

FAITH'S PLEA UPON GOD'S COVENANT.

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

On a Preparation-day before dispensing
the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,
at Kinglassie, upon Psalm lxxiv. 20.
Have respect unto the Covenant.

By the late REVEREND

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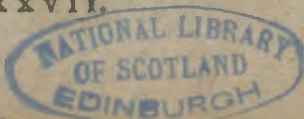
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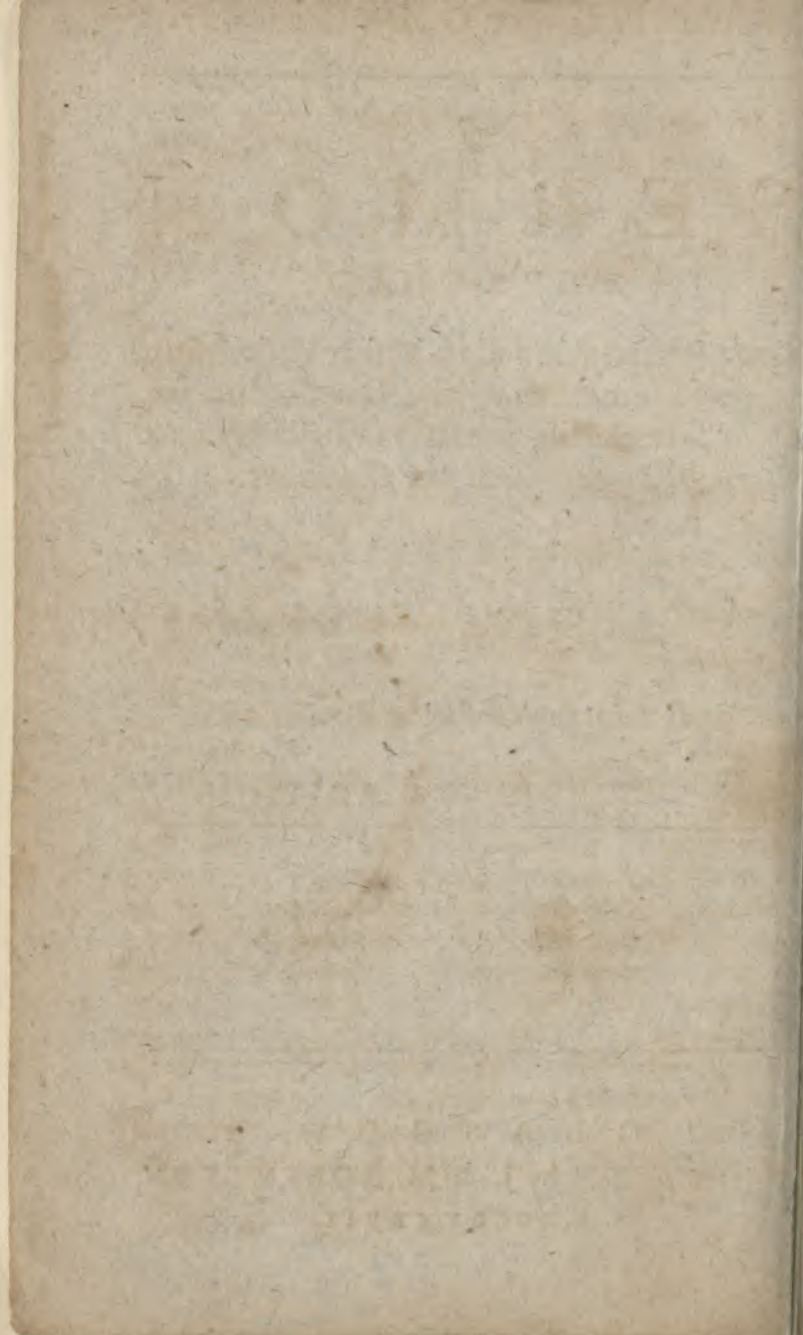


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M D C C L X X V I I.







Faith's Plea upon God's Covenant.

P S A L M LXXIV. 20.

Have respect unto the Covenant.

