

# THE COVENANT OF GRACE

**Preached At Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on Lord's day  
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*"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 minds and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people." (Hebrews 8:10)*

Neither sin, nor law, nor providence, nor lack of means, nor ignorance shall ever enter into this covenant to destroy one member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ. It is a very full covenant; it contains everything necessary to life and godliness; it secures all in it from every kind of death, from indulging in sin, from sinking under guilt, from the ignorance that is in man, in even the election of grace by nature. The previous covenant God did find fault with, it was not perfect. There are three covenants, speaking generally at the moment, revealed in the Scriptures.

The covenant of works made in Adam's nature and so in our nature, which covenant we have all broken; that never will be renewed, never patched up. It results in death, nothing less; death eternally where no Surety is found. Death in respect of the church of God was not abolished by omnipotence only, but swallowed up by the death of Jesus Christ. That covenant the Lord's people have done with.

In the 7th of Romans it is told us that "the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth, so that if while her husband lives she is married to another man she is an adulteress; but if her husband be dead then she is free from that law," so that she can be married to another man properly. Yea, says the apostle by the Holy Ghost, "Ye are dead to the law by the body of Christ," and the marriage that is to take place when the bride completed shall have prepared herself for it by having on the clean fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints, then will be the full consummation of God's purpose in the covenant.

The second covenant is the Levitical or Mosaic covenant, a covenant given in the hand of a mediator, even by Moses. That particularly belonged to the nation of the Jews. In that covenant God required of them perfect obedience to its enactments, its elaborate ritual, its perpetually repeated sacrifices, and the separation of the people from the nations round about them. With this covenant the Lord finds fault. Its sacrifices could never take away sins. If they could have done at any one time, there would not have remained any more sacrifices for sins. That covenant was done away in Christ, and by Him when He said respecting all works under either of the covenants, under both of them: "It is finished."

And now the third covenant is brought in, the covenant of grace expressed so wonderfully and beautifully and fully in the text, the covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. The two first had conditions, conditions laid upon men, and they failed to obey. This covenant has, as all

covenants have, its conditions, but they are laid on one Person, on Jesus Christ, "the Surety of a better covenant established upon better promises." He had to fulfil it in all its conditions, and so within this covenant He said to His Father, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me; I delight to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7) And everything is summed up in one word: "He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," (Isa. 53:6) and by removing iniquity Christ brought in an everlasting righteousness, for He made an end of sin, (Dan. 9:24) and where no sin is there is no unrighteousness. O what a mercy it will be if we are found in this covenant; if our union with Adam and our obligations to the first covenant were abolished by Jesus Christ when He said, "It is finished," and dismissed His spirit! If it was so the day will come when that will be fulfilled (with many it has come, with an innumerable number in heaven it has been fulfilled): "I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts." With some here, blessed be God, it has been fulfilled in a measure. What a wonder of divine grace! I just said no ignorance can destroy people who are in this covenant. Provision is made for it. "They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, I will teach them; I will see to it that they are made wise unto salvation. I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts." Now what are these laws? God has said He will put them into the mind and write them in the hearts of the people in this covenant.

They are first of all, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; that is the first thing, which in the words of Christ means this: "Ye must be born again." The new birth takes place in every person interested in this covenant. Dear friends, to be born again is to receive the new-covenant blessing. "God commands the blessing on Mount Zion, even life for evermore, and in Mount Zion it shall be said of this man, He was born there." (Ps. 133:3; Ps. 87:5,6) This is the law that God puts into the mind and writes in the hearts of His people, new life. Hence new actions, new courses, new feelings, new wants, new desires, new aspirations, new views, and all of them according to the nature of this life, all of them manifesting the nature of this life; and what the Lord commanded the Jews, which they broke through, is brought into spiritual reality in the church. He said to the Jews, now you are not to join yourself to the nations round about you. Do not take of their daughters for wives for your sons; do not intermarry. Do not learn their ways. Do not follow their maxims. Do not worship their idols. You are mine; you dwell in My sanctuary, you are My inheritance. Here are My commandments, here is the way of access to Me, here is the place of meeting between Me and you, the throne of grace. Do not mix with other nations. But these commandments did not give to this people a new heart, and so they broke through and mingled themselves with others. But this new covenant provides a new heart, a new spirit, a new life. Therefore the people are enabled to walk in Christ's word "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" (Acts 2:40) and everyone here born again has in some measure a witness in his own heart that it is so. You cannot, would not, dare not at times even think of mingling with the world again, take up those things which once were pleasures to you; and for this reason--not that the whip is ready for the back of the unwilling slave, not that stocks are prepared for the feet of a runaway, but from an internal principle of life, a hunger for God, a thirst for God, a real want of God which makes you say, "Lord I would be Thine, I would follow Thee." That enables you to follow with the captains of Israel who went to David and said to him: "Thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." (1 Chron. 12:18) You would come to Christ and say: "Thine are we, Lord Jesus, and on Thy side, Thou Son of God." O the blessing of having this in your mind and in your hearts! Who can express the greatness of this mercy? Who can bless God enough for being born again? This new life will carry you toward its source, and

