

# THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION Chapter 8 Its Arrangement-Continued

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## Transcript

### THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION

#### Chapter 8

#### Its Arrangement-Continued

Upon the Son's cheerful acceptance of the terms proposed to Him concerning the federal undertaking He was to engage in, the Father in turn bound Himself to do certain things for and unto the Son. This it was which constituted the very essence of that compact which was made by Them, for a covenant is an agreement between two parties who come under mutual engagements. Something is to be done by one party, in consequence of which the other party binds himself to do another thing in return. As there must be two parties to a covenant, so there must be two parts in a covenant—a condition and a promise. It is the performing of the condition or terms of the covenant—the work or service specified—which gives the first party the right to the promised reward. Having already shown what Christ consented to do, we turn now to consider what the Father promised to bestow. First, He agreed to make all needful preparations for the incarnation of His Son. Second, to give Him all requisite assistance in the performing of His work. Third, to bestow upon Him a meet reward. The promise to make all needful preparation for the incarnation of His Son comprehended the whole of the Father's providences or governance of this world from the creation of man until Christ began His public ministry: "My Father works until this time, and (now) I work" (John 5:17). The Father's "work" included the ordering of human history, and particularly His dealings with Abraham and his descendants and the separation of Israel from the rest of the nations, for it was from Israel that Christ, according to the flesh, would issue. The Father's "work" included the giving of a written revelation, in which the covenant was made known and the advent of His Son promised, so that an expectation of His appearing was created and a foundation was laid for His mission. The Father's "work" also involved the "preparation of a body" for His Son, which was accomplished by the miracle of the virgin birth. When "the fullness of time was come—when all the necessary preparations were completed—God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). The Father promised to give His Son all requisite help for the performing of His work. First, in order for the discharge of His mediatorial office there was that which fitted Him to it. "There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding and spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:1, 2). Upon which the Puritan Charnock said, "All the gifts of the Spirit should reside in Him as in a proper habitation, perpetually.

The human nature being a creature could not beautify and enrich itself with needful gifts. This promise of the Spirit was therefore necessary. His humanity could not else have performed the work it was designed for. So that the habitual holiness residing in the humanity of Christ was a fruit of this eternal covenant. Though the Divine nature of Christ, by virtue of its union, might sanctify the human nature, yet the Spirit was promised Him because it is His proper office to confer those gifts which are necessary for any undertaking in the world; and the personal operations of the Trinity do not interfere. It might also be because every person in the Trinity should plainly have a distinct hand in our redemption." The Father, then, furnished and equipped Christ for His arduous work by a plentiful effusion of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus He declared "Behold My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect in whom My soul delights: I have put My Spirit upon Him" (Isa. 42:1,2). Those promises were fulfilled at His baptism, when the Spirit descended upon Him (Matthew 3:16), for it was then that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). This was freely owned by the Saviour Himself, for in the synagogue He read "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" and then declared "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18,21). So too we find Him acknowledging "I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:27). Second, the Father promised to invest His Son with a threefold office. In order to the saving of His people it was most requisite that whatever Christ did He should act by the authority of the Father, by a commission under the broad seal of Heaven. Accordingly He said "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren" (Deut. 18:15,18 and see Acts 3:22). Christ did not run without being sent. It was God who "anointed Him to preach." Again, "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest (He did not intrude Himself into that office), but He that said unto Him, You are My Son" (Heb. 5:5); Christ was "made a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20). So also God the Father invested Him with the royal office: "yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2:6). "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper" (Jer. 23:5), for the "the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand" (John 3:35); and therefore has He made Him "higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27). Third, the Father promised Christ strength, support and protection to execute the great work of redemption. His undertaking would be attended with such difficulties that creature power, though unimpaired by sin, would have been quite inadequate for it. It was to be performed in human nature, and that had failed in a much easier task, even when possessed of untainted innocence. Therefore did the Father assure Him of help and succor, to carry Him through all the obstacles and dangers, trials and opposition He would meet with. "Behold My Servant whom I uphold. . . I the Lord have called You in righteousness and will hold Your hand and keep You, and give You for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1,6). "The work of redemption was so high and so hard that it would have broken the hearts and the backs of all the glorious angels and mighty men on earth had they entered on it; therefore the Father engaged Himself to stand close to Jesus Christ and mightily assist and strengthen Him in all His mediatorial administrations" (Thos. Brooks, Puritan). Christ is said to be "The Son of man whom You made strong for Yourself" (Ps. 80:17), for He had sworn "My arm also shall strengthen Him" (Ps. 89:21). It is blessed to see how that the Redeemer, in the days of His flesh, acknowledged these promises. "I was cast upon You from the womb, You are My God from My mother's belly" (Ps. 22:10). "Listen O isles unto Me, and hearken your people from afar: The Lord has called Me from the womb, from the bowels of My Mother (see Matthew 1:21, 22) has He made mention of My name. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand has He hid Me" (Isa. 49:1,2). "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned . . . the Lord God will help Me . . . and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isa. 59:4-7). In unshaken confidence, when His enemies were conspiring against

