and, accordingly, to show that by special explicit engagements they should devote themselves to him; and the representation of the Church as the "Pillar and ground (stay) of the truth,"[452] teaches that her duty is to make an unequivocal and steadfast public profession of Divine truth. The Covenant of God, from the last dispensation being introduced as the "New Covenant," and as one of the covenants of promise,[453] is represented by the last inspired writers as extended, both in regard to its blessings and its duties, to the latest times.[454] And, by some of the evangelists and apostles, the Covenant of God is exhibited as a testament. By them the dispensations of Divine mercy to men, are represented as being each both a covenant and a testament. By them are applied such representations to each of the dispensations -- both to the former dispensations, and to the last of them. The conclusion, therefore, to which we are brought by them is, that each, as a testament, is essentially an exhibition of a corresponding covenant, or a given dispensation of one covenant. The truth is, that the Covenant of God, under each dispensation, includes in it a testament, or that every dispensation of grace, whether in former times, or in the last times, viewed as a testament, is a covenant. Every testament is a covenant, and each of those dispensations is at once a testament and the Covenant of God. Take first the present dispensation. A testament, like every covenant, has a stipulation, or promise and demand; in both, good is offered, and duty required. In this

dispensation, the blessings of God's favour are offered, and obedience to the law of Christ is required; it has, therefore, one character, both of a covenant and of a testament. A testament, like every covenant, when acceded to, has a re-stipulation, or engagement corresponding to the stipulation. In the present dispensation, when the overtures of Divine grace are acceded to, there is tendered an acceptance of Christ and all his benefits, and the promise of obedience in dependence on his strength. It has, therefore, another mark common to both a testament and a covenant. A testament and a covenant have alike a seal or ratification. The seal of the testament is not valid till the death of the testator; the overtures of Divine mercy were ratified or sealed by the death of Christ. The present dispensation has, therefore, the third and last mark both of a testament and of a covenant. It has, consequently, all the characteristics of a testament, and of a dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. It must, therefore, now appear how the idea of the present dispensation being a covenant is contemplated in the New Testament, even while it is described as a testament. The coincidence between a covenant, and a testament as a particular case of it, explains how the Greek term [Greek: dichtheche] capable of being rendered sometimes by the word testament, and, at others, by the word covenant; and shews the error of the insinuation, so derogatory of the inspiration of the Scriptures, that the Apostle Paul, finding that this Greek term, which is used for covenant, meant, in some connections, a testament, therefore proceeded to unfold the covenant of God as a testament. The reason why the apostle, guided by inspiration, exhibited the Covenant of God as a testament, was, that it is in reality a testament. Yea, the fact that that covenant is a testament, must have been the reason why, even before the days of the apostle, even that Greek word had, from direct or indirect communication between the Greeks and the Israelites, acquired the twofold import. Hence, besides, it is doing no service to the interpretation of the Scriptures, to attempt to shew that in the passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[455] where the covenant is represented as a testament, either that the term [Greek: diatheche] there, must have only the meaning testament, or that it must be rendered covenant exclusively throughout. In some parts of the passage it means the one, in others the other, in others both. It means both in the original of the passage, "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." It means a testament in that of the following, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." In the original of the words, "Whereupon neither the first (testament understood) was dedicated without blood," it means properly a covenant ratified by the blood of sacrifice, and, consequently, a testament. And it means both in the original of the words that follow, "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." The parallelism between the death of the testator and the shedding of the blood of the covenant, is beautiful, and it cannot be destroyed. In the case of the death of Christ, it becomes an identity. The death of the testator is there the shedding of the blood of the covenant! We have seen that the last dispensation is both a covenant and a testament; but so was the former. The blood of sacrifice was typical at once of the blood of the Mediator, and of his death as the great Testator. The blessings of his purchase in the first ages were, even as in the last, testamentary. They were not reversionary, but no less by bequest and no less sure than they had been had he, whose death by sacrifice was continually pointed out antecedently, really died. In conclusion, from the whole, it is manifest, that to represent Covenanting as a mere Jewish thing, is an error. It was engaged in

before the father of the Hebrew race was called. It was practised when the Levitical economy was on the verge of dissolution, and attended to in the apostolic age by churches that were not subjected to its peculiar institutes. It was provided for the Church, whether existing in Old or New Testament times. It was independent of the peculiarities of the former dispensations, though it attracted to itself the performance of their characteristic observances. It was by Covenanting that the Church was incorporated; by it the Church has been hitherto kept distinct from the world; and by it, throughout all time, she will prove herself to be the heir of the Covenant promise of God, made from eternity, and to be bestowed in time and eternity to come.

FOOTNOTES:[365] Heb. xiii.20.[366] Ps. xc.2.[367] Prov. viii.23.[368] Mic. v.2.[369] Ps. lxxxix.3, 28.[370] Is. liii.10-12.[371] Is. xlii.21.[372] Rom. v.15-19.1 Cor. xv.47-49.[373] Is. lix.21.[374] Gen. vi.18; xvii.7; Lev. xxvi.9; Ezek. xvi.62.[375] Deut. xxviii.9; xxix.13.[376] Is. xlix.8.[377] Ps. lxxxix.4.[378] Jer. xxx.20-22.[379] Ezek. xxxiv.24; xxxvii.24, 25.[380] Ps. xxii.28.[381] Heb. x.19-23.[382] Compare Ps. ii.8, and Deut. xxxii.9.[383] Is. viii.18, and Heb. ii.13.[384] Jer. iii.19.[385] Ps. xxii.30.[386] Eph. i.4.[387] Jer. xxxi.3.[388] John xv.5.[389] Heb. xiii.15.[390] 2 Thess. ii.13.[391] Is. xxviii.15-18, and 1 Pet. ii.6-10.[392] Phil. ii.11.[393] Col. ii.6, 7.[394] Ps. viii.2, and Matt. xxi.16.[395] Ps. xcvi.6.[396] Is. xlvi.13.[397] Rom. iv.9, 10, 11.[398] Gal. iii.14, 15.[399] Gal. iii.17.[400] Compare Heb. xiii.20, and Is. liii.10-12.[401] See Is. xxi.2; xxix.11. In the latter of these passages it may mean both a revelation and a covenant.[402] Is. xxviii.18.[403] Is. xxxiii.17.[404] Ps. xxvii.8.[405] Ps. xl.7, 8.[406] Compare Ps. lxiii.17, 18, with Eph. iv.8.[407] Zech. ix.11.[408] Exod. xxiv.7.[409] Ezek. xvi.60, 62.[410] Ps. xix.11.[411] Gal. iii.18.[412] Job xx.7, 8.[413] Deut. xxi.4-8.[414] 2 Chron. xiii.5.[415] 1 Cor. x.1, 2.[416] Is. liv.5.[417] Jer. xxxi.32.[418] Josh. v.15; Is. lv.4.[419] Zech. iii.8; vi.12, 13; Jer. xxiii.5, 6.[420] Job ix.33.[421] Gen. xxviii.12.[422] Is. lv.4.[423] Eph. ii.14.[424] Is. xxxii.18; Is. xlii.19.[425] "The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ." By the Rev. Dr. William Symington. 2d Ed., pp.9, 10, 11.[426] Job xxxiii.23, 24.[427] "Atonement and Intercession," pp.257, 258.[428] Acts v.3, 4, 9.[429] 1 Cor. x.14; 1 John v.21.[430] Rom. xii.1; Rom. vi.13.[431] Heb. iv.14; x.23.[432] Rev. ii.25.[433] Compare Eph. ii.10, with Is. xlv.2.[434] Eph. ii.20, 21; 1 Pet. ii.5-10.[435] Eph. i.13.[436] Heb. x.22.[437] Rom. iv.11, and Col. ii.11, 12.[438] 1 Cor. xi.24, 25.[439] Eph. ii.17, and Rom. x.15.[440] John xiv.27.[441] Is. xix.21.[442] John iii.33.[443] Heb. iii.1.[444] Col. iii.24, and 1 Pet. i.4, 5.[445] Mat. xiii.38.[446] Eph. v.1.[447] John xv.14.[448] Rom. viii.17.[449] 1 Pet. v.3.[450] Rev. xxi.9.[451] Philip, iii.15.[452] 1 Tim. iii.15.[453] Heb. viii.13; Eph. ii.12.[454] Heb. ix.15.[455] Heb. ix.15-20.

CHAPTER VII. COVENANTING ADAPTED TO THE MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

The law of God originates in his nature, but the attributes of his creatures are due to his sovereignty. The former is, accordingly, to be viewed as necessarily obligatory on the moral subjects of his government, and the latter -- which are all consistent with the holiness of the Divine nature, are to be considered as called into exercise according to his appointment. Hence, also, the law of God is independent of his creatures, though made known on their account; but the operation of their attributes behave to be regulated according to that law. The principles of eternal holiness, embodied in the law, necessarily existed because of the eternity and infinite glory of God; but would not have been made the basis of a law had creatures not been formed. The constitution of creatures who should be called to give obedience, was wholly due to the will of God, but in perfect harmony with the spirit of his commands. Moral creatures having been formed, the law of God speaks one language to all of them. They, possessed of different characteristic attributes, alike recognise its appeals. Angels have a constitution which distinguishes them from man, yet with him they apprehend the authority of the one moral law. Over a range, therefore, of infinite extent, the principles of eternal rectitude are maintained. Man, in innocence, recognised them. Man, redeemed, cleaves to them according to his attainments in grace. Angels, possessed of a nature different from that of man, acknowledge their obligation upon them. And God himself, distant from his highest moral offspring by a difference that is infinite, exhibits them as a manifestation of his holiness, and the principles according to which he acts towards his creatures. Much, therefore, in common belongs to the constitution of the moral natures of angels and men, and necessarily proceeds from and accords with the nature of God. His law, we have seen, inculcates the duty of Covenanting. From what has been said, we would, therefore, conclude that the constitution of man was fitted to that exercise. That it was so appears, moreover, from other considerations now to be adduced. Covenanting was adapted to the moral constitution of man in innocence. First. From the Scripture account of that constitution this appears. In this manner he is there represented -- "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." [456] "God hath made man upright." [457] These declarations imply that man was created at least "in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness," and accordingly, in conformity with the will of God, as to his intellect, his affections, his conscience, and will. When brought into existence, his intellectual and moral powers were full grown, and his knowledge was suited to the state of a creature fitted to hold communion with God. His intellect was fitted completely to survey, according to its capacity, the whole scene of natural and moral existence presented before it, from the lowest stage of dependent being to what it was competent to him to know of God. His affections, in a flame alike pure and ardent, glowed at the prospect of moral excellence which appeared in the works of God, and above all, in Himself. His conscience, tender as the perfection of a delicate spiritual organisation worthy the creative energy of a Being of spotless infinite holiness, was in perfect sympathy with the awards of that perfection of judgment which, from eternity to eternity, is unchanged. And his will, the mighty gift, emblem of the volition of the Giver, approved what He

decreed. With such capacities, accompanied with corresponding knowledge of the external world and the internal man, and with a perfect acquaintance with the nature and demands of God's law, the favoured creature man could not but acquiesce in it. To the claims of its glorious Author, put forth by it, he was led by the most sure, and yet most gentle and delightful constraints, to give his acquiescence. What it demanded as duty to God, and duty to man, as if bound, yet free, he joyously proffered and endeavoured to give. What it forbade, he, in the same spirit, desired not to attain to, but resolved to reject. That law required, in its first command, the avouchment of God as a God in Covenant; in its second, it demanded the same, in anticipation of whatever evil -- such as the inroads of satan, might tempt to lead from him; in its third, it claimed the fulfilment of the duty of solemn appeal to the I Am by oath; in its ninth, it required the speaking of truth to man, and consequently, the public avouchment of God as a God in Covenant before others; and in entering into Covenant with him, the favoured creature man, to all these and the other statutes of that law, from his holy nature, gave his adherence. In his nature, as a living personification of finite excellence, designed to transact with God, and rendered fit to adhere to his engagements, and true to the constitutional character of his existence, in the presence of his glorious Lord he stood a being in Covenant with him. Had there even not been a representative phase of character provided for Adam, he had, therefore, necessarily, from his very constitution, been in Covenant with God. A law was made known to him by the great Creator and Ruler; a willingness to accept of it as a guide to duty, manifested by receiving it, was given to him. To the formation of a covenant, though any other condition that God should propose might be added, nothing more was necessary. The covenant due to this was embodied in that which, as we shall presently see was, at his creation, in sovereignty made with him. Secondly. This appears from the fact, that the law of God to man in innocence, was given in a covenant form. From the very origin of his existence, Adam was placed under law to God, both as an individual, and as the representative head of the human family. Under both aspects of his condition he was, accordingly, amenable to that law; nay, more, to that law in a covenant form. To him, as an individual, it was promulgated, not merely as a law but as a covenant. It could not have been proclaimed to him as the federal head of others, had it not conferred obligation upon him as a moral agent, responsible for his own actions. Now, the law that was given to him in his twofold character was, in reality, a condition of a covenant. Both the positive precept and the statutes of the decalogue unfolded what was designed as a covenant claim. The command to obey, implying the command to agree to obey, is an injunction to enter into covenant, and, therefore, itself the condition of a covenant, to be constituted in the acquiescence of the creature addressed. The giving of any command to man, therefore, in a state of innocence, was a recognition of him as a creature on his constitution designed, and, in the providence of God, to be called, to enter into covenant with him. But this conclusion is corroborated by the very matter of the moral law itself. We have seen that several of the precepts of that law require the observance of entering into covenant. These commands could not have been obeyed as the dictates of God's laws, had the duty of Covenanting not been performed. And that duty could not have been performed otherwise than in the recognition of the commands of the law as the conditions of a Covenant. From other considerations this also appears. We are warranted to maintain that the covenant of God dispensed to men is in reality a covenant. But the positive precept forbidding man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, is inculcated in the very same terms in which the Covenant of God is enjoined. Both are spoken of as commanded. "And the Lord God commanded ([Hebrew: yetzav]) the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou

mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."[458] "He hath commanded ([Hebrew: tzivah]) his covenant for ever."[459] A law, when promulgated, cannot but be commanded. A covenant when revealed, as we here see, is commanded. We should, therefore, take an unwarrantably circumscribed view of the law given to man at first, were we to view it as given as a law, but not as a covenant. Even as the matter of the law revealed at Sinai was an exhibition of the provisions of the Covenant of Grace, so that of the law given to man in innocence was the condition of the Covenant of Works. It was not merely by the promise, but also by the gift of life, that the positive law was converted into the nature of a covenant. By that promise, indeed, the Covenant of Works was distinguished; that showed the unspeakably beneficent design of the great Creator, and formed the most powerful motive to obedience. But the making of that promise was not essential to the existence of a covenant between the parties. By the giving of that promise, God indeed became, by explicit intimation, engaged to man; but by giving to his creature capacities for enjoying good, and desiring it, he virtually engaged to give him what was to be beneficial for him, so long as He should choose. Adam was in the enjoyment of good when God revealed to him his law. God addressed him, not as one who might be doubtful whether or not he should receive good from his hand, but as one in possession of powers and capacities even then appropriating extensive benefits. His delighting himself in God -- the highest good that he could enjoy, though no explicit promise of good had been made to him, would have been a token to him that he was in covenant. But the promise in which that good was implied rendered the anticipation of it definite, both as to time and duration. Again, the law of God was given both as a law and as a covenant to Adam, as the representative of the human race. Though the giving of the positive precept put him into a covenant state as a federal head, and though by breaking it he fell, and in consequence of his sin they fell in him, yet it is unwarrantable to maintain that the duty of abstaining from the tree of life was the only condition of the covenant to be observed by him as the public covenant head of his descendants. What would have been his condition had he neglected any other duty incumbent on him? Would he not have been deprived as an individual personally guilty? and accordingly seeing that he that offends in one point is guilty of all, would he not have been unworthy of representing his posterity, or in consequence of his depravity would he not have resolved to eat of the tree of life, and thus have exposed himself to the stroke of Divine indignation, and have been cut off? As, had he existed alone, he would from the very constitution of his nature have been under covenant obligation to perform whatever duties his Creator might have made known to him, so in his public character, his obedience to the law of God on his own behalf and towards the fulfilment of the peculiar duties connected with his relation to his descendants, was due as required by covenant. As one with his posterity he was bound by requirements that would have brought them under obligation. Feeling himself commanded to obey on behalf of many of whom he himself was one, no less than as if he had acted in an individual capacity, did he or could he recognise his obligations to acquiesce in duty prescribed, nor less was he called and urged solemnly by covenant to engage to them. Accordingly, man in his original condition, was, from his constitution, engaged in covenant to God by his law. By a twofold bond, the obligation laid upon him was imposed. The authority of God requiring obedience was one of the bonds. The authority of God requiring fulfilment of an engagement made according to his command was the other. The giving of the law implied the disposition of the constitution of man to respond to its appeal, and demonstrated that both were of God. Seeing that He determined to create moral subjects on earth, his arrangements provided that he should make them disposed to

acquiesce in that law; and hence, so long as man continued to possess the moral standing in which he was placed at first, he must have had an impression that by the constitution which had been given him, God was engaged to bestow good upon him, which he was brought under obligation by Covenanting to accept. Covenanting is adapted to the moral constitution of man in a state of grace. First. Inasmuch as gracious capacities lead to acquiescence in what God requires. All the powers of man, either directly or indirectly, were injured and misdirected by the fall. The range of the intellect was circumscribed, and its power was diminished. The affections were deadened, and subjected to unholy influence; the conscience became callous, and unfit to testify for God as it had formerly done; and the will was exercised to do only evil, and that continually. From the moral nature of man proceeded all the evils that overtook his constitution in consequence of sin. That suffered the taint of a depravity that exposed the sinner to ruin; and the curse of the broken law went out through it, to mar and destroy. Man by nature is degraded, because he is chargeable with original and actual sin, and because he wills not to obey God. Of every characteristic of a creature in covenant with him, he is destitute. Between the tendencies of his nature, and the demands of the Divine law, there is no correspondence. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." [460] But in the day of effectual calling, a complete change is produced upon the moral tendencies of the soul. Before that, there was applicable to it the description, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." [461] Afterwards it uses the language, "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works." [462] Men in sin have addressed to them the mandate, "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see." [463] Men renewed, do each say, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people;" [464] "I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." [465] To the wicked is addressed the reproof, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" [466] To the righteous belongs the description, "that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord." [467] Of unbelievers, it is declared, "Even their mind and conscience is defiled." [468] But of those who live by faith, it is said, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" [469] Of those who, though professedly the people of God, were but hypocrites, the record is given, "But my people would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would none of me." [470] But concerning those who had submitted to him, an apostle gave the testimony, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." [471] Thus, those who are born again, are rendered fit to lay hold upon the proposals of God's goodness and mercy through Christ. Such are a people made willing in a day of power. Corruption continues within them, but it is subdued. They delight in the law of God after the inward man. To the requirement of a covenant like that of works, their resolutions and endeavours are alike inadequate. Under the dispensations of Divine grace, however, no proposals of any covenant designed to confer life through their own obedience is made to them. It is on a covenant, the conditions of which were fully satisfied by One infinitely qualified for his work, that they are invited to take hold, and the powers conferred upon them correspond to the exercise. Imperfection marks the nature of the Christian, even throughout all his earthly career; but the means to be employed by him in making covenant engagements to the Lord, do not less accord to his new covenant relation to him, than those made by him in innocence, did to his first covenant state; and not less are his gracious powers and faculties suited

to the one, than the original gifts conferred upon him, were adapted to the other. Secondly. Inasmuch as the invitations to accede to the Covenant of Grace are tendered to sinners, and through the operation of the Spirit are accepted by those who are born again. The offering of free favour to man must imply the possibility of him, aided in some manner, accepting it. Had the rational nature of man been destroyed by the fall, then a re-organization of him must have preceded the reception on his part of the benefits offered. But regeneration, and not re-organization, is experienced by him when he is enabled to lay hold of God's Covenant. The former, not less wondrous, perhaps more wondrous than the latter would have been, brings the sinful creature from the state of one exposed to the curse of the law, as both a covenant and a law, to that of one engaged to the duties of a permanent covenant. By regeneration, the intellectual character of the human mind is not changed, nor thereby are changed the conscience and affections and capacity to will. By that the personal identity of the sinner is not altered; for it is the same being that sinned who is saved. But by that the tendencies of the moral nature are changed, and modifications most important are produced upon the operation of the powers of the whole man; -- in one word, the heart in being brought under gracious influence is renewed, and thus is made to possess the character of a new heart. Thus, the understanding that was formerly darkened and misdirected is enlightened; those affections that were sinful are sanctified; the conscience is made tender; and the will which was opposed to God is made to acquiesce in his; the enmity in the heart, like a foreign substance which had not annihilated the nature, but which had assumed dominion over the whole man, and exercised a power for which he was answerable, is displaced; and corruption, though not altogether removed, is gradually bereft of its influence, and doomed to extermination. It is not as if man in sin were altogether ignorant of what God requires, but because he is unwilling to obey, that he does not yield it. His disobedience is not as if that requirement were inconsistent with his natural powers, but as opposed by their tendency. It is not as if obedience were foreign to his nature, but because it is repugnant to his will. But when the sinner is renewed, the requirement of the duty takes effect. The result upon the man proclaims the adaptation of the claim to his state; and the nature of that claim shows that he is prepared for the exercise which it urges. The law of God demands of all what all ought to give, but what man, in consequence of sin, because he is unwilling, is unable to give. That law demands of all what believers are desirous to render, but which of themselves they are unable to implement, and the part of which that is accepted they are enabled by Divine grace alone to perform. Calls to the exercise of Covenanting addressed to men, whether in a state of sin or in a state of grace, though differently apprehended by them, being in a varied manner understood by both, must be in accordance with what is common to the nature of each, and also to that of man in innocence. The wicked show that they know what these calls imply; for they often refuse to attend to them after any manner, and when they attempt to act according to them, they aim at an end that is not elevated above deliverance merely from the effects of sin, not to say comprehensive of the glory of God. And the righteous do in measure understand them. After some manner they obey them. They arrive at their full import progressively. Their feelings are inadequate to them, not in kind, but in measure. As they make progress in holiness they will be more thoroughly conformed to them in fact. When about to enter upon the heavenly inheritance of the promise itself, their conformity with these will be complete. Hence, First. The reality of the Covenant of Works appears. It was not unworthy of God to enter into covenant with man in innocence. He was the workmanship of his own hands. The constitution given to him admitted of intercourse on his part with his Creator. It

