

THE GOSPEL OF THE COVENANT

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I--The Promise-Covenant

Christianity is the religion of a divine covenant. This is its distinctive feature. Christianity is not the outgrowth of a speculative philosophy, the product of human reasoning. It is a revelation--the revelation of the eternal purpose of God in the form of a covenant of redemption, mediated through His Son Jesus Christ. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should have a clear understanding of the nature and terms of this covenant, in order that we may enjoy to the fullest degree the rich blessings which are ensured by and in it.

What then is the nature of this covenant? What is the difference between it and a covenant between men? In what way may we be benefited by this divine covenant? Where shall we find a reliable answer to these questions?

We shall find little or no help--in fact we may be misled--by going to any secular dictionary to learn the definition of "covenant" as found in the Scriptures. Such dictionaries are very valuable in determining the meaning of words in use among men in the ordinary relations of life, but they are not designed for authority in the field of religion. For the authoritative meaning of the terms used in setting forth the relation between God and man, the terms used in making known the divine purpose concerning man, we must give careful study, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, to the meaning of these terms as indicated by their use in the Scriptures. We do not have an inspired and therefore authoritative glossary of the words employed in the Bible, but by comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover the content which the divine mind has put into them.

Let me remark, in passing, that the authority for Christian doctrine is not in a book apart from its author, but the Bible is of authority because God, the Creator, speaks to us in it. Inasmuch as in this Book the Author deals with subjects outside the sphere of human knowledge, a field so full of absolute light that to the mortal eye it is gross darkness, although He uses human language, yet He puts His own meaning into it, and under the guidance of His own Spirit, we may learn this meaning as we surrender our minds to be taught of God, according to His promise. John 6:45; Isa. 54:12.

Use of the Word "Covenant"

Now let us give some attention to the use of the word "covenant" in the Scriptures. It is first found in the sixth chapter of Genesis in connection with the announcement of the destruction of the world by a flood and the building of the ark for the preservation of Noah and his family. These are the words: "I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with thee." Gen. 6:17, 18. The covenant here mentioned is not defined in words, but in the experience of Noah, who was saved from the waters of the flood. In recognition of the fact that his preservation was wholly due

to the free mercy of God, and not to any merit of his own, or any skill in navigating the ark, when Noah came out of the ark he built an altar and offered sacrifices. Gen. 8:9.

The covenant with Noah was the covenant of life preserved by the grace of God. As a feature of this covenant came this assurance: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. 8:22. Note the interpretation of these words as given through the prophet Jeremiah: "Thus saith Jehovah: If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, so that there shall not be day and night in their season; then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant." Jer. 33:20, 21. Here it is plainly shown that God's promise that there should be an unbroken succession of day and night is in His mind a covenant, and this meaning of covenant pervades the Scriptures.

God's promise to man is God's covenant. This interpretation is further justified by the way in which the promise to Abraham is designated. Note the words of the apostle Peter in his address to those who were assembled after the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple: "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Acts 3:25. Here again a simple promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," is spoken of as a covenant. On this principle we would naturally expect to find that the words "covenant" and "promise" are used interchangeably, and such we observe to be the case in Galatians 3:17: "Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth no disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect." This is a helpful illustration of the way in which the meaning of words is indicated in the Scriptures by their use rather than by formal definitions. The substitution of "promise" at the end of the sentence quoted for "covenant" at the commencement of the sentence, is the Biblical method of defining God's covenant to be His promise.

It is thus made clear to us that the covenant of grace or of redemption is not a mutual agreement or compact between God and man, as between two equals. "In a divine covenant the parties do not stand in the remotest degree as equal contractors. God in His good pleasure makes an arrangement which man receives, though he is not passive. Such a covenant is a disposition, an ordainment, an expression of the divine will which they to whom it is made reverently welcome." Observe, then, that the covenant of grace or of redemption is "an expression of the divine will," which is usually expressed in the form of a promise. To the same effect are the words of another capable interpreter of the covenant idea: "In accordance moreover with the regular Biblical practice this covenant [of grace] is regarded not as an agreement entered into between God and man, but rather as a saving provision instituted wholly by God."

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, and to make clear the relation of the two parties to the covenant of grace, attention is here called to the fact that while the two parties in the divine covenant are by no means "equal contractors," yet in

receiving this disposition or ordainment man "is not passive." There must be on his part absolute surrender of his will to "the mutual will of the Father and the Son," an offering of the body as "a living sacrifice," and an active faith which appropriates the covenant-promise. There is no merit in this cooperation with God in His work of grace.

It is the only way by which man, with perfect freedom of will, can enjoy the blessings provided by the divine covenant. This is clearly revealed in the experience of Abraham, of whom it is written: "Looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4:20-22.

Covenant Between the Father and the Son

It seems fitting to point out now that the promise of blessing to Abraham and to his seed, that is, the covenant with Abraham, was the revelation and application in time of a covenant of a different kind entered into between the Father and the Son, two equal parties, before the creation of the world, concerning the redemption of man, if he should fall into sin and betray his kingdom to the enemy of God and man. Direct reference is made to this covenant in the words of Jesus to His disciples: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me." Luke 22:29. This reference to the covenant, fully warranted by the Greek text, is expressed in the following translations of this verse:

"I engage by covenant unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath engaged by covenant to Me." Witsius' translation. "I covenant to give you, as My Father has covenanted to give Me, a kingdom." Weymouth. "I covenant with you--according as My Father covenanted with Me--a kingdom." Rotherham.

The following quotations will, I think, be of interest in opening up more fully the meaning of these words of our Lord:

"In order the more thoroughly to understand the nature of the covenant of grace, two things are above all to be distinctly considered. First, the covenant which intervenes between God the Father and Christ the mediator. . . . When I speak of the compact between the Father and the Son, I thereby understand the will of the Father, giving the Son to be the head and Redeemer of the elect; and the will of the Son, presenting Himself, as a sponsor or surety for them; in all which the nature of a compact and agreement consists. . . . When we have clearly demonstrated all these particulars from Scripture, it cannot, on any pretense, be denied, that there is a compact between the Father and the Son, which is the foundation of our salvation."—"*The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*," Herman Witsius, pp. 137, 138.

"God did not ordain that sin should exist, but he foresaw its existence, and made provisions to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, 'that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish, but have everlasting life."--*"The Desire of Ages," Mrs. E. G. White, p. 22.*

"He [Christ] showed them [the disciples] that the awful conflict which they could not yet comprehend, was the fulfillment of the covenant made before the foundation of the world was laid."--*Id., p. 799.*

"Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan."--*Id., p. 834.*

"But whence does this proceed, and what is the origin of such important things? 'The counsel of peace,' which is between the man whose name is the Branch,' and Jehovah, whose temple He shall build, and on whose throne He shall sit (Rev. 3:21). And what else can this counsel be, but the mutual will of the Father and the Son, which, we said, is the nature of the covenant."--*"The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man," Herman Witsius, p. 140.*

The idea that the blessings of the gospel were all provided for in a transaction which was completed before the creation of the world, is plainly expressed in other passages of Scripture. Note the following:

"Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal." 2 Tim. 1:2.

"In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised [covenanted] before times eternal; but in His own seasons manifested His word in the message, wherewith I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour." Titus 1:2, 3.

"Now unto Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." Rom. 16:25, 26.

"All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8, margin.

The last passage quoted shows that in the mind of God the cross was a reality before the world was created.

The expression, "the mutual will of the Father and the Son," found in the last quotation from Witsius, is very suggestive, and invites serious thinking, since it points to the central basis of the covenant of redemption. Note the inspired interpretation of the sacrificial work of Christ which is given to us in the following words:

"It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Thou hadst no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." Heb. 10:4-7.

The creative will of God (Rev. 4:11, A. R. V.) brought man into existence endowed with a free will, with the purpose that he might dwell in free and loving fellowship with his Creator. Such fellowship involved heartfelt obedience. "At the very root of the relation of a creature to his God, and of God admitting the creature to His fellowship, lies the thought of obedience." The rejection of the will of God is sin, and inevitably means separation from God. Isa. 59:2. The fundamental purpose of the redemptive work of Christ is to restore man to intimate fellowship with God by taking away the sin which separates them. The sacrifices of animal life, taken contrary to the instinct of its possessor, could not effect this. Only the righteous life of the last Adam, the racial man, fully acceptable to God and offered through the active will of its possessor, could make atonement for willful sin, and thus restore man to fellowship with God.

In Fulfillment of This Covenant

And here the covenant of redemption, originating in "the mutual will of the Father and the Son," finds its place. The Son of God, in fulfillment of this covenant, volunteered to become man, making Himself wholly dependent upon the Father for the grace to lead a life of perfect obedience in a sinful world and thus to demonstrate that disobedience was the choice of man, and not a moral necessity. This life of perfect obedience was crowned with the voluntary death of the only-begotten Son, and so "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yes, the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. This sacrificial obedience to the will of God even unto death was the acceptable offering which Jesus made for the sin of the human family, and this offering was made through the eternal Spirit, for we read: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. 9:14.

A study of the Gospels will show how fully this idea of doing the will of God, according to the covenant into which He had entered, was in the mind of Jesus while He was on earth. Note some of His own words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." John 4:34. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 5:30. "I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. "This perfect surrender to the will of the Father was maintained throughout the whole experience of His life, and even when He faced its final climax in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the bloody sweat on His brow testifying to the terrible struggle involved, He affirmed His loyalty to the covenant: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:42.

And so Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, went to the cross, the Lamb of God, bearing the sin of the world, fulfilling the covenant between the Father and Himself, and securing eternal redemption for us.

