

The Messianic Covenant

by A.W. Pink

A.W. Pink's sermon explores the significance of the Messianic Covenant and the role of prophecy in shaping the expectations of God's people regarding the coming Messiah.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:15, James 1:13, James 4:7, 1 Peter 1:6

Topics: "Temptation", "Sanctification"

Description

Greek Word Studies, in a sermon titled 'Tempted,' delves into the meaning of 'apeirastos,' emphasizing the concept of being untempted or untried, highlighting the inability to be tempted. The preacher also explores the significance of 'Himself' (autos) in relation to God, underscoring that God never entices to sin but allows tests to refine and mold believers into the image of His Son. While tests can be opportunities for growth or stumbling, James shifts the focus to true temptations to do evil in the current context.

Transcript

I. We have designated this final covenant "the Messianic" rather than "the Christian" or "the New" covenant, partly for the sake of alliteration and partly for the sake of emphasis. Before we consider its special nature and contents, we must first bridge the interval that elapsed between the making of the Davidic covenant and the commencement of the Christian era--an interval of approximately one thousand years. From the times of David a special feature gradually became more prominent in the history of the covenant people. The gift of prophecy, enjoyed by the psalmist, was now more widely diffused than it had been previously, and was conferred in greater fullness and upon a larger number of individuals, who in succession were raised up and in different degrees exercised a most important influence upon the nation of Israel.

This gift of prophecy was by no means a new one. Moses possessed it in a large measure, yet under conditions which separated him from all who followed up to the coming of Christ. With him God spake "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord did he behold" (Num. 12:8). In this respect he was an eminent type of Him that was to come, on whom the prophetic influence rested in unlimited measure: of this God, through Moses, gave intimation when He said, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18,19). To others, during the life of Moses, the gift was communicated, if only for a season. The most striking case

was that of Balaam, a worthless character, who, against his own intentions, was constrained to pronounce blessings on Israel.

In the period that followed we find traces of its bestowment, though only occasionally, and after considerable intervals, until the last of the judges. That eminent person, Samuel, was not only a prophet himself, but on him was conferred the honor of founding schools for young men for the prophetic office. The object of those institutions, so far as we can gather, seems to have been to impart a knowledge of the law to men suitably endowed, fitting them to teach and influence the nation. From what little is recorded of them, we may conclude that those sons of the prophets enjoyed, as circumstances required, special assistance from God in the work to which they were devoted. On David, however, the gift was conferred in unusual measure, the fruit of which appears in his inspired psalms. Several of his contemporaries were similarly endowed. From this period the prophetic element, with some brief intervals, became more prominent and influential in Israel, increasing in the copiousness of its communications till the depression of the house of David during the captivity.

The peculiar work of the prophet has not always been correctly understood. That element in some of them which had respect to the foretelling of future events has attracted undue attention and been magnified out of all proper proportions. This may be accounted for from its striking uniqueness, and the use to which it has been put as an important department of Christian evidence--drawing from it an invincible argument for the divine inspiration of Scripture. Yet this concentration upon the predictive aspect of prophecy has served to create a widespread misconception concerning the nature of the gift itself and the chief design in its exercise. The main purpose of the prophetic office has almost been lost sight of. By many today it is unknown that its leading object contemplated the practical spiritual interests of the people: that the prophets were principally employed in imparting instruction to them, exposing their sins, calling them to repent, setting before them the paths of duty, and in various ways seeking to promote their religious improvement.

Prediction, in the strict sense of the term, occupies a very inconspicuous place in the ministry of Moses, the chief of all the prophets. Some of the more prominent among them--as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha--seem hardly to have uttered any predictions at all. Their business consisted mainly in denouncing the idolatrous practices of the people and in vindicating the claims of God to their homage and service. It is true that in the writings of two or three, predictions largely abound; nevertheless, if they are examined with care it will quickly be seen that their ministry had largely to do with the existing spiritual conditions of those among whom they labored. Take for example Isaiah, who of all the prophets was perhaps most honored with revelations of the future. A cursory investigation will show that foretelling constituted only one portion of the message he delivered. The true idea of the prophet is that of a man raised up to witness for God, His mouthpiece to the people--to rebuke sin, counsel in perplexity, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord.

Even the positive predictions delivered by the prophets, while contemplating the benefit of future generations (by which alone, on their fulfillment they could be fully understood), were subservient to the immediate purposes of their ministry, by affording encouragement and hope unto those who feared God amidst the general disorders and declension of the times in which they lived. This plain view of the case, which numerous and obvious facts support, must be understood in order to gain a correct conception of the prophetic Scriptures in their general structure. On the subject of the covenants, the predictive portions of their writings, as would naturally be expected, have the more direct bearing; yet the practical parts, which deal with the sins and duties of the people, make their own contribution--the practical sections

furnishing many striking illustrations of the previous revelations and giving definiteness to the meaning of many particulars embraced in the covenants.

The didactic and the practical are often strangely mingled. Statements which at first bear on present duty, sometimes insensibly, and at other times more abruptly, pass into representations of the future which startle us, not less by the suddenness of their introduction, than by the vividness of their coloring. All, however, is made strictly subservient to the immediate purpose which the prophets had in view. The intimate blending of these different elements makes it far from easy to separate them in all instances, nor is it necessary to attempt it. As they now stand, they more effectually promoted the end in view in the spiritual improvement of the people. The glowing prospects of the future either supplied an incentive to the discharge of present duty, or ministered to their support under present trial. Still, to the predictions, strictly so called, we must look as the chief means of furnishing the fullest light on the prospective covenant transactions of God with His people.

