

SERMON ON THE TWO COVENANTS

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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. HEB.8:10.-

STEAM PRESS, BATTLE CREEK, MICH. 1875.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer.31:31-34.

THE first covenant was made with the people of Israel at the time of their departure out of Egypt. This covenant no longer exists. The new covenant long since took its place. But a very serious error prevails in the minds of many persons respecting the points of difference between these two covenants. The old covenant was made with the Hebrew people. For this reason, whatever entered into it is supposed to be Jewish. Thus the law of God is summarily set aside as Jewish; and thus might the God of Israel himself be discarded as a Jewish God. But the new covenant is held up to our admiration, because it is, as they say, not made with the Jews, but with the Gentiles. The old covenant belonged to the Jews, and with it we have no concern; the new covenant is made with the Gentiles, and we, as Gentiles, are interested in it.

How can men thus carelessly read the Scriptures? The language of inspiration is very explicit in stating that the new covenant is made with the same people that were the subjects of the old covenant. Thus Jeremiah, speaking in the name of the Lord, says: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." And he further alludes to the fact that the new covenant is made with the Hebrew people when he adds: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." And yet again he identifies the Hebrew people when he says: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel." And Paul quotes at length, in Hebrews 8, this entire statement of Jeremiah respecting the old and new covenants' being severally made with the Hebrew people. And, as if this were not enough, he makes a statement in Rom.9:4,5, that exactly meets the case. Thus he says of the Hebrews: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth

the adoption, and the glory, AND THE COVENANTS, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." Thus it appears that everything valuable God has given to the world through the instrumentality, or by the means, of the Hebrew people. Those who choose to do so can venture to despise the law of God because given to the Jews, and to reject Christ because he came of the Jews; but one thing they cannot do. They cannot say, "We accept the new covenant because it pertains to the Gentiles, whereas the first covenant, and the law, etc., pertained to the Jews." No such distinction can be drawn. Both the covenants pertain to the Hebrew people, according to the explicit statement of Paul; and both are said by Jeremiah and Paul, or rather by the Spirit of inspiration speaking through them, to be made with Judah and Israel.

The fact being thus clearly established that the two covenants are both made with the Hebrews, it becomes a matter of interest to inquire into the reason of this thing. Why did God thus honor one nation and pass by all others? Undoubtedly there was a sufficient reason for this action, and that reason we shall find fully laid open to our view in the Bible. The first thing which Paul has enumerated as pertaining to the Hebrews, is "the adoption;" and if we can understand why God adopted this family, we shall readily understand why all the other things which he has named should also pertain to this people.

Know, then, that God did not adopt the family of Abraham as his first action in behalf of mankind. He attempted thus to make his own the family of the first man, Adam, the common head and father of the human race. But at the end of the antediluvian age, only eight persons remained upon the earth who feared the God of Heaven. There was no alternative with him but to witness the extinction of piety in the earth, or else, by an awful lesson of judgment, to destroy every wicked man from the earth. And for this reason came the deluge. And now one family alone remains - the family of Noah, who is the second head of the human race. And this family, thus instructed in divine truth, and thus warned by God's terrible judgments, might all have been, if they would, the heritage of the Almighty. But when men began again to multiply upon the earth, they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They forgot God. They plunged into sin. They united under Nimrod to build Babel. As they set God at defiance, he placed his curse upon them by confounding their language. Gen.10 and 11. In the fourth century after the flood, only a handful of godly persons remained. Abraham, in the midst of this dense moral darkness, for even his immediate ancestors were idolators (Josh.24:2), was so preeminent in virtue that he was called the friend of God. James 2:23. God said that he knew Abraham, that he would command his children and his household after him, and that they would keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. Gen.18:19. God had pledged himself at the time Noah and his family came forth from the ark, never again to drown the world. Gen.9:15.

But he must do something to save this one faithful family from ruin, and, by means of them, to preserve in the earth some degree of true piety, and to retain among men a body of faithful worshipers. To do this, he adopts this family of Abraham, his friend, and separates them by circumcision and the rites of the ceremonial law, from all the

rest of mankind. Thus Abraham became the third grandfather of mankind. Not the father of the whole race, like Adam and Noah respectively; but the father of the people of God. This was the adoption. He gave up the rest of mankind to idolatry and atheism, not because he was willing that they should perish, but because they would not hearken to his voice. Yet, though he thus adopted this one family, he did not so reject the rest of mankind that he did not make provision for any of them to be received among the Hebrew people if they would become circumcised and unite with the Hebrews in his service and worship. The adoption was just, and right, and necessary. By means of it, God preserved his knowledge and his worship in the earth.