Him and His friends were on the point of forsaking Him, He declared "yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). Those promises of the Father were the support of His soul in the hour of His supreme crisis. His heart laid hold of them, acted faith on them, and received comfort and strength therefrom. "Preserve Me, O God, for in You do I put My trust" (Ps. 16:1), was His petition and plea. "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to those that plucked off the hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting, for the Lord God will help Me therefore shall I not be confounded, and therefore I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isa. 50:6,7). When He was denounced by the Jews and condemned by Pilate, He consoled Himself with the assurance "He is near that justifies Me" (Isa. 50:8). "I have set the Lord always before Me: because He is at My right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in hope, for You will not leave My soul in Sheol, neither will You suffer Your holy One to see corruption. You will show Me the path of life" (Ps. 16:8-11). In the prospect of death, He rejoiced in the sure knowledge of resurrection. Fourth, the Father promised Him a glorious reward. First, a glory for Himself personally, as the God-man Mediator. As He was to endure the cross, so He was also to receive the crown. The enduring of the cross was a covenant engagement on His part, and the bestowing of the crown was a covenant engagement on the Father's part. That was plainly borne witness to by His prophets, for the Spirit in them "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." (1 Pet. 1:11). That glory consisted in His being fully invested with His priestly and royal offices. As it was with the type, so with the Antitype. David was anointed incipiently and privately before he slew Goliath (1 Sam. 16:13), but formally and publicly after his victories (2 Sam. 5:13). The antitypical David was indeed "anointed with the Holy Spirit" at the Jordan, but not until after He had triumphed over sin, Satan and the grave, did God anoint Him "with the oil of gladness above His fellows" (Heb. 1:9) and publicly make Him to be "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). "The solemn inauguration into all His offices was after His making reconciliation: making an end of sin, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and thereby shutting up all prophecy and vision, because all the prophecies tended to Him and were accomplished in Him; and then as manifesting Himself the most holy, He was to be anointed—that is, fully invested in all the offices of Prophet, Priest and King (Dan. 9:24). The compact ran thus: Do this, suffer death for the vindication of the honor of My Law, and You shall be a Priest and King forever. He could not, therefore, be solemnly installed till He had performed the condition on His part (for the promise was made to Him considered as Mediator or God-man); then it was that He was advanced, for the ground of His exaltation is pitched wholly upon His sufferings. Therefore God has given Him a glory as a just debt due to the price paid, the sufferings undergone, and the obedience yielded to the mediatory Law" (S. Charnock). Therefore it is that the general assembly of Heaven say with a loud voice "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). Subsidiary to that glorious investiture was the Father's promise to raise Christ from the dead. "He asked life of You, and You gave it Him, even length of days forever and ever" (Ps. 21:5). Beautifully does that link up with Ps. 102:23-27 —quoted by the apostle in Heb. 1:12 as the words of the Father to the Son. In Psalm 102:23, 24 we hear the incarnate Son saying, "He shortened My days: I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days," to which the Father made answer, "Your years are throughout all generations . . . Your years shall have no end" (v. 27). So again, He received assurance "He shall prolong His days!" (Isa. 53:10). The Father made promise that the One who had been bruised by Him and whose soul He had made "an offering for sin" should have a glorious deliverance and should reign in life. It was in fulfillment of such promises as these that "The God of peace (the reconciled One) brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). In like manner subsidiary to Christ's glorious investiture of His full priestly and kingly offices was His ascension, for though He was born King and acted as Priest at the