The nature and extent of the help we shall derive from these intimations of the future will turn, to a large extent, on the mode in which we deal with them. The interpretation of prophecy, in all its principles and results, is a large subject, but a few words are called for here so as to prevent misconception. A slight examination of the prophetic Scriptures is enough to show that their language is not infrequently taken--leaving out of consideration the figures which natural scenery supply--either from past events in the history of Israel or from the sacred institutions and arrangements with which they had long been familiar. And of course this is quite natural when we bear in mind the typical character impressed on the Old Testament dispensation throughout; yea, probably it was necessary as the best means of imparting to the Jewish people an intelligible representation of the future.

The creation of an entirely new nomenclature in literal adaptation to the better things to come, instead of being understood, would only have occasioned perplexity and defeated the object for which the revelation was given. Be this as it may, the fact is certain that in terms peculiar to the theocracy, or descriptive of theocratic events, the revelation of future things was made. In other words, the language of the type is familiarly employed in delineation of the antitype. Thus, for example, "Israel" is the term used in reference to the spiritual seed; "visions and dreams" (the current mode of the divine communications in those times describe the future operations of the Holy Spirit under the gospel dispensation; "David," in like manner, is the name applied again and again to the Messiah, the true Shepherd of Israel; and the events of the future are represented in terms derived from the dispensation then existing. Occasionally express statements are made affirming that the order of things then in being was destined to pass away--as in Jeremiah 3:16; at other times the change impending was as plainly implied.

On this principle, then, these predictions are constructed almost throughout, and on no other can they be correctly interpreted. It was thus that the apostles dealt with them, yet it is sadly overlooked by many of our moderns. A slavish adherence to a literal interpretation which is the survival of a Jewish error--if consistently carried out, necessarily leads to consequences which few are prepared to face, opposed as they are to both the letter and the spirit of the gospel. It is certainly a humiliating proof of human infirmity, even in good men, that at this late date, the principle on which so large a part of the Word is to be interpreted has yet to be settled, and that from the same prophetic statements the most diverse conclusions are derived. Surely it should be apparent that since the literal cannot be fairly applied without eliciting conclusions contradicting apostolic testimony, we are bound to abide by the typical and figurative as the only safe principle.

There is one other misconception against which we must guard. It must not be concluded that because the Messianic predictions are for the most part plain to us, acquainted as we are with the events in which they found their fulfillment, that therefore they must have been equally plain unto those to whom they were first delivered, but from whose times these events were far distant. In dealing with those Scriptures for our own edification, it is our privilege to take advantage of all the light furnished by the New Testament, but in so doing we must not forget that our position is vastly different from that of those amongst whom the prophets exercised their ministry. Take, for instance, the predictions respecting the Messiah--the great subject of the covenant promises. Consider the many references to His lowly condition, His sufferings and death, and then to the triumphant strain in which His exaltation and glory are so largely set forth. Some passages represent Him as a man amongst His fellowmen; others as the mighty God. How perplexing must those representations--apparently so much at variance with each other--have been to the Jews!

Keeping these things in mind, we may now observe that the ministry of the prophets, commencing with David, and, after a break, continuing from Joel onwards, was of considerable value in filling up the truth which, in brief outline, the covenants exhibited, yet leaving much to be still supplied by the actual fulfillment of the promises they contained. No one contributed more to this result than Isaiah. On the one hand, he furnishes the most vivid portrayals of the treatment which the Messiah would receive from His countrymen, and of the nature and severity of the sufferings He was to endure, both at the hands of God and of men, in the accomplishment of His work. On the other hand, he supplies the most blessed testimony to the essential dignity of His person, and the most animating assurances of the extent and glory of His kingdom; and, under highly figurative language, describes the beneficent and peaceful effects of His government and the spiritual results of His reign.

With few exceptions, the rest of the prophets corroborated and supplemented the testimony of Isaiah. The person and work of the Messiah are represented from various angles, the stupendous results of His undertaking depicted under striking imagery, and divine wisdom is clearly evidenced in the phraseology--derived from the religious institutions of the Jews or from events of their history--which is employed to give vividness to their representations. The effects of this must have been to impart to the mass of the people a new and deeper realization of the magnitude of the results involved in the covenants under which they were placed, however perverted their views of the nature of these results may have been; and to awaken in the godly remnant of them expectations of a future immensely surpassing anything yet realized in their history--a future with which, in some mysterious way, their own spiritual life was bound up.

As the earthly prospects of Israel became darker, through the growing corruption of the nation, hastening toward that catastrophe which destroyed their temple, and for a time removed them as captives into a strange land, those prophets who then exercised their ministry were far more explicit in regard to the nature of the great alteration which the appearing of the Messiah would produce and of the blessings which He would dispense. In their hands the future assumed a more precise shape, and the expectations warranted by their language exhibited an expansion far in advance of anything to be found in Scripture. This was just what the circumstances of the time required. One can readily conceive the despondency with which the pious Jews must have looked on the course which events were taking. The idolatrous propensities of the masses, the general immorality which was encouraged by idol worship, the common contempt with which God's servants were treated, the wickedness of their kings, and the frequent invasion of their land by hostile forces, all presaged the dissolution of their state.

When assured that the divine patience was at last exhausted, that the infliction of the oft-threatened punishment was nigh at hand, and that the triumph of their enemies was certain, at what conclusion could they arrive than that for their sins they were forsaken of God, that the covenant was about to be made void, and that all their hopes would soon be buried in the ruin of their country? They might not unreasonably have supposed that the stability of the covenant was dependent upon their obedience, and since that obedience had been withheld, and all the gracious measures taken to reclaim them had failed--since, in the review of their past history, no lesson was so impressively taught as their incurable tendency to sin--they might have concluded that God was absolved from His promise, and that even His righteousness demanded the people should be cut off and left to the ruin which they had so persistently courted, the near approach of which everything seemed to indicate.