this will be a manifestation that you have it when you are after the source of it; when you can say, as it wells up in your heart: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want. Thy grace be my sufficiency, Thy bosom my rest, Thy light my guide, Thy life my animation actuating and moving me, Thy blood my cleansing, Thy cross my hope, Thy righteousness my justification; Thou, O Christ, art all I want." It is from the possession of this life that sin is bitter; that if, to suppose for a moment, if there were no hell, no punishment for sin, no frown of the Almighty on a sinner, one born again would say: "I would be holy, I would be God's. Not the fear of hell alone for that may prove extreme, but from the possession of divine life the church of Christ says: "I would be the Lord's, I would be obedient to His gracious commandment." The life of God will do this, does accomplish this.

Now, how do you stand with respect to this point? Has God put this law into your mind and written it in your hearts? Can you look on the church of God and say? "This people shall be, if I may speak so, my people, and their God I would fain have for my God," even while you are feeling at times not fit to be with the people of God, not worthy to think on the name of God? The life of God is a pure thing, O purity itself! A pure river of water of life cleanses the mind from love of sin and takes the eye sometimes away from every vain object and sets the whole soul on God Himself. Well now, cannot some of us come in here and say, we cannot but believe the Lord has fulfilled this part of the covenant in us: "I will put My laws into their minds." They are not hammered in by some trouble. No, they are put in by the Holy Spirit, and this precious law of life lives there. All other life dies; that is to say, the life of sin, and this poor body that may have lived in sin must die. But says Christ of this life: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) Then says a soul: "Lord, give me this life, give me more of this life, fill my soul with it, pour it on my heart continually, let it influence me; be with me in prayer, in reading the Scriptures, in walking amongst the saints; be with me in providence that I may not make a bad use of providence; be with me in trouble that trouble may do me good; be with me in affliction that I may be the better for affliction; be with me in death that I may enter into eternal life." Life, what is religion without it? The life of God purifies, the life of God makes the fear of God not a slavish thing but the feeling of a child, a filial feeling. Life will always rise to its source; you will rise to God in your desires. "I will put My laws, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, into their minds and write it in their hearts." "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John 5:11)

Let me mention another thing. If we have this life we do feel conviction of our daily wrongs more or less distinctly. Life will say when you are indulging something wrong. "That is wrong." The feeling is not a naked knowledge that this is a sin, but it is a sacred feeling that it is wrong, and that is the safest of all. You may get notions and they are not safe; but if you get this solid, blessed, spiritual feeling, that is safe. It will tell you, life will tell you, when death is about. As when a living body gets diseased in some part of it there is pain, life feels it; so when the disease sin moves here and settles there and wants indulgence there, this life says, "No" It protests against it, it says: "This is not right, this is not good, this is not what the Lord says: "this is not the way of saints." "O how love I Thy law," said David. And how you will love this spiritual life in your soul that moves after God from time to time. Ah, you will want more of it! You may say sometimes: "I wish I were flooded with it, that every vile passion I am under were overcome." It is a conviction, and bless God for this life. It makes religion, I mean true religion, a choice, it makes sin abhorrent, it makes Jesus beloved, it makes His ways a delight, it makes His truth

