

SERMON VI

THE NEW COVENANT OF FREE GRACE

Tobias Crisp

And I will "give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." {Is.42:6,7}

The Lord is pleased by this sweet evangelist of the Jews, this evangelical prophet Isaiah, to pour forth his own gracious thoughts and purposes concerning his dear Son Christ; in this chapter especially, he reveals and declares himself from the beginning of it.

It is worth the while to mark the coherence, to see how these words come in.

First, he declares who it is that he sends into the world for such a business, by two titles, in verse 1, first, he calls him a servant; that is, in respect of the employment and business he hath to do, wherein he is to serve the Lord; and in reference to this business, he tells us what he doth, that this his servant may dispatch it effectually, "Behold my servant, {saith he,} whom I uphold." Secondly, he calls him his elect, and that in reference to the designation or separation of him, the singling him out unto this business. And he doth further amplify the description of him, by the tenderness of this elect unto him, "my elect, {saith he,} in whom my soul delighteth;" here is the description of the person; Christ is this person, as you shall hear by and by, whom he thus describes.

In the next place the Lord propounds the great end for which he doth elect this his servant, and uphold him, and furnish him with his Spirit; for he saith also, "I have put my spirit upon him;" and the end of it is, "that he may bring judgment to the Gentiles;" here you see who he is; how he is furnished; and to what end he is furnished. A servant upheld, the Spirit put upon him, to the end, that he might bring judgment to the Gentiles. The Lord proceeds further, and shows how this Servant of his shall deport and demean himself; after what manner he shall carry this business in the world, "to bring judgment to the Gentiles." He describes this in two circumstances. First, Christ shall dispatch this business of the Father, not in a ruffling or stirring way; he shall not make a great noise, as men use to do, sounding trumpets before them, when they do any good; but as you have it in the 2nd verse, "he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street;" he shall go privately about his business. And secondly, he doth illustrate the manner of managing and ordering this business, by the tenderness of the Spirit of this Christ towards those people with whom he shall deal; he doth, I say, illustrate this tenderness of his Spirit admirably, in the 3rd verse, "a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench;" he shall not deal roughly or harshly, but gently, and mildly; and yet as little noise as he shall make, though he shall not seem to promise any great thing by his privacy of deportment and carriage; yet, for all that, in the 4th verse, the Lord, by his prophet; tells us, that he shall be never the further off from performing the business he takes in hand; "he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth."

And then, in the 5th verse, the Lord is pleased to confirm this by undeniable arguments, that there shall not be a failing in Christ to compass this great business; the arguments, I say are strong, "thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein;" he is not a mean person that undertakes this thing, but the mighty Lord; he that hath done all great things in the world, that have been done heretofore, it is he that undertakes it; and therefore, there is no fear that it should fail.

Having thus discoursed in general, concerning the business of Christ in the world, and the manner of managing it; he comes again with the same thing, and descends unto particular instances and illustrations of what he delivered before, but generally; therefore, first, in the beginning of the 6th verse, the Lord is pleased to show forth the authority and commission by which Christ is authorized unto this great business; "I the LORD {saith the text} have called thee in righteousness;" this call is the commission of Christ; "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." {Heb.5:4} That gives authority to a business, to be called of God. Secondly, he reiterates the helpfulness of God, as well as his call unto it, in the following words, I "will hold thine hand, and will keep thee." And so, thirdly, he falls in with an explication or interpretation. First, how Christ shall compass this great business which he calls him out unto; he shall do it thus, by the Father's giving of him to be a covenant for the people. I will "give thee for a covenant of the people." {vs.6} Secondly, what Christ is to do, or the end for which he is called out to be a covenant. Before it was said, "to bring judgment to the Gentiles;" that was his business in the end of the 1st verse, and now he expounds what this judgment is. "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house, &c."

There are two main things in the text. The first is, the way by which Christ compasses the great business of the Father upon earth, and that is, by being "given to be a covenant to the people." Secondly, the business itself, whereunto he is called out, that is, "to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of prison." So you see how sweetly these truths hang together. For the words themselves, there are these particulars considerable in them. First, who it is that speaks, this gracious language in the text; you shall find, in the beginning of the verse, it is the Lord; "thus saith the Lord, I will call thee, and give thee for a covenant."

Secondly, we may consider the person to whom this gracious language is directed and spoken; and that is unto Christ; expressed only in this place by the name of 'thee;' thus "give thee for a covenant." Mark here I pray you, it is not, I will give myself; it should be so, if the Father had spoken to or of himself only; but it is plain here are two several persons mentioned, I and thee; if there be two several persons, then it cannot be God speaking to himself; it must be the Father speaking to the Son, to Christ.

Yea, but you will say, it is somebody else that speaks, and is spoken unto.