After His death and resurrection, this same Jesus, now our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, ministered and still ministers His own Spirit of love and power to all believers in order that they may follow His example in doing the will of God.

The central purpose of the exposition of the mediatorial ministry of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews is to reveal the provision which has been made in the atoning work of our Lord that repentant believers might enter into intimate fellowship with God, revealed in doing His will or keeping His commandments. This is clearly indicated in the closing verses: "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Heb. 13:20, 21.

In view of the intimate relation between "the mutual will of the Father and the Son" and the covenant of redemption, it seems advisable to give some study to the teaching concerning the will of God as found in the Scriptures. This I will consider next.

II--The Active Will of God

Having found that the covenant of redemption is God's method for carrying into effect the covenant entered into between the Father and the Son before the creation of the world, and that this basic covenant is the expression of "the mutual will of the Father and the Son," it seems a fitting time to seek for light from the Scriptures concerning the will of God in its relation to our salvation from sin.

And first let us note that the will of God is the root cause and motives of every action on His part. Whatever He does, He is simply expressing His will. This is true with reference to the original creation, as we read: "Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created." Rev. 4:11. It is through His word that the will of God is expressed in language, and so creation is accomplished by His will revealed through His spoken word: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . . For He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Ps. 33:6-9. "He commanded, and they were created." Ps. 148:5. It is thus clear that the will of God is a creative will, a creative energy, the final cause of all things that are. And the same will, expressed through His word, sustains the universe thus created, for He upholds "all things by the word of His power." Heb. 1:3.

On some clear night look up and behold the firmament studded with spots of light, the brightness shining from uncounted world's great and small. Take a glance at the Milky Way where these worlds are so numerous that they almost seem to blend into one bright surface. God brought all the systems into existence by the action of His will, something out of nothing, and the same will guides the motions of these unnumbered masses of matter so that each one keeps its course without interference. Shall such a creation rebel against the Creator, and reject His will? If such a thing were possible, it would result only in absolute chaos, making this universe unsafe for intelligent life, and ending in the most complete ruin. But all worlds say, "Thy will be done," and they are preserved to manifest the glory of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Ps. 19:1. Listen to their message.

A Scientist Speaking

In these days when so many scientists are trying to explain nature and its phenomena without reference to God, it is certainly heartening to give attention to the philosophy of one who recognizes that all the so-called laws of nature are simply the observed action of the will of God. The following extracts are from an article written by one who interviewed this scientist:

"'By the will of God.' It is a scientist speaking. That is how he explains the atom, the speed of light, gravitation, the workings of electricity.

"'No cut and dried bundles of words made up into a scientific formula, will suit,' he says; 'they simply cover up the investigator's in ignorance. In the last analysis,

everything operates by the will of God, and there is no formula which will explain that.' . . .

"So Dr. W. R. Whitney, director of many vast electrical researches, has found God in his laboratory. . . .

"He is a world figure in science. He is past president of the American Chemical Society, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, doctor from half a dozen colleges, holder of many decorations and medals, author of highly technical studies. . . .

"Interviewer and scientist spoke of electricity. Enough has been discovered to show that we really know very little about it. 'However,' said Dr. Whitney, 'it is pretty clear that no matter what electricity is, it seems to be the ultimate essence of what everything is made of, and by which most processes occur.'"

"And that ultimate essence itself?" I asked.

"'We have our theories,' answered the scientist, 'but can't prove them.' He picked up from his desk a small bar magnet. 'Bring this near a steel needle, and the needle will lead to the magnet. No one knows why, but we have worked out elaborate explanations. We speak of lines of force, we draw a diagram of the magnetic field. We know there are no lines there, and "field" is just a word to cover our ignorance.'

"He laid the magnet over a wooden base in which was imbedded another bar magnet, and the bar magnet floated in space about half an inch above the base.

"'What supports it? Sir Oliver Lodge says it is the all-pervading ether. But Einstein denies that there is any ether. Which is right? I say that the magnet floats in space by the will of God. The magnet repels another magnet by the will of God. And no man today can give a more precise answer.'

"'What do you mean by the will of God?' I asked.

"'What do you mean by light?' shot back the scientist. 'A beam of light comes speeding from a star, traveling hundreds of years, and finally it reaches your optic nerve, and you see the star. How does it do that? We have our corpuscular theory of light, our wave theory, and now our quantum theory, but they are all just educated guesses. About as good an explanation as any is to say that light travels by the will of God.'

"'The best scientists,' he added, 'have to recognize that they are just kindergarten fellows playing with mysteries--our ancestors were, and our descendants will be.'

"'Then there is a limit to what we can know?'

"'It seems so. We move from one theory to the next, and always there is something that does not fit in with the other evidence. Take the atom. Yesterday it was whirling particles, infinitesimal solar systems. But that is outmoded now, and today the atom is described as a wave in space. Tomorrow it will be something different. The theory of relativity is not final. It won't stand fixed. No scientific concept can stand still. All is in motion. The will of God, the law which we discover but cannot understand or explain--that alone is final.'--"*The Literary Digest*," Nov. 22, 1930.

The visible universe, when rightly interpreted, reveals the work of the invisible God: "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." Rom. 1:20. Happy are they who thus read the book of nature. But the purpose of all this is that we may recognize that the same will of God which operates in the natural world is operative in the spiritual world, and that our surrender to this will is the secret of our success in all our relations with God.

But the will of God is the directing power not only in the inanimate or natural world, but also in the affairs of the nations. In the mind of sinful man all his accomplishments are due to his own wisdom and power, and so Nebuchadnezzar asked, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" Dan. 4:30. But after his conversion the same king confessed a different philosophy concerning the God of heaven: "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" Dan. 4:35. His own experience had taught the ruler of Babylon that there is a God in heaven who rules over all.

God Alone Appears in Divine History

The history of the Hebrews is full of suggested illustrations of the fact acknowledged by Nebuchadnezzar. The great French preacher Massillon testified to this in a clear way: "God alone appears in this divine history; He is, I venture to say, its sole hero. Kings and conquerors appear as the ministers of His will."--
"God in History," Strahan, p. 15.

Here are two testimonies to this truth. Secular history tells us that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, conquered Jerusalem, but divine history declares that "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand." Dan. 1:2. Again, concerning the boasting of the king of Assyria as to his ability to conquer Jerusalem, the prophet gave this message:

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man; and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped." Isa. 10:12-14.

Was this an empty threat? Read of the capture of Nineveh and 612 B.C. for answer to this question. Although there sometimes seems to be some delay in the accomplishment of God's purpose, due to the refusal of rulers to accept the will of God for their country, yet He is never defeated, and history "is not a fortuitous succession of events, but their orderly evolution from certain well-defined causes towards a divinely willed end."--*"Prophecy and History in Relation to the*

Messiah," Alfred Edersheim, p. 118. God "worketh all things after the counsel of His will." Eph. 1:11.

A striking instance of the way in which the will of God and the will of man may seem to collide disastrously, and yet the purpose of God prevail, is found in the climax of Hebrew history, the crucifixion of our Lord. In fear of the loss of his standing, Pilate yielded to the demand of the mob, and "Jesus he delivered up to their will" (Luke 23:25), and He went to the cross. But note the interpretation of this apparent triumph of the will of man as given by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost when the inauguration of Jesus was accomplished in heaven after His resurrection: "Him [Jesus] being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucified and slay." Acts 2:23. That the will of both the Father and the Son was carried out in the death of Jesus is clear from His own declaration before His betrayal: "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." John 10:17, 18. The four Gospels unite in the testimony that Jesus on the cross, even though He had the strength to cry "with a loud voice," immediately "gave up His spirit." Those Roman soldiers did not take away His life from Jesus. Calvary reveals the sinful will of man surrendered to Satan, and the righteous will of God; and the righteous will of God accomplished our salvation contrary to the will of the creature, Satan.

How the Creative Will of God Operates

But we must now consider how the creative will of God operates to accomplish the new creation, the salvation of believers. This is clearly illustrated in the experience of the leper who came to Jesus to be healed. Note his expression of faith, and the response of Jesus: "Lord, if Thou wilt [willest], Thou canst make me clean. And He stretched forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed." Matt. 8:2, 3. The answer of Jesus to the confession of faith in the power of His will, I will it; and a new life is imparted.

Another instructive experience is that of the man sick of the palsy, who was let down through the roof of the house where Jesus was teaching. Again the great Teacher revealed His saving mercy and His words of power: "Son, . . . thy sins are forgiven." But the scribes, full of zeal to discredit the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of prophecy, accused Him of blasphemy, asking, "Who can forgive sins but one, even God?" To this Jesus responded: "Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." And when the people saw the sick man walking and carrying his bed, "We never saw it on this fashion." Mark 2:3-12. Here is the positive demonstration that the forgiveness of sins is the revelation of creative

power, and that this creative work is wrought by the same word of authority that brought the world into existence,—the expression of the will of God. God created man in His own image. This image was lost through sin. God takes away the sin, and by the same act creates a new man in Christ Jesus. This is the gospel of the new creation by the will of God.

God's Attitude Toward Man's Salvation

The attitude of God toward the salvation of the human family is declared in plain language: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise; but is long-suffering to youward, not wishing [willing] that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. (See also Matt. 18:14.) Again: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:3. But God has given to man a will of his own, so that he can say "yes" or "no" to God, and thus thwart the will of God for his individual salvation, although he must himself abide the consequences. This is the wondrous truth which Christ taught at the close of His sevenfold woe pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered [have I willed to gather] thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would [willed it] not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:37, 38. The refusal of the rulers in Jerusalem to will what Christ willed for them, brought desolation upon their city and upon themselves. So it was with them, and so it will be with us if we refuse to cooperate with the will of God. This is taught in an appealing way in the following extract:

"Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. . . . Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith."—"*Steps to Christ*," Mrs. E. G. White, p. 52.