cross when He "offered Himself to God" and "made intercession for the transgressors," yet not until He had completely performed His part of the covenant could He enter into His rightful reward. Accordingly we find promise of ascension made unto Him. It was clearly implied in "I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27). It was revealed in "Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His Holy Place?" answered by "Lift up your heads O you gates and be lifted up you everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in" (Ps. 24:3,7). It was plainly announced in "You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive" (Ps. 68:18). It was such promises as these the Saviour had in mind when He said "Ought not Christ to have suffered and to enter into His glory" (Luke 24:26). "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted and extolled, and by very high" (Isa. 52:13). The 53rd of Isaiah—that wondrous chapter in which we have so solemnly, so strikingly, and so evangelically depicted, the vicarious sufferings of Christ—closes with that blessed promise of the Father: "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He has poured out His soul unto death" (v. 12). The similitude used there is taken from the honoring of military conquerors who, having in fight defeated and routed their enemies, gained a great victory and in consequence are suitably rewarded by their princes, being exalted by them and given a share of the spoils or fruits of war. It was as though God the Father said: This My incarnate and successful Son shall receive such honor, glory, renown and riches after His toils and conflicts as are meet for His triumphs. He shall have a glorious recompense for all His humiliation and sufferings at the hands of men, for His opposition from Satan, and for His enduring of My wrath. For nothing less is due Him. The fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12 is seen in Ephesians 4:8, Colossians 2:15, etc. "The obedience of Christ bears to these blessings not only the relation of antecedent to consequent, but of merit to reward, so that His obedience is the cause: and the condition being fulfilled by virtue of obedience, He has a right to the reward" (H. Witsius—the Dutch Puritan). That is the precise force of the "Wherefore" in the above verse, as it is also in "You love righteousness and hate wickedness, therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows" (Ps. 45:7). It was not only that justice required it, but the covenant fidelity of the Father was involved therein. Therefore His assurance "My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with Him, and in My name shall His horn be exalted" (Ps. 89:24). Thus also the N. T., Christ "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:8,9). It was Christ's meriting the reward for Himself which was the ground of His meriting life and glory for us. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). That was the whole burden or theme of Peter's Pentecostal sermon, the grand truth proclaimed therein and enforced by Scripture: that He whom the Jews had vilified God had glorified. Having faithfully fulfilled the terms of the everlasting covenant, the Saviour was elevated to dominion and empire over the world. God's exaltation of Him in His human nature to His own right hand (v. 33) was a full confirmation and demonstration of what He had acquired by His death. He made Him "both Lord and Christ," seating "Messiah the Prince" (Dan. 9:25) upon the throne of the universe. This is an economical Lordship, a dispensation committed to Him as God-man by the Father—just as He has "given Him authority to execute judgment also" (John 5:27). The One whom His enemies crowned with thorns God has "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). He must be received by us as "Lord" before we can have Him for our "Christ." He must have the throne of our hearts if we are to receive His benefits. It was promised Christ that "He should have dominion from sea to sea and from river unto the ends of the earth. . . yea all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him that has no helper" (Ps. 72:8, 11, 12). All of this in consequence of, "The Lord (the Father) said unto My Lord, Sit You at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool . . . The Lord has sworn and will not repent, You are a

Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:1, 4); that is, a royal Priest—"He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6:13). A regal inheritance was assured Him. Not only has He acquired the mundane inheritance forfeited by the first Adam, but as the risen Redeemer declared, "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18), for the Father "has appointed (Him) Heir of all things," so that now He is "upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:2,3), wielding the sceptre or universal dominion. The "government" is upon "His shoulder" (Isa. 9:6). It was promised that a blessed harvest should crown His undertaking, that He should reap the fruit of His sufferings. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10). What that signifies is intimated in such passages as the following: "I will preserve You and give You for a covenant of the people to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, that You may say to the prisoners, Go forth" (Isa. 49:8,9). "Behold You shall call a nation that You know not and nations that know not You shall turn unto You, because of the Lord Your God, and the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified You" (Isa. 55:5). The Gentiles shall come to Your light and kings to the brightness of Your rising (Isa. 60:3). To the One who came forth from Bethlehem it was promised "He shall be great unto the ends of the earth" (Micah 5:2, 4). How fully these promises have yet been fulfilled or how much longer human history must yet continue we do not profess to know, but even now "angels and authorities and powers" are "subject unto Him" (1 Pet. 3:22).

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