Such a despondent condition required special encouragement, and the form which that encouragement assumed deserves particular attention. It consisted in the assurance of a thorough change in the dispensation under which Israel had hitherto been placed, and of the establishment of a new covenant under the immediate administration of the Messiah, the purely spiritual character of which is described in language far more explicit than had hitherto been given. This more glorious constitution of things they were taught was the designed issue of all God's dealings toward them, and to it their hopes were henceforth to be confined. Notwithstanding their present calamities, the continuance of their national existence was assured to them until in due time the new order of things was inaugurated. Could anything be conceived better fitted to kindle the hopes and communicate the richest consolation to the devout portion of the Jews than such an assurance?

II.

In the preceding chapter it was pointed out that, following the times of David, the prophets occupied a more and more prominent place in Israel, and that the primary purpose of their office was a practical one, designed for the good of those to whom they immediately ministered. As the spiritual life of the nation degenerated, the voice of the prophets was heard more frequently--pressing the claims of God, rebuking the people for their sins, and affording comfort to the faithful. It was this third item that we enlarged upon in the closing paragraphs of our last chapter, calling particular attention to the large place given in the communications of the "major" prophets unto things to come. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; for as things went from bad to worse in the earthly kingdom of Israel, God was pleased to grant much fuller revelations concerning the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah.

What has just been pointed out reveals a principle which is of great practical value for our own souls today. The further Israel's religious apostasy advanced and wickedness increased, the more were the godly handful among them taught to look away from the present to the future, to walk by faith and not by sight, to regale their desponding hearts with those covenant blessings which the Messiah would obtain for all His people. It is not necessary to suppose that they fully understood the import of what the prophets set before them; yea, they were far from comprehending the entire truth which they contained. Nevertheless, they must have gathered sufficient from them to relieve their minds from that distressing anxiety which their present circumstances had awakened. Those predictions which more particularly dealt with the new order of things which God promised should yet be ushered in, supply the real key to the interpretation of the numerous predictions regarding the Messiah's work with which they had long been familiar.

Here, then, is the grand lesson for us to heed. Though the present state of Christendom be so deplorable and saddening; though the enemy has come in like a flood, threatening to carry everything before him;

though the voice of the true servant of God be no more heeded today than was the prophets' before the captivity, yet God still has a remnant of His people upon the earth. Heavy indeed are their hearts at the dishonor done to the name of their Lord, at the low state of His cause on earth, at their own spiritual leanness. Yet, while it is meet they should sigh and cry for the abominations in the churches, deplore the wickedness abounding in the world, and penitently confess their own sad failures, nevertheless it is their privilege to look forward unto the grand future which lies before them, to the sure accomplishment of all God's covenant promises. Nor is it necessary that they should understand the order of coming events, or the details of unfulfilled prophecy: sufficient for them that Christ will yet see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, reign till every enemy be placed under His feet, and come again to receive His people unto Himself.

Both the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who exercised their ministry about the same time among different portions of the covenant people, spoke the same language and gave the same assurances, in close connection with the promise of their future reestablishment in their own land. That particular promise was partly accomplished in their return from Babylon, but is fully understood only when viewed in the light of the typical import of the language used. The grand statement found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 is repeated with equal definiteness in chapter 32: "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath: and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely, 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 forever, 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." So again in 33:14-16.

In a similar strain and in terms equally explicit, Ezekiel addresses that portion of the Jews amongst whom he exercised his ministry. "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince amongst them: I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the wild beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing" (34:23-26). And again: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you. . . and cause you to walk in my statutes" (36:25-27).

But the clearest of all of these later communications by the prophets is that furnished in Jeremiah 31:31-34: "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 a 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. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and , every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." On the two main points adverted to by us, namely, the change of the then existing dispensation, and the spiritual nature of that which was to succeed, its testimony is most decisive.

First, we must seek to remove a radical misconception which obtains in certain quarters as to the ones with whom God here promised to make this "new covenant," namely, "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Modern dispensationalists insist that this says just what it means, and means just what it says; and with this I am in hearty accord. Nevertheless, we would point out that it is entirely a matter of interpretation if we are to rightly understand what is said; and this can only be accomplished as the Spirit Himself enlightens our minds. Any method of Bible study, or any system of interpretation (if such it could be called) that renders us self-sufficient, independent of the Holy Spirit, is self-condemned. An unregenerate man, by diligent application and the use of a good concordance, may soon familiarize himself with the letter of Scripture, and persuade himself that because he takes its letter at its face value, he has a good understanding of it; but that is a vastly different thing from a spiritual insight into spiritual things.

The first time the name "Israel" occurs upon the sacred page is in Genesis 32:28, where it was given to Jacob: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou it power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." This is most suggestive and significant: it was not his name by nature, but by grace! In other words, "Israel" stamped Jacob as a regenerate man, thereby intimating that this name primarily pertains to the spiritual seed of Abraham and not to his natural descendants. That this term "Israel" would henceforth possess this double significance (primary and secondary) was more than hinted at here in Genesis 32, for from this point onward the one to whom it was originally given became the man with the double name: sometimes he is referred to as "Jacob," at other times he is designated "Israel," and this according as the flesh or the spirit was uppermost in him.