was not unbecoming the dignity of God's character to give to man a law. It was becoming his character to give him a moral constitution that would lead him to obey it. It was equally becoming the glory of his nature to accept of obedience to it. His entering into covenant with him was the accepting of Covenanting -- a part of that obedience, and was therefore in perfect consistency with the excellency of His being. It is not allowable to suppose that in order to a covenant relation between God and his creatures, these should be able to give something of their own which might be esteemed as a meritorious condition of a covenant; nor is it warrantable to maintain that because man in innocence was unable to make such a communication, therefore he was not in that state taken into covenant. Neither man in innocence, nor man in a state of grace, was required to make such a tender; nay, no creature is able to afford it. If it is admitted, then, that a covenant exists between God and man redeemed on the footing of the merits of the Saviour, how can it be denied that man in innocence could be taken into a covenant with God on account of the merit or worth of Himself as the Creator and righteous moral Governor of all? In the case of the Covenant of Grace, the merit on account of which man is accepted was displayed in a manifestation of the mercy of God in the obedience and sufferings of Christ. In the case of what is rightly held to have been a covenant between God and Adam as the representative of the human family, the merit for which man was accepted was not his own, but the merit or worth of the Divine character exhibited, in giving him a constitution fitting him for acquiescing in what the Divine law required, and in affording him every facility for glorifying God by yielding obedience to all his commands. And, besides, various are the considerations that tend to show, that from the constitution of man there is reason to conclude that the representative character and state that are attributed to Adam as a covenant head, and therefore also what is called the Covenant of Works, -- though in a certain sense a covenant of grace -- but not of grace through a mediator, are not inconsistent with the glory of the Divine character. It would not have been inconsistent with the glory of God to have made any one of the human family its representative head. No one of them would have refused to represent their race. And since therefore Adam would not have refused, it is not warrantable, on the assumption that he would have refused, to deny that he was commanded to undertake the duties of a federal head. The interests of men were better provided for on the principle of representation than they would have been, had it been given to every member of the human family individually to undergo a trial, on which would have depended their eternal condition. Had the whole human family been together when sin entered into the world, they had all been as liable to seduction by the enemy as the first of men. But the resistance of him by Adam would have been equal to the resistance of the whole human race. Had all the human family at once been present in the very circumstances of temptation in which Adam was placed, would they have acted differently from what he did? They could have done so; but what evidence have we that they would? God did not vouchsafe an extraordinary power in order to keep Adam from falling: such would have interfered with his state as a free moral responsible being. Would he have done so, then, to the whole human race, had they been then present together? But had Adam continued for an appointed period to obey, life to all his posterity would have been the result, and thus benefits through one as a representative would have come to the many with certainty, without all having individually, by being put into a state of probation, in the midst of temptation, to endeavour to secure a title to life for themselves. It is sinful for men to arraign the procedure according to which men come into the world in a state of condemnation, or to deny it. The Scriptures reveal it, and it is a necessary effect of the operation of Divine justice. Had it not been right, God would not have

instituted such a relation between Adam and his descendants as would have admitted of the fact; nay, had not that arrangement in itself been preferable to every other, Divine wisdom would not have made it. It therefore has a reason for it the most satisfactory, however little we may be able to apprehend it. Nothing that we know is inconsistent with that arrangement, but it may be but a small part of its reason that we yet observe. Man was not doomed, but permitted to fall. It was not necessary that he should be prevented from sinning, and his fall was the necessary effect of his transgression. Is it urged -- Is it not dreadful to think of man being brought into existence in a state of sin and misery? -- of a nature being given to him which never had the power to make one endeavour to live for ever? It is answered, God did not create men in a state of condemnation, but sin invaded them, and in one all fell. God is righteous, and his justice finds every one of the family of man guilty. The rectitude of God's character did not require that he should create any one with a title to eternal life; but because of sin, it forbade that any of the children of fallen man represented by him should come into existence in a state of acceptance with him. The case of the sinner coming into the world under condemnation, is not worse than that of him, who, first having had power to stand, was tempted, and sinned, and fell. No less consistent with the excellence of the character of God and the sovereignty of his procedures, is the state of one fallen even at the very origin of his being, than that of one who had had an opportunity to avoid falling, but after a short trial really fell. Adam at first had not a right, independently of the sovereign gift of God, to come into existence in a state of acceptance. He had not a right to continue in it when he sinned. And in like manner, no sinner can say that he had a claim upon the Creator to be brought into being free from the curse. The same argument that would suffice to establish that men should not be implicated in the rebellion of Adam, would go to prove that he should not have been allowed himself to fall. And hence the repugnance of men to the doctrine of original sin is unwarranted, and affords no proper ground on which to deny the Covenant of Works. Secondly. The wicked, whether individuals or communities, and these alone, are not in covenant. Man in innocence was never under the law of God merely as a law. The will of God, promulgated as the terms both of a covenant and a law, had the sacredness of a law; acceded to by man, it had all the sanctity of a covenant. The will of God was propounded as a law, to be received both as a law and as a covenant; the acceptance of it engaged man to it as possessed of both characters. Because of God's authority dictating it as a law, his will revealed conferred obligation. Because of God's will and providential arrangements as to the constitution of man, he acquiescing in the requirement of the law came besides under a covenant obligation to fulfil it. At the very origin of his being he came under both obligations. Under both he was placed according to the appointment of the Most High, and by his authority. At his fall the whole human family became exposed to the curse at once of a broken law and a violated covenant. Then and thereafter the law was a broken covenant. It had been propounded as a law, and offered as the condition of a covenant. As a law and as a covenant it had been acquiesced in, and thus stood as a covenant; but by reason of apostacy it passed from the rank of a law and a covenant to that of a mere law; and as a law proceeded to put forth on the unregenerate the claims for punishment, of a law that should still continue, but also of a covenant that had been broken, and could never again exist in its original state. To the ungodly still it is a law demanding obedience to it, and punishment for past transgression of it as a law, and requiring also not obedience to it as a covenant, but punishment for the breach of it as a covenant. What was the Covenant of Works is not now a covenant to any; to the wicked it is a law which by reason of their sin tends to their ruin. The work of the law is written upon the hearts of men in sin,

but not as if it were now a covenant law; for now the Covenant of Works as a covenant, has no demand of obedience to it on men. The tendency that there is in the unrenewed heart to seek life by the works of the law shows, not that the law is there written as a covenant, but that there is there an attachment inconsistent with the will of God, to the law as a covenant, which, while there is not felt the desire either of good flowing from a covenant relation to God or of willingness conscientiously to obey his commands, leads vainly to seek, merely exemption from punishment, or undefined good. Certainly the blinded heathen have not that law which was broken proposed to them as the terms of a covenant; and so neither have others. The will of God revealed to men in a state of sin, has the character of a law, but not of a covenant. "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." [472] The impenitent transgressor continues under the curse of the law. If not subdued by Divine grace, he will continue to feel here the effects of the wrath of God "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" and in the future state will experience the effects of the curse in "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." The law of God addressed to corrupt ecclesiastical societies, is not a covenant, but essentially a law. A national compact between rulers and people, when violated, affords an analogy here. The laws, or institutions, or ordinances, of a nation, according to which the sovereign reigns, the other rulers govern, and the people voluntarily give obedience, is a covenant; but against those who violate them, whatever may be their rank, they act not as a covenant but as a law, punishing for breach of covenant. But to proceed. When Israel were holiness to the Lord, his law was to them a covenant. When any of them fell off into idolatry, that covenant was dispensed to those solely as a law taking vengeance for the breach of it as a covenant and as a law. To the true Israel receiving spiritual blessings, it was dispensed as a covenant. But only as a law demanding punishment and obedience, it extended, to many in the mountains of the East, and on the plains of Babylon, and afterwards in every part of the world, to the descendants of the unbelieving Jews. When the Christian Church was pure, the law of God was to her a covenant. When, by the removal of the truth, and opposition to it, she degenerated into Antichrist, it continued not a covenant to her, but acted against her as a law. And before its blighting curse she fell plagued. The judgments poured out on the seat of the Beast were its effects; and to that curse will be due, the accomplishment of the prediction -- "I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord;" [473] and the realization of the fearful doom proclaimed by an angel come down from Heaven -- "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen," and of the woe uttered by a mighty angel, that "took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." [474] Even the offers of mercy to the unrenewed are made as the requirements of a mere law. So long as they are unaccepted, they possess the same character. They are tenders of what, when acceded to, would be a covenant; but are not the requirements of a covenant till they be appropriated. When received, they are the duties of both a law and a covenant. For example, the injunction to believe on Jesus, addressed to one in a state of sin, is the command of a law, but not of a covenant, to that individual. If not accepted, it binds to punishment for disregard of it as a law, and the non-acceptance of it is a proposed covenant command. If perfidiously received, it binds to punishment for not obeying it, and for deceitfully professing, by vow or oath, to receive it. Accepted in sincerity and truth, and consequently not by

the wicked, but by one born again, it is laid hold on at once as a law and a covenant command; -- as a requirement of the immutable law of God, and as a duty of the Everlasting Covenant. Commands addressed to believers are at once, even while inculcated, a law and a covenant requirement. They have acceded to these. Thereafter, such therefore remain not merely a law, but a covenant duty, and as enforcing covenant obligation, fall to be habitually observed. Thirdly. Those who are in covenant with God will, as individuals and communities, in some measure make and keep covenant engagements with him. Every believer, that is, every one in covenant with God, will after some manner practise such duties. Covenanting is an exercise of the renewed nature, and is an essential manifestation of it. From gravitation come the movement of the moon in her orbit, that of the planets round the sun, and perhaps a progress of the whole solar system through space; from the living energy of the plant cherished by the moisture and heat of heaven proceed, the expanding of the leaf, and the putting forth of the flower and fruit; from the laws of molecular attraction, come the beautiful forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal creation; from the principle of love to God comes the habit of delighting in him; from hope come the stimulating anticipations of eternal good; from faith comes the exercise of believing; from the heart, whose energies delivered from the dominion of sin by grace, are, from their native constitution and by the claims of the God of salvation, engaged to him in covenant, proceeds the habitual exercise of Covenanting. Where there is motion, there and there only force prevails; where organic effort is made, there only life exists; where Covenanting is engaged in, there only a covenant relation and title can be found. Every incorporate community that forms a part of the true Church of the living God, with greater or less frequency, or more or less explicitly, recognises its covenant obligations by acknowledging and endeavouring to keep them. Where no attention is paid to covenant obligations, there is no covenant relation. The body that does not attract iron, or possess polarity, is not magnetic. That which does not transmit light or sound, is not elastic. That which does not distribute heat is without life. If a society bind not others to itself by religious Covenanting after some manner, it belongs not to the Church of God. From the law of Covenanting comes all the consistency of the union of believers -- the family that is named in heaven. That family, by displaying God's covenant, invites to its communion many who would have perished. The invisible Church cannot have associated to it any thing dissimilar to itself, but it binds to it those who are congenial to it. It is to the fellowship of the Church visible that the members of the Church of the first-born are drawn. God prepares men for the communion of saints. It is by the power of the Spirit accompanying the means of grace dispensed in the assemblies of the faithful, that a transforming effect is produced on the natural man, and that he is drawn. It is the power and glory of God that draws and unites; and the whole body, like the virgin gold or silver in the veins of the rocks, which is composed of what were grains scattered through contiguous strata, and by a galvanic power continues to accumulate, has its affinities for each of the precious family of grace. The law by which these are drawn is not merely moral, but gracious. The communion of saints was confederated, that, by attracting others to it, it might grow. As a covenant society, and in the use of Covenanting, it attracts. It has a tendency to give utterance to its intention, and that by professing the truth, that sinners may be won. "As it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." [475] "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." [476] By taking the Covenant of God publicly in their mouth, his people in measure fulfil the Redeemer's mandate, -- "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another;" [477] and the corresponding duty, -- "Let your

speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt."^[478] It is a serious mark of a Church's imperfection for it to recognise only implicitly or virtually its covenant obligations. The greater the living energy that inhabits the society, the more regard its obligations receive. Finally. How dreadful is the condition of those who are not in covenant with God! It is degraded. Man was in covenant with God at first. With all accepted moral beings, and these alone, He deals by way of covenant. Thus, after some manner, he dealt with angels in glory. Thus he dealt with man unfallen. Thus he deals with sinners redeemed. For sustaining the dignity of a covenant relation to him, inanimate and unintelligent creation are not adapted; but for not standing in that, they are not dishonoured. Angels in light, acquiescing in God's law, were at least virtually in covenant with him. Some of them proudly sinned, and fell from their high confederation. They took counsel together thereafter, but it was against the Lord. In hell they appear his foes combined in everlasting league against him, but delivered over forever to the terrors of his wrath. To their case alone, that of the wicked even on earth can be compared. But the case of rebellious sinners here, is, if possible, more revolting. Sinners under condemnation receive outward good here, designed to lead them to repentance. All the good diffused around, comes through the arrangements of a gracious covenant. They receive temporal good themselves indirectly from a covenant on which they will not take hold. They despise the word of him who ordained that good the most extensive should come to sinners through that covenant. Their degradation is extreme. Attempting to go in opposition to all the arrangements of the Most High, and yet kept in the enjoyment of some good, and in the prospect of the greatest, they are an anomaly in the universe. They confederate with one another, but against God. They will not take Him into their counsels. They are, therefore, destitute of his favour, and of all the honour of co-operating with him. The change to which, by sin, they subjected themselves, is more humbling than that produced on any other class of creatures, even on fallen angels themselves; for these resist not offers of mercy. The inanimate creation responds to God's command. He enjoins, and it obeys. There the Divine mandate has the sure counterpart of obedience. In the world of unfallen intelligences, the word of the Lord is fulfilled willingly by all. In the world of perdition, however, it is set at nought. But on earth, where benefits are dispensed, it is spurned by the wicked also. The twofold curse of a broken law and covenant pursues sinners, yet they are invited to escape it; but they will not submit. A covenant of life and peace is made known. Its blessings great and precious are freely offered to them. Yet they cherish the enmity of their hearts against God, and they will not yield. With no sinless creature of God have they communion. They are voluntarily alone in the universe, at war with all God's creatures, and lowest among them. They are most unworthy. Every arrangement of his providence tends to restore them to his favour. Neglecting the duty of Covenanting, they set all these at nought. The beasts that perish are not degraded, but these are. They are worthy to be ranked with apostate angels. In the rage of their rebellion, they are bent on enduring all the terrors of a broken law and covenant in the place of final woe. Let not sinners persevere in their obstinacy. Even yet, there is good largely offered to them, which, if they accept it, they will abundantly receive.

FOOTNOTES:^[456] Gen. i.27.^[457] Eccl. vii.29.^[458] Gen. ii.16, 17.^[459] Ps. cxi.9.^[460] Rom. viii.7.^[461] John v.40.^[462] Ps. lxxiii.28.^[463] Is. xlii.18.^[464] Ps. lxxv.8.^[465] Mic. vii.7.^[466] Ps. iv.2.^[467] Is. lvi.6.^[468] Tit. i.15.^[469] Heb. ix.14.^[470] Ps. lxxxi.11.^[471] Phil. ii.13.^[472] 1 Tim. i.9.^[473] Jer. li.25, 26.^[474] Rev. xviii.21.^[475] 2 Cor. iv.13.^[476] Ps. li.13.^[477] Mark ix.50.^[478] Col. iv.6.

CHAPTER VIII. COVENANTING ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

Since every revealed purpose of God, implying that obedience to his law will be given, is a demand of that obedience, the announcement of his Covenant, as in his sovereignty decreed, claims, not less effectively than an explicit law, the fulfilment of its duties. A representation of a system of things pre-determined in order that the obligations of the Covenant might be discharged; various exhibitions of the Covenant as ordained; and a description of the children of the Covenant as predestinated to peculiar privileges and services, make that announcement; and consequently, preferring the claim of submission to covenant requirements, urge, not less than to the others of these requisitions, a dutiful regard to the exercise of solemn Covenanting. Many things in creation and providence were appointed for this, as well as for other ends, that men might make and fulfil solemn vows to God. The work of creation itself is cited to lead men to acts of religious homage. "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." [479] The work of creation was performed, that on earth a people might be sustained to serve the Lord. "They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else." [480] In anticipation of bestowing good on his people, even during their continuance on earth, the Surety of sinners, when the creation of all things was decreed, rejoiced. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." [481] Hence of them as the heirs of a comprehensive Covenant blessing, it is said in language in substance not unfrequently occurring, "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." [482] God's covenant with every living creature, revealed to Noah, was an appointment to confer the means of life on men in order to the attainment of the end of their creation. Other arrangements, conducive to the same object, are thus described, -- "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of

the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace." [483] That the land of Canaan was granted to the Israelites, not merely by promise, but by a sovereign decree, is implied in the words, "Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them." [484] Israel, fallen from the service of the Lord, is thus addressed, -- "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband), and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." Protection, as ordained in connection with their being taken into covenant with God, is thus promised, -- "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." Support, too, as in like manner provided for them -- crying unto the Lord for the supply of their wants, is promised, -- "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." And not merely reclaimed Israel, but the Gentiles, as by sovereign ordination interested in all their outward and spiritual blessings, are objects of the promise, -- "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." [485] Secondly. The covenant of God, as ordained by him, manifests that the exercise of vowing unto him was also ordained. That was appointed. In statements regarding the sovereign arrangements of providence is this taught. These were brought into view, and their continuance promised, in the covenant made with Noah. In that covenant it was secured that the waters of another flood should not overflow the earth. In that too it was promised, that summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, should not cease. The covenant, therefore, as well as these ordinances, its results, was ordained. And accordingly was ordained, all connected with its dispensations. From the use of a term employed in prophecy in reference to the waters of the sea, this, moreover, appears. "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it." [486] The term here rendered placed, in this passage means appointed; and in the two following passages is applied to the covenant. The statement, "He appointed a law in Israel," [487] hence declares the institution of his law as a decree. And the demands of the covenant being those of the law, even as his law, the covenant it intimates as ordained, not merely by his high authority, but according to his sovereign will. And thus too are expounded David's last words, -- "He hath made with me," or rather appointed for me, "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," [488] as intimating not merely his cleaving to God's covenant, but his recognition of that covenant as according to his good pleasure, in all things decreed. That covenant was established. "God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." [489] In such terms -- literally applicable to intelligent and moral beings -- but in figure transferable to the lower creation too, God spake of good intended for living creatures of every kind. That all the latter could apprehend his benevolent purposes, the words cannot intimate, but they do declare that by a beneficent

ordination he had made provision for all. The beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, in common with man, enjoy the benefits of an animal life. With him they are subjected to the operation of causes acting according to the sovereign purposes of God, and with him, they are employed by the Lord of all in their varied spheres to fulfil his will. But he, by his great Creator, favoured highly above them, is called to obedience in a way to them unknown. Yet not less determinate than the laws and dispositions of the material world are all His arrangements, especially his covenant provisions made with regard to man. The lower creatures of God, though they know him not, obey his word. Moral agents on earth are subject wholly to his control. The decrees of his providence affect his intelligent and moral creatures not less than those that know not to resolve. All things continue according to his ordinances -- the material creation and his immortal offspring. His statutes bind the heavens and the earth; and by his appointment, the relations unto him into which men are brought, are constituted and sustained. Whatever may be the character of a solemn covenant with him, to his appointment it is due, and by his will continues. If to them that fear God will be verified the declaration, "Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee,"[490] will not all his own holy purposes stand? And was not all that he established -- was not the covenant which he established, decreed? His purposes and their fulfilment are alike sure. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand."[491] To some who had disregarded his covenant were directed his words, -- "Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, ... The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." But revealing the Mediator of his covenant, and, consequently, making known that covenant, as to obtain, instead of the covenant with death, which was to be swept away, at the same time he says, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." Regarding both the threatening and the promise, are his words, -- "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."[492] And may there not also be applied to both his own averment, -- "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand."[493] The covenant was commanded. When God said, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded," He spake of that omnipotent word by which he commanded all their hosts, at least into existence. And, accordingly, we are to understand the testimony, "He hath commanded his covenant for ever,"[494] as implying not merely that it should endure for ever, but that to his almighty mandate are its origin and continuance due. This the Psalmist celebrates when he sings of Zion, "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."[495] And this, too, in addressing the children of Zion, and the God of Zion, he records. "Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us."[496] In like manner, are the blessings of that covenant thus announced: -- "The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." And is thus declared, that obedience to its requirements was ordained, "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he

commanded to a thousand generations: which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." By the Lord of all, obedience to his law is enjoined. But what is requisite that duty be performed, is from him. And all needful aid he ordained. His law exhibits what he demands. The allotments of his providence illustrate the necessity of submission to him; and the pre-determinations of his will secure the services which he accepts. His laws are perfect. With the arrangements of his providence they harmonize. On the absolute perfection of his nature they are founded. All who obey them declare their approval of his purpose. To encourage such, his purposes are revealed. Because his covenant was commanded, it was made known. Its revelation, with its other provisions, leads to the attainment of its end. And it shall continue. Its benefits will be confessed, and its obligations respected and fulfilled. Contemplating its demands as promulgated by the authority of God, these they will endeavour to satisfy in accordance with his sovereign decrees. The wicked disobey his commandments, but cannot alter the determination of his will. The others make not the purposes of God the rule of duty, but endeavouring to fulfil his revealed will, they are employed with honour to execute his counsel. "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." [497] And the covenant of God stands according to a sovereign decree. In virtue of his high authority the Lord imposed the regulations of his material and intelligent kingdoms, and the laws by which his moral creatures are governed. Hence, terms strictly applicable only to the government of the one, are metaphorically applied to the control of the other. And his dispensations to some are employed as symbols of his operations towards the rest. Thus, in language primarily used in reference to the firmness or security of a building, his word, and, consequently, his covenant, the arrangements of which it embodies, are represented as decreed. "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever." [498] As ordained or decreed, to the appointments of the material universe it is compared. "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers." -- "Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant." [499] And especially is that true religion through which covenant engagements are made and kept, according to God's decree. "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" -- "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." "When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." [500] Were the rain, and the lightning, and the thunder decreed? Then no less was decreed "the fear of the Lord." To vow unto the Lord was to manifest that fear. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." [501] And hence, also, not less than every other effect of that true wisdom which consists in the fear of the Lord, and of that understanding which is to depart from evil, was ordained the service of vowing and swearing to him. Thirdly. A people were foreordained to make solemn vows unto God. Representations are given of his people as formed for his service.