Our hope of eternal life depends upon our proper relation to the will of God, as we are plainly taught: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17. How fitting then is this prayer of the poet:

"O, will my will to will Thy will,
And then to will is well.
The willing will which wills God's will
Within God's will will dwell."

This privilege of a life in harmony with the will of God as expressed in His law is provided for in the covenant of grace: "This is that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put My laws into their mind, and on

their heart also will write them." Heb. 8:10. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances, and do them." Eze. 36:27. "The first covenant demanded obedience, and failed because it could not find it. The new covenant was expressly made to provide for obedience." Here again we find the blessing of the gospel of the covenant.

III--The Abrahamic Covenant

"In the eleventh chapter of Genesis we find a clear revelation of the essential spirit and purpose of Babylon: "They said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Gen. 11:4. "Let us build us a city!" City life is proper enough for a righteous people with a righteous king; but for a people in sin, to be scattered in the country and to live by the cultivation of the soil is better. This people chose a city. Why? Because they thought to attain their self-exaltation more fully by this means. The tower expressed the lofty spirit.

"Let us make us a name." This is the ambition of a proud people. Pride scorns the idea of dependence upon another. Pride seeks great things for itself, regardless of the welfare of others. Pride at its fullest ambition says, "I will make myself like the Most High." Pride discounts God in favor of self.

With such a background as this, we come to the twelfth chapter of Genesis and read God's message to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. 12:1-3. "Get thee out," and "I will," and "I will," and "in thee." Separation from all former connections and surroundings is the way of accepting the "I will" of God's covenant-promise. Next came the blessing of Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High" (Gen. 14:19), followed by the promise of a seed that should be like the stars for multitude, and later with the definite statement, after the birth of Isaac, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Gen. 21:12.

Then came the test of Abraham's faith in the call to offer up Isaac, an act which would to the natural mind nullify the promise just made. But Abraham's faith enabled him to hold fast to the "I will" which God had spoken, and in answer to such faith God provided a substitute offering, and then swore by Himself that He would add to, and surely fulfill, the previous "I wills:" "By Myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that 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; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." Gen. 22:16-18. Thus did the obedience of faith open the way for the fullness of blessing.

Now let us observe how these manifold promises are interpreted to us. First we find here the preaching of the gospel of righteousness by faith, the eternal gospel of the covenant: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. 3:8. These promises are next designated as the covenant of redemption from sin: "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant

which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:25, 26.

Covenant Renewed to Isaac and Jacob

This covenant was renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4), and later to Jacob (Gen. 28:12-14), and throughout the history of Israel became the foundation covenant upon which all the covenant-promises rested. When the descendants of Abraham were held in bondage and were grievously oppressed, "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." Ex. 2:24. When Moses was distressed because Pharaoh gave no heed to his pleadings for the release of Israel, Jehovah declared to him: "I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant." Ex. 6:5. When the Israelites made and worshiped an idol after they had been miraculously delivered from Egypt, and Jehovah threatened them with utter destruction, Moses pleaded for them by reminding Him of the covenant: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. . . . And Jehovah repented of the evil which He said He would do unto His people." Ex. 32:13, 14.

When the people went astray, were punished for their iniquities, and repented, then Jehovah assured them, "Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob; and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember." Lev. 26:42. After the people had come to the border of the Promised Land, Moses reminded them of the covenant with Abraham, thus inspiring courage to enter the land: "Go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Deut. 1:8. (See Deut. 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4.) When Hazael, king of Syria, oppressed Israel in the reign of Jehoash, then "Jehovah was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast He them from His presence as yet." 2 Kings 13:23.

Through the prophet Nathan, Jehovah conveyed a message of wondrous meaning to David: "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . . And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever." 2 Sam. 7:12-16. Later David himself designated these promises as God's covenant with him, as one version reads: "For is not my house so with God; for He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for all my salvation, and all my desire, will He not make it to grow?" 2 Sam. 23:5. The covenant with David is simply a further development of the covenant with Abraham, and therefore He in and through whom that covenant was fulfilled is designated as "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matt. 1:1. As

the Son of man, Jesus of Nazareth was a son of the covenant which God made with Abraham, born of the Spirit, as were the elect who were addressed by Peter in his second reported address after the ascension of the risen Saviour. (See Acts 3:25.)

In the Psalms there is repeated reference to God's remembrance of His covenant as the reason for His gracious dealings with His people: "He hath remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant." Ps. 105:8-10. "For He remembered His Holy Word, and Abraham His servant. And He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with singing." Ps. 105:42, 43. (See Ps. 106:45).

When Israel was on the point of going into captivity on account of her sins, the weeping prophet, Jeremiah, pleaded the covenant in her behalf: "Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory: remember, break not Thy covenant with us." Jer. 14:21. After the overthrow of Jerusalem, through the prophet of the captivity, Ezekiel, Jehovah declared His purpose to remember His covenant: "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish with thee an everlasting covenant. . . . And I will establish My covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." Eze. 16:60-62.

Thus through all sacred history from the time of Abraham onward, the covenant with Abraham was in the mind of Jehovah, and His gracious dealings with His erring people were in fulfillment of the covenant made with them through their father in the flesh. Again and again He "remembered His covenant." Again and again this covenant was made the basis of a plea for compassion. Even though Israel did not remember, yet her spokesman dared to say to Jehovah, "Remember, break not Thy covenant with us," and the response was, "I will remember My covenant with thee." And so the chosen people were preserved through centuries of remarkable experiences.

The Climax

But now we come to the climax of all this history, the event toward which it had all been tending, the fulfillment of the central feature of the covenant with Abraham--the birth of the promised Seed. In view of the assurance given to her by the angel, that "that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35, R. V.), the virgin Mary, blessed among women, said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord. . . . He hath given help to Israel His servant, that He might remember mercy (as He spake unto our fathers) toward Abraham and his seed forever." Luke 1:46-55. Plainly, then, the covenant with Abraham involved the incarnation of the Son of God, the gift of God to provide mercy and help for a world in sin. With the God who covenanted with Abraham, time and space have no meaning, and the promised blessing a reality through the sacrifice of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8. The covenant of grace is "an eternal covenant." The name of the promised deliverer is "I AM."

After the birth of John the Baptist, "his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David (as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from old), salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to show mercy towards our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware unto Abraham our father, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Luke 1:67-75. Here it is clear that Abraham and David are the outstanding figures in the covenant of redemption, based upon the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son. Three names indicate the historical development of what was eternal in the mind of God. These names are Abraham, David, Jesus; and the birth of Jesus is the divine pledge for the fulfillment of all that was promised to Abraham and David-- complete salvation in the everlasting kingdom promised to the son of David. This gives significance to the question which Jesus asked of the Pharisees: "What think ye of the Christ [the Messiah]? whose son is He?" Matt. 22:42. They knew that the Messiah for whom they were looking was the son of David, the gift of God to provide mercy and help for a world in sin. With the God who covenanted with Abraham, time and space have no meaning, and the promised blessing was a reality through the sacrifice of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8. The covenant of grace is "an eternal covenant." The name of the promised deliverer is "I AM."

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The Crowning Messianic Blessing

The central blessing of the covenant of redemption is revealed in these words: "I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God." Ex. 6:7. This assurance is repeated in the prophecy of the new covenant as announced by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:33), and quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 8:10) as the basis of the renewed fellowship between God and His people. "It is His abiding presence which constitutes the preeminent blessing of the new covenant which Jehovah makes with His people in the day of redemption: '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 forever.' Isa. 59:21. The gift of the Spirit as an abiding presence in the heart of the individual is the crowning Messianic blessing. To precisely the same effect is the teaching of Ezekiel. The new heart and hew spirit is one of the burdens of his message (Eze. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26); and these are the Messianic gifts of God to His people through the Spirit."—*"Biblical Doctrines," B. B. Warfield, p. 122.* (See Gal. 3:13, 14.)

The significance of this covenant relation between God and Israel, that they should be His people and He would be their God, is revealed in the following conversation between Jehovah and Moses: "Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, whom thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: . . . now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them. . . . And Moses besought Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, that Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" Ex. 32:7-11. Note carefully the language used. Jehovah said, "Thy people, whom thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt," but Moses declined to accept any such responsibility, and turned the words back to Jehovah: "Thy people that Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt." Here was a reference to the covenant with Abraham, followed by the direct appeal, "Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel" (verse 13), with the result that "Jehovah repented of the evil which He said He would do unto His people" (verse 14). "My people" and its equivalents "thy people" and "your people," together with "your God" and its equivalents "thy God" and "our God," constituted an appeal to the covenant with Abraham, and were so recognized.

In view of this fact it is instructive to observe the frequency with which one or the other of these terms was used after this conversation between Jehovah and Moses. In the book of Deuteronomy alone they occur between three hundred and four hundred times. And so was the God of Abraham reminded again and again of the gracious covenant of fellowship between Him and His people.