THE Psalmist, in pleading for the church and people of God, and that he would appear for them against their enemies, uses several arguments. Particularly in the close of the preceding verse, there is something he pleads God may not forget, 'Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever;' and he rather uses this argument, because he had said, Psalm ix. 14. 'The needy shall not be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.' There is, in this verse, something he pleads, that God may remember and have regard unto, 'Have respect unto the covenant.' Thou hast brought us into covenant with thee, might he say, and though we are unworthy to be respected, yet 'Have respect unto the covenant of promise.' When God delivers his people, it is in remembrance of his covenant, Lev. xxvi. 42. 'Then will I remember my covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: and I will remember the land.' We cannot expect he will remember us, till he remember his covenant: hence, therefore, we propose to illustrate the following truth.

DOCTRINE. "That one of Faith's strong pleas
" with God, is, That he would have respect to
" the covenant."

If we would deal with God for mercy, or plead
with him for favour, or look to him for any good
at this occasion, let us expect it only upon this
ground, The respect he hath to the covenant, and
plead upon this argument.

The method we would observe, as the Lord shall
assist, for briefly handling this subject, shall be the
following.

- I. Shew what covenant it is he will have a respect to.
- II. What it is for God to have a respect to the covenant.
- III. What it is in the covenant he hath a respect to.
- IV. What kind of respect he hath to it.
- V. Why he hath a respect to it, and so why it is a suitable plea and argument in suing for mercy.
- VI. Make some application of the whole.

i. We are then first to shew what covenant it is he will have a respect to. The covenant here spoken of is the covenant of grace and promise, made in Christ Jesus, 'before the world began;' and published in his gospel to sinners, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.

' And I will give them one heart and one way,
' that they may fear me for ever, for the good of
' them, and of their children after them. And I
' will make an everlasting covenant with them,
' that I will not turn away from them to do them
' good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that
' they shall not depart from me, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

' A new

A new heart also will I give you, a new spirit
 will I put within you, and I will take away the
 stony heart out of your flesh, &c. Jer. xxxi. 33.
 But this shall be the covenant that I will make
 with the house of Israel, after those days, saith
 the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts,
 and write it in their hearts, and I will be their
 God: and they shall be my people.' And in
 Psalm lxxxix. throughout. It is called a covenant
 of Grace; because grace is the beginning and the
 end, the foundation and top stone of it: even grace
 reigning through righteousness.——It is called a
 covenant of Mercy; because therein mercy to the
 miserable is proclaimed through justice satisfying
 blood; for there 'mercy and truth met together;' and all
 'the sure mercies of David,' are conveyed
 thereby. It is called a covenant of Peace and Re-
 conciliation; because it both treats of peace with
 God, and makes it good. It is called a covenant of
 Promise; because it lies in promises with reference
 to us; and these to be accomplished upon the con-
 dition already fulfilled in Christ's obedience and sa-
 tisfaction; and because therein the faithfulness of
 God is pledged, for making out all the promises to
 believers, and the children of promise. It is cal-
 led a covenant of Salt; because it is an incorrupti-
 ble word, 'an everlasting covenant, well ordered
 in all things and sure.' In a word it is a cove-
 nant of help to poor helpless sinners, saying, 'I
 have laid help upon One that is mighty. O
 Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is
 thy help.' It is a covenant of Pardon to the guilt-
 y, saying, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy
 transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not
 remember thy sins.' It is a covenant of Supply
 to the needy, saying, 'When the poor and needy

‘ seek water, and there is none, and their tongue
 ‘ faileth for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them, I,
 ‘ the God of Israel will not forsake them’ It is
 a covenant of Gifts, wherein grace and glory are
 freely given; and in the dispensation thereof, God
 says, come and take all freely, himself, his Christ,
 his Spirit, and all, Rev. xxii. 17. Isa. lv. 1.