According to some of these, the expression, to form, means to fashion, or to bring into existence. "I will say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." [502] "Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant." [503] And hence, because whatever is formed, is formed according to God's purpose, his servants, to his service in all its parts, were foreordained by him. But besides, the meaning of the said expression, cannot, even in the foregoing passages, nor in others, be limited to its literal import. It is employed to intimate that God pre-determined what his enemies should accomplish. "Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps." [504] In reference to a Covenant people to be continued to discharge their peculiar duties, and to provisions of grace, described in terms most beautiful, it is applied. [505] "Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; the Lord is his name." [506] And since the purposes of God secure their fulfilment, and so his arrangements concerning his people secure their creation, regeneration, and continued support, does not the expression, kindred to others, "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; fear not, O Jacob, my servant," explicitly advert to them as predestinated to obedience, and especially the obedience thus described, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel"? [507] Reasonings on the sovereignty of God exercised in setting apart a limited number to the benefits of salvation, illustrate and assert the truth. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." [508] In such terms is God described as not merely having created all things, but as having predestinated some to eternal life, and decreed that others should be left to perish. The mode of expression embodying the image of the potter agrees with the words of the Old Testament Scriptures, -- "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? or shall the thing framed (formed) say of him that framed (formed) it, he had no understanding?" [509] What is taught by the use of such language must therefore be implied in those declarations of the prophets, where corresponding terms are employed. In the language of the Old Testament, the potter is literally, he who forms. According to the Apostle, the potter symbolizes him who predestinates. Hence, since, as in the words, -- "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth (formeth) it, what makest thou? or thy work, he hath no hands," [510] he is compared to the potter, He is to be recognised as the sovereign Disposer of the final conditions of all. And forasmuch as, at a given period, concerning the existing house of Jacob, framed by him, he says in regard to their descendants, also formed by him, "But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the

God of Israel,"[511] depicting all of them in the character of those who avouch him to be their God, the true Israel he acknowledges as formed for, or set apart to, that high distinction by himself; and that the Apostle had this in view, his quotations from the prophets here given declare. It was of a people who should be objects of this promise, "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali,"[512] and on whom the privileges thereafter described should be conferred, that was predicted the blessedness, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."[513] It is of those, to whom Covenanting[514] with God, refers the promise, "The remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God,"[515] that Esaias also crieth, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved."[516] And it was of those who, heirs of Abraham's faith, which was counted to him for righteousness, were, as he was, taken into covenant with God, and like whom none remained in the cities of the plain when these were overthrown, that "Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."[517] The Covenant people of God are an appointed people. Even as a law was appointed in Israel; even as an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, was appointed; so were they. "And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them."[518] The same term, denoting to appoint, in each of the three cases is used. It is used in original of the passage, "He gave (appointed) to the sea his decree;" and in this acceptation of it signifies, in sovereignty to ordain. The ancient people included first the people of Israel;[519] and they are the Covenant people of all nations, and of every age, members of that church whose date is of ancient days. By the prophet who speaks of their appointment, their practice as Covenanters vowing to the Lord, in a familiar passage is explicitly described.[520] From others it may be concluded. Many evils overtook apostate Israel. "The earth mourneth, and fadeth away; the world languisheth, and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the Everlasting Covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." But to many, good was to follow. And if, for the neglect of making and keeping Covenant engagements, such calamities were poured out, will not a strict regard to these duties be paid when desolations shall cease, and there shall have arrived the time, "when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."[521] Many were appointed or left to disobedience and condemnation. And were not others appointed to obedience and life? Of the former, the Apostle Peter writes, -- "But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." But to the others, in terms certainly implying, that to every privilege and duty of the Covenant they were no less -- yea, assuredly appointed, He says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him

shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." The chief corner stone laid in Sion is presented as a ground of trust, instead of the Covenant with death and hell which should not stand. All founded on him are therefore a Covenant people, and hence, in that character, they were appointed. And hence, in terms from the Old Testament, bearing on Covenant relations and duties, he continues his address, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." [522] The people of God, as a Covenant people, were written in the book of life. Of the holy Jerusalem the Spirit testifies, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." [523] Whosoever enters therein, therefore, will not rank among those who, refusing to act as the children of the Covenant, are denominated the uncircumcised and the unclean. Concerning the beast, it is said, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." [524] The sin of those is idolatry. Hence, neither are written in the book of life any others, who impenitently refraining from the obedience of a covenant people, virtually persevere in the service of any idols, till death arrests them. It was to Israel as a people who had voluntarily in covenant dedicated themselves to his service, that was addressed the message, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord." [525] And applicable to all who, such as they were, being in covenant are sanctified, is the promise, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." [526] The saints of God are come "to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven;" but they are also come to "Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." And according to their distinguished destination they endeavour to reduce to practice the exhortation, "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." [527] The Covenant people of God are an elect people. They were chosen to be separated from the wicked and from their works. Thus Israel were separated from the heathen. Thus all who believe are separated from those that know not nor obey the Lord. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." [528] "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you." [529] The answer of God to the lamentation of Elijah concerning the defection of Israel, is applied to believers of New Testament times, as a people in covenant chosen from the wicked. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." [530] The apostle does not quote the words of the prophet, -- "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant;" [531] but he states the evidence for the fact which these words announce,

"They have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars." The seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, were steadfast in God's Covenant. All believers are so. As thus steadfast, all of them in every time are a remnant, according to the election of grace. The people of God were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Hence a visible church was erected therein. Hence Israel, as a people, were endowed with peculiar privileges. Hence the ordinances of Divine grace are dispensed in every age. But all are not elect who wait on the institutions of religion. Israel was chosen from among the heathen; but all of them were not chosen in Christ. The members of the visible church, by profession, are separated from the world; but all of them do not enjoy the privileges, and do not discharge the duties of God's elect. All are not Israel who are of Israel. When the Lord entered into covenant with his people Israel, he chose them from among idolaters. He did so because of his choice of them from everlasting. Why the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, is, that he chose them from eternity. And the Lord will have mercy on the Gentiles as a covenant people, set apart from the wicked, according to his eternal sovereign good will. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all the people; but because the Lord loved you. -- "[532] "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." [533] When Paul and Barnabas preached at Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. These apostles thereupon expressed their resolution to turn to the Gentiles. And their warrant they declare, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Nor was he, who, that he might be a light of the Gentiles, was given for a covenant of the people, [534] then preached in vain. "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." [535] The people of God were elected to covenant obedience. Israel were frequently represented both as his elect and as his servants. "For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name." [536] The elect are spoken of as formed and ordained to good works. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And those good works include the keeping of the covenant, by Covenanting and fulfilling the engagements made. "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." [537] The saints are described as "elect -- unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." [538] As the sprinkling of blood, signifying the application of the efficacy of Christ's death by the Spirit of God, was wont to accompany the exercise of Covenanting by sacrifice, so, under the last dispensation, the obedience of the people of God, according to election, is to spring from their acceptance of Christ and his benefits, and dedication to God in the various acts of personal and social Covenanting. Finally, they are introduced at once as his witnesses, his servant, and his chosen. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." [539] They were therefore chosen to serve him, by vowing and swearing to him in secret, by testifying to his truths by oath before the world, and by adhering faithfully to his testimony. The people of God were elected to privileges that can be enjoyed only by those in covenant with him. Theirs is the

heavenly calling; and this they enjoy, "that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." [540] All the saints being called, and chosen, and faithful, Abraham had been a partaker of this calling when God delivered to him the command to leave his native land, which the patriarch obeyed. That effectual call led him to obey the special mandate to go forth to Canaan, and to believe the precious promise that had been made to him. When the Covenant of God was established with him by that call, he laid hold upon it, testifying to his acquiescence in it, by believing in the Lord, by sacrificing unto him, and by receiving circumcision as a covenant sign. And that, as the promise of that covenant was to the Jews who were called, so its seasonable duties, and consequently the exercise of engaging to it, were incumbent upon them, appears from the record of the specially momentous day of Pentecost. Manifestly keeping in view the Covenant, by inculcating on the people a regard to baptism -- its sign, "Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." [541] Not merely to the Jews was its precious promise of the "seed," Christ, but to the Gentiles also. And faith in him, and the duty of keeping and of entering into covenant with him, under the latter dispensation, are obligatory on all. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." [542] And the gospel is preached, that men receiving the external call may be called effectually, and thus brought to receive the promise, and fulfil the duties required. Like the Israelites, who, after His manifestation in the flesh, believed in Jesus, all the people of God feel and acknowledge their covenant obligations, that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. To the condition of a people keeping covenant, the seed of Jacob yet to be reclaimed, as chosen of God will be called. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." [543] And all whom he had before prepared unto glory, even those whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, as a people in covenant acting faith on Christ will lay hold on the covenant promise. "For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (covenant), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." [544] To the elect people of God belongs the blessing of justification. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified." [545] Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. It was when, in the exercise of Covenanting, he accepted of the promise of God, that he was thus blessed. All who believe are the children of Abraham, and, being in covenant, are, by being justified, blessed with him. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." They are those concerning whom the Lord hath sworn, saying, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." [546] The Lord Jesus, exalted a Prince and a Saviour, is made of God unto his people, righteousness. Being justified by faith, they have the covenant blessing of peace with God, through Christ. And to the glory of the Redeemer, and to

the manifestation of the solemn covenant relations to God in which they stand, making mention of his righteousness, they will vow and swear to him. Under the auspicious reign of Messiah, seated at God's right hand, the people of Israel, restored to their own land, will do so. "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them." [547] And this duty the Gentile nations also shall perform. "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." [548] The Lord hath chosen his people to the adoption of sons. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." [549] In that character they individually, and also in a social capacity, vow to the Lord, and keep his covenant. To manifest that that relation recognises the necessity of self-dedication unto him, he says to each one called to his service, "My son, give me thine heart." [550] That Israel might be led into the wilderness, and thence to Canaan, not merely to give continual obedience to his law, but at certain seasons, as a people, to enter into solemn covenant with God, Pharaoh had addressed to him the message, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, let my son go, that he may serve me." [551] In terms which describe the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Surety of sinners, the covenant of royalty which God made with David is also commemorated. [552] In that covenant Solomon was interested, and, standing in such a relation, was the object of the promise, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." [553] Jacob, described as the Lord's servant, and Israel as his elect, and who are represented as vowing and swearing to the Lord, are acknowledged as his sons. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." [554] Israel, by falling into idolatry, manifestly disregarding the solemn covenant obligations that had descended upon them, were reminded of their sin, by a representation of that filial relation to God in which their fathers stood, but to which many, notwithstanding their professions, through unbelief, never attained. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." [555] In the character of his sons, will Israel be reclaimed from their apostacy, and voluntarily enter into solemn engagements with God as his covenant people. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." [556] In the character of children, too, they shall enjoy the benefits of God's covenant; [557] and, like them, all the chosen of God will hear his gracious invitation, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding;" and with them cheerfully coming under obligation to serve him, they will say, "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." [558] Both Jews and Gentiles are interested in the apostle's declaration, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." [559] The elect people of God are a sanctified people. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." [560] And as a holy people they draw near to vow to him. As

separated from the heathen, and called to the service of God, Israel appeared a holy people. Abstaining from certain practices in which idolaters engaged, they were ceremonially holy. Under both aspects, they appeared a symbol of the true Israel among them, and of all else who are sanctified by the Spirit, and dedicated to the Lord. The people entered into a covenant with the Lord at Sinai. But that they might be prepared for acceding to it, and for the accompanying solemnities, they, as a holy people, required to make progress in sanctification, were previously to be sanctified. "The Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow." [561] In order to wait upon God, whether making miraculous displays of his omniscience or power, or manifesting himself in the dispensation of the ordinances of his grace, the people of Israel were commanded to sanctify themselves. The place of his gracious presence, where his people, besides engaging in other exercises, sware in Covenanting with him, was his sanctuary. His covenant with his people, as that with Abraham, is a holy covenant. That his people may enter into covenant renewedly, the Lord himself will sanctify them. His Sabbath, the sign of his covenant, he gave them, that they might know this. [562] This they will continue to experience. Many sware by those that were no gods, but to his own people as swearing by his name he promises, "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid (sanctified) his guests." [563] In this, ruin may be threatened to his enemies; but in it, certainly, is implied his gracious procedures to his saints. By the Holy Ghost they are sanctified, that they may dedicate themselves to God, and thereafter serve him. "Putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." [564] This offering up or oblation of the Gentiles, was that urged in these terms, -- "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [565] And by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant are such set apart to this. "Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to (or confessing) his name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." [566] To them belong the benefits of redemption that accompany and flow from acceptance with God. These are, Assurance of God's love. All believers may not enjoy this blessing; few may attain to it in any comforting or satisfactory measure; yet it is attainable. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." [567] "Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." [568] "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." [569] It is provided. It is vouchsafed as a provision of the Everlasting Covenant. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." [570] Those who enjoy it know that to it they were elected. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." [571] And from the invitation to enter upon eternal life, that will be given to the righteous by the glorious Judge of all on his high throne, it is manifest that from the days of eternity, that blessing, preparatory for the final glory, was secured to them. He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." [572] Among the benefits introductory to the final glory, which, not less than that glory, were laid up for them, appears the earnest of the Spirit. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of

your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."[573]Peace of conscience. It is according to the purpose of God that faith is exercised. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, -- to believe on him."[574] And by that faith, through which justification, a fruit itself of the Divine counsels, is bestowed, and which is in exercise in Covenanting, peace with God is enjoyed. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."[575] Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are all vouchsafed to the believer; all of them are covenant blessings. The arrangements of Divine mercy secure righteousness, and therefore all of these. The new creature, born from above, ranks among the Israel of God, who are by covenant engaged to his service; and on such the peace of God is invoked. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."[576] God, in covenant, is the God of peace. Believers say concerning Christ, "He is our peace."[577] The Covenant of God is a covenant of peace; -- peace of conscience: peace with Himself: peace in all its manifestations. And that peace, which Christ came to secure, which he preached, and which he commanded, as his best blessing, to descend upon his people, proceeded from that counsel whence came all the displays of God's love -- the Counsel of Peace.Joy in the Holy Ghost. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[578] Every one that sweareth truly by Him shall rejoice in God, and shall glory.[579] Joy in God is essential to the exercise properly conducted. Let the saints testify from their own experience to the perfect correspondence to their feelings of these words, dictated by his own Spirit, -- "I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.... I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels."[580] Supplication may be made for joy in vowing and swearing by his name. "Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul."[581] The Church of God, yea, many nations, are commanded to rejoice, performing this service. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee: and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee."[582] On a solemn occasion, all Judah rejoiced at the oath which they had sworn.[583] Promises are made, that, engaging in this exercise, many will rejoice. Those who shall take bold on the Covenant of God will be joyful in his house of prayer.[584] As he did on a former occasion,[585] when the Lord turns the captivity of Israel, and takes them into covenant with himself, he will cause them to rejoice. And the Gentile nations, in like manner, engaged as they were, shall be filled with joy. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.... Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."[586] And the rejoicing thus variously represented is according to Divine ordination. It is said, "Behold, my servant shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name. That he who blesseth himself in the

earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." But concerning these words, as well as others that precede them, it is said by Him whose Spirit dictated them, "Behold it is written before me." [587] How elevated is the rejoicing of God's Covenant people! Theirs is a joy which the world cannot give nor take away. With it a stranger cannot intermeddle; it is unspeakable and full of glory! It is the joy of the Lord! Increase of grace. The Covenant people are a remnant according to the election of grace. [588] To that grace, therefore, which comes from the free favour of God they were chosen by him. They are heirs of the grace of life; [589] and, consequently, in God's purposes, according to his Covenant, they were set apart to the enjoyment of grace that should be progressive. They are planted in the house of God, and grow up and flourish in his courts; and there they still bring forth fruit in old age. They are the planting of the Lord; and according to his purpose, as well as to his actual disposal of them and their own engagements to be for Him, they stand there. Passing towards the heavenly temple, they go on from strength to strength. In taking hold on him, in vowing and swearing to him, they do so, and find that the Lord indeed is their strength. And as they find thus that the Lord ordains strength for them, they know that he had so ordained at first. To them that fear the name of the Lord, and accordingly avouch him to be their God, is made the promise, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." [590] That promise, as well as every other, is due to his immutable counsel. [591] Finally, the command is given, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." [592] To grow in grace is, therefore, co-ordinate with increase in the knowledge of Christ -- even of that knowledge which is attained to in cleaving to his Covenant. And he himself teaches, that fitness to do so was provided according to his purpose. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." [593] Perseverance in grace. God's Covenant with his people shall not be broken. "I will never break my covenant with you." [594] "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." [595] He will give grace to cleave to it continually. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." [596] Believers were given to Christ, and therefore they cannot be lost. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." [597] Trusting in him, therefore, his people rejoice to say, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." [598] And eternal life. This consummation unspeakable is indissolubly connected with the purpose of God, and the believer's exercises of adhering to the Covenant. On the promise of eternal life the heirs of it lay hold in Covenanting; and to this they were chosen. They cleave to the covenant as an Everlasting Covenant, well ordered in all things and sure: that is all their salvation, and all their desire. And to that final salvation they were chosen. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." [599] Who can describe that life? and who can sufficiently tell of the grace of Him who hath secured it to men? And who should not feel amazed at the backwardness of sinners to prepare for it -- so free and beneficently offered? Truly the glory of God is great in his salvation! The redeemed through eternity will find the glad work of declaring that glory undone. Would that

sinners now, by accepting of the great salvation, would begin here, and finally be prepared to celebrate with all others of their race redeemed to God, that glory! In conclusion. As in every case the purposes of God harmonize with his precepts, so the manifestation of those in reference to the keeping his Covenant, unites with express injunctions of his law in urging to discharge that duty. The law of God conspires with his revealed purposes to lead the sinner to obedience; and his purposes revealed illustrate the import of his law. Both consist with his nature. What in his providence accords with both, at once acknowledges the high claim which he has upon the willing exertions of men to serve him, and his right to appoint, independently of a specified statute, what shall be carried into effect. The law of God is the rule according to which men act; and that is illustrated by his purposes revealed. His purpose is the rule according to which he acts, and that is consistent with his law. Accompanied by the sanction of both, Covenanting is revealed; and not less than as dictated in his law, it appears, as according to his purpose, an Ordinance of God.

FOOTNOTES:[479] Ps. xcv.3-7.[480] Is. xlv.16-18.[481] Prov. viii.22, 23.27-31.[482] Ps. xxxvii.11. [483] Job v.19-24.[484] 2 Chron. xxxiii.8.[485] Hos. ii.16-23.[486] Jer. v.22.[487] Ps. lxxviii.5.[488] 2 Sam. xxiii.5.[489] Gen. ix.17.[490] Job xxii.28.[491] Prov. xix.21.[492] Is. xxviii.15, 16, 17, 18, 29.[493] Is. xiv.24.[494] Ps. cxi.9.[495] Ps. cxxxiii.3.[496] Ps. lxxviii.28.[497] Ps. xxxiii.8, 9, 11, 12.[498] Ps. cxix.152.[499] Jer. xxxiii.20, 21, 25.26.[500] Job xxviii.12, 23, 26-28.[501] Deut. vi.13.[502] Is. xliii.6, 7.21.[503] Is. xlv.21.[504] Is. xxxvii.26.[505] Jer. xxxiii.[506] Jer. xxxiii.2.[507] Is. xlv.2, 5.[508] Rom. ix.20-24.[509] Is. xxix.16.[510] Is. xlv.9.[511] Is. xxix.23.[512] Hos. ii.16.[513] Rom. ix.25, 26.[514] Jer. i.4, 5.[515] Is. x.20, 21.[516] Rom. ix.27.[517] Is. i.9; Rom. ix.29.[518] Is. xlv.7.[519] Is. xlvi.6.[520] Is. xlv.5.[521] Is. xxiv.4, 6, 23.[522] 1 Pet. ii.7, 8, 5, 6, 9, 10.[523] Rev. xxi.27.[524] Rev. xiii.8.[525] Jer. ii.2, 3.[526] Is. iv.3.[527] Heb. xii.23, 24, 28.[528] Deut. vii.6.[529] Deut. vi.13, 14; see also Ezek. xx.5-7.[530] Rom. xi.2-5.[531] 1 Kings xix.10.[532] Deut. vii.7, 8.[533] Rom. xi.7.[534] Is. xlii.6.[535] Acts xiii.45-48.[536] Is. xlv.4; see also Is. xli.8, 9; and Ps. cv.6.[537] Eph. ii.10, 11-13.[538] 1 Pet. i.2.[539] Is. xliii.10.[540] Rom. ix.11.[541] Acts ii.38, 39.[542] Gal. iii.8, 9.[543] Rom. xi.25-29.[544] Heb. ix.15.[545] Rom. viii.30.[546] Is. xlv.25, 23, 24.[547] Jer. xxiii.6-8.[548] Jer. iv.2.[549] Eph. i.5.[550] Prov. xxiii.26.[551] Exod. iv.22, 23.[552] Ps. lxxxix.3-28.[553] 2 Sam. vii.14.[554] Is. xlv.4, 23-25, 11.[555] Hos. xi.1, 2.[556] Jer. xxxi.9; see also ver.31-37.[557] Jer. iii.18, 19.[558] Jer. iii.22.[559] Gal. iii.26, 29.[560] 2 Thess. ii.13.[561] Exod. xix.10.[562] Exod. xxxi.13.[563] Zeph. i.7.[564] Rom. xv.15, 16.[565] Rom. xii.1.[566] Heb. xiii.12, 15, 16.[567] 1 John v.10.[568] Rom. viii.23.[569] John xiv.21, 23.[570] Ps. xxv.14.[571] 1 Thess. i.4.[572] Matt. xxv.34.[573] Eph. i.13, 14; see also 2 Cor. i.22; v.5.[574] Phil. i.29.[575] Rom. v.1.[576] Gal. vi.15, 16.[577] Eph. ii.14.[578] Rom. xiv.17.[579] Ps. lxxiii.11.[580] Is. lxi.8-10.[581] Ps. lxxxvi.4.[582] Zech. ii.10, 11.[583] 2 Chron. xv.15.[584] Is. lvi.6, 7.[585] Neh. xii.43.[586] Rom. xv.8, 9, 13.[587] Is. lxxv.14, 16, 6.[588] Rom. xi.5.[589] 1 Pet. iii.7.[590] Mal. iv.2.[591] Heb. vi.17.[592] 2 Pet. iii.18.[593] John xv.16.[594] Judg. ii.1.[595] Ps. xciv.14; see also Is. liv.9, 10.[596] Jer. xxxii.40.[597] John x.28, 29.[598] 2 Tim. ii.19.[599] Rom. viii.30.

CHAPTER IX. COVENANTING SANCTIONED BY THE DIVINE EXAMPLE.