In what has just been before us there was most accurately anticipated the subsequent usage of the term, for while in many passages "Israel" has reference to the natural descendants through Jacob, in many others it is applied to his mystical seed. Take for example: "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Ps. 73:1). Who are the ones referred to under the name "Israel" in this verse? Obviously it does not refer to the nation of Israel, to all the fleshly descendants of Jacob who were alive at the time Asaph wrote this psalm, for most certainly it could not be said of by far the greater part of them that they were "of a clean heart" (cf. Ps. 12:1). A clean heart is one which has been cleansed by the sanctifying operations of divine grace (Titus 3:5), by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus on the conscience (Heb. 10:22), and by a God--communicated faith (Acts 15:9). Thus, the second clause of Psalm 73:1 obliges us to understand the Israel of the first clause as the spiritual Israel--God's chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people.

Again: when the Lord Jesus exclaimed concerning Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47), exactly what did He mean? Was nothing more signified than, "Behold a fleshly descendant of Jacob"? Assuredly it was this: Christ's language here was discriminating, as discriminating as when He said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). When the Savior declared that they were "disciples indeed," He intimated they were such not only in name, but in fact; not only by profession, but in reality. And in like manner, when He affirmed that Nathanael was "an Israelite indeed," He meant that he was a genuine son of Israel, a man of faith and prayer, honest and upright. The added description "in whom is no guile" supplies still further confirmation that a spiritual and saved character is there in view: compare "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. 32:2.).

"Behold Israel after the flesh" (1 Cor. 10:18). Here again discriminating language is used; why speak of "Israel after the flesh" unless it be for the express purpose of distinguishing them from Israel after the

Spirit--that is, the regenerated and spiritual Israel. Israel "after the flesh" were the natural descendants of Abraham, but spiritual Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles, are those who are born again and who worship God in spirit and in truth. Surely it must now be plain to every unbiased reader that the term Israel is used in Scripture in more senses than one, and that it is only by noting the qualifying terms which are added, that we are able to identify which Israel is in view in any given passage. Equally clear should it be that to talk of Israel being an "earthly people" is very loose and misleading language, and badly needs modifying and defining.

Admittedly it is easier to determine which Israel is in view in some passages than in others--the natural or the spiritual; yet in the great majority of instances, the context furnishes a definite guide. When Christ said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), He certainly could not intend the fleshly descendants of Jacob; for, as many Scriptures plainly state, He was equally sent unto the Gentiles. No, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" there means the whole election of grace. "Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:23). Here too it is the spiritual Israel which is meant, for He did not save the nation at large. So too when the apostle declared, "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20), he must have had in view the antitypical Israel. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). This could not possibly refer to the nation, for God's curse was on that. It is the Israel chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, regenerated by the Spirit.

"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). In this verse the apostle begins his discussion of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and shows that God had predetermined to cast off the nation as such and extend the gospel call to all men indiscriminately. He does this by showing God was free to act thus (vv. 6-24), that He had announced through His prophets He would do so (vv. 25-33). This was a particularly sore point with the Jew, who erroneously imagined that the promises which God had made to Abraham and his seed included all his natural descendants, that those promises were sealed unto all such by the rite of circumcision, and that those inherited all the patriarchal blessings: hence their claim, "We have Abraham to our father" (Matthew 3:9). It was to refute this error, common among the Jews (and now revived by the dispensationalists), that the apostle here writes.

First, he affirms that God's Word was not being annulled by his teaching (v. 6, first clause), no indeed; his doctrine did not contravene the divine promises, for they had never been given to men in the flesh, but rather to men in the spirit--regenerate. Second, he insisted upon an important distinction (v. 6, second clause), which we are now seeking to explain and press upon our readers. He points out there are two kinds of Israelites: those who are such only by carnal descent from Jacob, and others who are so spiritually, these latter being alone the "children of the promise" (v. 8) (cf. Galatians 4:23, where "born after the flesh" is opposed to born "by promise"). God's promises were made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as believers; and they are the spiritual food and property of none but believers (Rom. 4:13,16). Until this fact be clearly grasped, we shall be all at sea in understanding scores of the Old Testament promises.

When the apostle here affirms that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6), he means that not all the lineal descendants of Jacob belonged unto "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16)--those who were God's people in the highest sense. So far from that being the case, many of the Jews were not God's children at all (see John 8:42,44), while many who were Gentiles by nature, have (by grace) been made "fellow-citizens with the [Old Testaments saints]" (Eph. 2:19) and "blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). Thus the apostle's language in the second clause of Romans 9:6 has the force of: Not all who are

members of the (ancient) visible church are members of the true church. The same thought is repeated in Romans 9:7, "Neither because they are the [natural] seed of Abraham, are they all children" --that is, the "children [or inheritors] of the promise," as verse 8 explains--but "in Isaac the line of God's election and sovereign grace] shall thy true and spirituals seed be called." God's promises were made to the spiritual seed of Abraham, and not to his natural descendants as such.

This same principle of double application holds equally good of many other terms used of the covenant people. For example, Christ said to His spouse, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Sol. 6:4). Now the church goes under this name of "Jerusalem" in both the Old Testament and the New. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem" (Isa. 40:2). Obviously this did not mean the literal city, nor even its inhabitants in general, for the great majority of them were unregenerate idolaters, and God sends no message of comfort to those who despise and oppose Him. No, it was the godly remnant. "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:25, 26). One of Christ's promises to the overcomer is "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God--new Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:12)!

III.

In the second half of the last chapter it was shown that the name Israel has a twofold application, both in the Old Testament and in the New, being given to the natural descendants of Jacob and also to all believers. Nor should this in anywise surprise or stumble us, seeing that the one whom God first denominated "Israel" was henceforth the man with the double name, according as he was viewed naturally or spiritually. It should also be duly noted that God's giving this name unto Jacob is recorded twice in Genesis: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (32:28); "And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name" (35:10). Is there not here something more than bare emphasis--namely, a divine intimation to us of the dual application or usage of the name?