Nay, but mark in Isaiah 49 where the same expressions are used, that are in this text; and then you shall plainly see, it is the speech of the Father unto Christ, by many circumstances that will illustrate it. In the 5th verse he begins thus; "and now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him;" it is none but Christ that brings Jacob back. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." {Eph.2:13} And in the 6th verse, he saith, "it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel." Who is it that raiseth the tribes of Jacob, and restores the preserved of Israel? None but Christ, who is the Saviour of all that are saved. Here he begins to fall upon some of the words in the text itself. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Here it is plain now that it is only Christ; for none is the salvation of men unto the end of the earth, but Christ alone. Again, look in the 8th verse and you may see more of the words of the text; "thus saith the LORD, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." Here you see likewise, that he who is the Saviour of Israel, is he who is given for a covenant to the people. And in the 9th verse, "that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves;" so here is the same thing delivered more plainly, and Christ more fully expressed. This I have opened more at large, because all I shall speak will depend upon the opening of this truth.

Thirdly, in the next place, we are to note, what he speaks unto Christ here, even gracious language in respect of us. "He will give him for a covenant."

Fourthly, note here unto whom the Father gives Christ for a covenant; the text saith, "unto the people, and unto the Gentiles;" that is, to Jews and to Gentiles, to all sorts of people.

Fifthly, note the end and purpose for which the Father gives him to be a covenant unto the people; "to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of prison."

So, you have the parts of the text, which afford many excellent truths, and we might single them severally out; but for the sake of brevity, I will reduce the whole substance of this text into one proposition.

Doctrine: The Father is pleased to give Christ for a covenant to the people and Gentiles, to open their blind eyes, and to bring them as prisoners out of prison. This doctrine, you see, is directly the words of the text, adding only that explication, that it is the Father that doth give Christ. There is abundance of marrow and fatness in this present truth I have delivered unto you, more than people usually can find out in it. We will endeavour therefore to break the bone that all the marrow may be seen, and none of it may be lost. For this purpose, we must desire you to observe these following particulars.

I. What it is for Christ to be a covenant, or, the covenant?

II. What it is for Christ to be given to be a covenant?

III. What it is for Christ to be a covenant to open the blind eyes?

IV. If time will permit, we will then consider to whom this Christ is given to be a covenant; who they are that may partake of him, given to be a covenant unto them?

I will begin with the first of these, what it is for Christ to be a covenant; and herein will consider two things.

First, what this covenant is, that Christ is unto us. Secondly, how Christ himself is said to be this covenant.

What this covenant is, which Christ is unto persons. First, a word or two in general concerning the nature of a covenant. The common and usual manner of covenants, as you all know, is this; namely a mutual agreement between parties upon certain articles or propositions, propounded on both sides; so that each party is bound and tied to fulfill his own conditions, which if either of them fail in, the other is therefore freed from his part, and the covenant becomes nullified, void, and frustrated. You all know, this is the true nature of a common covenant.

There are two sorts of covenants generally wherein God enters with men. There are divers particular covenants, but I will omit to speak of them; such as the covenant with David to establish his throne to himself, and to his posterity; this the prophet Jeremiah speaks of at large, which I shall only touch upon and mention, the rather, because some are conceited there was no other covenant made with David, but the covenant of grace. "Thus saith the LORD; if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers." {Jer.33:20,21} This covenant is for the establishment of David's throne, and this is a different covenant from the covenant of grace; that is common to all sorts of believers, one with another; but I omit that.

There are two main general covenants God enters into with men; the one is called the first covenant, the old covenant, the covenant of works; it stood upon these terms, "do this, and live." The other is called a new covenant, by the prophet Jeremiah; and, by the Apostle, in Hebrews 8, it is called a better covenant, a covenant of grace. As for the first, the old covenant, the covenant of works, which stood upon these terms, "do this, and live," it is very probable, if not certain, that Christ was this first covenant unto men, even the covenant of works; for, however it be not a covenant of grace, as the second and new covenant is, yet it may, in some sense, be called a covenant of grace, in reference unto other creatures; for all creatures are under this tie, to do this; that is, what their part is which God hath imposed upon them; yet no creature hath this privilege of grace, that in doing this, he should live; the sun doth his part, he runs his race; yet the sun lives not in, or upon the performance hereof; brute creatures do their part; that is, the trade they were set about; yet, they die and perish, and are no more, when they have done. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" {Ps.8:4} That he should have life, and no other creature in the world, seeing there can be no difference in the creatures of themselves; the difference must be

in the grace of God, which makes it that some creatures should live by doing, and others not. In Proverbs 8:31, you shall see the ground of this covenant; when the Lord made all things in the world, Wisdom, which is Christ, there tells us, that she was the delight of the Father, and her whole "delight was with the sons of men." I say, the foundation upon which the difference was built, between man and other creatures, that he hath this covenant by grace, others not, is this, all the delight of Christ was with the sons of men; he himself singled out the sons of men to be his delight, as he was the delight of the Father; and for his sake the Father will do more for them, than for other creatures.