God's procedure when imitable forms a peculiar argument for duty. That is made known for many reasons; among which must stand this, -- that it may be observed and followed as an example. That, being perfect, is a safe and necessary pattern to follow. The law of God proclaims what he wills men as well as angels to do. The purposes of God show what he has resolved to have accomplished. The constitutions of his moral subjects intimate that he has provided that his will shall be voluntarily accomplished by some of them. His own example presents what must be willingly done. It affords a complete reason for doing what is besides variously urged. The law of God is his will diffused among his moral subjects. His revealed purposes are his determinations to be carried into effect by means, many of which are beyond the sphere of the willing endeavours of his creatures. The constitutions of his obedient subjects are an instrumentality worthy of the glorious moral character of Him who, though independent of all, acts according to the principles of eternal rectitude, and who in infinite wisdom can cause immortal beings, bound by immutable laws, to act so as freely to perform his holy will. His own example is the direct operation, not of creatures, nor of laws, nor of dispositions, but of the I AM himself, as the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Spirit, presented to the creatures of his power, for their guidance and direction. I. God himself has entered into Covenant engagements. The dispensations of God in Covenant are peculiar to Himself. No change whatever is produced on him when he transacts with his creatures, or on their behalf. His relations to them are constituted wholly by his doings that affect them; He himself is immutable in his being and purposes. When he acts, he is not moved; when he accepts, no transformation of character is produced upon him; any new relation in which he stands comes wholly from the effect accomplished on the creature. He makes known his will, not as due to the present, but as the same from eternity. He acts in creation and providence; but his creatures alone are affected. He becomes engaged to some of them, not by any alteration being produced upon his views or enjoyments, or state or character, but by the manifestation of what he is. He accepts of those as united to Him -- viewed by them through his grace as possessed of a certain glorious character. From eternity his sovereign purposes regarding the salvation of man, were, but not by any change in the Trinity, or in the Unity of the Godhead, defined in Covenant. First. The Eternal Three-in-One entered into confederation in the Covenant of Redemption. We are warranted from Scripture to receive this Covenant as a fact. It might not have been; but according to God's will, it was. The purpose of God to save sinners is from eternity. The covenant is due to that. In an order of nature wonderful to contemplate, the former precedes the latter. God willed that the Father should be the God of grace. God willed that the Son should be the Mediator between God and men. God willed that the Holy Ghost should dispense his influences for carrying into effect the purposes of mercy. These purposes stand from eternity -- the fruit of the Divine sovereignty -- the conscious resolutions of the Eternal -- the conditions of a sure Covenant. The reasons for the fulfilment thereof are the sovereign purposes, and the purposes approved of by each person of the adored Godhead, in an economic character. Secondly. God entered into covenant with man in

innocence. The Divine character was made known to the gifted immortal. The will of God claiming obedience and the offer of definite good were presented before his mind. He acquiesced, and God was engaged to him and to all his posterity in covenant. One ground on which He was to bestow the blessings of the Covenant was his own purpose; His making, before his creature, and by and before Himself, a promise to confer it, was, according to the principle of eternal righteousness, the other. Thirdly. God enters into covenant with men in Christ. He says to them, -- "I am the Lord thy God."^[600] Believers are taken into God's covenant.^[601] He made with his people a covenant that shall endure.^[602] All the promises of God are offers made on HIS part to enter into covenant with sinners. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made."^[603] And, therefore, when these are accepted by men, the Lord is to them a God in covenant. The Lord hath on some occasions sworn to his people, and by his oath made a covenant with them.^[604] The Lord brings sinners into the bond of his covenant,^[605] and accordingly makes with them a covenant. And he keeps, and hence he must have entered into, covenant with his people. Finally. The Lord Jesus on earth illustrated in his practice the duty of Covenanting. In such a manner as none other than God himself could do, he gave it recommendation. Possessed of the nature of man, and being true God, he Covenanted with men, as the Head of the Church of God himself, and also as a member thereof; and as the Father's servant, in Covenanting acknowledged Him. He recognised his disciples as his friends and servants; he spake peace to them, and explicitly Covenanting with them, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," to them he made precious promises, which he gave them grace to receive.^[606] Waiting on the ordinances of religion at Jerusalem, about the close of the Old Testament dispensation, unquestionably along with the people of Israel, he engaged in various exercises of vowing, and especially in the use of the Psalms, so full of holy vows to God; and after the last supper with his disciples, two of whom, by the Spirit that dwelt in all of them, enjoined the exercise of singing these precious compositions,^[607] singing a hymn or psalm, he at once sanctioned their use in the worship of God, and gave countenance to the devout making of the Covenant engagements which they contain. And in those exercises of religion in which none of his people could hold communion with him, prayer to his Father was accompanied with his own recognition of his engagement to fulfil his will. The psalm,^[608] a part of which, at least, we know he repeated on the Cross, and which is prophetic of his exercises there, and his intercessory prayer, contain at least one instance of the making or renewing of Covenant engagement on his part, not to be forgotten.^[609] II. The Lord, in entering into Covenant, provided an example for imitation. By this it is not intended that any are called to engage in acts of this nature precisely corresponding with those in which he engaged. It would be impossible, as well as impious, for men to imitate the making of the Covenant of Redemption, or of that of Works. Nor is it meant that men, as perfect beings, are to follow the pattern in this set by the Most High; but it is to be understood, that in making a promise of good in truth and sincerity, and in taking Himself to witness, he is to be imitated by his people in Covenanting, while they depend on grace afforded by himself. First. It is possible for his people, after some manner, to imitate God in Covenanting. They cannot imitate him entering into covenant as a self-existent, independent Being; nor can they imitate him as in this providing benefits which of himself he can bestow; but in some respects, by his grace they may. He holds intercourse with those with whom he enters into covenants in truth. His people ought to do so with him. He makes promises. They ought to do so too. He swears by himself. They ought to swear by him. He swears that He may give assurance of his intention. They ought to swear for the same reason. Because of his hatred to sin he entered into covenant. They should

enter into covenant with him in order to show their hatred to it. He necessarily loves himself, and he loves those with whom he Covenants. By love to him -- the origin of love to all others, as well as to themselves -- they should enter into covenant with him. He promises in order that his people may have the security of good. They are called by Covenanting to accept his promise, that they may have the security afforded by believing his word. In entering into Covenant, God honours his own character. Imitating him in Covenanting all are called, and they ought, to glorify his name. Secondly. It is desirable to imitate God in Covenanting. He draws near to his people; and should they not draw near to him? God is waiting on men to take hold on his covenant. He has entered into covenant with others who sought to imitate Him; He offers to do so with us. He waits, -- Infinity waits and draws while waiting, -- Excellence waits, and waiting transforms into excellence, -- blessings wait, and attract while waiting, -- He waits on men. To follow finite good, is to seek good, though limited. To imitate finite excellence, is to aspire at excellence, even though but in part. To take God for an example, is to prosecute the course to boundless happiness and honour. Where he walks, there is sin rebuked, evil flees away, and corruption dies; there good is seen, a field of duty without limit stretches out, happiness immeasurable begins, and glory eternal opens. It was by his covenant that the scene of heavenly bliss was to be opened to sinners, and peopled by them. Taking hold upon it, the unnumbered millions for whom it was prepared, in imitation of him, make preparation for it. To follow these would be delightful and honouring; but would be to follow what is merely a copy, and only finite. What is it then to follow the great Original, the provider of glory, and honour, and immortality, to be dispensed to the eternal honour of his character, -- God himself! Finally. It is a duty to imitate God in Covenanting. The act of swearing by the name of God is holy. The performance of it is inculcated in the decalogue. Swearing on the part of the Most High is a manifestation of His holiness. Swearing on the part of men is at once an imitating of Him, and a holy service. When men endeavour to discharge the duties of the ten commandments, they are exercised to holiness, and acting in imitation of Him who only is holy. And accordingly these commandments are injunctions to imitate God. Enjoining therefore the duty of Covenanting, they inculcate that as an imitation of Him -- swearing by himself. Again, even as the exercise of keeping the Sabbath is enforced by the Divine example, so is that of entering into Covenant with God. In the fourth commandment, the former duty is explicitly enjoined on that ground. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." [610] And although the observance of no other of the ten precepts is in the like manner commanded in them, they may all be viewed as declared obligatory, because of the example of God, an illustration of which is presented in this. The Lord set an example in the keeping of the Sabbath, and therefore men are called to keep it. But to the knowledge of his creatures, he acts according to the principles of the other commandments, and for the same reason that his example in resting on the Sabbath is to be followed, is his regard to the other dictates of his law to be made use of as furnishing examples of what to us is duty. He has made, and he makes and keeps Covenant engagements: and as his keeping of the Sabbath is a reason why his creatures are commanded to sanctify it, so his engaging in covenant is a ground on which they are called to the duty of vowing and swearing to him. But, besides, the exercise along with others, is unequivocally inculcated from the Divine example. The Lord said unto Moses, "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." [611] To be holy, is to obey the Divine law in all its parts. The Lord is known to be holy, because he acts according to the

principles of that law. To Covenant, therefore, is to do a part of the duty commanded in the words, "Ye shall be holy;" and to do so for the reason, "I, the Lord your God, am holy," is to engage in it according to his commands, because he has entered, and because he does enter, into covenant. Moreover, this duty would seem to be emphatically taught in the words -- "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"[612] The holding fast of the profession of faith implies the making of it; and both are therefore urged on the ground of the faithfulness of Him that promised; and He is introduced here as faithful, not merely in order that his people might depend upon him for the good offered, but as presenting to them an example according to which all should make and keep engagements to their brethren and to Him. And finally, this is shown to be incumbent by declarations leading to the imitation of the Redeemer. He Himself says, in one of these -- "If any man serve me, let him follow me." [613] The believer cannot follow Him to imitate him, as a Mediator obeying and dying for others. He cannot so follow him as acting in the nature of sinless man, or as the living and true God. He cannot so follow him, teaching by his Holy Spirit to all nations the way of life and peace. He cannot so follow him as a Priest before the throne on high, making intercession for sinners. He cannot so follow him in the putting forth of almighty power for the conversion and edification of his people. He cannot so follow him to the throne of the universe, to rule over all things for the glory of God and the good of his people. But in many respects, he is required, nay in these words he is enjoined, to follow him. In general, in the discharge of all duty, he is called to follow him. In particular, to follow him in regarding all the ordinances of religion -- unfolding a covenant relation to God; -- in acknowledging a heavenly Father, as a child in covenant alone could do; -- and in making a solemn confession of the truth of God, saying with him, though in circumstances infinitely humbler, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." [614] His people, were he to bid them, would follow him to prison and to death. And will they not habitually follow him -- who confessed his own Divine character, to confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father? [615] Hence, in conclusion, First. How important the exercise of following the Divine example in Covenanting! It gives a peculiar elevation to the mind. We are called to duty for the advancement of God's glory, and for our own advantage. And when we contemplate aright the exercise as sanctioned by the procedure of God, how distinctly are these brought before us! Was it not for the advantage of men that God entered into covenant from the days of eternity? that he entered into covenant with man in innocence? that he entered into covenant with so many of our fallen race? -- and will it not be for this that He will yet enter into covenant with unnumbered millions to come? And as God thus sought the advantage of sinners, will they not in imitation of him seek it too? But higher still, was it not for his own glory that God revealed himself as a God in Covenant? Was it not that he might make known what inherently belonged to Him, and even the manifestation of which could not add to his essential greatness? Was it not that he might teach his creatures gifted by his bounty while in the enjoyment of good to rise above themselves, so as to give scope to the manifestation of excellence, lovely because of itself, and not less lovely because of its tendency to attract others to be transformed into the unfading image of its own loveliness? How then ought all to be drawn by imitating God in this, to the manifestation of the excellence of the truth, that sinners may behold it, and being enabled to lay hold upon it, may drink of that fountain of delight to which it may lead, and which to eternity, though drawn upon by each of the redeemed, will remain alike unailing and satisfying to all? And how ought all thus to endeavour to manifest that excellence which creatures were brought into existence to contemplate, were

appointed as means to lead each other to examine, and which was to be displayed, not merely for ages, but that holy beings might be brought, if not in their natures, at least in their conceptions, to think in some small measure adequately of God, to eternity! But again, and finally. To follow the example of God in Covenanting, is obligatory through life, and in all ages. The Lord swore in order to give men an assurance of the immutability of his purposes of mercy. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself."... "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." [616] And in order that men may arrive at the assurance of hope, they ought to have recourse to the use of this, as well as every other means of grace. The man who attempts prayer but once, does not give complete evidence of possessing the spirit of prayer; in order to show this, he must pray habitually. The individual who attempts to hope, must repeatedly have recourse to the exercise, before he have pleasing evidence of the existence within him of the hope that maketh not ashamed. Those who would be assured of the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts, must have it in habitual exercise within them; and those who would have the comforting evidence of their being in covenant with God, must feel themselves drawn by his example, frequently to acknowledge themselves as devoted to him. It is self-evident, that every time that the people of God take hold on his Covenant, he, after some manner, makes a covenant with them. Every act of Covenanting, therefore, on the part of the saints of God, and especially on the part of the believer himself, affords an instance of the Divine example inviting him again to the duty. And since the Covenant of God from eternity, anticipated all the engagements of time, to these believers are drawn by the ever-memorable example presented by that. But the example of God in former ages, also extends to all succeeding times. The covenant which he made with Abraham, was to include men in the later as well as former ages. And if the swearing of an oath then, by the Lord himself, was to be imitated by his people under any dispensation, it was to be, therefore, imitated during the last. And even as the covenant with Abraham, the Everlasting Covenant -- the origin of that, afforded the giving of the oath of God as an example to be followed throughout the whole lapse of time, even until those who were given to the Son should be brought by him to that glorious inheritance to which they were chosen. FOOTNOTES: [600] Exod. xx.2. [601] Gen. xvii.2. [602] 2 Sam. xxiii.5. [603] Gal. iii.16; see also ver.15, 17. [604] Luke i.72, 73. [605] Ezek. xx.37. [606] John xvi.23, 24. [607] Eph. v.19. James v.13. [608] Ps. xxii; see ver.22. [609] John xvii.26. [610] Exod. xx.11. [611] Lev. xix.2. [612] Heb. x.23. [613] John xii.26. [614] John xviii.37. [615] Phil. ii.11. [616] Heb. vi.13, 17, 18.

CHAPTER X. COVENANTING A PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS.

Whatever attainment is made by any as distinguished from the wicked, or whatever gracious benefit is enjoyed, is a spiritual privilege. Adoption into the family of God is of this character. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power (margin, or, the right; or, privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." [617] And every co-ordinate benefit is essentially so likewise. The evidence besides, that Covenanting is a good to which believers, through the grace of God, are entitled, is abundant. First. Believers Covenanting are a people near to God. To be near to God, is to have special privilege. "He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord." [618] Those who honour him will God honour. [619] But with the lip, and consequently in Covenanting as well as otherwise, such draw near to honour him. It is the hypocrisy of the Jews, who insincerely attempted this becoming service, that is challenged in the words, -- "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." [620] While, therefore, He sets before the wicked their sin, he honours his own, or recognises them as gifted with privilege while they draw near to him in the duty. To engage in the idolatry of the ancient heathen, or otherwise to fail to recognise God as a God in covenant, was to be far from him; while to draw near to him, and, consequently, to acknowledge him in vowing to him or otherwise, was good for his saints. [621] Some, as examples of all who were uninterested in the Covenant of God, are represented as destitute of what are accounted the privileges of the covenant children; while the attainments of those after their conversion, and which, by being put in contrast with what appertained to them in their former state, must be viewed as spiritual privileges, are represented as consisting in this, -- that they were made nigh by the blood of Christ. "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." [622] And, by an apostle, encouragement to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, at once a duty including that of Covenanting, and certainly a privilege, is given in the language -- "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." [623] Secondly. These Covenanting are in the gracious presence of God. The want of this on the part of the wicked being a curse, the enjoyment of it by the righteous is a privilege. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, or ceased to attend to the institutions of religion, and thus manifested that he had neither enjoyed nor valued the presence of God reconciled to him. By suffering them to be removed by the Babylonians from their own land, and, consequently, from the ordinances of his grace dispensed in his temple, the Lord cast out the wicked of Jerusalem and Judah from his presence, [624] or deprived them of those opportunities of enjoying his gracious presence which they had not improved. To his people among the heathen, even though deprived of the public ordinances of Zion, He himself proved a sanctuary. [625] Moses received from the Lord, on behalf of Israel, the encouragement, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." [626] The promise must, therefore, have been fulfilled to them throughout their whole journey to Canaan, and especially when about its

termination they entered into covenant with Him. The agitation of the earth and heavens, when the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, was a striking intimation that Israel there enjoyed the presence of God.[627] The covenant blessing of peace was to be bestowed, and, consequently, accepted in his gracious presence. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." [628] Yea, the upright shall come into his presence, confessing his name, and shall continue to enjoy his favouring regard. "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving (confession)." [629] "Surely the righteous shall give thanks (confess) unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence." [630] Thirdly. These Covenanting, see God. As he is in his essential character, no man hath seen God at any time. Even of the Redeemer himself as God, it is said, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." [631] It would appear to have been some such manifestation of God -- altogether incompatible with the capacities of a creature, that was denied to Moses when the Lord said to him, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live." [632] Yet, as Moses, though he did not see the glory of God according to his desire, enjoyed the gracious presence of God, all his people receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [633] By faith, in this manner, both before and after his incarnation, God was to be seen in Christ, and especially on occasions of solemn Covenanting. It is the blessedness of the pure in heart, that they shall see God. Inviting sinners to come unto him, and even formally to take hold upon his covenant, the Lord utters the command, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." [634] And lifting up their hand, and their heart, and their eyes to him, his people obey. From a verb ([Hebrew: chazoh]) that signifies to see, come two nouns, one of which ([Hebrew: chozeh]) signifies, a prophet and a covenant, and the other, ([Hebrew: chazuth]) as we have seen, [635] a vision, or a revelation, and a covenant. [636] Hence, a covenant with God, in a sense far higher than what is applicable to an agreement with mere men, is made in receiving a revelation of his will, or seeing him in such a manner as is competent to his people. The "cherubim" of the Old Testament, and the "four living creatures" of the New, [637] -- the one representing the ministers of religion in both periods, the other symbolizing the ministers of the gospel in the latter, are both represented as full of eyes. Thus described, they resemble the prophets of old, denominated "seers." The many eyes ascribed to them may point out the enlarged capacities which they should have for apprehending Divine things, as well as for rightly observing the dispensations of Providence, in order that they might teach the people. But from the prophets, and rulers, and seers, who were unfaithful, being represented as having had their eyes closed, and the people to whom a vision or covenant was addressed, being exhibited as unable to read it, [638] and from those who were guilty of idolatry being spoken of as blind, [639] it would appear that both the ministers of God's sanctuary and his other people, under the former dispensation, when they drew near to Him in Covenanting, enjoyed a privilege of which the gift of seeing was an emblem. And from the "four living creatures" and the "elders" -- the one full of eyes, and the other also capable of contemplating the Lamb as slain, around the throne, saying, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests" -- [640] it would appear that the later saints in the house of God on earth were to engage in the exercise of taking hold on his Covenant, and as his saints of old, there to enjoy the vision of God as a privilege. Yea, even to the Gentiles, enabled to apprehend Christ as given for a light to them, it will be vouchsafed as a privilege to attend to this. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine

hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." [641] Fourthly. These Covenanting, know God, and are known of him. The heathen, worshipping idols, are represented as not knowing God. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods." And some from among them who had made an insincere profession of religion, are reprov'd for turning from services which, if rightly engaged in, would have been discharged by them in such a manner as to show that they knew God, but which they had never properly performed. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" [642] To know God is, in reality, by faith to see God. As He promised to make himself known in a vision, [643] so he will give his people to know him in acceding to his Covenant. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." [644] The privilege thus described implies in it a knowledge of the gracious promise of God's covenant, and consequently, of the glory of his character, wrought in them by his Spirit. And those who will enjoy it are those who fear him, and consequently, who will recognise Him as their God. Hence it is that the expressions "to Covenant," and "to know God," may often be put, the one for the other. Encouraging his son to cleave to the Lord in covenant, David said, -- "And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind." [645] The Egyptians, described as to enter into Covenant with God, it is prophesied, will know him. And hence, all brought to acknowledge him in this manner are truly blessed. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." [646] Fifthly. To these Covenanting, the Lord is favourable. He extends to them the light of his countenance. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness; and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." [647] And He accepts them. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." [648] Sixthly. These Covenanting, enjoy communion with God. The wicked do not use the name of God, in swearing by him, with acceptance; [649] but his people do. [650] And then the Lord speaks to them. "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." [651] The Lord dwells among his people continually; [652] and hence, He is among them when they engage in vowing and swearing to Him; and in the language of prophecy, new manifestations of his favour to his people are introduced under the representation of the Lord returning to them while performing the duty. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee." [653] Entering into covenant with him, they feast before him. The dispensation of all the ordinances of religion is represented as a feast; and not less than of any other of them is that of Covenanting. A feast is a token of friendship. Special solemnities among the people of Israel were designated feasts. Covenanting with God sometimes entered into the religious exercises performed at these. The blessings of salvation are offered as the rich provision of a sumptuous feast, provided and given, by the Lord himself. And the reception of them in this exercise belongs to the privilege of those accepted, before him. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord: we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." [654] Finally. By his love the Lord constrains

his people to take hold on his Covenant. Because of the love of God, his chosen are called at once to duty and privilege. Duty they perform through the influence of his love shed abroad in their hearts; and they enjoy privilege by his love extending to them. The Lord Jesus said to his disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The injunction extends to the command regarding the commemoration of his death, -- "This do in remembrance of me." [655] And his people, under the influence of love to him, obey. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." [656] But in drawing near to God in the ordinance of the Supper, and in other explicit acts of Covenanting, they enjoy the manifestations of his love. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." [657] Even as Jonathan, after David and he had entered into a covenant of the Lord, caused David to swear again because he loved him, [658] the Lord causes his people, whom by his love he had drawn to himself, to swear by his name. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." [659] "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." [660] Hence, In conclusion. The observing of the other duties of God's Covenant, as well as the taking hold of it, is a privilege. Whatever is enjoyed in communion with God is inseparably associated with good to follow. As in the keeping of his commandments there is a great reward, so the blessedness of high privilege is enduring. The strength afforded for duty is a manifestation that privilege has been enjoyed. And the bringing forth of the fruits of righteousness, no less than the high enjoyment which fitted for causing them to abound, is a special blessing. If it is a privilege to vow to God, it is a privilege to observe the vow. If his mercy is seen in the giving of a heart to make it, certainly it is manifest in the granting of spiritual vigour fully to perform its promise. If it is a blessedness to commune with Him of all that is within the heart, can it be else to realize, throughout the whole period of the performance of engagements solemnly made to him, the promise of his Covenant, -- "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." [661] FOOTNOTES: [617] John i.11, 12. [618] Ps. cxlviii.14. [619] 1 Sam. ii.30; see also John xii.26. [620] Is. xxix.13. [621] Ps. lxxiii.27, 28. [622] Eph. ii.12, 13. [623] Heb. x.22; see also ver.19, 23. [624] 2 Kings xxiv.20. [625] Is. viii.14. [626] Exod. xxxiii.14. [627] Ps. lxxviii.8. [628] Num. vi.24-26. [629] Ps. xcv.2. [630] Ps. cxl.13. [631] 1 Tim. vi.16. [632] Exod. xxxiii.20. [633] 2 Cor. iv.6. [634] Is. xlv.22; see also ver.23, 24. [635] Page 222. [636] The former occurs in the original of Is. xxviii.15, and the latter in that of Is. xxxviii.18. [637] Ezek. x.13; and Rev. iv.8. [638] Is. xxix.10-12. [639] Is. xlii.17, 18. [640] Rev. v.10. [641] Is. xlii.6. [642] Gal. iv.8, 9. [643] Num. xii.6. [644] Ps. xxv.14. [645] 1 Chron. xxviii.9. [646] John xvii.3. [647] Ps. iv.5, 6. [648] Is. xlv.19; see also Rom. xii.1; xv.16. [649] Jer. xlv.26. [650] Jer. iv.2. [651] Hag. ii.5. [652] Ps. cxxxii.14. [653] Zech. ii.10, 11. [654] Is. xxv.6, 9; see also ver.7, 8. [655] 1 Cor. xi.24, 25. [656] 2 Cor. v.14, 15. [657] Song ii.4. [658] 1 Sam. xx.17; see also ver.16. [659] Jer. xxxi.3. [660] Hos. xi.4. -- Cords and bands here correspond to the bond of the Covenant. [661] Ps. xxxii.8.

CHAPTER XI. COVENANTING ENFORCED BY THE GRANT OF COVENANT SIGNS AND SEALS.