This double significance of the word Israel holds good for other similar terms. For example, to the "seed of Abraham": "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). The "children of Abraham" are of two kinds, physical and spiritual, those who are his by nature and those who are connected with him by grace. "To be the children of a person in a figurative sense, is equivalent to 'resemble him, and to be involved in his fate, good or bad.' The idea is of similarity both in character and in circumstances. To be 'the children of God,' is to be like God; and also, as the apostle states, it is to be 'heirs of God.' To be 'the children of Abraham' is to resemble Abraham, to imitate his conduct, and to share his blessedness" (John Brown). To which we may add, to be "the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38) is to be conformed to his vile image, both in character and in conduct (John 8:44), and to share his dreadful portion (Matthew 25:41).

The carnal Jews of Christ's day boasted that "Abraham is our father," to which He made answer, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). Ali, the spiritual children of Abraham "walk in the steps of that faith" which he had (Rom. 4:12). Those who are his spiritual children are "blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). The apostle was there combating the error which the Judaizers were seeking to foist upon the Gentiles namely, that none but Jews, or Gentiles proselyted by circumcision, were the "children of Abraham," and that none but those could be partakers of his blessing.

But so far from that being the case, all unbelieving Jews shut heaven against themselves, while all who believed from the heart, being united to Christ--who is "the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1) --enter into all the blessings which God covenanted unto Abraham.

The double significance pertaining to the expression "children" or "seed" of Abraham was very plainly intimated at the beginning, when Jehovah said unto the patriarch, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore" (Gen. 22:17). What anointed eye can fail to see in the likening of Abraham's seed unto the stars of heaven a reference to his spiritual children, who are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1); and in the likening of his seed unto the sand which is upon the seashore a reference to his natural descendants, who occupied the land of Palestine.

Again, the same is true of the word "Jew." "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But 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" (Rom. 2:28, 29). What could be plainer than that? In the light of such a Scripture, is it not passing strange that there are today those--boasting loudly of their orthodoxy and bitterly condemning all who differ--who insist that the name "Jew" belongs only to the natural descendants of Jacob, and ridicule the idea that there is any such thing as spiritual Jews. When the Holy Spirit here tells us "he is a Jew, who is one inwardly," He manifestly signifies that the true Jew, the antitypical Jew is a regenerate person, who enjoys the "praise" or approbation of God Himself.

Here, then, is the reply to the childish prattle of those who declare that "Israel" means Israel, and "Jew" means Jew, and that when Scripture speaks of "Jerusalem" or "Zion" nothing else is referred to than those actual places. But this is nothing more than a deceiving of ourselves by the mere sound of words: as well argue that "flesh" signifies nothing more than the physical body, that "water" (John 4:14) refers only to that material element, and that "death" (John 5:24) means naught but physical dissolution. There is an end to all interpretation when such a foolish attitude is adopted. Each passage calls for careful and prayerful study, and it has to be fairly ascertained which the Spirit has in view; whether the carnal Israel or the spiritual, the literal seed of Abraham or the mystical, the natural Jew or the regenerate, the earthly Jerusalem or the heavenly, the typical Zion or the antitypical. God has not written His Word so that the ordinary reader is made independent of that help which He deigns to give through His accredited teachers.

It may seem to some of our readers that we have wandered a considerable distance away from the subject of the Messianic covenant. Not so: that covenant is made with "the house of Israel and with the house of Judah"; and it is impossible to understand those terms aright until we can determine which Israel is meant. So many, assuming that there is but one Israel in Scripture, namely, the Hebrew nation, have insisted that the promise of Jeremiah 31:31 is entirely future, receiving its accomplishment in "the millennium." To make good their contention, they must show: first, that it does not and cannot refer to the mystical Israel; second, that it has not already been made good; third, that it will be accomplished in connection with the literal nation in a day to come--concerning which we ask, Where is there one word in the New Testament which declares God will yet make a new covenant with national Israel?

What, then, does Jeremiah 31:31 signify? Has that divine promise already received its fulfillment, or is it now in course of receiving its fulfillment, or does it yet await fulfillment? This is far more than a technical question devoid of practical interest. It raises the issue, Has the Christian a personal interest therein? If the older commentators be consulted--the ablest teachers God has granted to His people since the

Reformation--it will be found that they unanimously taught that Jeremiah 31:31 receives its accomplishment in this present dispensation. While we freely grant this is not conclusive proof that they were right, and while we must call no man (or set of men) "father," yet the writer for one is today very slow in allowing that the godly Puritans were all wrong on this matter, and slower still to turn away from those luminaries which God granted in the brightest period of the church's history since the time of the apostles, in order to espouse the theories of our moderns. Then let us seek to "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

In his comments on Jeremiah 31:31-33 Matthew Henry said, "This refers to Gospel times . . . for of Gospel times the apostle understands it (Heb. 8:8, 9), where the whole passage is quoted, as a summary of the covenant of grace made with believers in Jesus Christ." "The first solemn promulgation of this new covenant, made, ratified and established, was on the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the resurrection of Christ. It answered to the promulgation of the Law on mount Sinai, the same space of time after the deliverance of the people out of Egypt. From this day forward the ordinances of worship and the institutions of the new covenant became obligatory upon all believers" (John Owen). To which we may also add that C. H. Spurgeon throughout his sermon on Jeremiah 31:32 speaks of that covenant as the Messianic one: "In the covenant of grace God conveys Himself to you and becomes yours."