It seems hardly necessary to state that the idea of the covenant permeates the New Testament. I have already called attention to it in the Magnificat of Mary, in the Benedictus of Zacharias, and in the address of Peter. In the whole teaching of

Jesus we find the gospel of the covenant, and this is crowned by His statement to His disciples when He instituted the Lord's supper and gave them the cup: "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 26:28. The whole gospel finds its center here, for "the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster."—*"Gospel Workers," p. 315.* This keynote of the gospel is sounded through the New Testament, and is especially emphasized in the epistle to the Hebrews, where Jesus is set forth as the priest, the sacrifice, the mediator, and the surety of the "better covenant." In the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, the word "Lamb," referring to the sacrifice on Calvary, is used twenty-eight times, and as the closing vision of "a new heaven and a new earth" was given to the beloved disciple, he "heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21:3. Here we find that the same note of fellowship is struck which has been sounded throughout the Scriptures, the note of fellowship between God and believers provided for in the covenant of grace, as indicated by the words "His peoples" and "their God."

This necessarily brief touch upon some of the high points in the historical development of the covenant with Abraham indicates that down through the centuries "the eternal covenant" has been in force, that it has been found sufficient to meet all the spiritual needs of a trustful people, and that its complete realization will be experienced in the near future, when the new creation, the kingdom of righteousness, is gloriously established. Let us be ready for "that day."

IV--The Doctrine of the Promise-Covenant

My purpose in these meditations is to develop the idea that Christianity is the religion of a divine covenant. In pursuance of this purpose I have pointed out that in the divine mind the covenant of redemption is of the nature of a promise, the expression of the divine will, a definite undertaking on God's part to do for man in desperate need what he is utterly unable to do for himself. In a hasty sketch of God's dealing with His people from the time of Abraham down through to the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness, I have shown that the original promise-covenant has been in the divine mind as the guiding principle. What I wish to emphasize just now is that the content of this promise-covenant as unfolded in the words of the prophets, while of course involving prediction, is essentially religious instruction, designed to impart spiritual life and power in the warfare against evil, and to ensure victory to loyal believers. This has been well stated in the following paragraphs:

"The Bible offers very few predictions save in the form of promises or threatenings. It differs from the systematized theologies in its not disconnecting prediction from promise or threatening. We shall find that it also differs from some of them in emphasizing one promise rather than many predictions. This is the prevailing note in both Testaments--a multitude of specifications unfolding a single promise, the promise serving as a central religious doctrine. . . .

"The most prominent thing in the New Testament is its proclamation of the kingdom and its anointed King. But it is on the basis of the divine promise that its preachers proclaim the kingdom, and when they appeal to the Old Testament in proof of Christian doctrine, they make the promise more prominent than the kingdom itself."--*The Prophets and the Promise, Willis J. Beecher, pp. 178, 179.*

In an attempt to understand more clearly how one central promise serves "as a central religious doctrine," it may be worth while to consider the difference between a human promise and a divine promise. A human promise is a form of words in which assurance is given concerning something entirely distinct from the Promiser and which does not in any way involve the very existence of the Promiser. A divine promise is of a different order. A divine promise is not a mere form of words, but the revelation of Him who is the Word (Rev. 19:13), and therefore a personality. The Promiser is inseparable from the promise. His very existence is involved in the keeping of His promise. If He failed, He would cease to be God. "Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, He is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant [promise] and loving-kindness with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." Deut. 7:9. Inasmuch as there is no future with God, but only eternal now, every promise has a present fulfillment in the divine mind, just as the Lamb was slain "from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), and as the benefits of the slain Lamb were available to faith in the promise of the coming Lamb, so all the blessings of the gospel promises, the

development to Abraham and to David of the original promise of the Seed of the woman, are available to faith. This is simply the practical application of the interpretation of faith. One version reads, "Now faith is giving substance to things hoped for." Heb. 11:1. What is promise becomes a present reality to faith which gives substance to it.

The central person in the promise, or promises, is the Son of God, the coming Messiah. All the blessings are embodied in Him. His coming in the flesh, His coming in the Spirit, and His coming in glory constitute the great theme of the promises, and the purpose of these three comings is a sharing in the divine nature, the fellowship of life with life. But this experience is obtained here and now by faith in the promises, for we read: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord [a present experience]; seeing that His divine power hath given unto us [a present possession] all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby He hath granted unto us [a gift received] His precious and exceeding great promises: that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." 2 Peter 1:2-4. The escape from corruption and the becoming partakers of the divine nature are present experiences entered into by faith in the promises.

The central blessing of the new covenant is expressed in the promise, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God" (Ex. 29:45), and the visible glory of God in the tabernacle was the evidence of the present enjoyment of that blessing. After the incarnation a fuller measure of this blessing was experienced when "among" was changed to "in" (2 Cor. 6:16); and by the coming in glory, the fullest measure will be enjoyed; for, "We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." 1 John 3:2. But all through the years we "are transformed into the same age from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18), enjoying in a constantly increasing measure the promised blessing until "that day." The promised Presence, the promised fellowship, becomes a present reality to faith, and we accept "the Lamb of God, that beareth the sin of the world." John 1:29, margin.

Having found that the divine promises constitute religious doctrine and become a reality to faith, it will certainly be interesting, and I hope profitable, to give some study to the promise idea as presented in the Scriptures. Limits of space prevent my considering all the many promises, but I will call attention to a sufficient number to make clear the doctrine of the promise-covenant.

Saul of Tarsus, having been taught in the school of Gamaliel, knew the words of the promise-covenant, but he interpreted them in harmony with the tradition of the elders, and so did not experience the blessing realized by faith, until he met Jesus on the Damascus road. After that, the promise became a personality to him, and he gave his life to witnessing for Him whom he had thus found. When he was permitted to justify his new experience before Agrippa, he reminded the king of his former manner of life as a strict Pharisee, and then declared: "And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers." Acts 26:6.

He then briefly related the transformation which came to him when the promise was made known to him as inseparable from the Promiser, and he received his commission to proclaim the remission of sins through Him. All that he taught, he affirmed, was the religious doctrine contained in the words of the prophets, "How that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of [from] the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." Verse 23.

Plainly "the hope of the promise" concerning which Paul was accused included the central features of Christian doctrine, the death and resurrection of the Messiah, as the Spirit "testified beforehand and the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them." 1 Peter 1:11. That the suffering and the subsequent glory of the Messiah constitute the primary features of the Gospel of the promise-covenant is shown by the statement of the same apostle: "I delivered unto you first of all [not in time, but in importance] that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.

That the hope of the resurrection was warranted by the covenant with Abraham is distinctly taught by our Lord in His reply to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, when He said: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" Matt. 22:31, 32. His answer "put the Sadducees to silence," because it was when "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Ex. 2:24) that He used the words quoted, recorded in Exodus 3:6. Further evidence is found in the language Paul at Antioch: "We bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus. . . And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David." Acts 13:32-34. It should be noted that both in his defense before Agrippa and his talk at Antioch, the apostle Paul refers to "the promise," using the definite article in each case. This makes it entirely clear that all subsequent promises are "the covenants of the promise" (Eph. 2:12), simply the unfolding of what was included in the original covenant-promise.

Absolute certainty of a promise-covenant is secured in three ways: First, because God, "who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2), made the promise, and confirmed it with an oath: "For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of promise [note the definite article] the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath." Heb. 6:16, 17. Second, because the man Jesus is "the surety of a better covenant." Heb. 7:22. Third, because "Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that He might confirm the promises given unto the fathers." Rom. 15:8. The oath of God, Christ the surety, and the confirmation by Christ--these establish the absolute certainty and enduring nature of the promise-covenant.

Of primary importance in the doctrine of the promise-covenant as taught by the prophets is the gift of righteousness to faith. Jehovah said to Abraham, "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah; and He reckoned it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:5, 6. The inspired comment upon this passage is worthy of careful thought: "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have made thee) before Him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be." Rom. 4:16-18.

This faith brought the blessing of justification, or faith reckoned for righteousness, to Abraham, and the record of his experience was written by the prophet Moses for the benefit of all succeeding generations as a stimulus to their faith: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sakes also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." Verses 23-25. "Here was a man who took the right way to receive sovereign blessing. He interposed nothing between the Promiser and himself. He treated the Promiser as what He is, all-sufficient and all-faithful. He opened his empty hand in that persuasion and so, because the hand was empty, the blessing was laid upon its palm."--*"The Epistle to the Romans," H. C. G. Moule, p. 123.*

We have been plainly instructed that justification by faith "is the third angel's message in verity," and inasmuch as justification by faith is the essential feature of the covenant with Abraham, as is taught in Galatians 3:8 and has been shown in this article, it follows without question that the covenant with Abraham is the very essence of the third angel's message. In calling attention to this, I do not mean to infer that in teaching this message we should simply repeat the words of that covenant; certainly not, but that we should proclaim the fullness of the meaning of that covenant as it has been historically developed from the time of Abraham until now. This is "the everlasting gospel" is to be preached to the whole world in preparation for the great consummation.

V--The Covenant of Righteousness

No intelligent Christian can think of God apart from righteousness. The essential being of God is righteousness expressed in life. In Him righteousness and life cannot be separated. The words "God," "righteousness," and "life" are so related to each other in an inseparable trio that they form the trinity of Christian thought.

The fundamental idea of righteousness and human thought is godliness, Godlikeness. Created in the image of God, it was possible for man to live in fellowship with a righteous God, and thus to testify, according to his finite capacity, the character of his Creator. This experience, however, was wholly subject to the action of the human will, and could be thwarted by it, as the history of morals plainly shows.

Sin is the absence of righteousness in one's life, for "all unrighteousness is sin." 1 John 5:17. Since the law of righteousness is the norm of the being of God, any disregard of this law is sin, for "sin is lawlessness." 1 John 3:4. It follows, of course, that unrighteousness is lawlessness, the absence of righteousness revealed in the disregard of the law of righteousness.