To declare emphatically that the people of God are a covenant people, various signs were in sovereignty vouchsafed. The lights in the firmament of heaven were appointed to be for signs, affording direction to the mariner, the husbandman, and others. Miracles wrought on memorable occasions, were constituted signs or tokens of God's universal government. The gracious grant of covenant signs was made in order to proclaim the truth of the existence of God's covenant with his people, to urge the performance of its duties, and to unfold its blessings. Of these signs, some coeval with each one in covenant, and many enduring like the covenant itself, even for ever, all declaring that some are in covenant with God, and that others will yet also be so in covenant, enforce not less than all other duties, yea, especially enforce the duty of Covenanting itself. A token deemed necessary to a covenant was sometimes freely given: at other times it was requested. Jonathan, in token of his covenant with David, "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." Rahab said to the spies from the camp of Israel, "Now therefore I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token." For all in covenant with God, without their entreaty, have tokens been provided. None attempted to ask them in the depth, or in the height above. The Lord himself of his own good pleasure bestowed them. And, first, The rainbow. "God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."^[662] In the provision, here announced simply as an appointment of providence, all flesh is interested. Noah and his family were interested in the good promised, as a covenant blessing. With Noah the Lord had established his covenant before the flood. "And, behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant."^[663] For the benefit of the human family were given the following instructions: -- "And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind; of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind; two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be food for thee and for them."^[664] After the flood, by the mandate of heaven, had retired, and left them in possession of the first fruits of the gracious federal grant made to him, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in his heart,

I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."[665] And having blessed Noah and his sons, and made sundry new grants to them, he again declared, "I will establish my covenant with you,"[666] and gave his announcement of the bow in the cloud as its appointed sign. To mankind alone, of all flesh, that could prove a token. For their encouragement alone it was provided. As if God had taken sure means that his promise should be fulfilled, he uses the language, "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."[667] The promise is comprehensive. That a race of living creatures under the dominion of man, and for his advantage, should be continued throughout all time, -- that the family of man, unvisited by the waters of another flood, should increase during succeeding ages, it implied: and included that a people in covenant with God should be raised up and preserved; grace to perform the duties of his covenant be granted; and the acceptance of their most solemn services, while they should present offerings of righteousness, be afforded to them. Before the deluge, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."[668] The term in the original, which is here rendered imagination, meaning not merely the conceptions of the mind, but also the purposes and desires of the heart, points out the human race swallowed up by the flood's destructive waters, as unpossessed of the willing mind of God's covenant people. As sustaining the character of enemies unto him, they are represented to have said unto God, "Depart from us."[669] The billows of Divine wrath threaten all in their condition. Contrasted with the state of all such was that of Noah, who is described as a just, or justified man, and perfect in his generations, or, in his generations attained to holiness in measure, and to covenant peace. To all such as he was, the bow in the clouds is a pleasing and encouraging sign. That that sign may prove so to all, all are thus enjoined, -- "Acquaint now thyself with him" -- with God -- "and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."[670] That the end of this sign might not be forgotten or overlooked, is the occasion of its appointment thus celebrated by the Psalmist in a tribute of praise: -- "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou has set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth."[671] By a reference to the promise given when this sign was appointed, and which it was designed in every season to bring again into view, is the sin of idolatry -- a breach of covenant with God -- thus condemned: -- "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it. But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." The practices of the people so addressed are also thus described, -- "Though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely." "Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods." And their consequent privations are in like manner introduced. "Your iniquities have turned

away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." [672] That this token was to designate the continuance of a covenant, the blessings of which were not merely temporal, but spiritual and eternal too, and whose duties -- incumbent on those who surround the altar of God and swear by his name, should still be performed, we are taught by his own words, -- "This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." [673] To encourage the prophet Ezekiel in discharging the duties of his mission to the house of Israel, and also that many to whom his messages should be addressed might receive them, this sign, in vision, was presented before him. To expostulate with the rebellious house of Israel he was sent. The privileges enjoyed by that people he was called, in these terms, to describe, "Yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine;" and for their apostacy, to deliver to them the warning, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant." [674] He had been commanded to utter the corresponding denunciation, "But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." [675] But he had also been charged with the promise, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God;" [676] and was enjoined to give the prediction, "Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." [677] But the glory of the God of Israel meanwhile had appeared -- that glory which was seen by him at first, "as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain." [678] That his ministry was undertaken by the authority of a God in covenant it signified; and announced the certain success which should follow his labours, in the conversion of some to be won by offers of mercy, and abiding tokens of reconciliation and peace. The prophetic part of the Book of Revelation -- unfolding the history of the Church of God, from the days of the apostles till the end of time, is introduced by a vision presenting this covenant sign -- "A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." [679] To the whole period, therefore, of the Church's later history, that sign was to apply. The "four living creatures" -- emblematical of the ministers of the gospel, who are also presented in that vision, by this are encouraged to exclaim, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;" and by this are they and the four and twenty elders, as a people in covenant with God, led to adore the Lamb, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" and to seek to be enabled, as a race wholly devoted to God, truly to say, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." [680] And, finally, before the witnesses for Jesus, ordained to witness a good confession, and in opposition to ignorance and sin in the world, to abide by, yea even to renew, their confession and wonted vows, made by all the solemnity of an oath, the same sign is presented. The promise is made, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in

sackcloth."[681] The work committed to these witnesses was arduous. Nor was the finishing of their testimony, in the eyes of the world, enviable. But manifestly great was to be their gracious reward, when they should ascend up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them. The duty to which they were called, and their high enjoyments to follow, the little book which John was commanded to eat, contained. It appeared open in the hand of that mighty angel -- the angel Jehovah -- come down from heaven, whose face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. To assure his servants of the stability of his covenant, through which is dispensed his all-sufficient grace, and to prompt them faithfully to perform their high duties, in vision he was seen clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon his head.[682] Beauteous is the bow in the cloud in the day of rain. More beauteous than what is simply material, is it to the mind's eye as a Covenant sign. The colours of that bow, unfaded throughout all ages, have continued; and the security of God's covenant is without change. Though the waters of another flood will not invade the earth, the flood of Divine wrath will swallow up the world of the ungodly. None of God's Covenant signs stir them up to duty; and as to each Covenant sign they continue wilfully blind, to them no final sign of good will appear. But while by them no token of deliverance will be seen, to the righteous, the evidence of God's purpose to deliver them will be complete. And when his enemies, like the men of old time, who, while the flood's destructive waters advanced, may have fled to the mountains for safety, will in vain seek deliverance from Divine wrath, his people, contemplating the evidence of his gracious regard to them, in triumph will acknowledge, -- "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." [683] But next was given, the sign of Circumcision. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." [684] This rite, thus described, having been instituted on the occasion of a renewal of God's covenant with Abraham, signified at least God's acceptance of the patriarch in this service, and the acceptance of all who, when suitably called to it, should, in renewing their engagements to the Most High, imitate his example. And hence obviously, all who should submit to this rite or its equivalent, were encouraged thereby to seek privilege, by endeavouring individually and socially to renew their vows to the Lord. Benefit was to be enjoyed through the reception of this sign. The reception of it did not imply the attainment of grace; but as a sign, it was appointed to denote grace received. Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." [685] To the enjoyment of all other privileges of the visible Church of God, it was introductory and necessary: -- "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." [686] To the Hebrew people, as an inestimable privilege, were committed the oracles of God. "For what nation," said Moses to them, "is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments as all

this law, which I set before you this day?"[687] And to them was delivered the command, so indicative of good, -- "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God."[688] Thus access to all the means of spiritual advantage was secured, and opportunities of being fully addressed by the most varied and powerful motives to duty, were provided. That the efficiency of this rite as a sign might be most complete, attention to it was enjoined under the greatest penalty. And that the design for which it was given was highly important, would thus appear. The character of the duties incumbent on the Israelites moreover illustrate this. Every man that was circumcised was debtor to do the whole law. And till the Mosaic dispensation should come to an end, throughout life his obligation could not decrease. As a member of the Church and nation of Israel, by the solemn Covenant engagements of that people to God, and to one another, he was bound. To fear the Lord, to swear by his name, and to perform his vows, was required of him. And to testify to the truth of his profession he bare the sign of God's covenant upon him. When Israel under Joshua, had entered the promised land, the use of this sign became peculiarly manifest. "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins." The same individuals were not circumcised twice. The young of the people had not been circumcised in the wilderness. Their fathers -- who had been circumcised in Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua -- died before reaching the land of promise. Though the people, while they were in the wilderness, having no immediate intercourse with the heathen, neglected that duty without being specially reprov'd for it; yet when they came to Canaan, where idolaters abounded, their non-observance of it was not to be permitted. In reference to these heathens the command had been given, "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods."[689] And when they came among them, that they might not associate with them in their idolatrous rites, but be constantly reminded of their own separation to the service of God, the duty was re-injoined, and on its performance, "The Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."[690] Circumcision was given, not merely as a sign to denote God's Covenant, but as a seal to give assurance of its benefits, and also of the performance of its duties. Abraham by receiving it as a seal of the righteousness of faith had confirmed to him the promises on which in believing he relied, and was recognised as permanently set apart to perform the duties of faith and obedience. Every blessing promised in the word of God as if sealed by His own seal, to him and to his spiritual seed was thus made sure; and every act of obedience enjoined on them, and to which by solemn vow they should become engaged, as secured by the seal of his approbation and acceptance, thus were they assured, they should by his grace endeavour to perform. But under the New Testament dispensation, instead of circumcision as a sign and seal, has been instituted the ordinance of Baptism. All that the other was, as a sign and seal of God's Covenant under the former dispensation, this is under the present. To these two ordinances, as symbols each of newness of life, and of the forgiveness of sin, the apostle in writing to the Colossians, makes the reference, -- "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."[691] And writing to the Church of the Romans, who were not circumcised, but had been baptized, he declares of Abraham, -- "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the

faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." [692] Was that enjoined by Divine authority? So was this. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," [693] is the Saviour's command. Was he circumcised according to the law? At the hand of his servant John, he received baptism. And baptism along with repentance and faith was preached by the apostles. To the enjoyment of other outward privileges, as circumcision was, this is the first step. When any acceded to the offers of the gospel, baptism was administered to them. The cases of the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia and her household, many of the Corinthians, and others, are instances; of spiritual blessings in all their extent this is a sign and seal. This the apostle Peter adverted to, when he said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." [694] And this truth, no less emphatically these words declare, -- "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." [695] And finally, of Covenant duties, would it thus appear too the sign and seal. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." [696] Baptism is a sign of the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. His effusion on the day of Pentecost was in fulfilment of the prophecy, -- "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." [697] And his influences by another prophet are thus promised, -- "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." And if, of such benefits as these, baptism is an appointed token and security, can it be less a sign and seal of these their glorious effects, -- "They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel" [698] But after circumcision, was appointed as a sign, The Sabbath. Like the rainbow, the sabbath had been from the beginning. At a period of the world when many habitually disregarded it, was it given as a Covenant sign. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." [699] That the end of keeping the sabbath was to cherish the conviction that the Lord sanctified his people, these words of institution declared. But by taking them into covenant with himself, and causing them to keep his covenant, the Lord sanctified them. "The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken." [700] To vow unto him singly, or unitedly, was a duty of his covenant. To do this his people were sanctified. And hence, of this, as well as of each other religious service, the sabbath was a sign. Those who keep the sabbath will enjoy the privileges of

God's people. "If thou turn away from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." [701] But Covenanting is one of the privileges of the heritage of Jacob. Those, therefore, who keep the sabbath, that they may enjoy in full the gracious benefits promised to them, will have it put into their hearts individually, and often in a social capacity, to enter into and renew, solemn covenant engagements with the Most High. The institution of the sabbath itself has afforded calls for engaging in the practice of vowing to God. Moved by a sense of duty, Nehemiah and others returned to Jerusalem, contemplating the evils to which they were exposed from the example of the heathen, with a zeal worthy the adoption of all in times of abounding sin, engaged in solemn covenant with God to keep the sabbath, as well as discharge other bounden duties. "They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgment and his statutes; and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: and if the people of the land bring ware, or any victuals, on the sabbath-day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy-day." [702] The continuation of the sabbath is a provision for the observance of every religious service. In opposition to the worldliness of men's hearts, by the arrangements of a beneficent providence, first the seventh-day sabbath, and afterwards the Christian sabbath, was granted and preserved to the Church of God. That the ordinances of religion should not fail to be dispensed or waited on, the sabbath was given; and for this end, throughout every age, it will be kept. On that day especially, the worship of God is conducted in his sanctuary, and through the preaching of the gospel are the blessings of God's covenant freely offered, and its duties illustrated and enjoined. Where there is no sabbath, religion is unknown. Where the sabbath is not kept, the benefits of religion are not enjoyed, and the law of God as a rule of duty is not regarded. The insensibility of conscience that permits to contemn the injunction to keep holy the sabbath, will not, because of the authority of God, condemn the breach of any other of his commands. The ungodliness, and not infrequent immorality of sabbath-breakers, fearfully show how dangerous it is to trifle with or despise any Divine precept, and especially exhibit the evil to which they expose themselves, who, refusing to sanctify this day, are unaddressed by this as a sign of good, and unsolicited by this or any other Divine ordinance to resolve to cleave to holiness, the end of which is life and peace. When the sabbath is not kept, the ordinary duties of religion are not performed. The sign of God's covenant being dishonoured, no blessing of his covenant can be enjoyed, nor covenant duty be discharged. As a reason for pouring out his judgments upon the people of Israel, the Lord declared to them, "Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths." [703] And when a restoration to the privileges of the sabbath is foretold, regard to them as a people in covenant is promised. It is said, -- "For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen." In connection with this is given the assurance, "And I will

cause you to pass under the rod," -- as sheep under the rod of the shepherd -- "and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." [704] The good promised to those who keep the sabbath, whether viewed as positive privilege, or as a disposition and fitness to obey Divine injunctions, is most extensive; while the evil threatened for the desecration of it is appalling indeed. What less than the highest privileges of the saints on earth is offered in the promise, "And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow the sabbath-day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord"? And how dreadful the threatening, "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched"? [705] But as a sign of God's covenant, we are called to contemplate also, The Priesthood. A people in covenant with God, and a nation of priests are one. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." [706] At a period long posterior to the days of Moses, and in reference even to gospel times, was applied the same character, "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God." [707] The apostle Peter, addressing the people of Israel scattered throughout sundry regions, thus also describes them, -- "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." [708] And to this description given by the apostle, primarily of the dispersion, but not limited to them, corresponds that by another apostle of himself and all who believe, in their grateful adoration, -- "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." [709] In order to commemorate the deliverance which God wrought for Israel when he slew the first-born of Egypt, for a sign he claimed, as consecrated to himself, all the first-born of their males, "Thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's." "And it shall be for a token upon thine hands, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt." [710] The first-born of their sons represented the whole nation as a holy priesthood. Princes and heads of families, whether fathers or eldest sons -- succeeding to their fathers' privileges -- had performed the duties of priests. Such a character, therefore, the first-born in Israel would have come to sustain. When religious services should have been performed by them, the whole people, as a nation of priests, would have worshipped. And of whatever they were the token, the people at large, accordingly, were also the sign. But instead of them, subsequently the tribe of Levi was taken, and the special duties of the priesthood were confined to Aaron and his sons. Hence that appointed priesthood, and the Levites their attendants, conducted public services instead of, and for the whole nation, a

kingdom of priests. And as the first-born of Israel were a sign of a great deliverance wrought for them because of his covenant, the people themselves, the ordained priesthood among them were, and all the people of God will continue to be, a Covenant sign. And according to their character is this holy priesthood as a sign employed. Different from the other signs, their language with theirs is designed to harmonize. As willing ministers of God's pleasure, to other signs they give regard, proving themselves a living sign. When the rainbow displays its spiritual glories, by others unperceived, like Noah standing by the altar of God, they present sacrifices of thanksgiving, or vow and swear to him. When the Sabbath points out a rest from sin, and deliverance from its consequences, they seek to sanctify it, and keep it as a sign and pledge of the rest provided for them in the covenant. And having in baptism had the name of God named upon them, endeavouring to depart from all iniquity, they manifest themselves as by purchase and conquest, and their own personal surrender, truly his. In some respects are all the ordinances of religion a Covenant sign, and it is as set apart to wait on these that the holy priesthood displays a like character. To them in all their extent are applicable the words of the Lord concerning Phinehas, -- "Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace." [711] As lights in the world, and as a devoted people, they have verified to themselves the promise, -- "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon thine altar;" being faithful in discharging their solemn obligations, and thus illustrating the duty of paying the vow, their conduct, in vowing and fulfilling their engagements, receives the approval -- "they have observed thy word and kept thy covenant;" encouragement from above is vouchsafed to them in their peculiar character, in the words of prayer, -- "Bless Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands;" and thus, the assurance that as a sign they shall be preserved, -- "smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." [712] God's covenant with his people is the covenant of a priesthood. And to secure the dispensation of the means of grace, that was given. The ministry of reconciliation and the Church at large are co-ordinate. Where the one is promised, the other also will be bestowed in due time. Where the ministers of the word are, there, to a greater or less extent, will be a Church. And a Church will seek to itself the ministering servants of Christ. Where the ordinances of religion are properly dispensed, there is a Church; and there an appointed instrumentality, in greater or less measure, presents the mind of Christ. When his servants dispense the ordinances of his grace, God speaks to his people. And as a people in covenant with Him, to his words they are called to assent. His servants are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech by them, they beseech sinners to be reconciled unto him. Like the Church itself in the world, the continuance of the ambassadors of Christ shows that God is waiting to be gracious. They who despise their messages declare themselves his enemies. Like the recal of an envoy, which betokens approaching hostilities, the removal of the servants of Christ from among a people, declares that the Lord is about to deal with them as his foes. When Churches become corrupt, this is the case. When the righteous are removed from among them, and the ecclesiastical constitution is in opposition to his will, the whole body is out of Covenant, and what was the temple of God becomes the receptacle of idols. When the Lord was angry with his professed people, he suffered a lying spirit to enter the mouth of their prophets. And to the people as a whole, in token of their rejection, he said, "Thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." [713] But notwithstanding the defections of many such, the Lord will raise him up a faithful priesthood. It is expressed in the anticipation, "The children of thy servants

shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee;"[714] and pledged in the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Hence the encouragement, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding;"[715] and the duties defined, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."[716] Those faithful to the covenant of the priesthood are approved, while the desecrators thereof are fearfully condemned. How encouraging the approbation, "Ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity!" And how cheering the promise, in its ultimate spiritual reference not less applicable to the whole spiritual priesthood than it was primarily to the sons of Aaron! -- "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me."[717] But denounced are the others thus challenged, "Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts." An apostate priesthood taught the people to swear at once by the Lord, and by Malcham -- the abomination of the Sidonians -- a false god. To cut off these, and the victims of their deceit, the Lord stretched out his hand. And to mark the care with which he watched over the faithful dispensation of his own ordinances, and observed every deviation from them, as designed to present the privileges and duties of his covenant, were also uttered his words, "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."[718] A priesthood was recognised when God entered into covenant with Noah, and with Abraham; and throughout all time was a priesthood to be approved as a covenant sign. Had it not been for the Everlasting Covenant, the rite of sacrifice had not been instituted, and a priesthood had not been. But that the ratification of that covenant by the glorious Surety might first be prefigured, and next had in commemoration, was given this sign. To intimate the ratification of God's covenant with his people, as at Horeb, the blood of sacrifice by the priesthood was sometimes sprinkled; and, consequently, the priesthood, under the law, kept up the remembrance of the covenant, and pointed forward to its final confirmation. The later priesthood, the people of God under the gospel, in offerings of praise, record that one sacrifice by which it was rendered sure, and hence they, as well as all else of the holy priesthood, to its special duties of vowing and swearing, from their peculiar character, became engaged. Although of those who ministered at the altar under a former dispensation, it is said by an apostle, "those priests were made without the swearing of an oath,"[719] we are not to suppose them as not indeed by covenant set apart to the duties of the Levitical priesthood; nor are we to suppose that the people of God, as a holy priesthood in general, whom those priests represented, do not sustain their character in virtue of Covenant arrangements. Those priests, on believing, were entitled to the blessings promised and secured by the oath of God to Abraham's seed. And so were the rest of his Covenant people. Moreover, the Lord swore to his people at Horeb, when, in addition to the moral law, he enjoined all those other laws, among which stand the statutes regarding the priesthood of Aaron. To his people then present, whether priests or not, and to his people who should descend from them, throughout the period over which the covenant there made should

extend, his oath was given; and seeing it was then given, when his people individually acceded to his covenant, or his faithful servants to the duties of the sanctuary, it was not repeated. It was only when a new promise was made, or an enlargement or an illustration of one formerly made was given, or when, for his Covenant's sake, he denounced wrath on his enemies, that the Lord swore to his people. And the day of conversion, of entering upon office, and ordinary seasons of solemn Covenanting, could not afford such occasions as these. It is in contrast with Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, that those priests are introduced by the apostle, as made without an oath. To the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, the Lord did not append a new and separate oath. The nation of Israel before, by the oath of God, had been set apart as a nation of kings and priests. And when that priesthood was appointed, they merely entered on the enjoyment of privileges formerly promised, and came under renewed obligation to perform appointed duties. But in addition to the oath of God to his Son from eternity, upon the occasion of his taking upon him -- in the nature of God-man, the office of His priesthood, in order to show its speciality His oath was also given. There was not the same regard to be paid to the type that belonged to the antitype, -- to the priesthood under the law that was due to the priesthood of Christ. The priests under the law were not appointed to their office as if they had been principals. It was reserved for Christ to be so appointed. Perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood. Those priests were made so after the law of a carnal commandment, and hence to the duties of the priesthood by Covenant engagement were pledged. Christ on the other hand, to perform the high functions of his priesthood, was also in solemn covenant voluntarily engaged; but that testimony might be borne to the dignity of his character and perfection of his work, by the oath of God again given, he was made priest. Besides, that oath was sworn to him as not merely a priest, but as the Surety and Mediator of the new covenant. "The Lord swore, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." And, "by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." To none of the priesthood under the law, did the title of mediator appertain. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." And through Christ come all the distinguishing features, and all the high privileges of his people, as an holy priesthood. To secure blessings spiritual and eternal to the people of God, the Lord swore to his Son. In what was promised to him by the oath of God, his people -- a nation of kings and priests, are interested. He is a king; his people sit down with him on his throne. He is a priest; his people desire to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in their flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church; and while they neither possess nor claim merit on account of their deeds, rejoice inasmuch as they are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, they may be glad also with exceeding joy. And by and through the oath by which he was constituted priest, were they in general set apart to their functions, -- to covenant, to pray, to praise, to present spiritual sacrifices to God, acceptable through himself. Because of the priesthood of Christ, the priesthood under the law was instituted. Because of the priesthood of Christ, through which was to be ratified God's covenant, his people -- a holy priesthood, to act as vowers or Covenanters, were appointed. Their existence, while they claim an interest in its blessings, and resolve and endeavour to perform its duties, testifies to its character and design, and displays how vast was the glory and blessedness that lay couched in the oath of the Father to his incarnate Son. But next, in accordance with the last sign, we have promised as a Covenant sign, The New Heart. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that