II. We are to shew what it is for God to have
 respect to the covenant.

1. God hath respect to the covenant when he re-
 members it, and so remembers us, as in that fore-
 cited, Lev. xxvi. 42. ‘ I will remember my cove-
 ‘ nant, and then will I remember the land.’ Thus
 Psalm cix 5. ‘ He hath given meat to them that
 ‘ fear him.’ Why, he will ever be mindful of his
 covenant, if he comes to give us meat to feed our
 souls at this occasion, the ground will be, he will
 be mindful of his covenant, mindful of his pro-
 mise.

2. God may be said to have respect to his cove-
 nant when he regards it. He hath no reason to
 have respect or regard to us, but he sees reason to
 have a regard to his covenant; he puts honours up-
 on it, for reasons that I shall afterwards shew, on-
 ly I shall say here, his honour is engaged therein,
 therefore he says, ‘ My covenant will I not break,
 ‘ nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips,’
 Psalm lxxxix. 34. He hath more regard to it than
 he hath to heaven and earth: for he says, ‘ Hea-
 ‘ ven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall
 ‘ not pass away.’ He hath such regard to it, that
 he will never break it, but ever keep it.

3. He hath respect to his covenant, when he e-
 stablishes it. And when we pray that he would
 have ‘ respect to the covenant,’ we not only pray

he would remember the covenant, and regard the covenant, but establish the covenant, betwixt him and us, as he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. 'I will establish it between me and thee, and thy seed after thee.' He shews respect to the covenant, when he makes the covenant take hold of us, and makes us take hold of the covenant; for then he makes us put respect upon him, and upon his covenant.

4. He hath respect to his covenant, when he performs the covenant-promise, according to Micah vii. 20. 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old;' and he does this when he acts according to the covenant, or according to the mercy that made the covenant, and the truth that is engaged to make out the promise.

In short the sum of this prayer, as it concerns the import of the word Respect, 'Have respect to the covenant,' is, 'Lord, remember the covenant, and so remember me; Lord, have regard to the covenant, and let me be remembered on this ground, when there is no reason why I should be regarded; Lord, establish thy covenant with me, and so put honour upon thy name manifested in that covenant, and do to me according to the promise of the covenant, cause me to hope in thy word, and then 'remember thy word on which thou hast caused me to hope;' and deal with me not according to my sin and desert, but according to thy covenant and mercy in Christ Jesus.'

III. We are next to shew what it is in the covenant he hath a respect to, or that we should plead upon.

1. 'Have respect to the covenant;' that is, to the Mediator of the covenant. Though thou owest no respect to me, yet dost not thou owe respect, and hast thou not a greater respect to the Mediator of the covenant, even to him whom thou hast 'given to 'be a covenant of the people?' For his sake let me be pitied; have respect to the relation he bears to the covenant, even to him who is the Mediator, Testator, Witness, Messenger, Surety of, and ALL the covenant.' Have respect to his offices, and let him get the glory of his saving offices. It is a strong plea to plead with God upon the respect he bears to Christ; God cannot win over such a plea as that. He must own his regard and respect to Christ, who hath paid such a respect to him, and 'finished the 'work that he gave him to do.'

7. Have respect to the covenant, by having respect to the blood of the covenant. The blood of Christ, that is represented in the sacrament of the supper, it is the 'blood of the covenant,' called, 'the 'New Testament in his blood;' because all the promises are sealed therewith, and so, 'Yea and Amen 'in Christ;' this is the condition of the new covenant. The covenant of works had only the active obedience of the first Adam for its condition: but the condition of the covenant of grace properly, is both the active and passive obedience of the second Adam, his doing and dying. Now, Lord, have respect to that blood that sealed the covenant: since the condition is fulfilled to thy infinite satisfaction, let the promised good be conferred upon me.

3. Have respect to the covenant, by having respect to the oath of the covenant, Heb. vi. 17. The promise is confirmed with the covenant of God; 'That by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation,

'solation,' &c. Now, Lord, wilt thou not have respect to thine own oath? Hast thou not 'sworn by thy holiness, thou wilt not lye unto David?'