The Central Purpose of God

Now the central purpose of a righteous God in dealing with unrighteous man is to restore to him the privilege of fellowship which was forfeited by willful disobedience to the righteous command of God. But by his rejection of the righteous will of his Creator, man both did wrong and made himself a sinner, changing his very nature. The restoration of the sinner to his original privilege of spiritual fellowship with a righteous God made necessary, therefore, a new creation, a complete transformation of the sinful nature--not the improvement of the old life, but the impartation of a new life of righteousness.

Provision for all this was included in the purpose of God, "the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11), and was hidden in the "eternal covenant" (Heb. 13:20) which was entered into for the redemption of man. It will accordingly be profitable, I hope, to give some attention to this covenant as the covenant of righteousness.

The covenant-promise given to Abraham declared, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3), and, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This blessing in a threefold form, with a suggestion of its essential meaning, is found in the instruction given to Moses: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel: ye shall say unto them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." Num.

6:22-27. The name which was thus to be put upon the children of Israel was later revealed to be, "Jehovah our righteousness." Jer. 23:6. Thus the blessing promised to Abraham was the blessing of righteousness.

In harmony with this are the words of Peter spoken after "Jehovah our righteousness" had been manifested in the person of Jesus: "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:25, 26. That this blessing is the experience of righteousness by faith is shown by the interpretation of it given to the apostle Paul: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. 3:8. The good news that the gift of righteousness to faith was the essential feature of the covenant with Abraham is here disclosed.

But the promise-covenant with Abraham was not the first proclamation of righteousness by faith, for concerning Noah, who lived in a wicked world before the flood, we read: "Noah was a righteous man" (Gen. 6:9), and "a preacher of righteousness." 2 Peter 2:5. Further testimony concerning his work is thus borne: "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Heb. 11:7. By constructing the ark, Noah testified his absolute confidence in God, proclaimed the purpose of God to save those who believe, and brought just condemnation upon an unbelieving world. In this way God maintained His righteousness before the whole universe "when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly," but delivered the few who through faith in the covenant-promise were accounted righteous.

The waters of the flood were dried up, and a new era in gospel history was opened. But the controversy between good and evil was not brought to a close by the flood, and we must continue our study of the revelation of the covenant of righteousness, since the fullness of time was not yet come. Although the field is practically unlimited, including as it does the many centuries of world history, yet there are positive limits to my time and space, and I can therefore deal only with some of the outstanding features in this historical revelation of the eternal purpose of God to establish righteousness in the earth.

The Message of the Prophets

I have already outlined in a brief way the further development of the covenant-promise in the experience of Abraham and the later experience of David in which the gospel of righteousness by faith and of the everlasting kingdom of righteousness, was definitely made known, and I shall now turn to the message of the prophet who spoke in the name of Jehovah, and who, in addition to many warnings and threatenings, maintained the absolute certainty of the divine covenant

of righteousness, and revealed the coming of the righteous One in whom the covenant was embodied.

The prophet Joel sometimes seems to earn the title of "the prophet of gloom," so full is his message of dire threatenings, but these are lighted up with the glory of the promises of deliverance to those who heed his warnings. Here is one good illustration of this prophet's message: "The day of Jehovah is great and very terrible; and who can abide it! Yet even now, saith Jehovah, turn ye unto Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn ye to Jehovah your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil." Joel 2:11-13. But the distinctive contribution of this prophet to the development of the covenant-promise is his declaration concerning the outpouring of the Spirit "upon all flesh." To this prophecy the apostle Peter appealed as the explanation of that wonderful scene on the day of Pentecost, which marked the opening of the dispensation of the Spirit. Said he: "This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." Acts 2:16, 17.

The redemptive work of Christ has a twofold purpose in view, the gift of righteousness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is revealed in these words: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:13, 14. In the gospel of righteousness by faith preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), and through him to us, and in the prophecy of Joel cited on Pentecost, we find these two purposes of the promise-covenant developed for us. Joel is therefore a prophet of the covenant of grace.

Again, in the prophecy of Hosea we note how reproof and the covenant of righteousness are combined, as in this instance: "O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah. . . . Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to kindness; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Jehovah, till He come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:9-12.

In the same way the prophet Zephaniah warns and encourages: "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation that hath no shame; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the day of Jehovah's anger come upon you. Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept His ordinances: . . . it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." Zeph. 2:1-3.

The Witness of Isaiah

But it is in the prophecy of Isaiah, fittingly designated as the gospel prophet, that we find most fully proclaimed the gospel of the righteousness of the promise-covenant. It will not be possible to present all his messages of this special character, but I will call attention to some of the prominent ones. Six R's suggest the oracles of this prophet,--Rebellion, Redemption, Righteousness, Recompense,

Remnant, Restoration. In the very first chapter we find a characteristic note of the whole prophecy: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. . . . Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity. . . . From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it. . . . Wash you, make you clean; . . . cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. . . . How is the faithful city become a harlot! . . . Afterward thou shalt be called The city of righteousness, a faithful town." Isa. 1:2-26. Here we have emphatic condemnation followed by the hope of righteousness contained in the covenant-promise.

In the second part of this prophecy, chapters 40-66, the covenant of righteousness is greatly emphasized. In this section, the word "righteousness" is found more than fifty times in twenty-seven chapters, only a few of which can be cited here. Of course the very essence of the gospel of the covenant of righteousness is opened up to us in the fifty-third chapter, where the substitutionary suffering of "My righteous Servant" who "bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," is clearly revealed: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:5, 6. The result of His vicarious ministry is thus stated: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by the knowledge of Himself shall My righteous Servant make many righteous; and He shall bear their iniquities." Verse 11, margin.

How plainly is this interpreted and applied for us in the words of the apostle Peter addressed to a company of Jews at Jerusalem: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers [note the reference to the covenant], hath glorified His Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Acts 3:13-15. To the same effect are the words of Jesus Himself: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28. Thus the whole purpose of the mediatorial ministry of Jesus is to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy of the covenant of righteousness, and all the blessings procured for us by that sacrificial ministry are involved in His work in making many righteous in fulfillment of the covenant of righteousness.

Although the prophet Isaiah had definitely predicted the captivity in Babylon (Isa. 39:6), and had described in considerable detail the horrors of that experience; yet, as was the custom of the prophets, he declared the gospel of the restoration of the chosen people. Here is a good illustration of his message: "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. . . . And thou shalt know that I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. . . .

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. . . . Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever." Isa. 60:15-21. Thus was the gospel of righteousness presented as the fulfillment of the covenant of righteousness.

The same message was again proclaimed in these words: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me; because Jehovah hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; . . . That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He may be glorified." Isa. 61:1-3. That the work of the Righteous Servant, the coming Messiah, is here described is plainly shown by the fact that Jesus of Nazareth read these words in the synagogue in His home town, and then declared: "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4:21. Thus was to be realized God's gracious purpose "to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore unto Abraham our Father, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies should serve Him without fear, and holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Luke 1:72-75.

Limits of space prevent me from dealing further with the prophet Isaiah, but enough has been presented to make it clear that he proclaimed the gospel of the covenant of righteousness.

Testimony of Jeremiah

I will now touch upon the message of the prophet Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who both foretold and saw the downfall of Jerusalem. Although he lived in the time when, interpreting current history from the human standpoint, it seemed that Jehovah had abhorred the covenant (Ps. 89:39), and yet our prophet testified to the certainty of that same covenant: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness." Jer. 23:5, 6. Here is the good news of the Saviour concerning whom we read: "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness." 1 Cor. 1:30. The days of the prophet have come. The righteous Branch has appeared according to the covenant-promise, and soon His kingdom of righteousness will be established in the earth. In this time of apostasy and peril we may confidently look for the full salvation of the covenant, according to the words of Jeremiah: "Jehovah hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of Jehovah are God." Jer. 51:10.

Although the prophet Daniel both testified and revealed the gospel of the covenant-promise in the land of captivity, yet I must confine myself to one of his utterances. After he had made a full confession of his people's sin, he prayed thus:

"O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, let Thine anger and Thy wrath, I pray Thee, be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem." Dan. 9:16. In response to this prayer there came to him this central expression of the covenant of righteousness: "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." Dan. 9:24. Here is the climax of the prophecy of the covenant of righteousness. No further development could be expected, and no further development came. In Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of man, this "everlasting righteousness" was fully manifested, and in Him made available to all believers. Thus did the gospel of the covenant become a personality in the Promiser, and the fullness of blessing was assured.

VI--The Blood of the Covenant

To the modern interpreters of the gospel who substitute human philosophy for revelation, the blood of the covenant is a distasteful subject. To the believer in the saving gospel of Jesus Christ whose blood was shed on Calvary, the blood of the covenant, although a deep mystery, is meditated on with increasing interest and joyful comfort. To this vital theme I shall now give some study.

What, then, are we to understand by the blood of the covenant? To the Scriptures we must look for the correct answer to this important question. Note these words: "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of life." Lev. 17:11. The blood of the new covenant is the life of the Covenanter, and it is the life of this Covenanter which makes atonement for sin. Here we find the central truth of the gospel of the grace of God. Our sins have separated us from God (Isa. 59:2), and prevented that personal fellowship with Him for which we were created. Sin cannot be ignored or condoned by a holy God. Something must be done about it if we are to continue to enjoy life, and something has been done.

Our Lord touched the keynote of the gospel as He sat with His disciples at supper on the night of His betrayal, when He gave them the cup of red wine, and said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 26:27, 28. The blood of Jesus Himself is the blood of the covenant, redemptive blood. This blood was not offered grudgingly, but was poured out freely. This was done in order to provide remission of sins, that the forfeited fellowship might again be enjoyed.