I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Signally contrasted with the hearts of those of whom it is said, "Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets," the heart thus promised as a new covenant blessing, is essentially a new heart. Unlike the adamant stone, resisting the engraver's chisel, but made soft to receive impressions of truth, it sustains the character of an heart of flesh -- substituted for the former, the stony heart. And those blessed with it have had realized to them the promise, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you." Being a new Covenant blessing, the new heart is a new Covenant sign. A holy priesthood are a people set apart to the service of God. A new heart is the distinguishing feature of those so set apart. Though not palpable to the men of the world, it gives evidence of its own existence, not equivocal; and diffusing its stores, makes known the fountain whence it derived them, and proclaims the end for which its own constitution was given. Like hypocrites in every age, many of the ancient Israelites brake God's covenant, or, in other words, they gave evidence that in his covenant they never had an interest. But the Lord's covenant could not be allowed to fail. Although many disregarded his injunctions, and did their utmost to discredit that covenant, yet that covenant was not to be dishonoured; for in his mercy he should bring again of the Hebrews many to wait on the ordinances of his grace. Under a new dispensation, he should give fresh prominency to spirituality of mind; and by his Spirit, who, as formerly to his people, should write his laws upon their hearts, cause his impressions to remain when the former system of services should have ceased to exist, but where the motives to obedience should, in the preaching of the gospel, be immediately addressed. Various spirits may jointly or successively take possession of those in a state of sin. Yea, the common operations of the Spirit of the Lord, as when the conscience is aroused, and even sometimes his extraordinary operations, may be upon them. But to them meanwhile may not be given the one enduring new heart. To some, as to Balaam, for wise purposes, by the Spirit it may have been given to see a vision of the Almighty; and to others may be given, as God gave to Saul, another heart; and still there may not be bestowed a new heart. To seek this, however, that they may live, and hence, as a Covenant people, serve the Lord, all are thus enjoined, -- "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"[720] Under various aspects is the new heart presented as a Covenant sign. As a heart circumcised is it thus described. To the people of Israel, as debtors to the whole law, Moses declares, -- "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." And in illustration of the duty required of them thus commanded to obey, at the same time he gives the injunction, -- "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God: him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name."[721] And in like manner, along with the injunction, "circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem," is given the promise, "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." Strangers brought into God's sanctuary to pollute it, and charged by him with having broken his covenant, are described as uncircumcised in heart

and in flesh;[722] and in an evil age the house of Israel are classed with the uncircumcised heathen, as uncircumcised in heart.[723] Yea, to the unbelieving Jews the martyr Stephen applies the same character. But of those who are in covenant with God, as the Jews were, an apostle furnishes the delineation, -- "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." [724] Again, as a perfect heart, is the new heart obviously a Covenant sign. The new heart is that which believes. That is the true heart; and those possessed of it, like Hezekiah, who walk before the Lord in truth, manifest an integrity which distinguishes all who, being at peace with God, are in covenant for ever dedicated to him. Thus, before the Lord, David walked in integrity of heart; and of a descendant who sat upon his throne, and who with his people "entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul," [725] is left the record to his honour, -- "Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days." [726] And finally, as one heart is this sign a Covenant token. Contrasted with the heart in its natural sinful condition, which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, it is constituted a reprovener of those who, vowing to the Lord, swear deceitfully. Different from the double heart vainly attempting at once to do homage to God and mammon, it is wholly devoted to the Lord. And due to the operation of the Spirit of God, it is disposed to unite with others his like workmanship in faithfully resolving together, and jointly endeavouring to promote his glory. This the Lord himself conferred, when, upon the occasion of Hezekiah commanding all Israel to keep the passover, it was in his heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath might turn away from them. "Also, in Judah, the hand of God was to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord." [727] This the Lord also promised, when he said, "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." [728] And this he has often made his people to experience, as on the day of Pentecost, when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; and when by casting their effects into one common fund, they furnished, of their common interest in one gracious inheritance, the most affecting emblem that men have given. But, finally, Christ was given for a sign of God's Covenant. A prophet, by inspiration, had exclaimed, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." [729] And by an apostle, these words are represented as employed by the Saviour, having in union with the Divine nature the nature of man. [730] In mount Zion, the Lord of hosts dwells as a covenant God. His children, a holy priesthood, are from him as a covenant sign; and from him also, as the most distinguished covenant sign, is his Son -- the great high priest of our profession, himself sanctified by suffering. That all ends of the earth should see the salvation of God had been predicted. On the record of inspiration, too, had appeared the promise, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." That in Christ both were fulfilled, was attested by Simeon, to whom it was revealed by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. He took up the child Jesus in his arms, "and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." [731] Moreover, in prophecy was delivered the message, "The Lord himself

shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." In Jesus, the promised son was recognised. When the birth of his forerunner John suggested that He should soon appear, an honoured believer "was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham." And when he was prosecuting his ministry, then had been fulfilled the promise, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Of the existence of the Everlasting Covenant, Jesus was a token. The Old Testament economy, and that of the New, were dispensations of the Covenant of Redemption. Under the former, Christ and his work were typified and predicted. Under the latter, these are commemorated. Under both, these were to be preached. Christ, appearing as the substance of the truth announced under both, was given a sign of that everlasting Covenant whence they took their origin. Had that covenant been but in theory, Christ had not appeared. His appearance declared it fact. As the Father's Servant, and consequently as in covenant with him, he was promised. His mission, to fulfil his Father's will, declared his obligations. The oath sworn to him, as a priest after the order of Melchizedec, pointed out their nature; and his manifestation in the flesh, and the perfect righteousness which he wrought out, abundantly signified their covenant origin, and reality, and design. Christ was given as a token of the Covenant's ratification. In his questions put to the Jews regarding a prophetic psalm, the Redeemer testified to the Father's oath, sworn to himself as the new covenant Surety. The gracious words which he spake gave evidence that the Father, in fulfilment of his promise, had put his Spirit upon him. His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, completed the evidence of the Father's faithfulness in fulfilling the promise of glory and honour made unto him, which his mediatorial career on earth supplied; and his bringing of every new son to glory adds to its amount. And that, as on the part of the Father of mercies his covenant should be ratified, so, on his own part, it should not fail, he afforded an all-impressive sign. He magnified the law and made it honourable. He obeyed its precepts; he poured out his soul unto death. Concerning his work existed the prediction, "As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." [732] He predicted his own sufferings and death. He submitted to the injuries inflicted on him by his enemies; he bare the load of God's wrath; he laid down his life. Of him an inspired apostle writes, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will." [733] In heaven he stands as a Lamb slain, and receives the adoration of the four living creatures, and of the four and twenty elders, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." [734] By his people on earth throughout all ages, by the eye of faith, thus promised, and given, and glorified, as a sign of his covenant's complete confirmation will he be contemplated; and by them as such for ever, with joy unspeakable in the house above. Christ was a sign of the dispensation of the blessings of God's

Covenant. The Lord made to Abraham the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" and this promise, illustrated by an apostle, refers to Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." [735] Hence, when he assumed the nature of man, it was signified, that the spiritual experiences of the former saints on earth were not imaginary, but real; their entrance into glory thereafter beyond dispute; and their title to immortal bliss secure. And also was betokened the certain glory in reserve for all others favoured with increased heavenly light, and enabled to believe. He himself taught the doctrines of a judgment to come, an everlasting punishment, and a heavenly rest. His miracles attested the truths which he taught, and proved him a token of their reality. At his birth, there was commissioned to announce it an angel, and with him "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And signally, indeed, had been announced by his appearance, that peace -- his covenant provision. He himself, the greatest inconceivably of every covenant blessing, had been given. Could a doubt then remain, when he averred it, that spiritual blessings had been enjoyed by his saints before, and that every spiritual blessing in due time should be afforded to all brought to fear him? The greatest of all benefits was freely conferred; and had there not been, through him, and would there not be, bestowed the less? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." [736] Through Christ the Everlasting Covenant was to be made known, and forever had in remembrance. What events for importance are comparable to the occurrences connected with his sojourn on earth? What a privilege the Church enjoyed, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among them, and they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth! Nor could that be forgotten, nor its glorious design. The splendour of the cloud of God's promise could not be forgotten; and could the shades of oblivion cover the advent of Him who appeared as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person? By all enabled to behold his glory, is he received as an enduring token of good, yea, as the abiding reality of all good. All his people shall so receive him. In covenant, the heathen were given to him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And the darkness which covers the earth, the gross darkness that covers the people, shall be dispelled, and all ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. The sun was placed in heaven for a sign. The Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing in his beams. As an everlasting sign, he shall throughout all ages point out his covenant for his people. Their sun shall no more go down; the Lord shall be their everlasting light. And He is a token that the duties of God's Covenant had been performed, and that, moreover, they would still be discharged. He himself fulfilled the conditions of that covenant; and because of his righteousness alone, the services of his people in all ages, are accepted. Their acceptance implies that these were enjoined. In faith in a Saviour to come, the saints in Old Testament times, while they waited on God's ordinances, or were employed about the things of the world, endeavoured to give obedience; and in faith thereafter, his people looking to him, still attempt to obey him. His work was approved, and hence their faith was not in vain; and these services were received as faithful attempts to perform their obligations. That the Saviour hath overcome, is a token to his people that they also shall overcome. And hence, in imitation of Him who, as his Father's covenanted Servant, fulfilled his will, they put forth their efforts to perform what he requires; and their conviction is expressed by an apostle, -- "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." [737] To Him, for grace to give obedience, all are commanded, and many

are privileged, to look. "Thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live: but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba." [738] To seek places where heathen deities were worshipped, was to sacrifice unto those idols, and to swear by them. To seek the Lord, accordingly, was to wait upon his ordinances, whether in presenting offerings unto him, in vowing or otherwise calling on his name. And hence appears the nature of the exercises to which both Jews and Gentiles are called, when to them is realized the prediction, -- "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.... And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." [739] Again, we find the command, "Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face for evermore." And to point out the nature of the duties which it includes, are those to whom it was first tendered, thus addressed, -- "O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations." [740] Where a most emphatic promise is made, that the duty of vowing and swearing to the Lord shall be discharged, occurs the declaration, "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." [741] And the man who, seeking God, shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place, is described in language that certainly not merely refers to the oath as given to confirm testimony, but also as given in vowing other duties to the Lord, as "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." For their apostacy, the Hebrew people were cast out of the good land that had been covenanted to their fathers; and for many ages they have been scattered among all nations. But as, for their breach of covenant, they were cast off, and the goodly heritage that had been given them became waste; so, at their restoration to the precious privileges which through unbelief they forfeited, to this glorious Object they themselves, and with them the heathen nations, shall look as to a covenant sign. "He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." [742] How glorious this sign! -- The Messenger of the Covenant, the Mediator of the New Covenant, Immanuel -- God with us! But for his covenant, he had remained unseen by the eye of man. To make that known, he made his fallen creatures see God. The universe of material nature is glorious. More glorious is the intelligent creation. Both together are tokens of God's wisdom, and goodness, and power. But what was to be a token of his attributes in all their glory displayed in the salvation of man? The laws which he has given to his creatures are tokens of his will concerning them. But what creatures could sufficiently denote his covenant, its blessings, and its duties? The sabbath, and circumcision, were each, at once a privilege and a duty, and, as well as other things, a sign of the Covenant. But what among the effects of Jehovah's sovereignty, could betoken it in all its glory? Its effects on creatures being finite, what is finite might these in some measure point out. But could any dependent being fully designate its glorious origin, and infinite Surety? The world is finite, though due to Almighty power, and so are its ordinances; and a finite being might betoken these. Miracles of healing, raising the

dead, of controlling the material world, and the actions of angels and men, and of bringing from spiritual death to life are all finite, but beyond the might of less than Almighty power. And all these in some measure by some creature as a token might be signified. But the law of God embodied in his covenant is exceeding broad; its blessings are inconceivably great. God is the author of the Covenant. God is the mediator of the Covenant. God in his own nature and in the nature of man, is the glorious body to which are spiritually united the children of the Covenant. God, in the nature of man, alone could have afforded a manifestation of the Covenant adequate to its character. Behold, then, as the most glorious display that has been made of God or his ways, the Lord Jesus given to denote the Covenant that had been made for the people!

FOOTNOTES:[662] Gen. ix.12-15.[663] Gen. vi.17, 18.[664] Gen. vi.18-21.[665] Gen. viii.20-22.[666] Gen. ix.11.[667] Gen. ix.16.[668] Gen. vi.5.[669] Job xxii.17.[670] Job xxii.21.[671] Ps. civ.5-9.[672] Jer. v.22-24, 2, 7, 25.[673] Is. liv.9, 10.[674] Ezek. xvi.8, 59.[675] Ezek. xi.21.[676] Ezek. xi.19, 20.[677] Ezek. xvi.60.[678] Ezek. i.28.[679] Rev. iv.3.[680] Rev. v.9, 10.[681] Rev. xi.3.[682] Rev. x.1.[683] Jer. iii.23.[684] Gen. xvii.10-14.[685] Rom. iv.11.[686] Exod. xii.48.[687] Deut. iv.7, 8.[688] Exod. xxiii.17.[689] Exod. xxiii.32.[690] Josh. v.2, 3, 9.[691] Col. ii.11-13.[692] Rom. iv.11.[693] Mat. xxviii.19.[694] Acts ii.38.[695] Gal. iii.26-29.[696] 1 Pet. iii.21.[697] Joel ii.28, 29.[698] Is. xlv.3-5.[699] Exod. xxxi.13, 16.[700] Deut. xxvi.18.[701] Is. lviii.13, 14.[702] Neh. x.29-31.[703] Ezek. xxii.8.[704] Ezek. xx.40, 41, 37.[705] Jer. xvii.24-27.[706] Exod. xix.5, 6.[707] Is. lxi.6.[708] 1 Pet. ii.5, 9.[709] Rev. i.5, 6.[710] Exod. xiii.12, 16.[711] Num. xxv.12.[712] Deut. xxxiii.9-11.[713] Hos. iv.6.[714] Ps. cii.28.[715] Jer. iii.15.[716] Mal. ii.7.[717] Ezek. xlv.15.[718] Mal. i.14.[719] Heb. vii.21.[720] Ezek. xviii.31.[721] Deut. x.16, 20.[722] Ezek. xlv.7.[723] Jer. ix.26.[724] Rom. ii.29.[725] 2 Chron. xv.12.[726] 1 Kings xv.14.[727] 2 Chron. xxx.12.[728] Jer. xxxii.40.[729] Is. viii.18.[730] Heb. ii.13.[731] Luke ii.28-32.[732] Zech. ix.11.[733] Heb. xiii.20, 21.[734] Rev. v.9.[735] Gal. iii.16.[736] Rom. viii.32.[737] Phil. iv.13.[738] Amos v.4, 5.[739] Is. xi.10, 12.[740] Ps. cv.4, 6-8.[741] Is. xlv.19.[742] Is. xlix.6, 8.

CHAPTER XII. COVENANTING PERFORMED IN FORMER AGES WITH APPROBATION FROM ABOVE.

That the Lord gave special token of his approbation of the exercise of Covenanting, it belongs to this place to show. His approval of the duty was seen when he unfolded the promises of the Everlasting Covenant to his people, while they endeavoured to perform it; and his approval thereof is continually seen in his fulfilment to them of these promises. The special manifestations of his regard, made to them while attending to the service before him, belonged to one or other, or both, of those exhibitions of his acceptance of them in the discharge of the duty. They afford peculiar illustrations, brought out by Him in a wondrous providence, of the important truths concerning his Covenant, which all his other dispensations to his people also present. First. He approved of engagements made in Personal Covenanting. The vow of Jacob at Bethel, at the distance of several years, was followed by a command from God to erect there the altar, which in that he had virtually promised to build. The vow of Hannah was acknowledged by the gift of a son, whom the Lord honoured to be a signal blessing to Israel. The vow of David, -- "To find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," received the approval, -- "It was well that it was in thine heart," though the duty was made to devolve upon his son. These are examples of Covenant engagements made by individuals, to be performed by themselves, or by others, according to the will of God, and which he afforded grace to parties chosen by himself to fulfil. Secondly. He approved of engagements made in Social Covenanting. The Covenant made with Noah was dictated by the Lord himself. The patriarch and his family acceded to it. He and they, along with the living creatures concerning which he had received instructions, entered the ark according as God had commanded; and the Lord shut him in.[743] That Covenant was renewed with the patriarch by the express words of God; a promise kindred to that delivered to man in a state of innocence, but which, containing also the grant of animal food, and thereby affording an intimation of the exercise of feeding by faith on the flesh of the Redeemer, included a gracious grant which the other promise could not contain, was added at the renovation; and the bow in the cloud was declared a token that the Lord would not forget the transaction, but while that emblem should continue, even to all ages should fulfil the promise made by Him, and accepted in faith by his servants. The Covenant with Abraham was graciously proposed by the Lord himself. And the faith of the patriarch, called into exercise at the ratification of it, was encouraged by the appointment of a special sacrifice, and the wondrous phenomenon of the smoking furnace and the burning lamp.[744] That covenant was ratified a second time, while the Lord appointed the ordinance of circumcision as a sign and seal of it, to be extended to the descendants of the patriarch, not merely as the progenitor of the Israelites, but as the father of many nations. The extension of the privilege to Ishmael, the descendants of whom observed the rite, and to the other males of Abraham's household, was a pledge that all the Gentile nations should in due time become interested, not merely in the outward advantages, but also in the spiritual privileges of God's covenant, and was a pleasing illustration of the manner in which the Lord, by a special appointment, is pleased to testify even through many ages, to the good of many, to the pleasure

which he takes in his servants performing duty in the strength of grace afforded by himself.[745] When the Covenant was about to be ratified for the third time, the Lord called his servant to a signal exercise of faith. The giving of an enlarged view of the promise followed upon the provision of a sacrifice, as a substitute for the once-devoted son; and united with the oath of God, given for confirmation, in leading to the renovation of the Covenant, as a sign of the Lord's approval of the vigorous exercise of that faith through which its conditions are accepted. And the new pre-intimation of a Saviour to come, that was made in the ram caught in the thicket, gave to all who believed in God -- and still more, the actual offering of the Lamb of God, gives to all now who follow their faith in Covenanting, to use in confidence the patriarch's words, -- "Jehovah-jireh," the Lord will provide.[746] The Covenant made with Israel, like the others made thereafter with the Church of God, was a renovation of that established with Abraham. Like that, it was proposed by the Lord himself, and besides, was in token of his enduring favour ratified by his oath.[747] The Covenant with Jacob was entered into after that the Lord, by anticipating and encouraging the faith of his servant, graciously presented before him the vision of the Ladder, as an emblem of the glorious Saviour bringing men to communion with God, and in the accomplishment of his work directing the energies of unfallen angels sent forth by him to minister to the heirs of salvation.[748] The Covenant of Sinai was confirmed in a manner the most encouraging, as well as condescending and glorious. By fire, the Lord intimated not merely his power to punish, but also his gracious presence. By the voice of speech, though the people were afraid, he afforded in kindness an indisputable evidence of the truth of his gracious intercourse with them.[749] And when it was renewed, the Lord added to the tokens which he had given of his regard for his people drawing near to serve him, while he passed by before his servant Moses, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." [750] That the Lord approved of Israel making a vow at Hormah, appeared from the fact that He granted to them the object of it. [751] The Covenant made on the plains of Moab was confirmed by the oath of God; and the encouragement of it, that the Lord would be unto Israel a God, afforded additional evidence that their net of laying hold upon it was well-pleasing to him. [752] The Covenant made at Shechem was shown to be approved of God, not merely by his command to Israel to enter into it, but by the strength which he gave to them to serve Him, and consequently to keep that covenant all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua. [753] Of the Covenant between God and Israel, entered into through the instrumentality of David, [754] the Lord testified his approbation, in fulfilling to the house of Judah its promise of a race of kings in David's line, which should be consummated in Him who, being David's Son and David's Lord, should reign for ever. The tokens of the Lord's acceptance of Israel Covenanting with him in the reign of Asa were, that He, whom they had sought with their whole desire, was found of them, and that he gave them rest round about. [755] Israel Covenanting with God, in the reign of Nehemiah, were visited with special tokens of Divine favour. The Lord gave them one heart to perform the service, and bestowed his blessing afterwards upon them. "The hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord." [756] "Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven." [757] As to Israel under Joshua and the elders that overlived him, so to the people Covenanting under Josiah, the Lord showed his favour, by enabling them to keep covenant with him. "And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers." [758] Though there is less explicitly said to

intimate that the Covenanting of Israel under Ezra was approved of God, than what is recorded in commendation of other like exercises, yet their work was acceptable to Him.[759] Were there nothing else to show this, the prayerful frame of mind, corresponding to a former promise, in which they engaged in it, were sufficient.[760] The Covenant between God and his Church, in the days of Nehemiah, was made and followed with signal marks of Divine favour. The transaction had been predicted. "For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness." [761] "The consumption" here spoken of, was the destruction of the Assyrian empire. The returning referred to, was the restoration of Israel from Babylon. And the overflowing with righteousness adverted to, would appear to have been the exercises of engaging in Covenanting under Ezra and under Nehemiah, and the consequences thereof. And manifold were the benefits that followed from these engagements. Copies of the law of God were increased: the people were accordingly much more abundantly instructed than they had been before; and they no more returned to idolatry. And what is said by an apostle, in reference to the Churches of Macedonia engaging in the exercise, we have no reason to suppose to be inapplicable to the other Churches in the apostolic age, that performed the duty, -- that they did so "by the will of God." Hence, in conclusion. Though the Canon of Scripture be now closed, we have encouragement to make vows, the engagements of which are lawful. A material difference that obtains between the former and the present dispensation of Divine grace is, that what was vouchsafed under the former, was fitted to afford the principles according to which, all under the latter should judge of the attainments from the hand of God, made by them in every given exercise. Did he, in former times, manifestly approve the performance of the duty? he will substantially do so now. Did he favour his people taking hold on his covenant then? he will do so still. FOOTNOTES: [743] Gen. vi.17, 18. vii.16. [744] Gen. xv.9-18. [745] Gen. xvii.7-14. [746] Gen. xxii.1-18. [747] Gen. xxvi.3-5; and Ps. cv.9. [748] Gen. xxviii.11-22. [749] Exod. xix. xx. [750] Exod. xxxiv.6; see also ver.10. [751] Num. xxi.2, 3. [752] Deut. xxix.13. [753] Jos. xxiv.25, 31. [754] 2 Sam. vii.11-22; 1 Chron. xxviii.8. [755] 2 Chron. xv.15. [756] 2 Chron. xxx.12. [757] 2 Chron. xxx.27. [758] 2 Chron. xxxiv.33. [759] Ezra x. [760] Jer. l.4, 5. [761] Is. x.22.

CHAPTER XIII. COVENANTING PREDICTED IN PROPHECY.