But we are not dependent upon human authorities. Each one may see for himself that the New Testament makes it unmistakably plain that the promises contained in Jeremiah 31:31-33 are made good in the Christian economy. In the Epistle to the Hebrews--which supplies an infallible key to the interpretation of Old Testament Scripture--Paul quotes this very passage for the express purpose of showing that its terms provided an accurate description of gospel blessings. The apostle's argument in Hebrews 8 would be entirely meaningless did not Jeremiah's prediction supply a vivid portrayal of that order of things which Christ has established. First, he declares, "But now [and not in some future "millennium!"] hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is [not "will be!"] the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (v. 6); and what is added is in confirmation of this statement.

Before turning to the light which the New Testament casts upon Jeremiah 31, it should be noted that at the time God announced His purpose and promise through the prophet, the fleshly descendants of Abraham were divided into two hostile groups. They had separate kings and separate centers of worship, and were at enmity one with another. As such they fitly adumbrated the great division between God's elect among the Jews and the Gentiles in their natural and dispensational state. There was between these a "middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:14); yea, there was actual "enmity" between them (Eph. 2:16). But just as God announced through Ezekiel that Judah and the Gentiles are now one in Christ (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-18); and therefore all born-again believers are designated the "children" and "seed" of Abraham, and blessed with him (Gal. 3:7, 9, 29).

It is pertinent to raise the point, if the principal reference in Jeremiah's prophecy was unto the gospel church of this era, wherein Gentiles so largely predominate, why is the covenant there said to be made with "the house of Israel and the house of Judah"? Several answers may be given to this question. First, to make it clear that this covenant is not made with all the fallen descendants of Adam, but only with God's chosen people. Second, because during Old Testament times the great majority of God's elect were taken out of the Hebrew nation. Third, to signify that the Jewish theocracy has given place to the Christian church: "He taketh away the first [covenant that he may establish the second]" (Heb. 10:9; cf. Matthew 21:43). Fourth, to intimate that the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints form one body,

being the same church of God in different dispensations. Fifth, because it is a common thing to call the antitype by that designation which belongs to its type.

Returning now to Hebrews 8. The grand design of the apostle in this epistle was to demonstrate that the Lord Christ is the mediator and surety of a vastly superior covenant (or economy) than that wherein the worship and service of God obtained under the old covenant or economy of the law. From which it necessarily followed that His priesthood was far more excellent than the Aaronic, and to this end he not only gives Scriptural proof that God had promised to make a new covenant, but he declares the very nature and properties of it in the words of the prophet. In particular, from this Old Testament citation, the imperfections of the old covenant (the Sinaitic) is evident by its issues: it did not effectually secure peace and fellowship between God and the people, for being broken by them, they were cast off by Him, and this rendered all its other benefits and advantages useless. This demonstrated the need for a new and better covenant, which would infallibly secure the obedience of the people forever.

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Heb. 8:7). The reference is to that solemn transaction which took place at Sinai. That was not the "first" covenant absolutely, but the first entered into with Israel nationally. Previously, God made a covenant with Adam (Hosea 6:6), which in some respects the Sinaitic adumbrated, for it was chiefly one of works. So too He had made a covenant with Abraham, which shadowed out the everlasting covenant, inasmuch as grace predominated in it. The "faultiness" of the Sinaitic covenant was due to the fact that it was wholly external, being accompanied by no internal efficacy: it set before Israel an objective standard, but it communicated no power for them to measure up to it. It treated with natural Israel, and therefore the law was impotent "through the weakness of the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). It provided sacrifices for sin; yet their value was only ceremonial and transient. Because of its inadequacy a new and better covenant was needed.

"For finding fault with them, He said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:8). The opening "For" intimates that the apostle was now confirming what he had declared in verses 6,7. The "finding fault" may refer either to the covenant or the covenantees-- "with it" or "with them." In view of what is said in verse 9, the translation of the Authorized Version is to be preferred: it was against the people God complained, for their having broken His covenant. The word "Behold" announces the deep importance of what follows, calling our diligent and admiring attention to the same. The time fixed for the making of this new covenant is defined in "the days [to] come." In the Old Testament the season of Christ's appearing was called "the world to come" (Heb. 2:5), and it was a periphrasis of Him that He was "he that should come" (Matthew 11:3). The faith of the Old Testament church was principally exercised in the expectation of His advent.

The subject matter of what Jeremiah specially announced was a "covenant." "The new covenant, as collecting into one all the promises of grace given from the foundation of the world, accomplished in the actual exhibiting of Christ, and confirmed in His death, and by the sacrifice of His blood, thereby became the sole rule of new spiritual ordinances of worship suited thereunto, being the great object of the faith of the saints of the O.T., and is the great foundation of all our present mercies. 'Whereof the Holy Spirit also is witness to us: for after that He had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord:' Heb. 10:15, 16--yes, 'is witness to us,' and not to those who live in some future 'millennium.' A. W.P.]

"There was in it a recapitulation of all promises of grace. God had not made any promise, any intimation of His love or grace unto the Church in general, nor unto any particular believer, but He brought it all into this

covenant, so as that they should be esteemed, all and every one of them, to be given and spoken unto every individual person that hath an interest in this covenant. Hence all the promises made unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with all the other patriarchs, and the oath of God whereby they were confirmed, are all of them made unto us, and do belong unto us, no less than they did unto them to whom they were first given, if we are made partakers of this covenant. The apostle gives an instance of this in the singular promise made unto Joshua, which he applies unto Christians: 13:5" (John Owen).

IV.