But now, the covenant which the Lord mentions in this place, by the prophet, is not the first, but the second covenant. "I will give thee for a covenant to the people;" he means here, not the covenant of works, but the covenant of grace; which covenant is mentioned in Jeremiah 31:33, and renewed again by the prophet Ezekiel, in chap. 36:26; and also Hebrews 8, where you shall find both the covenant itself, and how, and in what sense, Christ is said to be that very covenant unto men. In verse 6, this is appropriated unto Christ, to be his great privilege, to have the sole hand and managing of this new covenant. "But now {saith the Apostle} hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant;" and what is this "better covenant?" Mark what follows in verse 8, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers;" for in verse 10, "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 write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Here is the substance of the covenant, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Now, all that I will note briefly out of all this, shall be only one proposition, wherein you shall see both a vast and comfortable difference between this new covenant, and all other covenants that God made with men; it differs, I say, exceedingly, and the comfort lies in the difference, which is this. All other covenants of God, besides this, run upon a stipulation; and the promise runs altogether upon conditions on both sides; the condition on God's part was, they should live; the condition on man's part was, that he might live, he must do this; and mark, the conditions in that covenant were such, that in case man did fail to perform his condition, the covenant was broke, and God was free from giving life; which accordingly came to pass; for man failing in doing, the covenant was actually broken, disannulled, and frustrated, and man lay under the curse of the breach of the covenant in not doing. But in this covenant of grace, to wit, the new covenant, it is far otherwise; for there is not any condition in this covenant; mark what I say, and I beseech you hear me with an impartial and unprejudiced opinion. I know I shall go against the strain of some; but, I hope, what I shall deliver shall be firmly proved from scripture. I say, the new covenant is without any conditions whatsoever on man's part. Man is tied to no condition that he must perform, which if he does not perform, the covenant is made void by him.¹

The first argument is this, the covenant is called an "everlasting covenant;" and here, in Hebrews 8, God saith, "I will be merciful to your iniquities, and your sins will I remember no more." Now suppose there were conditions for man to perform, and suppose man did fail in those conditions,

¹ {Note: This, though abundantly confirmed by the following arguments, is found fault with by some, particularly by D. W. in his Gospel Truth, &c. pg. ,59, and yet is no other than what some of the most judicious divines have asserted, particularly the famous Witsius; "We, [says he in his "Economy of the Covenants;" Book 3, chap.1, sect.8,] agree with them, who think, accurately speaking, that the covenant of grace has no conditions on our part, properly so called." And elsewhere, he has these words; "this is owned, that this is the true and proper condition of the covenant of grace, by which it is chiefly distinguished from the covenant of works, that all righteousness in which the right to life is only founded, is performed by the Mediator and Surety of the Covenant; hence it follows, this righteousness being admitted, that no condition, properly so called, can be required of the elect, by which they obtain for themselves freedom from punishment, and a right to life." And indeed what some call conditions of the covenant, as faith, repentance, and obedience, are no other than parts or blessings of it, which are absolutely promised in it; {see Ezek.36:26,27;} or what the Doctor afterwards calls the fruits and effects of the Covenant. Gill.}

what were become of the covenant? Man did fail in the condition, whilst there were conditions before in the first covenant, and thereby the covenant was frustrated. Man is not now so confirmed, but if there were conditions for him to perform, which if he did not perform, the covenant should be broken; I say, he is not so confirmed, but he might fail in those conditions; nay, if those be the conditions, that some men conceive, then he daily fails. And, if the covenant stands upon such conditions, the covenant is frustrated so soon as the conditions are broken. So, I say, if the covenant stands upon any conditions to be performed on man's part, it cannot be an "everlasting covenant," except man was so confirmed in righteousness, that he should never fail in that which is his part.

But, you will say, there are many conditions mentioned in this covenant; it is said, that there must be "a Law put in the mind, and written in their heart," with many other such things. I answer, beloved, it is true, God saith, "I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c." But do you find in this or in any other mention of a covenant that this is the condition to be performed on man's part; I say, that this is the condition of the covenant, and such a condition, that if a man perform it not, the covenant is frustrated? There is no such thing in the text.

But you will say, Conditions, or no conditions, a man must have his heart in this manner. I answer, it is true, by way of consequence, that after we are in covenant with God, he will bestow these things upon us as fruits and effects of that covenant; but, it is not true, by way of antecedence, that God doth require these things at our hands, before we shall be partakers of the covenant.