precious, and it makes sin most abhorrent. O what a blessing it is to have the life of God in your soul, to be feeling after God! When you fall, when you pollute yourself, then this life will show itself. Yes, it will show itself. How? In grief. O the tears of sorrow that the life of God in your soul will make you shed when you defile yourself, when you walk in wrong things! O the tears that you will shed over unbelief as it prevails and hardens your heart! Look at this, it is a point much to be observed, what this holy law of life in Christ Jesus, put into your mind and written in your heart, will accomplish. That is one important point in our holy religion and therefore you will bear with me for spending so long upon it. The Spirit writes it, and that--if I may add one word more here, that makes God a delight. There will be moments, yea sometimes hours and a day or more, that you will say out of your heart, "I give myself unto prayer." God will be your delight, and so you will comply with that word in the Psalm, "Delight thyself also in the Lord," and you will be enabled to do it. The thought of Christ will sometimes warm your heart; the mention of His name will draw out your sweet affections; His name as ointment poured forth will make you love Him; yea, it will make you want His company. What society like that of Christ? "The king hath brought me to the banqueting house, yea into His chambers, His banner over me is love. (Songs 2:4) As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Songs 2:3)

Now dear friends, have you evidences of this life? If so, may the Lord enable you to take courage and feel strength in this, that the covenant in that particular is fulfilled and being fulfilled in you in the communication to you of this blessed life. What will the end of it be? Says the dear Saviour of our souls: "Because I live ye shall live also. I in heaven living, you shall be in heaven and live with Me. I now have conquered all, you through Me shall conquer. I am on My throne, you one day shall share it with Me." This is the end of having this part of the covenant fulfilled in us, the blessed, holy, pure, sweet, purifying life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the law of faith is put into the mind of God's people and written in their hearts. This is a great subject, faith; faith which is a spirit of credence, belief, trust, leaning on the Lord. "Faith in the bleeding Lamb;" in His Person, in His work, in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection, in His ascension into heaven, and in His intercession there. Faith in God's providence, that He cannot do but what is right. Faith in Him in affliction, that He cannot be unkind. Faith in His wisdom when things are all upside-down apparently; things are ordered well by Him, who out of our confusion brings forth order. O what a gift this is, the gift of faith! All men have not faith, some have not. Why does one have it and not another? Because God will do with His own as seemeth Him good. We shall never be able to bless God enough for the gift of faith if we have it. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is called the faith of God's operation because He and He alone is able to create it in the heart. He does create it; He puts it there. This faith is knowledge, this faith is a certain persuasion in the heart that things which are in this Book are true, that this Book itself is absolutely pure, inspired, reliable, inerrant. This faith in the providence of God will wait on Him in affliction; this faith will make you prevail over men and with God. Think of it! We are poor believers, but if we have a little of this faith even as a grain of mustard seed, the mountain shall be told to depart, and depart it will. Everything will fall before faith. "To him that believeth all things are possible." Think of it!

Let us examine this a little by the help of the Spirit of God, if that help may be given. Now this faith will always be hungry for God. It will never rest away from Him, never rest but in the very bosom of Jesus Christ, in the death of Jesus Christ. That is its rest. As the atonement terminated in God and terminates in the conscience, so faith terminates in God, goes to Him, never rests away from Him. You fall, and faith will tell you how you must rise; you are defiled, faith will tell you how you must be cleansed; you are weak, faith will tell you where strength lies; you are perplexed, faith will tell you who is wisdom and who can guide you; you are empty, faith will tell you whose fullness can supply every need that you have. It is a great thing to have a faith that lives in heaven. Naturally we are on earth, and earthly things satisfy an earthly nature and an earthly mind; but if we are born again and have written in our hearts the law of faith, that will go and live in heaven. The law of works is as nothing to this faith. We are justified. "By what law, of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." (Rom. 3:27) Is Christ the termination and end of your faith? Can you say, "I look to Him?" Can you sometimes say with Hart: "Though void of all that's good, and very, very poor; through Christ I hope to be renewed and live for evermore?" Then why so sad, my soul? Though bad, thou hast a friend that's good; He bought thee dear, abandon fear; He bought thee with His blood." This is faith, and faith is a certain knowledge about what is in your heart at times. You may say again and again: "There are many things I know not the end of, but there is one thing I know, that I heard the voice of the Good Shepherd saying to me this." You may say: "One thing I am certain of, He gave me access to Himself and He answered prayer. One thing I am sure about, and that is, that this infallible Book has in this and that part of it been made the very and immediate and living Word of the Most High God in my soul." Uncertainties are miseries; faith is a certainty. Faith even in the least of us, where the least measure of assurance is, there faith is a certainty; and I will tell you in one or two particulars about this.