The apostle's design in Hebrews 8 is to evidence the immeasurable superiority of Christ's priesthood above the Aaronic, and he does so by showing the far greater excellency of that covenant or dispensation of grace of which the Lord Jesus is the mediator. When mentioning the "first covenant," he refers to that economy or order of things under which the Hebrew people were placed at Sinai, and of which the Levitical priests were the mediators, interposing between God and the people. The "second" or "new covenant" is that grand economy or order of things which has been introduced and established by Christ, of which He is the sole mediator. In proof of this Paul quoted Jeremiah 31:31-33, and it is quite obvious that the passage would have no relevancy whatever to his argument, if the prophet was there referring to God's dealings with carnal Israel in a period which is yet future. That covenant is made with the gospel church, the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:14), on which peace rests forever.

Let us next point out that this "new covenant," the Messianic, has assumed a form which no other covenant ever did or could, due to the death of its covenanter, namely, a "testament." The same Greek term does duty for both English words, being rendered "covenant" in Hebrews 8:6,8,9, and "testament" in 9:15-17. No word is more familiar to the reader of Scripture, for the second main division is rightly termed "The New Testament," yet it had been just as accurate to designate it "The New Covenant." But let it be clearly understood that it is called "New" not because its contents differ from the Old, for it is simply a fulfillment and confirmation of all that went before, everything in the Old Testament containing the shadow and type of the substance of the New Testament. The peculiar reason for naming it the New Testament is because it was newly accomplished and sealed by the precious blood of Christ just before it was written.

The second grand division of God's Word sets forth the gospel in all its unveiled fullness, and the gospel (in contrast to the law, the predominant revelation of the Old Testament) was called "the New Testament" because it contains those legacies and testamentary effects which Christ has bequeathed His people. How inexpressibly blessed, then, should be the very name of the New Testament unto every one of the Lord's people, who by the regenerating operations of the Holy Spirit can establish his own personal interest in the contents of it. "This is my blood of the new testament" (Matthew 26:28). By His death Christ has ratified the new covenant and turned it into a "testament," making .all its riches and legacies secure and payable to His people: "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:17). What has Christ left? to whom has He bequeathed His vast property? The answer is, every conceivable blessing: temporal, spiritual, eternal--the most durable treasure of all; unto "His own," whom He loved with an unquenchable love.

Before His departure, Christ expressed Himself to His disciples on this blessed subject when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). Thus we see that the Savior's legacies are to His dear people, His beloved spouse. As men before they die make their wills, and give their property to their relatives and friends, so did the Redeemer: "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17:24). Oh, for grace to

"prove" the Savior's will, to personally lay claim to all the rich legacies it contains! Have I been brought out of nature's darkness and become a new creature in Christ? Has the Lord given me a new heart and mind? Then I have an interest in Christ's will, and He died to make His testament valid, and ever liveth to be the executor and administrator of it.

The covenant (the "new," the "second," the Messianic) to which the apostle alludes so often in his writings, particularly in the Hebrews Epistle, is ratified by the death of Him who makes it, and therefore it is a testament as well. This covenant was confirmed by Christ, both as that His death was the death of the testator and as was accompanied by the blood of sacrifice. Hence it is such a covenant as that in it the Covenanter bequeaths His goods in the way of a legacy, and thus we find Him calling this very covenant "the new testament in my blood." It is in full accord with this that the believer's portion is designed an "inheritance" (Rom. 8:16, 17; Eph. 1:18; I Peter 1:4), for in a will or testament there is an absolute grant made of what is bequeathed. The title which the believer has to his portion is not in himself: it has been made over to him by the death of Christ, and nothing can possibly rob him of it.

We must next consider the substance or contents of the Messianic covenant. Broadly speaking, it is distinctly a covenant of promise, which gives security by pure grace for the sanctification of God's people and their preservation in a state and course of holiness, to their final salvation. In other words, their right of inheritance is not by the law or their own works: "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect . . . therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Rom. 4:14, 16). But is it not true that if the Christian should wholly and finally depart from God, that this would deprive him of all the benefits of grace? This hypothetical supposition

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is undoubted truth, yea, it is presupposed in the promise itself, which is likewise of certain and infallible truth: "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" (Jer. 32:40).

Considering the contents of this covenant, we are fully in accord with John Owen that there is in it "a recapitulation and confirmation of all the promises of grace that have been given unto the Church from the beginning, even all that was spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets that had been since the world began (Luke 1:70)." The original promise (Gen. 3:15) contained in germ form the whole essence and substance of the new covenant: all promises given unto the church afterward being but expositions and confirmations of it. In the whole of them there was a full declaration of the wisdom and love of God in the sending of His Son, and of His grace unto men thereby. God solemnly confirmed those promises with an oath that they should be accomplished in their season. Thus the covenant promised by Jeremiah included the sending of Christ for the accomplishment thereof, all promises being there gathered together in one glorious constellation.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, with the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10). In passing, be it duly noted that God did not here promise He would establish the nation in any earthly land, or bestow upon them any material inheritance. No, indeed; the blessings of this covenant immeasurably transcend any mundane or fleshly portion. Briefly, its contents may be summed up in four words: regeneration, reconciliation, sanctification, and justification. We will explain and amplify

in what follows.

"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." The "law" here signifies that which enjoins supreme love to God, and, flowing out of it, love to our neighbor. Of this grand principle the whole round of duty is to be the fruit and expression, and from it each duty it to take its character. If love be not the animating spring, then our obedience is little worth. When it is said God will put His law in our inmost parts and write it in our hearts, it signifies that preparation of soul which is effected by divine power so that the law is cordially received into our affections. Elsewhere this miracle of grace is spoken of as "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26). It implies an inward spiritual appreciation of its goodness and equity--the result of divine illumination; an assimilation of the tastes or inclinations of the heart to it, and the conformity of the will to its righteous requirements.