We have already seen that the blood is the life, and that it makes atonement for sin because it is the life. The life forfeited restored to fellowship with God by giving life for life. In order to accomplish this infinitely precious result, the life given must be adequate, and such was the life of the eternal Son of God; it must be offered freely, and Jesus testified to this when He said, "I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18); it must be acceptable, and of this the Father gave assurance in the repeated statement, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17; 17:5. So precious was this life of the Son of God, this blood, that it was sufficient to pay the redemption price for the whole human family, as is plainly taught: "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, for your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

Silver and gold may suffice to meet the penalty in an earthly court for some crime, but such corruptible things are absolutely insufficient as the payment for a corrupted life, a life of sin. The sinless life, and infinitely precious life, the life of the God-man offered "through the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14), the life of the last

Adam, in whom the whole human family is condensed in union with the divine nature, is the only sufficient ransom price, and this was freely given: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28); and "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died." 2 Cor. 5:14. All sinned in the racial sin of the first Adam (Rom. 5:12); and all died in the racial death of the last Adam, the head of the new human family, and so was the redemption price paid. Thus was the blood of the covenant, the life of the eternal Son, "poured out for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 26:28.

When we consider the glorious truth here presented,--the blood of the covenant, the life of the beloved Son, freely given as the price paid, by virtue of which "we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. 1:7),--it certainly seems that the modern sensitiveness about blood atonement must be the outgrowth either of willful ignorance or of that inherent pride which claims that aided human nature is fully able to redeem itself. But the latter is the same kind of deception as was employed to induce our first parents to reject the holy commandment of the Creator, and to trust their lives to a rebellious creature. This is the false philosophy of all willful paganism: "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Rom. 1:25.

This is no time to be experimenting again with an outworn theory which has wrecked humanity from the days of Adam until now. "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7), and any other method of cleansing fails to remove the stain.

The Blood the Life of the Covenanter

But there is a still further meaning of the blood of the covenant which we must not overlook. The new covenant and the Covenanter are inseparable. The blood of the covenant is the blood of the Covenanter, and the life of the Covenanter, and this life was given, not only as the redemptive price for sin, but also as the power for the forgiven sinner to walk in newness of life. There is truth in the hymn:

"Would you do service for Jesus your King?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood;

Would you live daily His praises to sing?

There's wonderful power in the blood."

It is the life which has passed through death and conquered it, that is the power for obedience to the will of God. This is clearly taught in the following quotation:

"In this, the doing of God's will, we have the destiny of the creature, the blessedness of heaven, the inmost secret of redemption. In this consists the worth of Christ's sacrifice, and this alone is the reason why His blood prevails. . . . We have more than once spoken of the two aspects of Christ's death,--substitution with the atonement it wrought, and fellowship with the conformity it brings. The two are inseparably connected. As long as we look at the substitution simply as an act accomplished outside of us, without seeking to know its inner nature and meaning,

the fellowship and conformity of Christ's death will be an impossibility. But as we enter into the real meaning of the death for us and in our stead, to that which constituted its divine life and power, we shall find that death and the life out of death becomes ours in truth, laying hold of us, and bringing us into the true life-fellowship with our blessed Leader and Forerunner."--*"The Holiest of All," Andrew Murray, p. 335.*

It is most essential to our success in the Christian life, to the life of victory over sin, that we should both understand and appropriate in its fullness the meaning of the blood of the covenant. Some helpful thoughts concerning the central idea of the gospel will be found in the following paragraphs written by one whose ability as a Christian writer will be recognized:

"Thus two distinct ideas were included in the sacrifice of a victim,--the death of the victim by the shedding of its blood, and the liberation, so to speak, of the principle of life by which it had been animated, so that this life became available for another end. The ritual sacrifice took account of both these moments in the symbolic act. The slaughtering of the victim, which was properly the work of the offerer, was sharply separated from the sprinkling of the blood, which was the exclusive work of the priest. The death was inflicted by him who in his representative acknowledged the due punishment of his sin; the bringing nearer to God of the life so rendered up was the office of the appointed mediators between God and men. Death and life for both exhibited, death as a consequence of sin, and life made by the divine appointment a source of life. And it is worthy of notice that these two thoughts of the shedding and the sprinkling of the blood, which embrace the two elements in the conception of atonement, were equally expressed by the one word [rendered in English by three words] 'outpouring of blood' (Heb. 9:22). Thus the life was first surrendered and then united with God. . . .

"Thus in accordance with the typical teaching of the Levitical ordinances, the blood of Christ represents Christ's life (1) as rendered in free self-sacrifice to God for men, and (2) as brought into perfect fellowship with God, having been set free by death. The blood of Christ is, as shed, the life of Christ given for men; and, as applied, the life of Christ now given to men, the life which is the spring of their life (John 12:24). In each case the efficacy of the life of Christ depends, from man's side, on the incorporation of the believer 'in Christ.' . . .

"The two elements which are thus included in the thought of Christ's blood, or, in the narrower sense, of the word, of Christ's death and Christ blood, that is of Christ's death (the blood shed) and of Christ's life (the blood offered), are indicated clearly in 1 John 1:9: [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins [the virtue of Christ death]; and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [the virtue of Christ's life]."--*"The Epistles of John," B. F. Wescott, pp. 35-37.*

In view of the practical importance of the right understanding of the blood of the covenant, it seems best to submit one more extract which interprets this vital subject:

"It is to Christ's offering *as a whole*, therefore, that we must look in order to realize the full efficacy of His atoning work. . . . The offering of death had to be

completed by the offering of life, or what in his expressive phrase the writer [of the epistle to the Hebrews] denotes as 'the blood of the Christ,' in order that Christ Himself, quickened and glorified, might bring His brethren into the same quickened and glorified state. And as Christ's blood was thus the means through which he entered into the divine presence and cleansed the individual conscience, so it was also through His blood that the new covenant, securing the promise of the eternal inheritance, was established and confirmed. . . .

"Thus as an offering of blood, an offering of life, it is essentially a *present* offering. And sharers in it are enabled to stand before God, not merely in the remembrance of the past death, but in the power of the present life. And while thus present, Christ's offering is also *complete*. It embraces the whole life of man, and secures for him not only escape from the guilt of sin, but deliverance from its power. . . . And the believer, as being already in One who is 'apart from sin,' can anew enter into the communion and fellowship with God which his own sin had interrupted, and which the Levitical sacrifices had been able only outwardly and partially to restore."--"*The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*," George Milligan, pp. 152-154.

Efficacy of the Blood of Christ

Turning now to the Scriptures, we shall find that the efficacy of the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, in the two aspects above presented, is urged with much force. I can deal with only a few of the many cases. Leaders of the flock are exhorted "to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28. Believers are instructed that they were redeemed, or purchased, "with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:19. We are plainly taught that "it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:19, 20), the blood by which the new covenant was ratified. These statements made prominent the value of the blood as the payment of the redemption price.

Other passages, while not reducing the value of this truth, call attention to the blood, or the life, and delivering from the power of sin. The contrast between the first step in the Christian experience, justification by the blood, and the saving power of the life which has conquered death, is clearly made: "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." Rom. 5:9, 10. The idea of fellowship experienced by those who were "without God in the world," is thus revealed. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. The blood's making impossible service acceptable to God is plainly made known: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Heb.

9:14. The relation of the blood of the covenant to the resurrection of Jesus and to our consequent life of doing the will of God is here presented: "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, making you perfect in every good thing to do His will." Heb. 13:20, 21. In the blood of the covenant, the life of the Covenanter, is found the resurrection power which orders the life in harmony with the will of God, a life of obedience to the law written in the heart.

"We have been rescued, ransomed, redeemed out of our old natural life under the power of sin, utterly and eternally. Sin has not the slightest claim on us, nor the slightest power over us, except as our ignorance and unbelief or half-heartedness allows it to have dominion. Our new-covenant birthright is to stand in the freedom with which Christ has made us free. Until the soul sees, and accepts, and desires, and claims the redemption, and the liberty which has the life of the Son of God for its purchase price, and its measure, and its security, it can never fully live the "new covenant life," the life and the power of the blood of the covenant.

"Behold, behold the Lamb of God,
On the cross, on the cross;
For you He shed His precious blood.
On the cross, on the cross.

"Where'er I go, I'll tell the story,
Of the cross, of the cross;
In nothing else my soul shall glory,
Save the cross, save the cross."

VII—The Law in the Heart

The law of God is the language of the holy will of God concerning the subjects of His kingdom. It is the standard of conduct, a revelation of the divine character, the ideal of human character. It was not changed by the entrance of sin, and it is not changed by the forgiveness of sin, since the righteous character of God is eternally unchanged. He was, and is, and shall be always the same holy God, in whom "there is no variation or the slightest suggestion of change." (Weymouth.)

Since God in His essential nature is the objective definition of that short but profound word of love, it follows that His law is the law of love, the way of love, a revelation of love in action in relation to both God and man. This was recognized by our Lord in His reply to the question, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" when He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22:36-39. To the same effect are the words of the apostle Paul in that epistle which is a most instructive exposition of the law: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth. . . hath fulfilled the law. . . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." Rom. 13:8-10.

The law of God, then, tells us in a simple but authoritative way how to express our love to God and to our neighbor.