For instance, you may say, "I am a lost man, yet I am certain there is a living God." There is a certainty about it. You may say, "I am the worst of all creatures, but I am certain God is holy." You may say, "I am as ignorant as I can be, but I am certain God can teach me; I am defiled by sin, I am full of it, but I am certain the blood of Christ can cleanse me." And so I might go through ever so many things, there is a certainty in faith. You are uncertain about many things, and particularly perhaps about your interest; but you are not uncertain as to who can save you, are you? You can say: "If ever my poor soul be saved, 'tis Christ must be the way." Christ must be the Saviour. Christ must be my King, my Lord, my Prophet, my Priest, my All. If I reach heaven I shall know on whose head to place the crown. What a great thing it is to be certain of so much as that! Wait on that blessed God who has given you that faith and He will increase it; and you will be certain of this also, that though you are troubled in many ways in providence, affliction cannot, does not spring out of the dust, nor come from the ground. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6)

Then this faith is hungering, this faith is hungry and she expresses her hunger thus: "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" And thus: "That I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." (Phil. 3:8,9) O faith says to the Lord: "Be not silent to me, lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down into the pit;" (Ps. 28:1) she is hungry for God. Great as He is, none less can satisfy this little faith, this hungry principle, this spirit of credence that says: "I believe in God, I believe in Christ, I believe in the Spirit, let this Lord be my All." How many of you can lay your hands on

your hearts now and say, "I have got that; I have got that hungry feeling in my soul?" One says, "But that is not food." No, but it is a long way toward getting food, for I will tell you where your hungry faith will take you; it will take you to the throne of grace. There you will want to live; there you will labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life; there you will say: "Lord bless my soul, save me from sin, from self, from the world, from temptation;" there you will beg and beg as long as you live. So though faith itself is not food, it does what the merchantman does, he bringeth his food from afar; so your faith will fetch your blessings from God, labour to get His goodness into your heart, His atonement upon your conscience. It will labour.

"And God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope." (Heb. 6:10) I have put this," says the Lord, "I have put it in their mind; I will write it in their heart; I will give them faith, that faith that will never rest." It will die one day. But how will it die? Not in blank darkness and confusion and disappointment; but it will just die away in open vision without the weary vail of the flesh between the Object of faith and the sinner, even God. This is a covenant promise; this is a covenant blessing of the new covenant. The first waxes old and is decaying and ready to vanish away; this is ever new and this is one of its blessings: "I will put the law of faith into their minds and write it in their hearts," which will always cry down the law of works. Faith will always say: "There is nothing there to be done; nothing good to be effected; nothing good to be borne; works can only ruin me." Faith says: "Christ can save, Christ can help, Christ can do me good." She makes Him first, she makes Him last, she falls in with all her heart with that testimony in the Revelation: "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First in salvation, I am the Last and I fill all up." Faith says: "That is what I want, my soul agrees with it and loves it." Is that law with you? Bless God if it is! It is His gift and He will never bring it to disappointment.

It will persuade you--and this must be my last word this morning--it will persuade you that God is true against all the disappointments to which you may be subjected, all the cross providences that may trouble you, all the long waiting that may weaken and weary you. It will say to you at times, "God is true," when nature was as dead, when nothing of that that had been promised him could come by nature; still he believed in hope against hope and he received the promise. Your faith won't let go. No, God may try it; He may leave you for a long time unvisited, unhelped, apparently, and the promise may seem to be in abeyance and appearances may say it is beyond fulfilment, but faith will still hand about the Promiser: "Do as Thou hast said." Jacob was a great example also of this, for when he was confronted by a new danger on his walking in a God-obtained faith, even returning to his own home by the Lord's commandment, he met with danger. How, and where? He met four hundred men when he was alone, and in the night when there came a Man to him and wrestled with him; and he overcame a good while before Esau and his four hundred men met him. Said the Lord: "Thou hast power over men and with God and hast prevailed." (Gen. 32:28) This blessed faith honours God by going to Him and overcomes all opposition of all kinds. "I will put this law into their minds and write it in their hearts." May the Lord give it to us.

This word will fetch in every vessel of mercy from the ends of the earth and every place where they may be. No grave shall retain them; no devil shall keep his hold of them; no sin shall reign in them; no law shall curse them. What a mercy it is to belong to God! What a mercy to be bound

up in the bundle of faith with Him! And everything necessary to salvation, to life and godliness, is provided in this covenant.