4. Have respect to the covenant, by having a respect to the properties of the covenant. This would be a large field; I sum it up in a few words. Have respect to the covenant; that is, Lord have respect to the fulness of the covenant, and let me be supplied, for there is enough there; it contains 'all my salvation and all my desire.' Have respect to the freedom of the covenant, and let me, however unworthy, share of the grace that runs freely thence, Have respect to the stability of the covenant, and let me be pitied though unstable as water, and infirm, yet the covenant stands fast: remember thy word that 'endures for ever.' Have respect to the order of the covenant, that 'is well ordered in all things,' as well as sure. 'Though my house be not so with God,' says David, 'yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure.' Though my house be out of order, and heart out of order, and my frame out of order, and all be in confusion with me, yet see, according to thy covenant, to order all well.

IV. We proceed to shew what kind of a respect he hath to the covenant, that we may be the more engaged to plead upon it.

1. He hath a great and high respect to the covenant. It is the covenant of the GREAT GOD, with his GREAT and ETERNAL SON, for the honour and glory of his great Name; and therefore, he cannot but have a great and high respect unto it. His great name is manifested in it; and therefore when we plead his respect to the covenant, we

plead in effect, saying, 'What wilt thou do for thy
' great name?'

2. He hath a dear and lovely respect to the covenant, for it is the covenant of his grace and love wherein he shews his infinite love to Christ, and through him to a company of wretched sinners. It is a covenant of kindness, Isa. liv. 10. 'My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the
' covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord,
' that hath mercy on thee;' intimating, his covenant of peace is a covenant of kindness, wherein he manifests his dearest love; therefore he hath a dear respect to it.

3. He hath a full respect to the covenant, a respect to every promise of it, 'they are all yea and
' amen to the glory of God,' 2 Cor. i. 20. He hath a respect to all of them, because they 'are all yea
' and amen,' and because they are all thus ratified in Christ, to the glory of God. He hath respect to every article of the covenant, 'not a jot
' shall fall to the ground.'

4. He hath an everlasting respect to the covenant; therefore it is called, 'an everlasting covenant,' it is secured by an everlasting righteousness; it is made between everlasting parties; it is replenished with everlasting blessings; it is rooted in his everlasting love: therefore he is very mindful of his covenant; and will never cease to have respect to it.

Well then say you, What need we pray and plead, that he would have respect to his covenant? Why, if it be sure that he hath, and will for ever have a respect to the covenant, then we may pray with the more assurance and confidence; so that there is here a strong footing for our prayer: but besides, when we pray, and say, 'Have respect unto
' the

the covenant,' we seek, that he would shew the respect that he hath unto it, that he would shew and make it manifest unto us, that we may have the benefit of it, and enjoy the fruits of it, and the blessed effects of that respect to it, in our participation of the blessings thereof.

V. The next thing was, to shew how he will have respect to his covenant; and consequently, whence it is such a suitable plea and argument for us. Why,

1. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to himself; the framer of it he owns himself to be, Psalm lxxxix. 3. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen.' Why then the strength of the plea is 'have respect unto the covenant,' and have respect to thyself, and thy own glorious name and attributes, and let them be glorified, in shewing regard to the covenant. Have respect to thy wisdom that shines in the contrivance of the covenant, 'the manifold wisdom of God; yea, the wisdom of God in a mystery,' that here appears. Have respect to the power that shines in the efficacy of the covenant, not only for over-powering principalities and powers, but overcoming thyself, and the power of thine own wrath, by the power of thy love. Have respect to thy holiness, that shines in the holy oath of Jehovah, by which it is confirmed, and the holy obedience of Jesus, by which it is fulfilled: so that, 'as by the sinful disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so by the Holy obedience of another glorious One, many are made righteous.' Have respect to thy justice, that shines in the blood of the covenant, the sacrifice by which justice hath condign and infinite satisfaction. Have respect to thy mercy and grace,

that reigns through that righteousness to eternal life. Have respect to thy truth and faithfulness, that shines in accomplishing all the promises of the covenant, upon the ground of Christ's having fulfilled the condition. Have respect unto thy eternity and immutability, in the unchangeableness of the covenant; shew that thou art God, and changeest not. Thus have respect to thyself.

2. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to his Son, Christ, the centre of it, and in whom it stands fast as he owns, Psal lxxxix. 28. 'My covenant shall stand fast with him.' Why then, the strength of the plea is 'have respect to the covenant,' and so shew respect to thy Son; have respect to him in his person, as he is thy Son and our Saviour; Emanuel, God-man; in his divinity, wherein he is equal with God; in his humanity, wherein he is the Master-piece of God's works. Have respect to him in his purchase, which is the substance of the covenant bought with his blood. Have respect to his death and resurrection; for thou levest him on this account, John x. 17. 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again:' where we see that Christ, as dying and rising in the room of his people, is the object of the Father's love, delight and esteem. Have respect unto his intercession, wherein he prays for all the blessings of the covenant that he hath purchased: Doth not the Father hear him always? Have respect to his commission which is sealed by thee; for 'him hath God the Father sealed,' appointed, and authorized unto all saving offices, relations, and appearances, let him get the glory of all these. O strong plea!

3. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath

hath respect to his Spirit, the great applier of the covenant blessings, and executor of the Testament, sealed with the blood of Christ, and by whom covenant-love is shed abroad upon the heart, Rom. v. 5. Why then the strength of the plea is, 'have respect to the covenant;' that is, have respect to thy own Spirit, that he may get the glory of applying by his power, what Christ hath purchased by his blood. Have respect to the Promise, of the Spirit that thou hast made, that 'when he is come' he shall convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,' and testify of Christ, and glorify Christ, by shewing the things of Christ. Have respect to the offices of the Spirit, as he is a convincer, sanctifier, and comforter, according to the order and method of the covenant. Have respect to the honour of the Spirit, who is the all in all of the covenant, in point of power, and powerful manifestation, communication, and operation.--- Have respect to the relations of the Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, the Spirit of the covenant, and of all the covenanted seed. Hence,

4. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to his people on the account of the covenant of promise; for they, as Isaac was, 'are the children of promise;' Gal. iv. 28. Why then, the strength of the plea and argument here is, Lord, 'have respect to the covenant,' and so shew regard and respect to us. We have no confidence to claim any respect at thy hand, but merely upon the account of the respect thou hast to the covenant. Have respect to our persons on this ground, since the covenant provides acceptance 'in the beloved,' Eph. i. 6. Look upon us in the face of thine appointed, and in the glass of the new covenant. Have

Have respect to our prayers and performances on this ground, since the covenant hath provided much incense to perfume the prayers and offerings of all saints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne, Rev. viii. 3. Have respect to our tears, when we sigh and groan and mourn, and weep before thee, since the covenant provides a bottle for our tears, Psalm lvi. 8. 'Put thou my tears in thy bottle.' Have respect to our needs on this ground, when we are hardened, that we can neither pray nor weep, nor shed a tear, since the covenant provides supply to the poor and needy, Philip. iv. 19. 'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches, in glory, by Jesus Christ.'

VI. I shall now proceed to make some application of the subject in these four words.

1. Hence see a mark and character of true believers, that are fit for a communion table, they are of God's mind; he hath a respect to the covenant, and they have a respect to the covenant; and hence they know what it is to plead with God upon the respect that he hath to the covenant: they could not do so, if they had not a high respect to it themselves: they have such a respect to the covenant in kind as God hath. They have a great respect to it, so as they esteem it more than all things in a world, they would not give one promise of it, on which they have been caused to hope, for all the gold of Ophir. They have a dear and kindly respect to it, as all their salvation and all their desire: yea, and all their delight also. The word of grace is sweeter to them 'than honey and the honey-comb.' They have a full and universal respect to it, and to all the promises of it; they respect the
promise