Argument 2: Observe, I pray, and you shall plainly perceive, that man hath no tie upon him to perform anything whatsoever in the covenant, as a condition that must be observed on his part; let the covenant itself be judge in this case; as it plainly shows where all the tie lies, and as plainly shows, that the whole performance of the covenant lies only upon God himself; and that there is not one bond, or obligation, upon man to the fulfilling of the covenant, or partaking of the benefits of it. Mark it in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, or in Hebrews; read those passages over, wherein the tenure of the covenant is contained, and you shall easily see where the tie is, as Hebrews 8:10, "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 write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;" he will put it in, and write it; and he will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people. The word shall, here, is a word of over-ruling; it is a word of power; as if he had said, I will order it so; it follows, "and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Know him how, by their own study and industry? No; see John 6:45, and you shall see that that condition of knowing the Lord is to be performed by the Lord, for it is there said, "they shall all be taught of God." Observe, also, the larger expression of the covenant in Ezekiel 36:25-28, and there also, you shall plainly perceive, that still all the tie lies upon God himself, and nothing at all upon man. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God;" and in verse 29, "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses;" and I will multiply the fruit of the earth, I will do it. Where is there in all this one word that God says to man, thou must do this? If God had put man upon these things, then they were conditions indeed; but, when God takes all upon himself, where are the conditions then on man's part?

Give me leave, I will ask you but this question; suppose there should be a fault {I make but a supposition} of performing in this covenant, whose were the fault? Must not the fault or failing to perform the covenant be his, who is tied and bound to everything in the covenant, and saith, he will do it? If there be a condition, and there should be a failing in the condition, he that undertakes all things in the covenant must needs be in fault; but the truth is, these particulars mentioned are not the conditions of the covenant, but they are consequents of the covenant; the main substance of the covenant is included in these words, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." But,

"sprinkling with clean water, taking away a stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh;" all these are nothing but the fruits of the covenant, which is, that God is the God of such a people, and the people are the people of such a God. For by virtue of this union, or uniting himself to his people, God doth cleanse and purge, he doth sanctify and refine them. As he becomes the God of his people, so he purges and cleanses them. {Acts 15:9} He doth not come first to men, and say, make yourselves clean; get you the Law of God in your minds; get you the fear of God into your hearts; get you power to walk in my statutes; and, when you do this, then I will be your God; if it did run so, then here were conditions indeed; but, it runs not thus; all the tie lies upon God's part, to do everything that is mentioned in the covenant. "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." {Ps.57:2}

But you will object, and say, if all lies upon God's part and man must do nothing, then all his life time he may do what he list. I answer, you must make a difference between doing anything in reference to the covenant, as the condition thereof, and doing something in reference to service and duty to that God who freely enters into covenant with you. I say only, that in a way of condition of the covenant you must do nothing.

Argument 3: Nay, the covenant in the actual substance of it, is made good to a person before he can do anything.² The main thing in the covenant is God's being the God of a people, and the model and draught of that, nothing but God's love to man; God's love to give himself to man; God's love to take man to himself. Now this love of God is cast upon man before he can do anything; before the children had done good or evil. "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Shall I need to tell you, that the covenant is then fulfilled in the substance of it, when men are actually justified. When men are justified, God hath made good his covenant unto them; he is their God, and they are his people; now where are the conditions of this covenant? Take but notice what the Apostle saith, and tell me what conditions you find in it? "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness &c." {Rom.4:4,5} There are two phrases here to show there can be no conditions to make up the covenant on man's part; first, "to him that worketh not;" if there must be no working to partake of justification, then there is no conditions unto it. And again, if we must "believe on him that justifies the ungodly," then justification is past-over to a person whilst he is ungodly; now, where is the condition of the covenant, while there remains nothing but ungodliness in men? But if these things must be fulfilled as conditions, namely, to change our hearts, and such like; then we are not justified as ungodly, but as righteous; and so it directly contradicts that of the Apostle. We must therefore conclude that this covenant, which is then made good when a person is justified, is conferred and bestowed on him, before there can be any such thing as a condition in him.

Yea, but you will say to me, peradventure though works be not the condition of the covenant; yet, we hope you will yield, faith is the condition of the covenant.