This morning after a few general observations upon the three covenants which the Scriptures contain, I noticed one or two of the laws which God puts into the mind of His people and writes in their hearts. First, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which effectually turns every recipient of that law from sin to holiness; turns him round in an effectual conversion from the world to God, from self to Christ. O it is a blessing to have a distinct language in your hearts! And then I mentioned the law of faith--faith that great grace, the spirit of credence, of knowledge; that hungry spirit panting for God, opening its mouth and panting for the gospel; faith that emptying grace that won't let you be content with yourself, but will empty you; faith that will make you pant for Christ. I would like this evening to say one or two words further about this law of faith.

A law is a direction really given to a person who is a subject, directing him what to do. It is positive, it is negative; he is to do this, he is not to do that. This law of faith answers to such a description of a law. It is directive; it will direct you. Yes, it will again and again and constantly under the operation of the Holy Ghost direct you to the Lord Jesus, and you will never live comfortably away from Him as faith is in your heart. I would speak this evening two words about this faith. First, this faith is a receiving grace; it receives. God is the giver and faith is the receiving hand. He gives and you, when He gives to you, receive what He gives. Abraham received a call to leave his father's house and his own country, and he went out not knowing whither he went. He received a promise, it lived in his heart, it directed him, and when the power of it was on him working then he was walking in humble hope and expectation of the fulfilment of that which he had received. He was a passive receiver of the call and of the promise. So you will be as God speaks to you. When He speaks there is something said, and that something heard: "Get thee from thy father's house...I will make thee a nation...and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3) You dear hearers, if and when God speaks to you, will receive, passively receive what He says. You won't be passive when you have received it, but it will come and you will find it in your heart. Now what have we received? Did we ever receive anything?

There are two or three things here that I would name to you. You have received light. I mentioned life this morning. You have received light and when you received it then you saw, then you knew. You saw, you saw God in some of His perfections; then as a consequence you saw sin in some of its deformity and terrible desert. You are seeing that now perhaps; you will see it as long as you live more and more, it will never leave you. Light coming from the Sun into your heart will never cease to be there. You won't always be perceiving it but it will always be there, and it will show you the terrible deformity of sin and the fearful desert of it. But that is not all. No, you will receive a sight of the cross of Christ, of His exceeding suitableness, the greatness of His grace, the sufficiency of His righteousness, the efficacy of His atonement. You will perceive these mercies; you will see Him to be sufficient Saviour; the only way to God from hell, from self, from sin, from condemnation. The only way to holiness and happiness; the only way from uncertainty to knowing something positively; the only way to reconciliation with God, and to the atonement. You will see this and the light will be as it is called, "the light of life." O it shines beautifully, gloriously sometimes! Sometimes you may perceive it to be just a flash that

comes into your heart, and you exclaim, "O what is this?" And you see the Lord Jesus. He is gone, but He has left something behind. You received this blessed light of life.

You will receive into the hand of your faith one day the forgiveness of all your sins. This is called receiving the atonement: "Having received the atonement." It reconciles you to God, it brings you near: "Made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13) It removes your sins; it relieves you of the burden; it takes away from you the pollution of sin; it brings you into the presence of God: "Through whom," that is Christ, "we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:18) Faith receives this, and when once you have received it you will never really give it up. You will be in the dark about it often; you may say, "Did it come?" You may fear many things; you may fear apostasy, such apostasy as is spoken of in this Epistle; but you will never entirely give up the bright inshining of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of access, and acceptance with the Lord. You receive this blessed light so as to say what Paul mentions in the Corinthians: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" (2 Cor. 3:18) and this is peculiar to the gospel. The law is a ministration of death, condemnation, and darkness and the vail is on the heart, but when the heart turns to the Lord under the teaching of the Spirit, then it comes to pass as it is said: "We all with open face," with sincerity, with the vail taken away, with some gracious power given to behold and bear the sight of the glory of the Lord, so that you can just feel in your soul: "Here would I sit, live, hope, and love, and die." "Changed into the same image from glory to glory." This by the Apostle James is called "looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing therein, not being a forgetful hearer." And though you may say, "My memory bad but what is sad, can folly still retain," you will never really cease looking into this perfect law of liberty. A perfect law of liberty is the law of righteousness for justification, of redemption, of liberty, of pardon, of purity, and sanctification. O it is a glass in which you may see and will certainly see these things! You say, some of you perhaps, "We get worse and worse." That will fit you to look into this law, this perfect law of liberty. "Sin becomes more bitter;" that will fit you more for the sweetness of the gospel. "Sin's power is more felt;" that will make you prize the power of Christ and want it to rest upon you.