The fact of Covenanting, under the Old Testament dispensations, being approved of God, gives a proof that it was proper then, which is accompanied by the voice of prophecy, affording evidence that even in periods then future it should no less be proper. The argument for the service that is afforded by prophecy is peculiar, and, though corresponding with evidence from other sources, is independent. Because that God willed to make known truth through his servants the prophets, we should receive it as transmitted by them, in a manner peculiarly calculated to invite attention. A statute tells what, according to the authority of God, ought to be done. The revelation of God's purposes unfolds precisely the same things as to be done, but according to his sovereign arrangements made to lead to them. Prophecy declares, indeed, the purposes of God, but specially the carrying of them into effect in individual cases. In the purposes of God, each fact agreeable to his will is provided for. In prophecy, such of these facts as he has resolved to make known are presented. The reality of the pre-intimation of these shows their importance, and points out that preparation ought to be made for them. The assurance that a fact of Covenanting is predicted is a substantial argument for its lawfulness. The individuals, to perform it, may be urged by a variety of motives; yea, even by the promise in reference to their doing of it, without knowing at the time that they were the special objects of the promise. The argument from prophecy derives its value from two things, -- that the subject of prophetic intimation, as provided for by the Lord himself, is warranted, and, that it is beyond the power of men either to fulfil it otherwise than he has arranged, or to prevent its accomplishment. Prophecy describes, with precision, facts that will take place. Men are brought into the circumstances to which a prophecy refers, and they may be ignorant of the fact. Afterwards they know it, and attest the verity of the prediction. The descriptions afforded in prophecy concerning the circumstances of the truth predicted are not given to provide these circumstances, for that is done according to a sovereign Divine arrangement; but are afforded to show, after the fulfilment, that the truth was indeed that which had been foretold. Prophecies, that duty will be done, lead men to it, not as attracted by its circumstances, but as directed by the Divine counsel. Prophecy, therefore, independently of its fulfilment, affords a reason for Covenanting. Properly authenticated, it has the force of an important argument. Shown to be prophecy, both by the circumstances in which it was uttered, and by the fulfilment, it is manifestly conducive to the duty. The fulfilment of prophecy is a scriptural test of its truth; but manifestations made of Divine approbation to the prophet, even before what was uttered by him was fulfilled, also attest that such was of God. It is the prophecy, as authenticated by one or other, or both of these things, that gives encouragement to perform the service. Did God speak by his servants in order to inform men, that his name should be called upon, in vowing and swearing unto him? Then, because of such a peculiar manifestation of his will, the duty behoves to be performed. If the dictation of his will as a law in reference to the service had been sufficient, he would not otherwise have enjoined it. And if his will manifested in that manner confers obligation, does not the revelation of it, in the condescending, though glorious language of prophecy, as well as otherwise, bind to duty? Shall he use any means to make his pleasure known, of which men, by giving obedience, will not testify their approbation? Shall God

speak, and yet men not respond? Covenanting was predicted in prophecy in reference to Old Testament times. The prophecies under this head may be divided into those of the earlier prophets, and those of the later. The first class includes in it, those of Jacob and Moses, and others, who were employed to predict the future circumstances of Israel. Referring to the Church of God as a covenant society, in general they foretold that the exercise of Covenanting should be performed by its members. As an instance of explicit references made to the duty, we may advert to the blessing of Moses on the tribe of Levi.[762] That prophecy, though not limited to the periods of the former dispensations, may be considered as specially including in it a prospective regard to every act of Covenanting, in which the Church and nation of Israel as such engaged after it was delivered. The predictions of the later prophets in regard to Covenanting in the former ages, were fulfilled, on the return of the Jews from Babylon.[763] They were so explicit, and so soon fulfilled, as to afford most emphatically an exhibition of the will of God in regard to their object. Covenanting was predicted in prophecy in reference to New Testament times. Both in the first and in the later ages, the performance of the duty in these ages was foretold. It was intimated when it was said concerning the Messiah, -- "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." [764] Many prophecies uttered concerning the restoration of Israel, refer to the present dispensation; and consequently, the predicted exercises of Covenanting which these contain, to it also belong.[765] Corresponding to the prophetic intimation concerning a people who should be created to praise the Lord, is that of a new heavens and a new earth; both are to be fulfilled in gospel times, and by those who were to be created, engaging in the duty of taking hold on God's covenant.[766] The Saviour was promised for a covenant of the people, and for a light of the Gentiles; and also that he might establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolated heritages.[767] The last of the Old Testament prophets, at the same time that he speaks of the covenant of the priesthood having been broken by the Jews, who were unbelievers, uttering the prediction, -- "My name shall be great among the Gentiles," [768] pre-intimates that all the heathen nations shall use the name of God in vowing and swearing unto him. Early was uttered the prophecy, -- "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." [769] An illustration of it is given in these words, -- "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also?" [770] Its reference to Covenanting is therefore manifest. Many passages besides, from the Old Testament prophets, show that the Gentiles in their national capacities shall vow and swear to God. [771] And in the book of Revelation, the same is foretold. [772] Explicit predictions are made concerning the Egyptians vowing a vow and performing it, and concerning the Assyrians along with them and Israel being reckoned as the Lord's people, which fall to be fulfilled in the later times. [773] And by the voice of prophecy we are assured, that by Covenanting, in the last days, Israel and Judah shall be gathered and united as the Lord's people. By the breaking of the staff "Beauty," a prophet was called to signify that the Lord's covenant with Israel was broken; and by the cutting of the other staff, "Bands," he was directed to show, that the brotherhood -- certainly one which had been professedly by covenant, between Judah and Israel should be broken. [774] But even an earlier prophet, by the use of the corresponding emblems, -- of one stick for Judah and Israel his companions, and another for Ephraim and all the house of Israel his companions, in joining them into one stick, was commissioned to testify to their being joined to one another, in taking the Lord for their God, in the latter day. [775] Referring to the words of sacred psalmody, -- "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name;" [776] as prophetic, an apostle unfolds the exercise of Covenanting as incumbent till the latest times. Yea,

as a fruit of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the service, in the loftiest terms, is foretold. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." [777] Hence, in conclusion. How important to attend to such prophetic intimations! They are the word of God. They were indeed addressed through men, but their origin is Divine. They are addressed to us. In times past God spake unto the Fathers by the prophets; he still speaks to us in his word. By the authority of the Lord Jesus, we are commanded to search the Scriptures; -- the Old Testament as dictated by his Spirit, and the New as also from Him. While we read his word, he speaks to us from heaven. Let us not be slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written. FOOTNOTES: [762] Deut. xxxiii.8-10. [763] Some of these are contained in Is. x.22; xxviii.15-22; Jer. I.5. [764] Gen. xlix.10. [765] See Jer. xxxi.31-34, and Heb. viii.8; Ezek. xxxiv.25; xxxvii.26; as instances. [766] Ps. cii.18-22; Is. lxxv.16, 17. [767] Is. xlii.6; xlix.8. [768] Mal. i.11. [769] Gen. ix.27. [770] Rom. iii.29. [771] Ps. xxii.27; Is. lii.15; Zech. ii.14. [772] Rev. xi.15; xv.4. [773] Is. xix.18-25. [774] Zech. xi.10, 14. [775] Ezek. xxxvii.15-28. [776] Ps. xviii.49. [777] Ps. lxxviii.18; see also Zech. ii.11.

CHAPTER XIV. COVENANTING RECOMMENDED BY THE PRACTICE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

The approved practice of the Church of God in Covenanting, is recommended to us by these two things, -- that it displays a voluntary regard to his will, and that it exhibits his power accomplishing his purpose. The example of the people of God, while they walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless, is a warranted motive to duty. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." [778] Their practice in the discharge of the duty of Covenanting, accordingly, is worthy of imitation. Were we doubtful whether or not their observation of the exercise were according to the will of God, we should not be encouraged by it; but when assured of its consistency with the Divine record, we are called to follow it. Their devout performances of the duty, then, present a reason for discharging it, strong in proportion to the force of every warrant which they had for engaging in it, but though in accordance with these, different from each of them. True, we are not to compare the doings of men with the command of God; but when he calls us, we are under obligation to observe these, when presented as an illustration of duty, or as a motive to perform it. On account of the same reasons for which the Church of God in former ages attended to Covenanting, we should attend to it; but we should perform it because of their example besides. Did they engage in it because of the manifestations of its obligation upon them, made in the Scriptures, and also on account of the approved practices of their predecessors? We should perform it for the same reasons, and for this cause besides, that they themselves engaged in it. "We desire ... that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." [779] The practice of the Church of God, warranting to engage in the duty, is a manifestation of Divine favour made by Him in enabling her to act to the fulfilment of his designs. Were his people called to duty according to his command? He vouchsafed the strength requisite that they should obey. Were they attracted to it by the anticipation of good from Him? He afforded the grace by which they were drawn. Through them performing the service, was promise or prophecy regarding it fulfilled? The glory of God was displayed by Him fulfilling his word. Because of the displays of Divine excellence made on its performance by the saints, contemplating their example, we are called to the duty. On these two grounds, the practice of the New Testament Church, engaging in Covenanting, to which here but merely a slight reference can be made, invites to the duty. The practice of the Church of God in the Apostolic age, in regard to this matter, has been considered before; [780] to those cases that were explicitly approved of God, it belongs. The practice of the Church of God in the three centuries immediately succeeding the Apostolic age recommends the duty. Creeds, Confessions, and Covenants, obtained in that period; summaries of Christian doctrine, received and adhered to, are recorded by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and others. To oppose the manifestation of error, these would appear to have been made. The primitive Christians, in order to the attainment of Church membership, were required not merely to assent to such creeds or confessions, but also to confirm their acquiescence by oath. [781] The younger Pliny represents them as meeting on a certain day -- obviously the Sabbath -- and among other exercises, then engaging in addressing themselves in prayer to Christ, binding themselves

by a Solemn Oath, to what we know to be duty. Justin Martyr represents Baptism to adults as given only to those of them who vowed to live according to the confession of their faith. And to the practice of Covenanting by oath, on the reception of Baptism, Tertullian and Jerome also allude. The service, as authenticated, continued till the days of Gregory Nazianzen. During the period too, covenants were subscribed; and at some stages at least of it, those who had become exposed to the censures of the Church, on being restored, were required explicitly to enter into covenant again. Such procedures were, in measure, more or less perfect, according to the statutes of the word of God, enjoining vowing to Him; and they have a claim to be regarded as the fulfilment of some of the prophecies regarding the duty of Covenanting, that refer to the last times. The beneficial practical consequences of them, in many cases, gave corroborative evidence that they were warranted. The federal transactions of the Churches of the Reformation recommend the duty. To what extent the practice may have been engaged in by the few in Europe who held the truth during the dark ages, we do not well know. That it was much attended to, we may rather infer, than use as an argument. But with the dawn of the Reformation came the practice of Covenanting. Step by step the Churches proceeded in opposition to Popery, by solemn engagements. By them the friends of truth were united together. By them, where they stood, successively through grace, they triumphed, even when they fell; -- they knew not to flee. The history of the Church's reformation is written in her Covenants. First. The federal transactions of the Churches abroad. The Waldensian and Bohemian Churches -- the forlorn hope of the Reformation, nobly led the way by Covenanting. Two Confessions of the faith of the Waldenses are valuable monuments. Some Waldenses who settled in Bohemia, are understood to have become the followers of John Huss. These frequently practised Covenanting. The Churches of the Waldenses and of the Protestants of Germany, in November, 1571, entered into a solemn covenant engagement, in which was made a profession of their faith, and a resolution to adhere to the true Christian Reformed Religion. Previous to this, by the famous league of Smalkald, renewed in 1536, the Protestant princes and people of Germany became engaged to maintain together the doctrine and truth of the gospel, and peace and tranquillity in the empire and German nation. In the Reformed Churches, Covenanting was common. According to Beza, on July 20, 1537, the capital articles of the Christian religion and discipline were SWORN by the Senate and people of Geneva. Berne and Lausanne also came to be included in the league. The Churches of Holland, and of Hungary and Transylvania, and others on the continent of Europe, had recourse in like manner to solemn vows. The tendency to enter into such engagements survived the wreck of the period that has elapsed since the days of the Reformation; and was nobly illustrated in recent times, as when a number in the Austrian dominions, when about to be cruelly expatriated for their attachment to the truth, pledged themselves to adhere to it, by a "Covenant of Salt." The practice extended to America. There settlers from Europe, at Salem, in 1629, by Covenanting, solemnly incorporated themselves into a Church of Christ. And afterwards the practice of Covenanting in the adopted land obtained. Secondly, and lastly. The Covenant engagements of the Church in Britain and Ireland. Scotland was honoured, early in the Reformation, to declare valiantly for the truth. Though a Hamilton, and a Wishart, and other noble confessors and martyrs, were soon sacrificed, it pleased God to place a safeguard around a Knox and others, that the truth might be diffused. And when the rulers of the nation were wholly devoted to Popery, in his goodness and mercy He saw meet to put it into the hearts of some of the nobles, and of many of the people, to offer themselves willingly, by Covenanting, to use means to effect its removal. The first covenant against Popery was ratified at

Edinburgh, in December, 1557. It was signed by the Earl of Argyll, Glencairn, Morton, Archibald Lord Lorne, John Erskine of Dun, and others. The next was entered into at Perth, in May, 1559. The third was made at Stirling, in August of the same year. The fourth, at Edinburgh, in April, 1560. The Fifth, through the exertions of John Knox and George Hay, at Ayr, in September, 1562. In 1580, the National Covenant, drawn up by John Craig, and directed against the whole of the Romish corruptions, was entered into; next year, the General Assembly sanctioned the covenant, and the Church received it; it was renewed in 1590, and also in 1596. On the 28th of February, 1638, the covenant, with an addition that was virtually directed against Prelacy, was renewed at Greyfriar's Church, Edinburgh; thousands had assembled; the solemnity was accompanied with prayer and fasting; and with the most profound emotions, the covenant was sworn and subscribed. In order to carry into design its effect, in Glasgow, November, of the same year, sat down the Assembly -- celebrated for overthrowing Prelacy in Scotland, and for its other acts of reformation. And as a manifestation of attachment to the cause of the covenant, in the consequent ever memorable times, there appeared on the banners of the Scottish people, the memorable motto, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant." These covenants are binding still on the people of Scotland. It is their duty still to declare for their object. Making efforts to maintain the kingly authority of Messiah, they ought to regard his covenant. Only those who see his covenant, see properly his crown. But to proceed. In consequence of negociations between the people of England and those of Scotland, "the Solemn League And Covenant," between the three kingdoms, was entered into. It was directed against Popery and Prelacy, and every other species of error; it engaged the nations to endeavour to attain to uniformity in religion; it recognised the duty of obeying civil rulers in the Lord; and it was sworn by men of various communities, but by them as all of one reformed religion. In August, 1643, it was approved by the Scottish Convention of Estates, and by the General Assembly, on one day. It was sworn thereafter at St. Margaret's, Westminster, by both Houses of Parliament, the Assembly of Divines, and the Commissioners from Scotland. It was afterwards subscribed by both Houses of Parliament, and by the Assembly of Divines, and generally by persons of all ranks in the United Kingdom. It was renewed in Scotland in 1648, and by the Parliament in 1649. Being scriptural in its matter, and not yet implemented, and besides, having been acquiesced in by the civil power, it is to this day binding on the nations;[782] to this day it binds the Churches in the three kingdoms, -- the Church of Scotland, and all those who have seceded from it as an establishment, as well as those Presbyterians who never were connected with that Church since the Revolution.[783] It is not too much to describe it, in the language of a most justly esteemed writer, as "a document which we may be pardoned for terming the noblest, in its essential nature and principles, of all that are recorded among the international transactions of the world." [784] The National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant, were renewed, with various additions, at Lanark, before the devoted but disastrous struggle at Pentland, in 1666; at Lesmahagow, in 1669; at Auchenshugh, near Douglas, on July 24, 1712; and at Crawfordjohn, in 1745. What was suited to these times in the engagements made on those occasions, and not yet accomplished, is binding, through the deeds of the parties who entered into them, on those whom these parties represented. It would not savour much of candour to keep out of view, that by other parties besides, these covenants have been renewed since the Revolution; though it must be declared, that of the renovations made by such we cannot in all things approve. Scotland, nay Britain, we may then say, was solemnly dedicated to the Lord. When will the Covenanted work of Reformation, which at present lies under the bann of many wicked acts,

yea, even under the act confirming the Union between Scotland and England, be revived? May there be soon fulfilled to our people again the promise, -- "Thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." It must be admitted that the testimonies of those who opposed the Romish apostacy were in accordance, at least in some measure, with the mind of Christ; and it cannot be denied, that the many to whom we have referred, delivering those testimonies with all the solemnity of an oath, appeared, to the fulfilment of ancient prophecy concerning those who in the last times should testify for him, as his "Witnesses." Besides, has there not been fulfilled in our own land, as well as elsewhere, in those who engaged in Covenanting, in part such promises as this, -- "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.... I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." That this promise may in due time be fulfilled to all who are in darkness, let us endeavour to imitate, in their devotedness of heart to God, those whose conduct we have been led here to consider, and who enjoyed so abundantly the benefits of that promise. FOOTNOTES: [778] 1 Cor. xi.1. [779] Heb. vi.11, 12. [780] Chap. xii. [781] Vitringa. [782] See "Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation." Glasgow, 1841. Lecture VII., by the Rev. Dr. W. Symington. [783] Appendix B. [784] "History of the Church of Scotland." By the Rev. W.M. Hetherington, A.M. Edin., 1842.

CHAPTER XV. SEASONS OF COVENANTING.

The duty is never unsuitable. Men have frequently, improperly esteemed the exercise as one that should be had recourse to, only on some great emergency. But as it is sinful to defer religious exercises till affliction, presenting the prospect of death, constrain to attempt them, so it is wrong to imagine, that the pressure of calamity principally should constrain to make solemn vows. The exercise of personal Covenanting should be practised habitually. The patriot is a patriot still; and the covenanter is a covenanter still. "It is not enough that the heart be once given to God; when this has really been done it is a great attainment; but it must again and again be surrendered in renewed acts of self-dedication, in order to the maintenance of any thing like fidelity and steadfastness in his service. A daily recognition of our relationship to Christ, is full of comfort and encouragement, and is at the same time invaluable as a means of sanctification. How precious the privilege of being able in all difficulties and dangers, to speak of the great Jehovah in the language of Paul, -- 'God, whose I am, and whom I serve!'[785] How powerful the argument, in applying for deliverance from evil of whatever kind, employed by the Psalmist, -- 'I am thine, save me.'[786]"[787] And though the exercises of Social Covenanting are not practicable so frequently as those of that which is personal, there is no reason why they, any more than the other, should be reckoned as incumbent only on occasions of an extraordinary nature. But special seasons do give peculiar calls to the duty in all its variety. Times of hazard and distress, by displaying in relief, the vanity of all the aids that mere creatures could afford, and finding men looking around for comfort and support, invite, with a power peculiar to themselves, to look to Him who is a present help to his people in every time of need, and cordially, by Covenanting, to respond to his invitation, -- "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."[788] When religion is low, and error and vice and ungodliness prevail, the hosts of darkness are successful; but their clamour is unfit to drown the cry, so fitted to inspire with holy zeal, then urging to special devotedness to the Lord's cause, -- "Who is on the Lord's side?"[789] In times of reviving, there are transmitted by every gale from heaven, the words of the Redeemer, inviting his Spouse -- his Church, individually and socially to the holy duty of acknowledging Him as her Lord, -- "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."[790] When the friends of truth unite for its maintenance, either in an incorporate or other capacity, they are called to follow the Lord, the "Leader." Is it said of the wicked, -- "They are confederate against thee (or, against thy Covenant they shall covenant)"? What ought to be the conduct unitedly of those, who individually are interested in the Lord's Covenant? Are they not urged, to declare most explicitly by formally taking hold upon it, that they have come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty?[791]

FOOTNOTES: [785] Acts xxvii.23. [786] Ps. cxix.94. [787] "Enter into thy Closet." By the Rev. James M'Gill, Hightae, Lochmaben. Glasgow: David Bryce, 1843; -- a most valuable work on the secret duties of religion. [788] Ps. I.15. [789] Exod. xxxii.26. [790] Song ii.10. [791] Appendix C.

CONCLUSION

Hence the exercise of Covenanting has powerful claims. It is important. It is unfolded by a flood of light from the page of Divine truth. It is intimately connected with the manifestation of the glory of God. It is related to every other duty incumbent on men. It contemplates the best interests of society at present and to come; -- it bears upon the maintenance of the just rights of mankind, and the glory of the Church in Millennial times. And it is an important means of sanctification, and of perseverance in grace. By means of it, each one of the glorious community of which Christ is the Head is called to manifest attachment to him; and through it to become more and more like unto him: so that the whole body of the faithful, each one having been taken into God's Covenant, and enabled to abide by it, -- the Church, as the Lamb's wife, may be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. It is advantageous. Preparation for it leads to accurate apprehensions of duty. It tends to cherish a devout solemnity of mind. It leads to the comforts of habitual holy communion with God. It impresses with a sense of increased obligation, that furnishes an ardour of mind, powerfully impelling to duty. It tends to unite many in affection, and sentiment, and zeal for truth. It presents instruction most solemnly to the young and rising race, led to inquire concerning it, "What mean ye by this service?" It is calculated to arrest for good the attention of society at large. And it provides benefits the most valuable and extensive, for generations unborn. It is necessary. It forms a part of the system of means devised by Jehovah for carrying forward his work; and it must be observed. His work, by this and other means, will be completed. Though the evils that have occurred in the world have been permitted, yet some are chargeable with blame for committing them, and others are culpable for not having used various means, of which Covenanting is one, in order that they might have been prevented. Though the Romish apostacy was permitted, yet who can tell how far the Church of God was culpable in not using extensively enough for its prevention, Covenanting -- one means directly adapted to that purpose? And who can tell what effect the performance of the duty will have in leading to the good in store for the Church, even on earth, and to the prevention of evil which, if allowed, would arise? The duty, therefore, should be observed.[792] It is irreligion that disregards it. Superstition and infidelity alike trifle with an oath; for Satan hates and tries to discredit this institution of heaven. Who, by not observing the ordinance of Covenanting would practically say, that it ought to be abolished? Who would say that one flower of the field should cease to exist in the vegetable world, because that many others emit a fragrance whose elements are the same as those of the sweets which it breathes, or display tints due to the same colours that afford its glorious hues? And who would say that this part of the glorious system of the means of grace is unnecessary? Let this Ordinance be observed, that evil, as a corrupt thing under the atmosphere and sun of heaven, may perish before it; that many may enjoy the blessedness of the inheritance of the saints; and that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant. FOOTNOTES: [792] Appendix D.

APPENDIX.