I answer, beloved, I beseech you observe me carefully in this, for I am now upon a vital point, and I shall desire to go as evenly as the scripture will guide me in it. I must needs tell you directly, and according to the truth, that faith is not the condition of the covenant.³

² {Note: Christ, who is the Covenant itself, the sum and substance of it, must be first given to a man, before he can do anything good; for without Him we can do nothing; and faith must be given, without which we cannot please God. Gill.}

³ {Note: This also is condemned as an error, by D. W. Gospel Truth, &c. pg. 57; but it is with great propriety and truth here asserted; for faith is the fruit of electing grace, the gift of God, the operation of his Spirit, and of which Christ is the author and finisher; and is not of men, or in their power to produce in themselves, or exercise; yea, it is a blessing of the covenant of grace, and not a condition of it; or is what men have in consequence of their being in the covenant, and not as the condition of their entrance into it. And the same is acknowledged by great many divines, particularly that excellent writer, often quoted, Professor Witsius; "the covenant of grace," says he, "or the Gospel strictly so called, which is the formula of the covenant, seeing it consists in mere promises, properly prescribes nothing as a duty; it requires nothing, it commands nothing, no not indeed, believe, trust, hope in the Lord, and the like." And again, "nor does that seem to be accurately said, that faith is a condition which the Law requires of us, that we may be accounted righteous and guiltless with God. The condition of justification properly speaking, is no other than perfect obedience; this the Law requires, nor does the Gospel substitute another, but

"He that believes shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned." Is not faith here the condition of the covenant?

I answer, there is no person under heaven shall be saved till he have believed. This I grant; yet this will not make faith to be the condition of the covenant. For first, consider faith as an act, our act, and as we do it, so I say it is a work; our act of believing is a work. If therefore we perform the condition that is a work for the enjoyment of the covenant, then the covenant doth depend upon a work; but it doth not depend upon a work, for the text saith, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, &c."

You will say, in that text, believing is required to the justifying of the ungodly.

I answer, an ungodly person, after he is justified, believes; but you must understand it, it is not the faith of the man that simply and properly justifies, but it is that Christ in whom he believes; believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly; it is he that justifieth, that is Christ. It is not believing that justifies. Mark well that phrase; "him that justifieth." Justification is an act of Christ, it is not an act of faith!

But you will say, it is an act of Christ by faith.

I answer, then Christ justifies not alone. Is faith Christ himself? If not, then Christ must have a partner to justify, or else faith doth not justify, but Christ alone doth it. Nay, I say more, Christ justifies a person before he believes; for, he that believes is justified before he believes; for I ask you, whether in justification a man must believe a truth or a falsehood? You will say that he must believe a truth; then say I, it is a truth that he is justified before he believes it; he cannot believe that which is not, and if he be not justified, that he may believe it, he then believes that which is false. But he is first justified before he believes, then he believes that he is justified.⁴

But what then serves faith for?

I answer, it serves for the manifestation of that justification which Christ puts upon a person by himself alone; that you by believing on him, may have the declaration, and manifestation of your justification.⁵ Mark what the Apostle saith, whereby you shall find the true use of faith, that is not the condition, without which we receive no benefit from Christ; but rather it is the manifestation of that which is already done, and received. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." {Heb.11:1} I pray you observe the Apostle's expression, for there is abundance of light in it. Faith is the evidence of things, it is not the being of things; and it is the evidence of things not seen. A man is justified, and that by Christ alone, but it is not known to him, it is an unseen thing. Well, how shall he see this, and know that it is so? The text saith that "faith is an evidence;" faith gives evidence to this thing, faith makes it known; by faith we come to apprehend it; by faith we

teaches that the Law is satisfied by our Surety Christ; moreover, it is the business of faith to accept of the satisfaction offered to it, and by accepting, to make it its own." Gill.}

⁴ {Note: Justification before faith, though caviled at by many, is certain; since God justifies the ungodly, and since faith is the fruit and effect of justification, and the act which is conversant about it, and the object must be before the act; and besides justification took place at the resurrection of Christ; yea, from all eternity, as soon as he became the Surety of his people; and which has been embraced, affirmed, and defended by divines of the greatest note for orthodoxy and piety, as Twisse, Pemble, Parker, Goodwin, Ames, Witsius, Maccovius, and others. See my "Doctrine of Justification," pg.36-54. Gill.}

⁵ {Note: And, indeed, for what else can it serve; since it is neither the cause, nor matter, nor condition of justification? At most it can only serve as the hand that receives the righteousness of Christ for justification, and claims an interest in it, and takes the comfort of it; nor does the Doctor say, it serves only for a manifestation, but that it does serve such an end; as it is certain it does, as has been owned by many judicious divines; and particularly the learned Hoornebeck thinks, that the difference between Dr. Crisp, and others, may easily be made up, by distinguishing justification into active and passive; the former is the act of God justifying, the latter the termination and application of it to the conscience of believers; the one is done at Christ's satisfaction, the other when a person actually believes; "this indeed is a manifestation of that." Afterwards he says, "we do not reject the distinction between justification as made in Christ and as manifested to the soul, though in the explication of it, we do not in all things agree." And it is the former, and not the latter, that is properly justification, as Maccovius observes, "it is said of God that he justifies, Rom.4:5, and of us that we are justified, not that there is therefore a twofold justification; for that which is passive is improperly called justification, and is only the sense of active justification." And what then is this passive justification, which is by faith, any more than a perception, evidence, and manifestation of what is properly Justification? Gill.}