Faith receives. She receives sometimes an invitation to come to the Lord. What a wonder isn't it for God to say in the heart of a sinner, "Come unto Me!" And though the sinner's objections begin to rise, "I am not worthy, I am not fit, I am not clothed;" yet this power will be in him so that he will follow the heavenly invitation. He will go and say perhaps, "Lo glad I come." Yes, "Lo blest Lamb, glad I come. And Thou shall take me as I am; Nothing but sin have I to give, Nothing but love shall I receive." Sometimes your faith will receive Abraham-like a promise: "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward; (Gen. 15:1) I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. I am thy God, I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine." It will come. You may in unbelief say, "If the Lord spoke to me I would not believe it;" but when He does speak you won't doubt it for the time, you will receive it passively. The land is thirsty just now and the rain that has fallen and is falling is received, and you, thirsty for God, unable to drink the water of this world, shall receive the rain of divine grace. "My doctrine shall drop as rain, and My speech shall distil as the dew; (Deut. 32:2) they sat down at His feet, everyone shall receive of Thy words." (Deut. 33:3) Well what a grace this is, what a wonderful grace it is to receive of God! "Of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace." Here let me remind you, dear friends, of what you know, namely that this fullness is God's salvation, and salvation is for the lost. If you become good, if

you become anything but lost in yourselves, you won't receive in that condition of mind out of Christ's fullness, but when you are lost, as you are lost, in the measure in which you feel you are lost, so you will receive; that is, it will be poured into your heart. Plentifully will God pour into His people. In Isaiah this receiving is spoken of thus: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." (Isa. 44:3) Faith is this grace, a receiving grace, a hungry thirsty grace.

The second word I would say about this grace of faith is that it is a fighting grace. If you are going to heaven you have got to fight your way there. God will be your shield and your exceeding great reward, but He says to you: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called." (1 Tim. 6:12) And when Paul the aged was about to depart he said this: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." (2 Tim. 4:7,8) True religion is a conflict, it means a conflict. You will never get the world and Christ to agree. You will never find your sinful self and Christ in agreement, never. The world is Christ's enemy, yourself is Christ's enemy, the devil is Christ's enemy, and we have these three: "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, with powers, with spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) We wrestle with these.

Perhaps some of you are a good deal put to it sometimes with that wicked thing that you carry in your breast, namely a corrupt reason. A corrupt reason brings its darkness to bear upon the light and calls it darkness, it looks with its astigmatism upon the teaching of God and the ways of God and says they are not equal. It says: "How can a man who is a sinner become as if he never had sinned?" It says: "How can he be a Christian in whose heart hypocrisy is often working, who has enmity and bitterness and wrath and malice and the world and the devil? How can he be a Christian who has these things in him, and who not only has them but who inwardly indulges them?" And this reason will keep your mind away from one thing that is going on, namely the opposition that these evil spirits meet with by faith. Faith says: "I cannot listen to you, I have to do with God; I have to do with a justifying God, and saving, sanctifying God. I have to do with Him who condescends to sinners and blesses sinners and visits sinners, and to Him I would go, about Him I would hang, after Him I would seek, for Him I would pant, and to Him would I trust alone." Faith must fight, If you have faith you won't always be consenting to sin; you won't always be listening to the voices in your own heart; you will be wanting Christ, you will be after Him. "The Lord is my hope and my salvation, therefore will I trust in Him. Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord." Blessed is the sinner who is enabled to wait at Christ's footstool and at the posts of His doors and at His gates. Blessed is the man whose faith says: "I believe that He is a Saviour and I will struggle to get at Him." This grace of faith fights.