promise of purity as well as the promise of pardon; the promise of salvation from sin as well, and as much, as the promise of salvation from hell; the promise of holiness as well as of happiness. As they have a respect to all God's commandments, so they have a respect to all his promises; and particularly as David had his golden Psalms, so they have their golden Promises, that they are made to hing upon. Yea, they have an everlasting respect to the covenant and to the promises thereof; even when their frame fails them, when their sweet enjoyments fail them, yet their respect to the covenant remains, and their respect to the Maker of the covenant, to the Mediator of the covenant, to the blood and oath of the covenant, to the Spirit of the covenant, and to the blessings and benefits of it. They have an everlasting respect to the grace of the covenant of grace; they are adorers and admirers of free grace. They have an everlasting respect to, and remembrance of the words of the covenant, particularly these words that have been let in with any life or power upon their soul, or that they have been caused to hope upon; whatever they forget, they can never forget such a word that brought life to their souls; 'I will never forget thy words, says David; for by them thou hast quickened me.' They have such an everlasting respect to the covenant, that, when they have nothing in the world to trust to; they will rely on the covenant, and confide in such a promise, and plead upon it, saying, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant.'

2. Hence we may see the misery of those that are unbelievers, and remain 'strangers to the covenant of promise,' and have no respect to the covenant. It is misery enough, that God hath no respect

spect to you: no respect to your persons nor prayers, as it is said, 'To Cain and his offering, God had no respect,' Gen. iv. 5. So God hath no respect either to your persons or performances: they are an abomination to him. Your prayers to him are but like the howling of a dog, if you have never taken hold of his covenant, nor seen the respect that God hath to the covenant. You have no respect to God, while you have no respect to that which he respects so highly. And as he hath no respect to your person or performances, he hath no respect to your tears: they never flowed from faith's views of a pierced Christ. He hath no respect to your souls, the 'redemption therefore cease' eth for ever,' because you have no due respect to the Redeemer's blood and righteousness. He hath no respect to your communicating: nay, he disapproves of it, and discharges you to sit down at his table, on peril of eating and drinking your damnation. God hath no regard nor respect to your salvation, because you have no regard nor respect to the Saviour he hath provided and offered. God thinks as little to damn you, as you think little to dishonour him. God thinks as little of you, as you think little of sin, and he hath as little respect to you, as you have to Christ and to the covenant. Wo to you, if you remain in this case, for the day is coming, wherein God will, before all the world, shew no more respect to you, than to say to you, 'Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!' But,

3. Hence we may see the happiness of believers, that have such a respect to the covenant, as I was speaking of, a great, dear, full, and perpetual respect to it and the Mediator of it, who have taken hold of the covenant through grace, and know
what

what it is to take hold of God in the covenant, to take hold of God in a promise, and to hold him by his word, and rely upon him in it, saying, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant: here is your great happiness, God hath respect to you: What respect? Even to your persons and offerings, as it is said of Abel, Gen. iv. 4. 'God had a respect to him and 'to his offering.' Though you be saying in your heart, Oh! how can he have respect to me, black and vile, and guilty me? Why! not for your sake indeed, be it known unto you, but for his covenant's sake, and his name's sake. He hath a respect to your praying, and praising, and communicating; because he hath a respect to the covenant. He hath a respect to your name, though 'the name of 'the wicked shall rot, your name shall be had in 'everlasting remembrance;' for God hath put his name in you; something of Christ in you, something of the covenant in you. Some observe, when Abram's name was turned to Abraham, there was some of the letters of the name *JEHOVAH* put in Abram's name. Indeed, God gives the believer a new name, that he hath a respect unto, he hath a respect to your suits and supplications; 'I have 'heard Ephraim hemoaning himself. O my dove, 'that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs: let me hear thy voice, let me 'see thy countenance, for sweet is thy voice, and 'thy countenance is comely.' He hath a respect to his doves, when pouring out their hearts before him; that voice that the world laughs at, God hath a respect to it. He hath a respect to your blood, precious in his sight is the blood of his saints. He hath a respect to your souls; and hence he gave his blood to be a ransom for them, and when your souls languish, he sends his Spirit
to