come to rejoice in it, as we apprehend it to be our own. It is true, indeed, Christ has honored faith admirably; but let us take heed we do not over-honour it, to give the peculiar reserved prerogative of Christ himself unto it. If faith were a concurrent thing with Christ, and Christ did justify a person alone, what would follow? Consider, when a man is justified, he is justified from all unrighteousness, and if his faith justifies him from all unrighteousness, this thing will unavoidably follow; that that thing which is full of unrighteousness will justify a man from unrighteousness; as much as to say, a man is justified from sin by sin.

But you will say, faith is not sin.

I answer, No, faith itself is not sin; but that faith acted by believers is full of sin; and the fulness of sin in it makes faith in some sense, a sinful faith; and if it be sinful, how can that which is sinful justify man from sinfulness? What need Christ be without all sin to justify a person, if anything else could do it that hath sinfulness in it? You must either say, there is no sin in your faith, or else you must say, you are justified by that which hath sin in it; yet, I say still, as faith is an evidence, a manifestation, so it may be said to be our justification; that we are, in regard of our own hearts, and our own spirits, justified by faith; but God-ward, as we stand actually before him, a discharged people from sin, and so consequently partakers of the covenant; as we stand thus, I say, it is not faith that justifies, neither wholly, nor in part; but Christ alone freely for his own sake, considering a person as ungodly, so he justifies him.

Beloved, let me tell you, though faith itself cannot thus be called our righteousness; yet in respect of the glory that God ascribes to it, that it seals to men's souls the fulness of righteousness, how can you consider a person a believer, and withal ungodly? When men are believers, they cease to be ungodly; but if they are not justified till they believe, Christ doth not justify the ungodly, but the godly; and then that truth which I have delivered cannot hold current, that we must believe on him that justifies the ungodly; but rather, we must believe on him that justifies the righteous. But, as I said, we do not believe that we may be justified; but we do believe, and truly believe, when we are, and because we are justified. So that still it stands firm, we are not justified, we are not in covenant, we partake not of the covenant, by any condition we perform, till which performance the covenant cannot be made good unto us; but we are in covenant, and Christ makes us to be in covenant, for his own sake, without any condition in the creature, "showing mercy to whom he will show mercy;" without anything, I say, the creature is to do, to this end, to partake of the covenant.

In the next place consider, how Christ himself can be said to be the covenant. For the text tells us, that he doth not only give Christ that there may be a covenant with men; but, saith; "I will give thee for a covenant." Christ himself is made the covenant. I answer that Christ is the covenant three ways. First, Christ is the covenant fundamentally. Secondly, Christ is the covenant materially. Thirdly, Christ is the covenant equivalently.

First, Christ is the covenant fundamentally; that is, he is the original of the covenant, the beginning of the covenant. The covenant of grace takes its being from Christ. Adam was all mankind, as all mankind was in Adam, in the loins of Adam; so Christ is the covenant, and all the covenant is, as it were, in the loins of Christ, and springs out of him; he is the covenant maker; he is the covenant undertaker; he is the covenant manager; he orders the covenant; he is the covenant dispatcher; he doth everything in the covenant; he makes the articles; he draws God the Father, and man, to an agreement unto the articles. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." {Ps.110:3} "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." {II Cor.5:19}⁶ Christ brings God down to the terms of the covenant, to yield to them. Christ brings man also to be willing to it. Christ is called "the Mediator of a covenant." {Heb.8:6} A mediator, what is that? A mediator of a covenant is the person

⁶ {Note: By whom are meant, not all the individuals of mankind, for these are not all in Christ, nor all reconciled to God, multitudes dying in enmity to him, nor all interested in the blessing of non-imputation of sin; whereas each of these is said of the world here; but the elect of God, who are chosen in Christ, whose peace, Christ is, whose sins are not imputed to them, and against whom no charge of any avail can be laid, and particularly the people of God among the Gentiles are here designed, who are frequently called the world in scripture; being the world which God loved, for whose sin Christ is the propitiation, and of the reconciling of which mention is particularly made. Jn.3:16; I Jn.2:2; Rom.11:12,15. Gill.}