A. Every species of co-operation with the appointed functionaries of an immoral and unscriptural civil government, may not imply the recognition of that power to be the ordinance of God. To co-operate with these for example, in the execution of justice, is not necessarily to acknowledge that the power is of God. If the forms of procedure be in themselves proper, and the laws just, the carrying of them into effect for the good of society and for the glory of God, is in itself right. But it is one thing to say that justice should be done in society, and also to aid in the execution of it, and it may be quite another to acknowledge that the civil rulers of the given society have a right to do so in virtue of authority from God. Justice should be done, by a civil power -- agreeable to God's preceptive will. If no such power exist, the community are to blame for not originating such a power. And if justice be not done, they are also culpable; -- because of the want of such a power justice is not to be undone. Were such to be allowed, the community would be chargeable with the crimes of both remaining without a proper civil power and permitting evil to be committed with impunity. To co-operate with an unlawful civil power in doing justice, is therefore to do less evil, yea more good, than would be done by refraining from co-operation. The swearing of an oath by those called to testify to truth, or to act in the weighing of evidence, as on a jury, in order to the execution of justice, does not necessarily imply a recognition of the authority that calls to do so, to be of God. It is the using of a lawful means of giving assurance regarding truth necessary to be ascertained, but does not essentially imply that the claims of those exercising power to the use of that power, are good. A lawful constituted authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, has a right to claim an oath for proper purposes. But an oath may be sworn to others besides. It may be sworn for a good end, even to those whose pretensions to power and authority may not be well founded, but not as if they had a right to claim it, but merely because of the giving of it being in itself right. The oath may be sworn for a proper purpose before an individual who has correct impressions of its sacredness, even though he may be acting for an unwarranted civil authority. It is not easy to conceive, however, how one could swear an oath to an infidel, or to any other who regards not the oath as a solemn religious engagement. The giving of an oath before a judge and jury, or on a jury before a judge, under an unscriptural government, does not include the recognition of those as using a power deputed by God; but contemplates them as Christian men, though mistaken as to their power, yet doing what is in itself right, and which, if done by those possessed of authority from God, would be done in all things, though imperfectly, according to his will. To swear to do justice, is not to swear an oath of allegiance to an evil power. The one is a duty; the other would be sinful. It is because that no better means of doing justice can be employed, that oaths to do justice in the said circumstances should be given. For the assumption of power which does not belong to them, those who make it, but not those who even make oath before them to do what is in itself good, while they protest against their unlawful claims to authority, are responsible. A civil government must either be the ordinance of God or not. It cannot be viewed as acting, in some things, in the character of a power ordained of God, but in others, as not possessed of authority from him. A good government, like a true Christian, often does what is evil. But a bad government, like the wicked, even though it do what in itself is right, cannot be viewed as in possession of

privilege from God, or as acting for his glory. Yet the inflicting of a just penalty, even by an unwarranted power, is not to be reckoned as injustice, or -- if a capital punishment, as murder. It is the claim to power which is made, but not the accomplishment of the deed of retribution -- which in itself is just, that is faulty. Take for example the execution of justice on a murderer. Murder is not the crime to be laid to the charge of those who, acting for or under the authority of a power that is not of God, on proper evidence put to death one who has unjustly taken away the life of a fellow creature. If a government not authorised by God, after due investigation put a murderer to death, they do what in itself is right; but if they do so as those who in their incorporate capacity act for Him, they do what is wrong. By the deed they are chargeable with the sin, not of murder, but of assuming to themselves a designation which they do not sustain. No man in society should take upon him by himself to execute justice for the shedding of blood, whether he live under a good or a bad government, except the government refuse to defend the lives and properties of subjects, and even as some, nay, many governments have been, be chargeable with oppression and bloodshed. The reason why none should so interfere, is, that it is likely that the whole community would execute justice with more propriety than an individual. Yea, a whole community under an improper civil power should not of itself execute justice, if there were an accessible power apart from or connected with it, in which were lodged authority from God. Those, however, who would in such circumstances claim that power, may often be looked upon with a jealous eye, as in general they would be found least entitled to the possession of it. Those who have most warrantably declaimed against evil constitutions, have been among those who were least given to assume to themselves a title to power; -- they have been found to defend themselves, but not rashly to usurp authority. If there were but one individual who could avenge bloodshed, and were his mind in a proper state, he would seem to have a call addressed to him to do so; failing to attend to it he would err. Were a community under an authority not of God, to fail to execute justice, they would be chargeable with two sins, -- that of letting the murderer go unpunished, and that of not, in recognising the law of God, forming a constitution or government gifted with power lawfully to proceed against the criminal. Thus were either an individual or a community to avenge bloodshed, a lawful power being wanting, such would not be chargeable with murder. Were a community to do so without acknowledging themselves to be possessed of authority from God, they would be chargeable with sin, for not endeavouring to constitute an authority having attributes which He would recognise as in accordance with his will. Were they to do so as if possessed of that authority, while destitute of it, they would be chargeable with the sin essentially of usurpation; and with them, because of this, others acting so as to support their claim, would be guilty. B. Reflecting on the descending obligations of the British Covenants on the people of these lands, by the current of an eventful providence we are conducted to the consideration of the circumstances of the "Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." The events in the National Church of Scotland which have led to the separation from her communion, of the Protestant Church, and finally, the disruption itself, cannot be forgotten. The struggle that was maintained for the rights of the Christian people, for the independence of Christ's house, and the glory of the Redeemer as King of Zion and King of kings, is worthy of the most cordial approbation. With those who were employed as the willing and honoured instruments of emancipating the Church from the tyrannical restraints under which she so long groaned, and effected a dissolution of a connection with the State, fraught with so many evils as have been long felt by her, there ought to be but one feeling of Christian sympathy. A testimony for the truth, calmly, and effectively, and devotedly, has been borne by her, to her lasting

honour. The Church has declared that the government has acted a tyrannical and wicked part by interfering with her privileges; and the people of Scotland have practically and memorably said, that it is sinful for the Church of Christ to be connected with an anti-christian State. The government of the land has been baffled. The rulers were not overborne by the voices of a majority in either House of Parliament; but by a calm and efficient resolution, we do not say, becoming the Scottish people, but worthy of Christian men, they have been defeated; and that would be wise policy, indeed, which would remove the shame of their overthrow. For the steps of reformation taken, for the noble sacrifice made by those who gave up their emoluments that they might be faithful, commendation is due; and that the Free Protestant Church may come to maintain, to its utmost extent, not merely doctrinally but practically, the testimony of Christ, is ardently to be desired. The accession of a great proportion of the youth preparing for the ministry, and of those engaged as itinerants in preaching the gospel, is a token for good; and the devotedness of the people of Scotland on the great emergency, in adhering to the "Protesting Church," and in yielding of their substance for it, is peculiarly cheering to the mind. The countenance given by those of the Presbyterian Church in England who were present, was encouraging and estimable, as it might have been expected; while the approving sentiments expressed by those from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in their circumstances, were truly honouring to them, and to that community. It was becoming others that by deputation they testified to their approval of the step taken at the great disruption. And, though what is here said is asserted on individual responsibility alone, it is declared, without fear of being in error, that another Community in the land -- who consider it to be their duty to adhere to the whole of the Second Reformation, and to the testimonies of the martyrs who suffered after it, though not present by representation at the memorable secession, in order to signify their approbation, do rejoice at the step, and trust to see it followed by other procedures alike faithful. The importance of the effects that are possible to follow from the disruption, demands the exercise of great wisdom on the part of the Protestant Church. Not less than the power to originate the great movement that has taken place, is requisite ability to direct it aright. The people of Scotland, like a mighty mass, have been brought to act; much depends upon the plan according to which the moving body may be made to bear. The future interests of the land, under Providence, would seem to be in the hands of those who now guide the ecclesiastical movement. The destinies of Scotland were in the hands of a few in days of peril. They were not unworthy of the trust committed to them. By the adoption of the same principles which the martyrs practically illustrated, be it the honour of the Protestant Church, free from persecution, if the Lord will, but still faithfully, though called to suffering, to transmit to posterity a legacy, ennobling and beneficial as that which those left. It is necessary that the Church of Christ should proceed on principles laid down in the Divine word. When it does not do this, it acts not in character, but gives the enemies of the truth occasion to load it with reproach. The "Free Presbyterian Church" sustaining, as we conceive, the character of a Church of Christ, should do so in all things. It is Presbyterian, and is therefore called to base its attachment to that form of government, on the principle, that it is of Divine right. To maintain, or admit, that other forms of Church government are of Divine original, is to surrender a scriptural truth, to act as if facts in providence could modify the institutes of that society which is essentially spiritual, to become liable to inefficiency in the maintenance of the truth, and to give scope to the unworthy suggestions of those who would contend, that what right even the Church maintains on an improper ground, other communities besides could claim as well as she. The state has no right to

claim the prerogatives of the Church, nor to dictate to her the form of her government, or prescribe for her in other matters. The State has no right to say to the Church, that, because she does not hold presbyterianism on proper grounds, therefore it might declare that her government shall be prelatic. But, by holding Presbytery as alone of Divine origin, she would most effectively discountenance such unjust claims. The Church, by a noble act, has thrown off the fetters of erastianism that had for so long been fastened upon her; let her act so as to be on her guard against every encroachment of that nature that might be proposed by the civil power. The struggle for the independence of the Church was resolutely maintained, and the yoke of those who attempted to diminish it, was dutifully thrown off. Let not any overture hereafter, ranging between complete submission to the State, and the mere use of the veto, on the part of the civil power, upon the appointment of a given minister to a congregation, though made by the State in the most attractive manner, be entertained. But let it be practically shown, as well as solemnly resolved by her, that she recognises only one Master -- who is in heaven. During the last few years, an arduous struggle has been maintained, in order to secure, as far as possible, the rights of the christian people. Now, it is possible to put the people in possession of the unfettered privilege of electing their own office-bearers; but to put any other party in possession of that right, would be to do those injury. The claims of lay patrons are without foundation in the word of God. The claims of presbyteries, or any other parties than the members of the Church themselves, are alike unsupported there. In order that the Church may act in character, her procedure in regard to the election of pastors and elders, must be scriptural. It is true, that whether the Church act scripturally or not, no civil class are warranted to usurp her rights; yet, were her procedure not according to the law of Christ, she would act undutifully, and would give advantage to enemies to declaim against her, to the diminution of her influence for good. Though the Church were to declare for The Call, merely on the principle of expediency, but not as if according to the will of Christ, the State would have no proper ground for affirming, that therefore it had a right to use patronage -- its principle of expediency; for a right of the Church can never be transferred to a civil power; yet the Church, by not legislating on scriptural grounds, could not act in such a manner as to deserve the recognition of her by the people as proceeding according to her true character. The last few years have added to the Church of Scotland a high proportion of godly and devoted ministers. Errors, that would have been winked at in previous periods by some in her Assemblies, have been brought to light, and the laws of Christ's house have been brought to bear on those who maintained them. Purity of doctrine was a jewel among the late reforming majority. The orthodoxy of the ministers in general of the separated Church is undoubted. She adheres to the Confession of Faith. It is requisite that she direct a testimony against unsound doctrine, including the errors prevalent now in Churches called Christian; and that whatever scheme of co-operation with other Christians she may embark in, may be consistent with her regard for the truth. The Headship of Christ over the nations is maintained by the Protestant Church; on that is founded the principle of the establishment of religion by the civil magistrate; that, was recognised in the late contentings with the civil powers, and especially in the second series of resolutions made at the Convocation of November; on that principle these resolutions were carried into effect at the late disruption; -- it is desirable that, in the progress of the newly modelled community the principle be properly applied. The important application of that, which is now necessary, is the lifting up of a protest against the civil power, as immoral and unscriptural, and a consistent course of procedure in consequence. What justifies the disruption requires a dissent from the civil power, as a power not

of God. That State with which the Church could not be connected, so as to enjoy her own privileges, cannot be the ordinance of God. If the government has been guilty of violating the rights and privileges of the Presbyterians of Scotland, has it not been acting in opposition to the will of Christ, and setting at nought his authority? Were the civil government possessed of less influence than it really has, men would likely be disposed to esteem it more agreeably to its true character, than they really are. Is an individual denounced for an act of injustice or oppression? And why should not a government? Even is a government, acting for the time being, worthy of being denounced for some things, and yet worthy of approbation, as if acting for God? Yea, is that constitution sound which admits of tyranny over the Church -- injustice of a highly aggravated character, to be cordially supported by those who complain of its oppression? The same pretensions to power over her, that were put forth in acts of parliament,[793] when the Church was disorganised, and for acting on which the house of the Stuarts was driven from the British throne, have been of late made in the councils of the nation. Can the power that would do so be approved? Why should any cling to an oath of allegiance to a power that, in this particular, as well as in others, is anti-christian? All have reason to beware of the attractions of such civil powers. What is it that gives evil governments their influence, but their power to terrify, and their wealth and honours to seduce? In one case, the ministers of the Community to whom we now direct our thoughts, have nobly cast the latter aside. It becomes her to act in other matters consistently with this. There are those who would overthrow the institutions of the land, that are noble, and plant anarchy where oppression flourished. But her principles, yea, the principles of all who hold the truth, are the reverse. These would wish that good men in power should be brought to see what is duty. They would not refuse to obey laws that in themselves are right. But they should not do so from a regard to the authorities in the land that enjoin them. If the present system of civil government cannot stand of itself, why should the people of Scotland, escaped from the trammels of tyranny, pledge themselves to support it? They ought not to bring in revolution, but neither ought they to continue, by adhering to their oath of allegiance, to give countenance to an unlawful civil power. Let their determination, and that of their brethren in the other parts of the empire, prove itself to be of a nobler order than what will be abated by unfavourable circumstances. Let it be put forth in leading to abstain from countenancing an evil constitution, and to raise above the fear of consequences. Arising from Christian principle, deep hid in the breast, let it give an energy which opposition would only increase, and which death itself would not subdue, but hand over with increased vigour to others. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland should recognise the attainments made during the Second Reformation. Whatever steps of real reformation have been taken of late, have been in accordance with some of these. It is desirable that all of them should now be adopted. Tho' the Revolution Settlement suffered not the Church to advance beyond the Reformation made at 1592. Now that that compact has been abandoned by the Church herself, let her occupy fully the ground on which the Reformers, between 1638 and 1649, so honourably stood. By some laws of the land, indeed, many of these are condemned. But these laws are monuments of the tyranny and oppression of the government that made them. The Revolution Church of Scotland never recognised, as a whole the brightest attainments made in the history of the Church in the land. During the late contest, indeed, the Act of Assembly, 1647, adopting the Westminster Confession, has been pleaded as the Act of the Church of Scotland at the Revolution, which had been made by the same Church before. But though that could not have been properly maintained without admitting that other laws of the former era, not ecclesiastically

repealed, were also the law of the Church at the latter,[794] let the Church, now that she is completely unfettered, by ecclesiastical legislation solemnly adopt all the distinct attainments of the second reforming period, and thus serve herself an heir to the highest privileges enjoyed by the Church in our land. It is good that the Free Presbyterian Church contemplates the erection of a Theological Seminary for a rising ministry. May it be called into operation, and greatly prosper; and may her youth -- kept from the chilling influences of error, evangelically instructed and eminently pious, prove the means of diffusing widely the truth, in consequence of a momentous reformation. And, above all, it is necessary that the Free Presbyterian Church should have regard to explicit solemn covenant obligations. The vows of God, made by the Church in this land, are upon her; these she ought to acknowledge, and to endeavour to renew. Though these covenants were condemned by the laws of the land, they are still binding. The act of Queen Anne was against the Revolution Settlement, and, therefore, the reforming party in the Church of late declared that it was unconstitutional. The Revolution Settlement itself was based upon the overthrow of the whole of the Covenanted Reformation; and no more than the act of Queen Anne, regarding patronage, ought the sinful parts of it to be regarded. Popery exists, and Prelacy, absorbing Popery, exists. Would that the Free Presbyterian Church, by recognising the binding obligation of the covenants, National, and Solemn League and Covenant, and by adding to the binding obligations of these, engagements suited to the times, were to go forth in opposition to all evil, in all the gracious vigour of a faithful witness for the whole truth.[795] The movement that has been lately made, contemplated in its highest character, appears the work of God. By a wondrous providence he has shut up the Church to a course of duty, and has plainly indicated the necessity to persevere in it. On the other hand, contemplating the human instrumentality called to accomplish an estimable work, and approving much of the agents immediately employed, we should not be forgetful of the corresponding efforts made in time past, even in the National Church. Our heart is to the memory of such as had in their view the objects lately contended for, and in a day when the rights of the people were trampled on without remorse, willingly lifted the voice in the Assembly against patronage, and otherwise laboured for the removal of its flagrant enormities. There was good principle in the National Church, but evil caused much of it to be unseen, though some of it remained manifest. Gold may be dissolved by a compound acid, and for a time may cease to be observed, but not beyond the power of re-appearing. The gold cannot be decomposed: let a test be added, and the indestructible ore will re-appear. By a powerful solvent the noble principle in the National Church became nearly all invisible, though some of it could not be dissolved. A test has been added, and the whole has been precipitated, and nearly all of it has come out.[796] The sound principle and piety in the Church were the gold; moderatism, including erastianism and patronage, was the solvent; a wondrous providence applied a test; and the gold of true excellence shines forth. Let it be united by Covenanting, into one glorious mass, and be exhibited for beauty, and glory to God. Let the Free Presbyterian Church, remembering the past, wisely look forward to the future; and, reflecting upon what may be the effect of its procedure on other nations of the world, now act so as to present an example worthy the imitation of all. And it is humbly presumed that the standing of the Church, in the days of her greatest glory and efficiency in the land, in preference to every other, claims her adoption. The position, ecclesiastical and civil, of the friends and followers of the Second Reformation, like an ancient fortress held by comparatively few, but venerable from its eventful history, remarkable amid the ruin which time has laid around it, and displaying a massive grandeur as it rests on its broad and solid

foundations, which had, during periods not very remote, been contemplated more as an affecting memorial of the past, than as a strength which should be available in time to come, has of late, while tyranny made progress, been somewhat approached, as it stands begirt with its gigantic bulwarks, surmounted with the banner of the Covenant, manifestly high above all other means of defending the Church; and it faithfully promises a vantage-ground, noble from its commanding altitude, and unassailable within its high defences, to which all in the land who love the truth should come, that to whatever outward peril they might be brought, they might maintain their christian warfare, to their continued honour and final triumph. C. In order to suggest a good basis, whereon all in the land who hold the truth might unite in a capacity more or less intimate, the following observations are humbly presented for consideration. The friends of truth cannot justifiably persevere in supporting the British Constitution as the ordinance of God. The government, in order to its dignity and efficiency, proclaims itself to be worthy of cordial support. The claims which it puts forth may not be regarded by itself as of a very high order, yet it views them as indisputable; and even, though manifestly not an ordinance of God nor friendly to true religion, it seeks to strengthen its authority by availing itself of the use of a most sacred institution in religion -- the oath. The government itself, though for certain ends it applies the oath, is not scriptural. And why should good men claim for it the character of an ordinance of God, to which even of itself it does not aspire? What right has an unscriptural civil power, any more than a corrupt ecclesiastical constitution, -- what right has the British Constitution, any more than the Church of Rome, to claim for itself in things civil, the title, such as that usurps in things ecclesiastical, of an ordinance of God? Nay, the very fact of a government in gospel times supporting Popery, must cut it off from the title of a power delegated from above. It is simply because bad civil governments have great influence, that they lead men to pay them a deference which they would not yield to other systems charged with their evils. Why is an evil government at one period viewed as the ordinance of God, and at another as worthy of being overthrown? Does the character of such change by the accumulation or the long pressure of the very same -- not new, evils? In the former case, the people who approve, misapprehend its true character, while they are able to endure; in the latter, they see it clearly, oppression having opened their eyes. Such were the governments of Charles II. and James VII. Though some approved of them as the ordinance of God, yet, at the Revolution, the nation declared that they were not. And consequently they should never have been acknowledged as such. Men acknowledge the British Constitution at present as a power ordained of God. If Puseyism go on till the Protestantism of the empire be swamped in an inundation of Popery, the nation will form right views of the subject. May they soon entertain such views, lest such an event arrive! The friends of truth under the present government should say to it in such a manner as not to be misunderstood, -- We will obey your good laws, because they are good; but by oaths or otherwise we will not recognise your authority as of God. -- We will co-operate with you in doing what is good; but so long as you continue to support evil, we cannot swear allegiance to you. Abolish all oaths of allegiance, and we will act along with you in every right matter. -- Were all those who hold the truth in the united kingdom to do so, would not the request extort regard? And might not rulers see the propriety of yielding? Were such oaths to the present government abolished, then those who love the truth might enter parliament, and act without being responsible for the evils of the civil constitution and of the administration, and at the same time lead to essential political reformation; and the people could with a clear conscience return to parliament such men as might be possessed of proper character, and be of known

attachment to the truth. Were a door opened in this manner for men consistently uttering their voice in the councils of the nation, then means should be assiduously used, on the part of the people and on the part of their representatives, for scripturally reforming the State, and for giving to true religion that external countenance and support which is due to it. The government would not act a weak part in conceding the abolition of the oath in the said cases. It would rather thereby attach to the support of what is good in it, men who would be equally at least with all others, amenable to every good law, but bound to duty by ties far stronger than those which human laws themselves could fasten. A good government should maintain the oath; but a government such as the British, ought not to claim it for the purpose of securing allegiance. That government seems at present disposed to concede the abolition of that oath to the Catholics of Ireland. Why should not the friends of truth in the empire, strive for the abolition of the oaths of allegiance sworn by themselves, in using which they, directly or indirectly, support what is evil, while Catholics are unwilling to swear, because, that by swearing they are in some measure prevented from giving scope to their own cause? Even in order to abolish these oaths, the going into parliament by swearing any of them, cannot be recommended. But since legislators in either house, having sworn oaths of allegiance -- even not justifiable, are in possession of privileges, for the time being, of which the Legislature cannot deprive them, let such have put into their hands, memorials on the subject, by the people, and let them use their privilege in order to gain their object. It does not appear how any one can act dutifully by remaining in parliament, except in endeavouring to carry into effect this measure. But should Popery continue to make progress, as it has done of late, and receive more countenance from the civil power, the friends of truth would find it difficult, in any way to co-operate with the government, but would be urged to take higher ground, in opposition to error, or even tyranny, than they have in general lately taken. They may even have to confederate against powers that would seek to rob them of their christian privileges -- wherewith the Lord Jesus has gifted them. Should they have to engage in a struggle for these, let their efforts be made without hesitation or wavering. Let their minds be wholly devoted. Under the influence of that faith which makes humble, but also enables to do all things in the strength of Christ, let them enter on duty. Having taken up their position, as if bound by the adamant chain of necessity, yet free as the orbs of heaven -- under the influence of gravity, let them, cordially engaged to one another, occupy that ground, there to stand or fall together. Let there be taken by them the calm and noble resolution, which knows not to fail; which fear cannot agitate, nor outward evils diminish; which peril and distress would only display in all its mighty strength; which, immovable as the pillars of heaven, stedfast in the midst of opposition, as the summit of the mountain on which the thunderbolts are expended in vain, would sustain undismayed the assault of every foe; which though pressed to the utmost would not desert the field; but which, though like the warrior, black and weary through the toil of conflict, it might be misrepresented or not recognised, would at some era, more or less remote, shine forth in the glory of victory, to be celebrated and employed for good in all time to come.

D. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has for some time had in view the performance of the duty of Covenanting in her social capacity. There are the most abundant reasons why the object should be more and more steadily contemplated, till it be attained. We profess that Covenanting is a duty. We have not for a length of time engaged socially in the formal discharge of it. We acknowledge ourselves to be bound by the obligations of the Church of God in past times, especially of his Church in these lands; and should view ourselves, as by these obligations bound to the duty. An example should be set by us to others who do not entertain the

same views of the importance of the duty that we do. The events of the age are arousing. Many are making efforts for the maintenance of the truth. The enemies of true religion are on the alert. Besides, within the last few years, many, some of whom, we should trust, love the truth, though their views of parts of it would seem to be inadequate, have acted as if men become engaged to a system of conduct only when they promise to follow it; and have virtually acted as if their own doings could bind them to a given course. Be it ours, by Covenanting to testify practically, that we feel bound to pledge ourselves to the service of God, not by caprice, but according to his law, -- commanding to vow, and finding those who enter into covenant bound by his authority through their own deed. Let us not be undecided. There is duty incumbent on us which we cannot devolve on others. Let us be active, lest even the tide of liberalism, like a refluent wave, bring society back to a sea of trouble, before the glorious work of Covenanting which will be performed in future times will be begun, and we who should have used direct means to lead to it will be dishonoured. That some are engaged in making reformation, is no reason why we should not be diligent. We have our duty to perform; and in being most active ourselves, we would most heartily show that we approve of the faithful exertions of these others. Our duties are peculiar. If we make no progress, we encourage not the movements for good, of society around us. While we rejoice to think of many maintaining truth, we also ought to advance to duty. We would account it incumbent on us to stand steadfastly by the side of all the lovers of true godliness in the nation, in defending the interests of truth and righteousness. By doing the service incumbent on us at present, we would most completely take means to lead to union of purpose and exertion, the most effective. We ought not to anticipate the good that may be done by others in such a manner as to suppose, that little will be required at our hands. Whatever step of obedience we take will aid in encouraging others; but, wherein we may now fail to advance, when victory will be complete, we will, like a squadron on the field, waiting for the success or aid of a fellow-battalion, fail of attaining to the true honour that will be shared in the triumph of truth. FOOTNOTES:[793] Of the years 1661, 1662.[794] See a valuable pamphlet, entitled, "The Revolution Settlement considered in reference to the independence and present position of the Church of Scotland." Glasgow: 1840.[795] For a luminous view of what would seem to be the Church's duty at present, we refer to an article in the "Scottish Presbyterian" for May, 1843, entitled, "Friendly Hints to the projected Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." [796] On the subject of the duty of those who still abide by the Establishment, see three powerful and seasonable discourses, entitled, "Come out and be separate," by the Rev. Dr. Bates. Glasgow, 1843.

ERRATA.

Page 145, line 12, for "requires," read "require." Page 161, line 21, before "will persevere, &c.," put "that." Page 174, line 14, for "unrevealed," read "revealed." Page 198, line 17, for "even," read "view"; line 18, for "are," read "as." Page 205, line 11, for "share," read "shun." Page 237, line 17, for "visitors," read "writers." Page 340, line 20, for "his," read "their." Transcriber's Notes: Added footnote marker 637 after:

"four living creatures" of the New Added footnote marker 641 after:

for a light of the Gentiles." Removed unnecessary closing quotation mark after:

he might have the pre-eminence. Added closing quotation mark after:

sacrifices God is well pleased. Corrected "Jos" to "Job" in footnote 412. The Errata listed above have been corrected in the text, except for "requires," which does not occur in the text as indicated.

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