to restore them, and when you die, he will send his angels to bring them to heaven. He hath a respect to your bodies; you ought, being bought with a price to glorify him in your souls and bodies, which are his. When your bodies go to the dust, he will take care of that dust, and lose nothing of you, but raise you up at the last day, and make your vile bodies like unto his glorious body; and so shall ye ever be with the Lord. He hath a respect to you, such a respect, that he puts honour upon you, 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.' He hath made you kings and priests to your God, Jacob was crowned a prince in the field of battle, the field of prayer, when he wrestled with the angel and prevailed as a prince. The poor wrestling man is a prince, and the poor wrestling woman a princess, in God's sight: this is the honour of all the saints. They have power with God, and therefore no wonder that they have 'power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron:' they judge and torment them that dwell upon the earth, even here; and 'know you not, that hereafter the saints shall judge the world?' God hath a respect to you, and he will shew it in due time, because he hath a respect to the covenant, and hath filled your heart with respect to it also.

4. Hence see the duty incumbent upon us in pleading with God for his favour, presence, and blessing; let us go to him both in secret prayer, and in solemn approaches to his table, crying, Lord 'Have respect to thy covenant.' I know not a case you can be in, but the covenant exhibits a cure, and you are allowed to plead it, Ezek xxxiv. 27. After many precious new-covenant promises, it is said, 'For this will I be enquired of by the house
of

‘ of Israel, to do it for them,’ and how are we to enquire, but by pleading the respect he hath to the covenant! Have you a polluted heart with the filth of sin? a polluted conscience, with the guilt of sin? Why, here is an article of the covenant: ‘ I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you,’ verse 25. O then, go to God for cleansing, and plead, saying, O Lord, ‘ Have respect to the covenant.’ Have you the old hard stony heart still within you, and would you have it renewed and softened? Here is an article of the covenant, ‘ A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.’ O then, go to God and plead it, saying, ‘ Have respect to the covenant.’ Are you destitute of the Spirit; sensual, not having the Spirit? Do you find such a want of the Spirit, that you cannot walk in God’s way! Well, there is an article of the covenant here, ver. 27. ‘ I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,’ O plead for this great blessing, and say, Lord, ‘ Have respect to the covenant.’

In a word, when you consider what kind of a sinner you are, consider also what kind of a covenant this is; it is enough to say, that it is a covenant of grace, of all sorts of grace; for all sorts of sinners that are out of hell. Are you under dreadful guilt? Here is a covenant of pardoning grace, ‘ I will blot out thy sin as a cloud, and thy transgression as a thick cloud; return to me for I have redeemed thee,’ Isa. xlix. 22. O then, plead that he may ‘ have respect to the covenant.’ Are you under fearful pollutions? O here is a covenant of purifying

rifying grace, saying, 'There is a fountain opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' O then plead he may have respect to the covenant. Are you in darkness and ignorance, having no knowledge of God? O here is a covenant of enlightening grace, saying, 'They shall all be taught of God,' O then plead it, saying, 'Lord, have respect to the covenant.' Are you under deadness, and like dead and dry bones? O here is a covenant of quickening grace, saying, 'I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly. The hour cometh, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live,' O then plead that he may 'have respect to the covenant.' Are you in confusion, and know not what way to take? Oh here is a covenant of directing grace, saying, 'I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.' Are you under sad plagues and soul-diseases, over-run with sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? O here is a covenant of healing grace, saying, 'The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. I am the Lord that healeth thee; I will heal your backslidings.' O then plead, saying, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant.' Are you in extreme danger of hell and damnation, because of your sin and guilt? O here is a covenant of delivering grace, saying, 'Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom, O then plead it, and say, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant.' Are you in bondage unto sin, Satan, and the world, a captive unto lust, and shut up in unbelief, as in a prison? O

here

ere is a covenant of liberating grace! 'proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' Are you stupid soul that cannot move toward God, nor air heaven-ward, by reason of a backward will like a brazen gate, that resists all the force of moving means? Well, but, O! here is a covenant of drawing grace, saying, 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.' As the power and virtue of the loadstone draws iron, so the virtue of an exalted Christ draws the iron bar of the will, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,' O then plead it, saying, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant.'