that hath the management of it on both sides. A covenant is no covenant till it be concluded, and done; there may be articles, but it is not actually a covenant till both sides are agreed; so there cannot be a mediator of a covenant till there be one that is able to bring both sides together, and make up a conclusion. And thus Christ is the covenant, or the Mediator of the covenant, as he manages all things in it. Job hath an excellent expression to show forth the soleness of Christ to deal in the covenant between God and men; for he makes a bitter complaint and pitiful lamentation; he knew not how to deal with God, and gives this as a reason of it, "for he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." {Job.9:32,33} It is Christ that is this daysman. It is all one with an umpire, or a mediator; he must come between, and lay his hand upon us both; what is that? Upon God and us; the meaning is that he that is the daysman, the mediator, must be such a person that hath power on both parties that enter into covenant together; he must lay his hand upon God; that is, he must have power with God, and bring God to such terms as he propounds; and lay his hand upon man, to bring man on; and when he lays his hand upon both, then he is a mediator of the covenant. And, in this sense, Christ is a covenant, as he hath the managing and dispatching of all the business of the covenant, from the first to the last.

Secondly, as Christ is fundamentally, so he is materially the covenant; Christ himself is the covenant, as he is Christ. This seems strange; but there is an admirable wisdom of God to be adored in this thing; the covenant substantially stands in this; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Now Christ is both these in himself; he is God unto his people, and he is the people unto God, and before him. Both these meet in that one Christ, and are both of them admirably illustrated to us, Matthew 1:23, where, upon the birth of Christ, the angel saith, "they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Christ is "God with us" not only as Christ's Godhead did take the human nature simply; but Christ is God with us, that is, Christ is so ordered by the Father for men, that the Father may see the Deity and Humanity made up in one, to wit, Christ's person; and so, consequently, all the people that are the people of God, are considered in Christ, as part of him; for Christ is considered two ways, either as he consists of the Godhead, and one individual human nature; or, as he consists of that and a compact of many persons considered as members of Christ's mystical body; so Christ is the Head, and all those that are in covenant with him, are members; and this head and members together make up one complete and entire body. Consider Christ thus, and then you shall see in him God, the God of his people, and men the people of God, and both these meet together only in Christ.

Christ, in a very few words, doth very excellently set forth this his own being, materially, the covenant. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." {Jn.17:22} Here first, he speaks of unity among themselves, as members have unity in one body; then he goes further in the next verse, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" as much as to say thus; I, as I have assumed humanity, and besides the humanity, have assumed the members of my mystical body, so I am in them, and they in me; and by this my being one with them, and they one with me, they become one with us both; so, God to be the God of his people, and the people to be the people of God, meet in this one Christ, God and man; Christ as head united to his members, and they as members in covenant with him.

Thirdly, Christ himself is said to be the covenant equivalently; I mean thus, though the main substance of the covenant be fulfilled to believers as soon as they are justified, that is, while they are ungodly; yet there are particular branches, or rather fruits of the covenant, to be fulfilled to believers in their season; to have God more abundantly pouring out himself in all manner of graciousness, this is to be fulfilled in season. Now, Christ is said to be the covenant, as a present pawn, or earnest delivered into the hands of a person, at the very instant of his justification; which pawn, is of equal value and worth with the whole covenant, when it is fulfilled to the uttermost; so, Christ being given over to men, as a pawn and earnest, they have, at the first instant, the whole covenant equivalently. If a man deliver money to another, and he receives a pawn worth the money, then he hath the money in his hand, though not in coin, yet in value, he hath as much as the money is worth; and so, by

consequence, it is as much as if he had the money itself. Christ, delivered over in justification, is of equal value with all that is to be fulfilled, when the covenant is fulfilled to the uttermost. He being of equal value, it follows, that Christ is the covenant by estimation, though not in respect of the accomplishment and fulfilling of the several fruits.

Thus I have done with the first branch; this I desired to clear more fully; because I find the world is marvelously puzzled with the mixture of other things besides Christ in the covenant; we will go a little further this morning, because I would dispatch that I intend, and would not willingly leave anything, not knowing when, or whether ever I shall see your faces again. I will therefore enter upon the next thing of great concernment; I hope there hath been no mistake of what I have spoken, and then I know the truth of it will justify itself against all contradiction.

II. The second thing is, what is it for Christ to be given for covenant? I answer, all that benefit that Christ is, or all that Christ can be to a person, is a mere deed of gift; and it, comes only as a very true and real gift unto men, upon no other consideration, but simply the Father's good will {Is.65:1} to make a gift of it; and this depends necessarily upon what we showed before. If that which we have hitherto spoken be not true, this cannot be true; if the covenant be with condition, and the condition to be performed for the covenant; then certainly Christ is not a mere gift. That which a man buys or pays for, he makes a reckoning of it as due debt; he cannot make a reckoning of it as a gift; but you see it plainly in the text, that Christ is given to be covenant; Christ is not bought to be a covenant, he is not paid for. Covenants between men I know are thus, if a man has a house or land to sell, there are articles drawn up and agreed upon; and he that must have the land, must pay for it; it is not so in this covenant; but it is as in covenants that are deeds of gifts, which run thus, I will freely bestow this upon you; so God bestows his Christ freely, passing him over to men, without anything from them in consideration of this Christ which is bestowed. And this imports two things; I say, that Christ is a gift, imports two things.