There must be a true delight in the purity which the law inculcates, for this is the only effectual preparation for obedience. So long as the law of God utters its voice to us from without only, so long as there is no sympathy in the soul with its demands, so long as the heart is alienated from its spirituality, there can be no obedience. worthy of the name. We may be awed by its peremptory utterances, alarmed at the consequences of its transgression, and driven to attempt what it requires, but the effort will be cold, partial, and insincere. We shall feel it a hard bondage, the pressure of which will certainly irritate, and against the restraints of which we shall inwardly rebel. Such is the real character of all graceless obedience, however it may be disguised. How can it be otherwise when "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7) --as true today as nineteen centuries ago, as the modern hatred of and outcry against the law clearly manifests.

Concerning the Hebrew nation at Sinai, who had stoutly affirmed, "All that the Lord hath said, will we do," God declared, "Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always" (Deut. 5:29). Ah, that explains their wilderness perverseness, and the whole of their subsequent history: they had no heart to serve God, their affections were divorced from Him. And it is just at this point that the new covenant differs so radically from the old. God has given no new law, but He has bestowed upon His people a heart--a heart in harmony with its holiness and righteous requirements. This enables them to render unto Him that obedience, which, through the mediation of Christ, is accepted by Him. Each of them can say with the apostle, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22).

Once the law in all its spirituality and extent is not only intellectually apprehended but wrought into the affections, once our inmost inclinations and tendencies are molded by it and brought into unison with it, genuine obedience will be the natural and necessary result. This is the import of the first great blessing here enumerated in the Messianic covenant. It necessarily comes first; for the miracle of regeneration is the foundation of reconciliation, justification, and sanctification. The one in whom this divine work of grace is wrought finds enlargement of heart to run in the way of God's commandments. He now serves in "newness of spirit." What was before regarded as bondage is now found to be the truest liberty. What was before an irksome task is now a delight. Love for God inspires a desire to please Him: love for its Author produces a love for His law.

"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." The terms in which this blessing is expressed indicate a designed contrast between the old and new covenants. Under the former, the law was written upon tables of stone--not only to denote its abiding character, but also to symbolize the hardheartedness of those to whom it was then given; and publicly exhibited as a rule which they were

under solemn obligations to observe. But it contained no provision to secure obedience. By the vast majority of the people its design was misunderstood and its requirements practically disregarded, proving to them the ministration of condemnation and death. Under the Messianic covenant, the law is written on the heart--incorporated with the living springs of action in the inward parts, thus bringing the whole man into harmony with the will of God.

A further contrast is implied in the second blessing here specified: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10). While the Hebrews were yet in Egypt the Lord announced, "I will take you to me for a people and I will be to you a God" (Ex. 6:7). Later He declared, "I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you; and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Lev. 26:11,12). But that was a vastly different thing from what now obtains under the new covenant: that was a natural relationship, this a spiritual; that was external, this internal; that was national, this is individual; that was temporal, this is eternal. Under the theocracy all of Abraham's natural descendants were true subjects and properly qualified members of the Jewish church--such only excepted as had not been circumcised according to the order of God, or were guilty of some capital crime. To be an obedient subject of the civil government and a full member of the ecclesiastical state was manifestly the same thing; because by treating Jehovah as their political Sovereign, they owned Him as the true God and were entitled to all the blessings of the national covenant.

Under the Sinaitic economy Jehovah acknowledged all those to be "His people" and Himself to be "their God" who performed an external obedience to His commands, even though their hearts were disaffected to Himself (Judg. 8:23; I Sam. 8:6, 7; etc.). Those prerogatives were enjoyed irrespective of sanctifying grace, or of any pretension to fit. But the state of things under the Christian economy is entirely different. God will not now acknowledge any as "His people" who do not know and revere Him, love and obey Him, worship Him in spirit and in truth. Only those are now owned as His people who have His law written on their hearts, and He is their God in a far higher and grander sense than ever He was of the nation of Israel: He is their enduring and satisfying portion. They are His people not by outward designation only, but by actual surrender of their hearts to Him. To be "their God" necessarily denotes they have been reconciled to Him, and have voluntarily accepted Him as such.

"I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." This is a distinct promise which comprises and comprehends all the blessings and privileges of the covenant. It is placed in the center of the whole as that from whence all the grace of it doth issue, wherein all the blessedness of it doth consist, and whereby it is secured. This relationship necessarily implies mutual acquiescence in each other, for it could not exist if the hearts and minds of those who are taken into it were not renewed. God could not approve of, still less rest in His love toward them, --while they were at enmity against Him; nor could they find satisfaction in Himself so long as they neither knew nor loved Him. Because they still have sin in them, this relationship is made possible through the infinite merits of the Mediator.

V.

The substance of the Christian covenant is, broadly speaking, divine promises which pledged the sanctification of God's people and their effectual preservation in a state and course of holiness to their final salvation. Those promises are summarized in Hebrews 8:10-12, and are four in number. First, is the declaration that the Lord would write His laws in the hearts of those for whom Christ died, which signifies such a change being wrought in them that the divine statutes are cordially received in their affections. Second, is the assurance that the Lord will be the God of His people, giving Himself to them in all His

perfections and relationships, so that the supply of their every need is absolutely guaranteed: "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13:9). He is the God of His people in a spiritual and everlasting sense, through the meritorious mediation of Christ.

"And they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11). This is the third promise, and like the two preceding it points a marked and blessed contrast from that which obtained under the regime of the old covenant, and that in connection with the knowledge of God. During the Mosaic dispensation, God granted ma

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