But here we are met by a question which baffles all unaided attempts to meet the divine standard: How can one reveal either to God or to men what he does not himself possess? Here is the catalogue of our natural characteristics: "We also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." Titus 3:3. How impossible it is for those "hateful, hating one another" to live the life of love! But what can men do about it? Can he bring love out of hatred? When darkness generates light, when cold generates heat, when sourness generates sweetness, then may hatred change itself to love. While we know that "with men this is impossible," we must remember that "with God all things are possible." Matt. 19:26. Our hope must therefore be in God, and not in ourselves.

Law Revealed in Actual Life

But we should now study this matter of the law from a different standpoint. Has the law of God been revealed to us in any other way than in the words of the ten commandments? Has the meaning of law of love been shown to us in actual life? My answer to both these questions is, Yes, in the person and work of the God-man. Jehovah, who gave the law in a scene of majesty and glory, as Jehovah-Jesus showed the interpretation of that law in a life of humble obedience and of sacrificial devotion to the need of others. He who told the lawyer what the law meant in conduct, illustrated His definition by a life-picture in which love was the

compelling motive. Jesus of Nazareth lived the law of love, and died as an unparalleled testimony to it. We should note some facts concerning this.

In the first earthly garden, man was induced to disregard the commandment of love by the assurance, "Ye shall be as God" (Gen. 3:5), and so love of self took the place of love of God, and self took the place of God, and the love-nature was lost. Then came the all-inclusive covenant-promise, the gospel of restoration through the seed of the woman. Gen. 3:15. The largeness of meaning included in this original statement of the plan of love was gradually unfolded in many "covenants of the promise" during the centuries of the controversy between good and evil; "but when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4:4, 5. Now we shall see the of love God in action. Now we shall see that love does not mean a mere gracious feeling, a sentimental emotion, or a pitying glance toward the unfortunate, but a surrender of honor and glory, and a life of unappreciated devotion to the rescue of the lost, extending from Bethlehem to Calvary with blood-marks all the way. "On the cross of Calvary is manifested the greatest thing in the world, Love; the darkest mystery of the universe, Sin; and the highest expression of God's character, Holiness."

Now let us think a bit further. What is the explanation of such a life of sacrificial devotion as was exhibited by Jesus of Nazareth? We are not left in any doubt about this. The psalmist David revealed the secret in his psalm concerning the Son of David when he contrasted the weakness of the Levitical sacrifices with the prevailing power of Him who sacrificed Himself in doing the will of God. His words are worthy of thoughtful study: "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast no delight in; Mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is written of Me: I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:6-8. Here is a prophetic key to the right interpretation of the life of Jesus. The law of love was in His heart, not as a code of hard and fast commands, but as a spiritual principle, a holy power capable of manifesting the righteousness of God in a wicked world. To such a reality of a living sacrifice as this, the typical service gave way, and shadow was changed to substance. The will of God manifested in a life which conquered death was the creative power which transforms every believer and becomes the very life of his life. This is the revelation of what is meant by the law of love in the heart, the life of the Law-giver manifested in the law-keeping life of him who receives it.

The Law in the Heart

We must now give some consideration to the relation between the covenant and the law and the heart. In the old covenant it was the law as a code, written upon stone, the keeping of which conditioned all blessings. This arrangement failed. Why? Because those who promised could not realize their promises. This covenant rested upon the promises of weak men, the will of man instead of the will of God. But the new covenant "hath been enacted upon better promises." Heb.

8:6. Here is the story in brief form: "For finding fault with them, He saith, 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 lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in My, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." Heb. 8:8-10. What is meant by the law written in the heart has been forcefully stated thus:

"The promise of the new covenant is to convert the external law into an inner life, to put it so in the heart that it shall be its inmost life, so that, as naturally as the heart wills and lives and acts on earth, it shall will and live and do what God demands. Why does an acorn so spontaneously grow up into an oak? Because the law of the oak is written in the heart of the acorn. The life of every creature acts with delight in accordance with the law of its Creator, that is, its inner nature. God and His holiness, Christ and His Holy Spirit, if they belong to us, must be as near to us, as essentially within us, as truly inherent in our own life, as our own thinking, willing, and doing. And so God promises that He will put His law in our minds and write it on our hearts, in such a way that it shall be our inner nature, are very life, and we shall act according to it as naturally as we think or live. Yes, He will do it. So that we can say, even as His Son did, 'Thy law is within My heart; I delight to do Thy will, O God.'"--*"The Holiest of All," Andrew Murray, pp. 272, 273.*

Now this is certainly a very attractive picture; but is it, or can it be, a practical experience? In this connection much, even all, depends upon our interpretation of the covenant of grace. Let us note again its meaning. "In a divine covenant the parties do not stand in the remotest degree as equal contractors. God in His good pleasure makes the arrangement which man receives, though he is not passive. Such a covenant is a disposition, an ordainment, an expression of the divine will which they to whom it is made reverently welcome."--*Westcott*. How then do we reverently welcome and receive this covenant, and thus open the way for its complete fulfillment in our experience? The formal answer is easy: It is by faith. The practical answer involves a surrender and an acceptance, a surrender of the perverted life and the acceptance of the divine life. Another way of putting it is, that it is the acknowledgement of the failure of the natural life and of our complete dependence upon a higher order of life, the life which was manifested in Christ.

I know that it is easier to state this principle than to practice it. Our natural tendency is to live under the old covenant, and to say with Israel of old, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do," relying upon our own power; but this is the way to defeat. Our only hope of success in our experience with God is in the absolute surrender of self, self-will, self-confidence, the merely animal life, and the acceptance of the new life in Christ Jesus. This is to be done day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment, in the atmosphere of grace and with childlike

confidence that what our loving Lord has promised He is able also to perform, and that He will perform it without fail. And so as we live physically by breathing the atmosphere with which God has surrounded us, and by appropriating daily food for physical strength, so we may live spiritually by the constant appropriation of the true breath of life, the Holy Spirit, and of "the living bread which came down out of heaven." John 6:51. But this can be no halfway experience. Our motto must be, "None of self, and all of Thee." This is the revelation of the meaning of Biblical faith, as expressed in the following acrostic:

F-orsaking
A-ll
I
T-ake
H-im.

We have already found that it is quite impossible for us to reveal a love which we do not possess, and it is therefore of fundamental importance that we should understand clearly how we may really have the love which we are to manifest in life. It cannot be developed in the natural heart by any cultural method. It cannot be grafted on to the merely animal life by any scientific skill. It must come wholly from God without the natural man. It is a divine gift imparted by divine power. Here is the method: "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." Rom. 5:5. "God is love," and the Holy Spirit of God is the very essence of love. When this Spirit of love is given unto us, the love of God is imparted to us, the very life of God is given to us, and we become the children of God by the new birth. "He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." 1 John 4:16. Here is the secret of the Christian life.

Love and Obedience

Some have seemed to entertain the idea that the love of God thus given to him who believes on Christ and enters into the new-covenant experience, takes the place of the obedience called for by the old covenant. But this is an absolute perversion of the divine purpose. This has been well stated in the following extract:

"The crowning gift of Christ's exaltation was the Holy Ghost, to bring salvation to us as an inward thing. The first covenant demanded obedience, and failed because it could not find it. The new covenant was expressly made to provide for obedience. To live in the full enjoyment of the new-covenant blessing, obedience is essential. . . .

"Obedience is possible. The thought of a demand which man cannot possibly render, cuts at the very root of true hope and strength. The secret thought, 'No man can obey God,' throws thousands back into the old-covenant life, and into a false peace that God does not expect more than that we do our best. Obedience is possible; the whole new covenant promises and secures this. . . . Obedience deals with the doing of what is known to be God's will, as taught by the word, and the Holy Spirit, and conscience. . . . When the full light of God broke in upon Gerhard

Tersteegen, he wrote: 'I promise with Thy help and power, rather to give up the last drop of my blood, than knowingly and willingly in my heart or my life be untrue and disobedient to Thee.' Such obedience is an attainable degree of grace. .

..

"When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it means that the love of God's law and of Himself has now become the moving power of our life. This love is no vague sentiment, in man's imagination of something that exists in heaven, but a living, mighty power of God in the heart, a working effectually according to His working, which worketh in us mightily. A life of obedience is possible."--*"The Two Covenants," Andrew Murray, pp. 116-119.*

When God fulfills the new-covenant promise to write His law in the heart, there comes into the heart, the very being of man, a new life, not even the life of the Holy God whose holiness is expressed in an His law. This is accomplished by the gift of the Holy Spirit in the heart in response to faith, that Spirit which is the guide into the truth and the power for obedience to the truth.

Every one who learns what it means to have the law of God written in the heart, will welcome this experience as the highest attainment of the Christian life, and will gladly offer his body a living sacrifice, that the will of God may be fully accomplished in a life of a joyful obedience to a living Father, who has promised: "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances, and do them." Eze. 36:27. Does not your heart glad to respond to such a privilege as this?

VIII—The Appropriation of Its Blessings

We must remember that, although the covenant of grace is an undertaking on the part of God for the salvation of man, yet in the experience of salvation man is not passive. What God in free love provides, man in free will accepts. Not only so, but what is thus accepted must be imparted to others. To the worldly-wise philosopher it may seem a self-evidence absurdity that the only way to retain the gifts of God is to impart them to others, but He who gave Himself for us and to us, established this divine principle: "Freely ye received, freely give." Matt. 10:8. Those who have with loving hearts followed this instruction, know that it is the true law of increase, and that the seed thus sown yields a double fruitage.

But what are the blessings of the new covenant which we are to appropriate and impart to others? They are many, too many to be listed and discussed in a brief article, but I wish to be as specific as possible, and so I will deal in a definite way with at least a few of them. I might say that they are all related in a logical way to one supernatural reality--conscious, personal oneness with God in Jesus Christ, the fellowship of life with life, of spirit with spirit. This is the assured goal of the covenant, according to the words of God Himself: "I will put My law put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Jer. 31:33.