The Hebrew people being thus adopted, and by means of circumcision set apart from the rest of the world, found to their great profit that, though they were separated from the world, they were united to Him who made the heaven and the earth. They had the Lord for their God. They had much advantage "every way;" the adoption, the glory, the two covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, the fathers, and the Messiah. And yet Paul says their chief advantage was that the oracles of God were committed to them. Rom.3:1,2. It is not best to scorn the law of God because [it was] committed to the Hebrews. It is not best to despise the new covenant, as Jewish, because, like the old covenant, it is made with Israel. Nor is it best to reject Jesus as the Messiah because he comes of that despised race; and, finally, it is not best to have some other god besides the God of Israel. Our God, indeed, bears that title; because he was for long ages worshiped by the Hebrews only, and by the Gentiles almost not at all. Yet that is not his fault, but ours. And so of all the sacred things committed to the Israelites. They were not Jewish, or Hebraic, but divine. In fact, we must have a part in these precious treasures which God gave to this people, for their preservation through the long period of Gentile darkness. They are of equal value to us, and we must share in them. "Salvation," said our Lord to the woman of Samaria, "is of the Jews." John 4:22.

The opening work in the establishment of the new covenant must, at least, be as early as the closing hours of the life of Christ. In the last memorable evening of his life, as he was about to be betrayed into the hands of the Jewish rulers, our Lord gave the cup, representing thereby his own blood, into the hands of his disciples, saying as he did it: "This cup is the new testament [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22:20. Here is the first mention of the new covenant by our Lord. It is evident that the shedding of his blood, and the pouring out of his soul unto death, was that which should give validity to the covenant. Isa.53; Heb.9. The opening event, therefore, in the ratification of the new testament, or covenant, was on that memorable night in which the Saviour was betrayed, when he, the mediator of the new covenant on the one part, and the eleven apostles on the other part, as the representatives of the people of God, entered into solemn contract with each other. He, by giving them the cup representing his own blood, pledged himself to die for them; they, by accepting it, thus pledged themselves to accept of salvation through his blood, and to fulfill the conditions connected therewith.

Indeed, we must date the preliminary acts in the establishment of

the new covenant, from the opening of Christ's ministry. Our Lord began to preach at the close of Daniel's sixty-ninth week. Compare Dan.9:25; Mark 1:14,15. The remaining, or seventieth, week, he was to employ in confirming the covenant with many; and in the midst of the week, he caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease, by being offered himself upon the cross, as their great antitype. Heb.10:5-10. We must, therefore, assign the ministry of Christ to the introductory work of establishing the new covenant, or new testament. His preaching was a public announcement of its principles. He assigned to the law of God its just place. He laid down the keeping of the commandments as the condition of eternal life. Matt.5:17-19; 19:16-19. He revealed the ground of pardon; viz., the sacrifice of his own life. Matt.20:28. He also stated in distinct terms the conditions on which that sacrifice could benefit men; viz., faith and repentance. John 7:24; Mark 1:15. We cannot, therefore, deny that the ministry of Christ was the opening work in the establishment of the new covenant.

And now we again come to the important fact that the establishment of the new covenant was solely with the Hebrew people. Our Lord confined his ministry to the Jewish people, declaring that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt.15:24. When he sent out the twelve during his own ministry, he "commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt.10:5,6. And when he sent the seventy also, it was only into those cities and villages whither he himself would come. Luke

10:1. His apostles were all Jews. And with them was the first solemn act of ratification of the new covenant in the cup out of which all drank, representing the new testament in his blood. Luke 22:20; 1Cor.11:25. And here comes in the fact that the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy pertain exclusively to the Hebrew people. Dan.9:24. The last, or seventieth, week was devoted to the confirmation of the covenant. Dan.9:27. It began with our Lord's ministry to the Hebrews, and ended when the apostles turned to the Gentiles. It was in the midst of this week of confirming the covenant that our Lord was crucified. And thus we find that, after our Lord's ascension, the ministers of the word preached the gospel "to none but unto the Jews only." Acts 11:19. It was unto the Jews first that God, having raised up his Son, sent him to bless them in turning them away from their sins. Acts 3:25,26. The termination of the seventy weeks closed the period in which the work pertained exclusively to the Hebrews. The work for the Gentiles was opened by the conversion of Saul, and by his commission to them as their apostle. Acts 9; 26:17. It was also opened on the part of Peter by his wonderful vision of the sheet let down from Heaven, and the commission given him at that time. Acts 10; 9; 15:7,14-17.