You will have to fight your way to the throne of grace often. What stands in the way? A wicked person. What wicked person? Yourself, he stands in the way. He says, for he can prove to be a devil, an angel of light; he says, "You are not in a fit state to pray, your mind is occupied with quantities of things, you know your covetousness, you are worldly, you are impatient, you are proud, you are hard-hearted, you are unthankful, you know you hanker after that which you have given up, you know you want it again." O this wicked person, this Christ-opposing person, this self! I do not wonder that Rutherford should say: "O that I had not a myself." Of all the opposers that Christ has with respect to you who fear His name, you will find yourself to be the worst, the

most powerful. Well, and do you give way? "Sometimes," you say, "I do." And are you easy? "Never." Do you always yield? "No, I struggle and cry aloud against the violence that is offered to Him, and I cannot rest until I cry, and I cry until some relief comes." This is the fight of faith. "Flee the lusts that hang about you and would drown you in destruction; flee those things. Look to that dear and mighty and great and only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Aim at reaching His throne and the Father through Him; at His precious blood look again and again. Look at His cross and see what it accomplishes, what it accomplished when on it He said, "It is finished;" and wait and wait and wait till He shall come. The law of faith. It is a directive really and says to you, "This is the way to heaven, Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" and says, "This is the way to rest and the only rest, the Lord Jesus. This is the way to justification and to sanctification--Himself. And so the victory is won. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5) Who is he that gets near to God, but He who approaches the divine Majesty through Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost? Therefore the word says: "Fight the good fight of faith." Yield not to unbelief and the voice of reason and the devils that rise up in yourself, and the devil who comes to tempt, and the imaginations which defile you. Yield not to these things, but wait and struggle to reach the blessed God of all grace.

O it is a great thing to fight. If our religion were of this world then there would be no fighting, and that is why you see if you are acquainted with religious people who are only religious in themselves, you find them without conflict; and then you say, "I cannot walk with them." Of course you cannot: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) How can a believer walk with an unbeliever? This will be the dividing line. A man may say, "I believe every doctrine you believe," and may tell you about them and seem to know more of them than you know. Then where is the difference? It comes in here, "All men have not faith," and this man may be just a dead Calvinist, no faith in his heart, no conflict, no trouble,; can sin and say "What have I done?" And walk in hardness of heart and bitterness; whereas you a poor, broken-down, destitute creature say from time to time: "I wish I could believe, I wish I were right, I wish the Lord would bless my soul, come to me and forgive me, and revive me, and help me, and not leave me to myself, not leave me to ruined by sin, not leave me to walk on in ignorance of myself." Struggle on ye conflicting, fighting sinners, struggle on; and the Lord who sees the conflict, when He sees you weaker and poorer and more destitute and dead in yourself as to experience, then He will come and help you. He has wise love, His is wise love, and His wise love leaves you to a sensible defeat until you are quite lost, and then He comes and saves.

But I must move on a little, and notice a little of another law: "I will put My laws." You know under the Old dispensation they had divers washings, ordinances, and laws, and so on, and the Apostle Paul here is writing to the Hebrews, and seems by the Holy Ghost very much to have conformed to their terms and to use terms which they would understand naturally. Here the Lord says "laws." I have mentioned two, the third I will mention is love, and He puts this in as a law: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is a kind of perfection. The Lord gives it. There are two or three things which do bring out love, one is this. When faith sees the beautiful, glorious, blessed Lord Jesus Christ, when she sees the suitableness of His Person, the greatness of His grace, the greatness of His love in dying; when she sees that He and He only is the way to God-- "I am the way," then feeling her need of Him, there rises up in her heart love. But the person who has this would not perhaps dare to call it love. He might say one day: "I wish I could love Him; He is so worthy of love, I wish I could love Him." One day he would say: "I do feel my heart