What other concerns have you?—Are you concerned for your children, that they may be partakers of covenant-blessings, and saved of the Lord? O here is a covenant of extensive grace entailing blessings on us and our offspring, saying, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.' O then look to God in behalf of your children, saying, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant.' Are you concerned for the church, and the dangerous circumstances she is in by reason of cruel enemies? This seems to be the great concern of the Psalmist here, as appears from the body of the psalm, and the words following the text: For 'the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' These that live in the darkness of ignorance and error, and in the works of darkness, are full of cruelty against the church and people of God, and they are surrounded with them, insomuch that the church is like a 'lily among thorns,' or a 'sheep among wolves,' what shall become of her? Why, here is a covenant of defence, and of defending and protecting grace, saying, 'Upon all the glory
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‘ there shall be a defence;’ therefore, even when enemies ‘ break down the carved works with axes and hammers,’ verse 7. When they are saying, ‘ Let us destroy them together,’ ver. 8. Yea, when it shall come to this, that a bloody sword, that is raging abroad, shall come over to us, and that foreign or domestic enemies, or both, shall devour and destroy, and may be ‘ burn up all the synagogues of God in the land,’ as it is, ver. 8. And when we shall ‘ not see our signs, and there is no more any prophet, nor any among us that know the time how long,’ ver. 9. In all such cases, what course shall we take but that of the Psalmist here? Lord, ‘ Have respect to the covenant.’

Are you concerned about inward enemies, spiritual enemies, and molested with the powers of darkness? Is your heart full of the habitations of cruelty, and fearfully inhabited with cruel devils, cruel lusts, cruel corruptions that master and conquer, and prevail against you, so that you may many a time wounded and dead at the enemy’s feet? O here is a covenant of sin-conquering grace, not only a covenant of mercy to your soul, but of vengeance to your lusts, saying, ‘ The day of vengeance is in mine heart, the year of my Redeemer is come,’ Isa. lxiii. 4. O then cry down the promised vengeance on all your cruel soul-enemies, saying, Lord, ‘ Have respect to the covenant.’

Are you concerned about your soul-poverty and indigence, not only oppressed with enemies without and within, but also oppressed with wants and necessities, being absolutely poor and needy, destitute of all good? O here is a covenant of soul-supplying grace, and of all needful provision, saying, ‘ When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I th

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Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them; I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' Then, plead the covenant as the Psalmist here in the following verse. 'O let the oppressor return ashamed, let the poor and needy praise thy name. Have respect to the covenant.'

In a word, Let your case be the worst out of all, this covenant contains all salvation as a covenant of grace, of all grace, of all sorts of cures for all sorts of cases; and if you can get yourself wrapt within the bond of this covenant, by believing and leading it; then you draw God upon your interest, so that your concern is his concern, your interest is his interest, your cause is his cause, as the Psalmist shews here, ver. 22. 'Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.' Stand ever upon his honour, and he will do his own work in his own time. If ever you got grace to draw a bill upon God as a covenanting, promising God in Christ, and have any bills lying tabled before the throne, and are sometimes unable to plead and pursue the bill, with, Lord, 'Have respect unto the covenant,' you have the strongest encouragement to wait on him, and expect his answering the bill in due time; or he will rather work marvellously, and create new worlds, rather turn all things to nothing, than quit his concern in, or give up with his 'respect unto the covenant.'

Are you concerned for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the earth, as you ought to be? Here is a covenant of grace to the Jews, and grace to the Gentiles; grace to the Heathen nations, saying, 'I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Are you concerned about generations

nerations to come, about the rising generation, when there is little hope of the present? O! here is a covenant of grace to succeeding generations till the end of the world, 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.'

Are you concerned about your latter end, and how it shall fare with you when in the swellings of Jordan; how you will fight the battle? O here is a covenant of death-conquering grace, saying, 'Death shall be swallowed up in victory: O death, I will be thy plague. O grave, I will be thy destruction. Are you concerned about a gospel-ministry, and thoughtful whether it shall be continued? There is many a word in this covenant about it; but especially, that Christ is exalted to maintain and support a gospel dispensation to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20. Whatsoever spot of the earth he doth chuse or refuse, he having ascended on high, hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, also that the Lord God might dwell among them,' Psalm lxxviii. 18.

F I N I S.