A clear interpretation of the meaning of these promises is given to us through the apostle Paul, who, after describing the wretched condition of the man who tries of himself to realize the spiritual law in his life, thus reveals the secret of the same man who has found deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:2-4.

"In Christ Jesus" is the keynote of this experience. The law of God in the heart as the very life of him who is "in Christ Jesus," and manifested in the fact that the ordinance of the law is fulfilled in him who walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit, becomes the normal life of the believer. Thus personal fellowship, the conscious union with God, which was lost through sin, is restored in the person and work of the Son of God, who came "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," and "condemned sin in the flesh." This is the practical experience of the fulfilled promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." This is the central blessing of the new covenant--the restoration of intimate fellowship with God. But it will be seen at once that the enjoyment of this central blessing involves the whole mediatorial ministry of Christ in dealing with sin for its removal. Sin is the expression of enmity against God, and is therefore absolutely incompatible with the experience of fellowship with God. Sin must be forgiven, and the heart must

be cleansed, and this has been made possible; for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Appropriating the Blessing of Fellowship

The first step, then, in the experience of appropriating the blessing of fellowship with God, is to believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven our confessed sins, and has made us accepted in the Beloved. Next, and inseparable from it, we must claim, and thank God for, the gift of His own righteousness, which is the essential part of forgiveness. Finally, we must by the grace of Christ reveal the life of the forgiven sinner, the life of the indwelling Christ, in such a ministry for others as will impart to them the same blessing which we have received. And this experience of self-sacrificing ministry will increase our own joy and power in victory.

But let us go a little further. This fellowship with God in Christ is the fruit of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit is the goal of Christ's redemptive work, as is thus stated: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:13, 14. The blessing of Abraham is righteousness by faith, and the gift of the Spirit is the seal of that righteousness and the pledge of its continuance. In other words, the presence of the Spirit of the God-man is the presence of Him who is "Jehovah our righteousness," in whom we have access to God. Eph. 2:18. But here again we find the secret of our fellowship with God, according to our Lord's own revelation made to His disciples: "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. . . . If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:20-23. Abiding in the Father and in the Son is again the central blessing of the new covenant.

It is interesting to note in this connection that quite a decided change is now being experienced by some of the leaders of modern thought in their effort to solve vital religious problems. During the last century the claims of evolution have been supported in an almost extreme way. Natural development is applied with the same degree of certainty in the religious world as in the scientific field, and the long-standing teaching concerning the inability of man to lift himself to a higher plane of spiritual attainment has been emphatically questioned or even totally rejected. But world conditions during the last twenty years have presented a serious challenge to this modern view, so pleasing to the natural man and has led to an effort to readjust a discredited philosophy in harmony with actual experience. The conviction is growing that evolution does not necessarily mean a change for the better; that there is such a thing as evil in the world, even though a personal devil may not be conceded, that what is known as Humanism as a purely naturalistic religious consciousness, has not satisfactorily demonstrated itself as a

solution in man's quest for something better than the old-fashioned gospel of the supernatural; and that there may be a need for some readjustment of the Modernistic philosophy in order to account for the inescapable fact, proved by reliable statistics, that moral standards have been lowered, that crimes of a shocking character are on the increase, and that self-restraint, the necessary condition of the higher and "more abundant life," is rapidly being effaced from human consciousness.

Since the World War the nationalistic spirit has been steadily increasing in strength, confidence in peace pacts and in national alliances has been weakened, and the grave need of preparation for a conflict of uncertain but serious dimensions is being recognized. Almost desperate efforts are being made in diplomatic conferences to maintain peace, but national leaders have an ill-concealed foreboding of the immediate future, and are showing it plainly by an unprecedented and almost reckless expenditure of money in the race of armaments. I shall not prophesy in any detail as to the future; I do not need to do so. Present conditions provide all the information needed to convince the open minded that the world is out of gear, that human philosophy and the modern substitutes for revealed religion have failed to fulfill their promises, and the indications of a terrible collapse cannot be regarded lightly.

To the prayerful student of the Scriptures this is as plain as the handwriting on the wall at the feast of Belshazzar. Perilous times are here. Evil men and seducers are growing "worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13. The counsel of God is being rejected, the will of God is being set aside for the human will, and the gates of human passion are being opened wide. No human wisdom and no human effort can remedy this situation. The gospel of the cross, the gospel of the crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour, the power of God unto salvation, is the only hope of a distraught world. And let it be clearly understood that this will not be a mass movement, but an individual experience. The invitation is to all, but the acceptance lies in the active will of each hearer. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. The gospel of self-salvation, however much it may be readjusted, cannot meet the need of slave of sin. A new creation by the power of the cross is the only solution of such a situation.

The Life of Victory Over Sin

But let us return to our definite theme. Another outstanding blessing of the new covenant, to be appropriated by us, is the life of victory over sin, the life of deliverance from the bondage of sin, the life of freedom in Christ. Christ conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the privilege of the true follower of Christ to share in this victory, but there should be no misunderstanding of what is involved in this experience.

A life of victory over sin does not mean a life free from temptation and constant warfare. Christ "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Heb. 4:15. Plainly it is no sin to be tempted, but sin comes in the surrender to temptation, and in willfully acting contrary to the known will of God for us.

The positive assurance of victory in the experience of the believer is the logical result of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth has fought the fight in our behalf, and has won the victory. This is clearly foreshadowed in the experience of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, when he was terrified by a great throng of his enemies who threatened the very existence of his kingdom. He prayed earnestly to the covenant-keeping God, "the God of our fathers," and the answer came in a message of hope through an accredited prophet: "Thus saith Jehovah unto you, Fear not ye, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Jehovah with you, O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go ye out against them; for Jehovah is with you." 2 Chron. 20:15-17. The king accepted the message and acted accordingly. It was only necessary for him to go forth with confidence in order to reap the fruit of the victory won by Jehovah, and so he encouraged the people: "Believe in Jehovah your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Verse 20. As they expressed their faith in a song of praise to Jehovah for the promised victory, He made their enemies their own destroyers, and it was only left for the king of Judah to collect and carry away the spoil. The battle was God's and He won the victory; but it was simple faith which appropriated the victory and enjoyed its benefits.

The application of this historico-prophetic teaching is found in the gospel of the saving work of Christ. He assumed human nature, and was "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8), in order that "through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:14, 15. His own words to us are these: "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome [conquered] the world." John 16:33. In the eternal mind and purpose of the triune God, the devil has been brought to nought, the world has been conquered, and a complete victory has been won. It remains for us to appropriate and apply this victory in our daily experience by the exercise of a triumphant faith.

But there is one feature of this victorious experience which is often overlooked, and must therefore be strongly emphasized; in prayer and praise the victory must be claimed, and thanks rendered for it, before we go out to the battlefield, or before there are any visible signs of victory. Note this teaching in the conquest of Jericho. The children of Israel had marched around the walls of that city for a whole week, following the instruction given by Jehovah to Joshua, with no visible results. The wall stood just as firm as before, and the people protected by them doubtless felt just as secure as before. Then came the final test of faith in the command of Joshua, "Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city." Joshua 6:16.

Doubting Thomases and modern skeptics would of course say, "We see nothing for which to shout," and thus they would fail of securing the victory; but not so

with the people before Jericho, as we are plainly told: "It came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, . . . and they took the city." Joshua 6:20. By the shout of faith the people united themselves with the purpose and power of Jehovah, who then wrought mightily in their behalf in giving them the victory which He Himself had won. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." Heb. 11:30. In Joshua's time the people shouted before the walls fell down. In Jehoshaphat's time the people sang praises for victory before they arrived on the battlefield. In our time we must follow their instructive example.

I suggest this as a practical way of appropriating daily victories: every morning, before we go out to meet the unknown experiences of the daily warfare, praise God for the victory which has been won for us, thank Him for the victories to be granted that day, and then in the face of an active foe and of high walls, claim the victory before it is visibly revealed. In every case our faith must of course rest upon the word of God, while we seek the glory of God, and not the gratification of any selfish desire. We shall never boast of victories thus appropriated, but shall humbly thank God for the gifts of His grace manifested in our lives.

All the blessings of the covenant are embodied in Christ, and are appropriated through faith in Him. We listen to His voice as He says to us, "Come to Me," "Learn of Me," "Believe in Me," "Follow Me," "Abide in Me," and He becomes our victory.

And now what shall I say in concluding this whole consideration of the gospel of the covenant? The subject has by no means been exhausted, but I hope enough has been presented to strengthen our faith, to enlarge our hope, and to stimulate our love. "If God, indeed, be nothing but a very fountain of goodness and glory, of beauty and blessedness, the more we can have of His presence, the more we conform to His will, the more we are engaged in His service, the more we have Him ruling and working all in us, the more truly happy shall we be. And that is only a true and good religious life, which brings us every day nearer to this God, which makes us give up everything to have more of Him. No obedience can be too strict, no dependence too absolute, no confidence too implicit, to a soul that is learning to count God Himself its chief good, its exceeding joy. . . . The new covenant may become to us one of the windows of heaven to which we see into the face, into the very heart of God." [Andrew Murray, *The Two Covenants*]

"Blessed Jesus, meek and lowly, with us here take Thine abode;
We would fain like Thee be holy, humbly walking with our God.
We would Thy sweet Spirit cherish, welcome in our hearts Thy stay;
Lest without Thine aid we perish, O, abide with us, we pray."