But what was the condition of the Gentiles before "the door of faith" was opened to them? Let the apostle Paul answer this, Eph.2:11-13, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The apostle goes on to speak of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one body as follows, verses 14-20: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."

Those who sneer at everything which God has committed to the Hebrews, and boast themselves of their Gentile descent, would do well to compare this statement of the condition of the Gentiles with Paul's statement of the "advantages" of the Jews, and his enumeration of the things that pertain to them. Rom.3:1,2; 9:4,5. God purposed to make of the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision one people for himself. The first thing was to abolish the enmity; viz., the code which created national distinction, which was circumcision and the ceremonial law. See Acts 11:3; Col.2:13-17; Gal.2:11,12. Of the Gentiles it is said that they were "in time past Gentiles in the flesh," and "at that time . . . without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from THE COVENANTS of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Of the Israelites it is said: "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and THE COVENANTS, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Certainly the Gentiles have no occasion for boasting. They did not take into the union that which added much to the common stock. They came in as the veriest beggars. They became rich by sharing with the Hebrews the blessings which God had for long ages preserved in their hands. The Gentiles were made partakers of the spiritual things which God had wisely and justly placed in the hands of Israel. Rom.15:27. But being thus brought nigh by the blood of Christ, Paul says of those who were Gentiles "in time past" (but not now) that they were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." They were no longer Gentiles, but Israelites. They became sharers in the name and in the riches of Israel. And it is by this adoption into the commonwealth of Israel that they became sharers in the blessings of the new covenant. The subject is wonderfully illustrated by the words of Jer.11:16; and Rom.11:17-24. Thus we read:-

"The Lord called thy name, A GREEN OLIVE TREE, fair, and of goodly fruit; with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken."

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou barest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt

say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Here is the good olive tree, representing the family of Abraham, as adopted by the God of the whole earth, when he gave up the rest of mankind to their own chosen idolatry and wickedness. It is a "green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." To this olive tree pertain the covenants of promise. The first covenant is made with the people thus represented. The new covenant is made with the same people that the first covenant was made with. The breaking off of many of the branches of the tree, is because that God's ancient people continued not in his covenant. This is why he regarded them not. Jer.31:32; Heb.8:9. Indeed, in the chapter in which Jeremiah predicts the breaking off of the branches of the olive tree, he assigns the reason: The violation of the covenant God made with his people when he brought them forth out of Egypt. See Jer.11. By the new covenant, those who were broken off can, if they will, be grafted in again, and not they only, but the Gentiles also with them. We may consider the good olive tree as having twelve larger branches, and a vast number of small branches. The tree will at the close of human probation, stand complete, representing the twelve tribes of "the Israel of God."

There can be, therefore, no dispute that the first covenant, and the new covenant, were each made with the Hebrew people; the first, at the departure out of Egypt; the second, at the time of our Lord's ministry and death. The Gentiles share in the blessings of the new covenant by becoming members of the commonwealth of Israel. Eph.2:12,19.

What is meant by the word covenant? In the books of the New Testament, the words covenant and testament are used as signifying the same thing. They are, indeed, only two different translations of the same Greek word, diatheke. So that when our Lord says, "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20), it is the same as if he had said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Webster thus defines covenant:-

"1. A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation.

"2. A writing containing the terms of agreement or contract between parties."

He thus defines the word contract:-

"1. An agreement or covenant between two or more persons, in which each party binds himself to do or forbear some act, and each acquires a

right to what the other promises; a mutual promise, upon lawful consideration or cause, which binds the parties to a performance; a bargain; a compact.

"2. The act by which a man and woman are betrothed, each to the other.

"3. The writing which contains the agreement of parties, with the terms and conditions, and which serves as a proof of the obligation."

It appears, therefore, that the word covenant has two leading significations: 1. That of agreement, or contract, between parties. 2. That of a writing containing the terms or conditions of such agreement. In the first and fullest sense, a covenant is a contract, or agreement, with the conditions on which that contract is made. In the second and more restricted use of that word, a covenant is the terms or conditions of such contract.

Such being the signification of the word covenant, let us now ascertain what it was which constituted the first covenant. We have ascertained who were the contracting or covenanting parties, viz., God and Israel; and when this covenant was made, viz., when God took that people by the hand to bring them forth out of Egypt. But what was the covenant itself into which these two parties entered?

1. 1. If we take the first definition then, without doubt, it was the mutual agreement, or contract, made at Sinai between God and Israel respecting the moral law.

2. 2. But if we take the second definition, it was the law itself; for that embodied the conditions of the covenant.