warmed with desires for Him, and if I could embrace Him I would, and feeling this I do ask Him to come to me and bless and save me." Whatever you may call that, I have no hesitation in calling it love. A sight of Christ will make you love Him. In your desires you will love Him. There will be none like Him, none to compare with Him. Sometimes love is called forth by a sense of the kindness and love of God in not allowing you to have sinned and fallen into certain things; in His kindness in calling you, as you are obliged to believe, to His heavenly throne and giving you a spirit of prayer and the grace of supplications. "The grace of God has appeared to you and taught you to deny ungodly and worldly lusts," (Titus 2:11,12) and the sense of this will make you love Him. And sometimes the mercy of God flows in so that your heart is melted and love bubbles up therein and runs out to the Lord. You love His name, His truth, His gospel, His holy Word, His sweet promises, His gracious invitations, His precepts; you love Him and what belongs to Him. This is so, is it not? I speak to wise men in this. You know what I say is true, and this is like a law; it directs you, it says in your heart "No other gods, no other gods." What a solemn word! I believe that that word of God to the Jews, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," becomes most solemnly true and weighty in the gospel. Not as a law to fulfil, nor to obtain life, but as a word of direction which, coming to a living soul, finds a desire to walk in it. "No other gods before Me. I am a jealous God." Love says: "Then Lord, do help me to walk rightly, help me to love Thee." This is put into the mind and into the heart. It will direct you; it will make Christ the First and the Last. "Alpha and Omega" are words of divine import, and you will find your heart moved after Him who claims to be the first and the last. And He will have no one to share the throne with Him; He is a jealous God and will not brook a rival. Have you got this? Look dear friends, do you love the Lord or no? One says, "I wish I knew." "Lord, decide the doubtful case," may be your prayer often. Love is the golden chain that binds the sinner and Christ together. Love is the sweet flame rising up to God that is the fruit of His own blessed kindling in the soul. Love is a pure thing, and it is sacrifice, it is holiness, it is all. When you have got this, O how comfortable your soul is! "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their heart."

One word in conclusion, "and I will be to them a God. I will take care of them. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. I will take care of them in these ways." First, I will give them My Spirit. Nehemiah recounting God's mercies to Israel of old, who had sinned so grievously, said: "Thou gavest them Thy good Spirit." The Holy Ghost in vital religion is the author and maintainer of that religion, and if God will be a God to us He will give us His Holy Spirit, and that Spirit will be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life. O what a gift is the gift of the Holy Ghost! By Him faith moves; by Him a sinner prays; by Him the consolations of love come; by Him the sinner is anointed and directed and supported, and prays and uses violence and overcomes the kingdom, obtains it by violence. If God will be a God to us He will be with us in manifestations of Himself. He appeared unto Solomon whose soul was bathed in divine mercy; He appeared twice to Solomon. If He will be a God to you He will appear to you. He will be in you the hope of glory. He will come to you to reprove you when you are wrong, and comfort you when you are troubled, and support you when you are weak, and sanctify afflictions to you. If He will be a God to you He will not let you alone. He is a jealous God, He will come again and again and speak to you, now reprovably, now comfortably. Reprovably when you are in a wrong way, and comfortingly when He sees you bowed down and troubled. "Speak unto Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40:2) If He will be a God to you, He will show it in

His providence, He will show it in afflicting you, He will show it by surrounding you with difficulties, a hedge of thorns, a wall of hewn stone, so that you shall not find the old paths of the world, but stand before Him and cry: "Show me Thy way, O Lord; teach me the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." And if you take these three things and notice how God deals with you by the Spirit, by manifestations of Himself to you and in providence, you may find great consolation and establishment: "I will be to them a God. They shall not be their own God, I will be their God. I am thy God, I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine. They shall be for Me alone and not another." Is He thy God, poor sinner? "And they shall be to Me a people. I will come to them and claim them, I will take hold of them." He took hold of Abraham: "I called him alone and blessed him;" and He will come to you and take hold of you by the power of His truth, by the light that will shine in, by the love that the Holy Ghost will shed abroad, and you will say: "Here is my poor heart, Lord take it."

He obtains loyalty, He gets the heart; He requires all the heart or nothing and He gets it. You won't be able to keep your heart when God comes to claim you for His. "They shall be to Me a people." He will take your heart, and when He has got your heart He has got everything. He becomes your treasure and then our heart is with Him. That is one way in which He claims His people for His own, and they pray as we do sometimes in the hymn: "Come and claim us as Thy portion, and let us lay claim to Thee." So He fulfils this great word.

This is just a hint and no more, and may it please the divine Spirit to make known to us this great truth: "I will be to them a God. I will come to them as a God and being full, they shall never perish of want; being almighty, I will defend them; all-wise, I will guide them; infinitely compassionate, I will bear with them. I will be to them a God, and poor and feeble and failing and wicked though they are, they shall be My peculiar treasure. I will take care of them, while I leave others to ruin themselves; I will take care of them as My own peculiar portion. The world is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills and the gold and the silver are Mine, but these sinners on their bended knees, with their humble confessions and their troubles and afflictions, these--they are Mine, My jewels, My treasures, My all." The church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Now I leave it for the present. The Lord command His blessing to rest upon us.