First, that in the participation of Christ, God requires nothing of man; he expects nothing from man in consideration of that Christ he bestows upon him. I say, he requires nothing, he expects nothing, he will take nothing; nay, he will not give Christ unto men, except they will take him freely, without bringing any thing for him.

Secondly, this gift, Christ, being given unto men, imports that there is no vileness, no sinfulness, no kind of wretchedness of man, that can be any bar to man from having a full part and portion in this Christ; a gift implies them both. I shall open them both, as clear as may be.

First, I say, Christ is conveyed unto men as a gift; without the Father's requiring anything of them, or expecting anything from them; but only barring them from bringing, or thinking to bring anything to this end, that they may have a part or share in Christ. I shall first declare, and make clear, that it is directly contrary to the nature of a gift {considered really as a gift} to require, or expect anything in consideration of that which is given. When things are passed over to a man upon consideration, either; they are passed over by bargain and sale, or else by way of bribe. When a man desires his cause may go well in a suit of Law, he will give the judge something; but the consideration must be, that the judge shall carry the cause on his side; this that the judge receives, is not a gift, but a bribe, because something must be done for it. When a man must have such and such lands, or such and such goods, and there is a contract, you must give me so much money, and you shall have them; these lands and goods are not gifts, when money must be paid for them.

If we must bring anything to the Father in consideration of Christ the covenant, then here is a bargain and sale between the Father and us; I will give you my Christ, but you must bring me works, to wit, broken, clean and changed hearts, and the like; this is a mere bargain and sale. In Romans 4:4, you shall find plainly and clearly, how the Apostle directly overthrows the being of a gift upon this supposition; if it could be received, that a man must bring anything to his justification, he plainly affirms, a gift ceases to be a gift when any such thing comes in. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;" mark, I pray you, well, "to him that worketh;" that is, would you bring your humiliations, your prayers, &c., as conditions that God may perform his covenant? Do you bring anything in the world, and work any inherent righteousness? Then saith the

Apostle, the reward, that is, the accomplishment of the covenant, is not reckoned of grace; if you bring works, the gift ceases to be a gift, it must be reckoned to be a debt. Either then you must lay down all works, and let them cease in the business of partaking of Christ, or else you must conclude you must not receive Christ of grace, but of debt; and the Apostle doth make it more clear, "and if by grace, {that is by gift; for grace and gift, you must understand are all one; grace is nothing but the favour of God freely, and of his own accord communicated, and if by grace,} then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." {Rom.11:6} If you bring grace unto works, or works unto grace; either the one or the other, or both, all is made void; as much as to say, these two things are inconsistent, they cannot stand together, that we should partake of Christ through grace and works both; they will not stand together; grace must stand alone, or works alone; for one directly overthrows the other.

And, beloved, to speak freely to you of these work-mongers, those buyers of Christ, that would bring something with them to partake of Christ; what would they bring? They say they will bring a good heart, or a changed life. I ask; what prize is this you bring? Do you bring anything of your own, or that which is God's already? Suppose your hearts be never so purged and cleansed; what bring you to God? You bring that which already is his own; as much as to say, a man owes another a thousand pounds, and he will come and bring him this thousand pounds, for lands worth fifty pounds by the year. No, he must bring a thousand pounds more, if he will purchase the land; even so it is for a person to bring works for Christ, which works thou owest unto God already; no, first pay thy debt which thou owest, and then if thou hast any more, bring that unto God to purchase Christ withal. But alas, when you have done all, you are unprofitable servants; for all you have done is not yours, it was due from you before; how then can anything you do be a consideration to purchase Christ withal?

Moreover, you that will bring works, and, in consideration of them, expect a part in Christ; what are the works you bring? A whip you shall have as soon as a Christ, in regard of your works. Oh, the filthiness of all the works of men, as they work them! There is nothing but filthiness in them. "Yea doubtless, {saith Paul,} and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness." {Phil.3:8,9} Therefore, as it is most presumptuous pride in men, so it is the grossest ignorance that can be to dream of anything that they have do, or can do, in the partaking of Christ; they directly overthrow the nature of a gift; hast thou but one thought once, that God will accept thee in Christ, upon consideration that thou hast performed thus and thus; this very thought directly destroys Christ, considered as a gift; for if he be a gift, then he comes without any consideration whatsoever.