Which of these views is the right one? Those persons who hold that the law of God still remains in force believe that the truth is stated in the first of these two answers. But those who believe that the law was abolished at the death of Christ, do, with equal assurance, maintain that the law of God alone was the first covenant, and that the second of these two answers is the right and proper answer. One party, therefore, asserts that the law of God, or ten commandments, was the first covenant. The other, that the mutual agreement between God and Israel concerning that law constituted that covenant.

Let us now trace the acts by which God and Israel entered into covenant. When we have noted all these, we shall be able to determine the truth in this case. Thus we read, Ex.19:1: "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai." And the people encamped before the mount. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Verses 3-6. Here is a

definite proposition from the God of Heaven: IF YE WILL OBEY MY VOICE,
. . . then ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure."

Next we read the action of Moses, the mediator between these parties. Having received this proposition from the Lord, he immediately bore it to the people. Thus we read of his action: "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him." Verse 7. The proposition of the Most High was thus submitted to the people of Israel. And now observe their answer: "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Verse 8.

Thus the people with one voice accept the conditions offered them, and pledge themselves to their fulfillment. And now it is the business of the mediator to return this answer to him who had made the proposition to them. And thus we read again: "And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." Verse 8. The preliminary contract was thus closed. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the preparation of the people to hear, and the descent of the Almighty to speak, the ten commandments. Verses 9-25. And now the voice of God utters the ten words of the moral law. Ex.20:1-17:-

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

"Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

"These words the Lord spake," says Moses, "unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; AND HE ADDED NO MORE." Deut.5:22. This was THE VOICE OF GOD, which the people had so solemnly covenanted to obey. Ex.19:5.

When the ten words of God's voice had thus been heard, and the people had witnessed the awful display of the divine majesty, then they removed and stood afar off. And they besought Moses to stand between them and the great God whose voice they had heard, and whose majesty they had witnessed. Ex.20:18.

"And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." Verse 21. The remainder of the chapter, and all of chapters 21,22, and 23, are devoted to statutes and judgments, partly defining man's duty toward God, but principally relating to his duty toward his fellow-man. With these are precepts of a ceremonial character, but the larger part of these chapters is made up of precepts stating the principles of justice among men. These three chapters were spoken to Moses only, who was in the immediate presence of God.

Next, the Lord proceeds to the final contract between himself and the people. In the preliminary contract, recorded in Ex.19, the people had solemnly pledged themselves to obey the voice of God. In Ex.20, they heard that voice in ten precepts. And now it is worthy of notice how careful was the Most High, in this work of entering into covenant with his people, to take no advantage of them. Before hearing his voice, they had pledged themselves to obey it. But the Lord did not treat the contract as closed yet. With an invitation to a large number of persons to come up to him, he sends Moses again to the people. Ex.24:1,2. They had heard the voice of God. Do they still stand to their solemn pledge that they would obey it? Lest they had forgotten something of that which God had spoken, and that they might be informed of all that God had communicated to him in the mount, it is next added:-

"And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments." Ex.24:3. The people have the chance now to refuse to close this most solemn compact if they see cause for so doing. They might have said, "When we agreed to obey the voice of God, we had not heard it. Now that we have heard it, we cannot abide by our promise." And Moses, by repeating every word again, gave them the most perfect opportunity for so doing. But, observe the answer of the people:-

"And all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said we will do." Ex.24:3. We might suppose that this would close the contract between the parties. But not so. Further acts of ratification were to take place. The whole thing must be put in writing. And thus we read:-

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." And now the solemnity of a sacrifice to God must take place. So it is added that Moses "rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord." Verses 4,5.

The sacrifice of these victims having been thus made to God by the people, the blood itself is carefully secured for an important purpose. And so the record adds:-

"And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." Verse 6. One half of the blood was offered upon the altar, a direct offering to God. The other half was reserved for another and most expressive solemnity.

We learn from verse 4 that Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. Now verse 7 tells us what he did with what was written. What Moses now reads is called the book of the covenant. For it contained the covenant between God and the people as far as, at that point, it had been consummated. And observe again the care of the Almighty that the people should understand every word of that to which they agree. Moses reads every word of the whole transaction in the audience of the people. Thus verse 7 states the case:-

"And he took THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT, and read in the audience of the people." Here is yet another opportunity for them to say that they could not abide by their first promise. But, instead of speaking thus, they give their final and unreserved assent to this solemn compact. And thus the verse continues: "And they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." This closed the contract on the part of the people. But there yet remained a most expressive act on the part of Moses, and a final, solemn announcement to be made by him, which not only proclaimed the accomplishment of the work, but gave a definite idea of what had been done. And so we next read:-

"And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people." Or, as Paul states the case, he "sprinkled both the book and all the people." Verse 8; Heb.9:19. One half of the blood had been already offered to God upon the altar; the remaining half is that which Moses thus uses. And how solemn and expressive is this act! It is what Paul calls the dedication of the covenant. Heb.9:18. He sprinkles both the book and all the people. And thus they enter, in the most solemn manner, into the bond of the covenant. And thus the solemn espousal of the people by the Lord of hosts having been consummated, Moses announces the result in words which define the contract with remarkable precision. Having sprinkled the book, and the people, Moses said to them:-

"Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you CONCERNING ALL THESE WORDS."

We have now the first covenant, complete and entire. And certainly it is possible for us to determine what constitutes it. We say that the first covenant was this solemn contract, or agreement, between God and the people of Israel concerning the law of God. Our opponents, on the

contrary, affirm that the first covenant was simply the law itself. According to the first view, the first covenant was the contract made at Sinai between God and Israel concerning the law of God, or ten commandments, obedience to that law constituting the condition of the covenant.

According to the second view, the first covenant was simply the ten commandments.

The first view is the more comprehensive, as it presents the two leading definitions of the word covenant, and answers to them both. 1. It presents as the covenant the contract between the parties. 2. It presents the condition to the contract.

But the second view presents as the first covenant that which answers to the definition of covenant only in its secondary sense; viz., the condition on which the contract rests. Undoubtedly the word covenant is thus used in the Bible. And for that reason many persons suppose that the ten commandments answer to, and constitute, the first covenant of which Jeremiah and Paul speak. That view of this subject which is really the truth will give to every part of the testimony its proper place, and will then show a divine harmony of the whole. But error must of necessity suppress, or pervert, the truth. Here are the more important passages quoted to prove that the ten commandments constitute the first covenant:-

Ex.34:28: "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

Deut.4:13: "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

Deut.9:9-11: "When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water; and the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant."

1Kings 8:21: "And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt."

2Chron.6:11: "And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, that he made with the children of Israel."

These are the texts relied upon by our opponents to disprove our views of the first covenant and to establish their own. We freely admit that the word covenant is applied to the ten commandments; and further, we also admit, or, to speak more properly, we maintain, that the ten commandments do sustain a very important relation to the first covenant. But all parties must agree,

1. 1. That the ten commandments are not a covenant in the sense of being a contract or agreement, as they contain no such thing.
2. 2. That they are a covenant in the sense of being the conditions of the agreement which God made with Israel.

It does not seem that either of these two propositions can be denied by any candid man, as they are, manifestly, the exact truth. Both parties to this controversy must here come together upon common ground. And if they each act with a pure conscience, it will be difficult for them to disagree respecting the following proposition: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS DO NOT CONSTITUTE THE COVENANT of EX.24:8.

That text reads thus: "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you CONCERNING ALL THESE WORDS." Two palpable reasons sustain the foregoing proposition: 1. The covenant made with Israel "concerning all these words," was the agreement which the people entered into with the Almighty, as recorded in Ex.19 and 24, that they would keep the words spoken by him. 2. The ten commandments were the words concerning which this covenant or agreement was made. These reasons are not likely to be disputed. They establish the fact, therefore, that the covenant which was ratified or dedicated with blood by Moses was not the ten commandments. On the contrary, it is a covenant in a more extensive sense than they can be. It is an agreement between God and Israel concerning his law, and that law is elsewhere called a covenant, not because there is in it a contract between God and his people, but simply because it is the grand condition of the contract, or covenant, which Moses here dedicates with blood. It is remarkable that the people entered into formal and solemn contract to obey the voice of God before they heard it, and that having heard his voice they ratified that contract in the most solemn manner; and that to conclude all, Moses, having written the whole thing in a book, sprinkled both it and all the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Ex.24:8.

Both parties to the controversy respecting the first covenant will here again certainly unite in saying that Moses uses the word covenant in this remarkable text, not as signifying the ten commandments, but the agreement made respecting them. Here we stand on solid ground, and our opponents will not attempt to drive us hence. And now that we are so happily agreed in this fact, let us advance to the important truth which lies directly before us. Here it is:-

The contract made in Ex.19 and 24, relative to the ten commandments, which Moses (Ex.24:8) calls "the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words," is the identical first covenant concerning which we are involved in controversy.

This proposition, our opponents stoutly deny. But so certainly as they are honest men (and we are ready to award this noble quality to every one of them who has not given palpable proof that he does not possess it), they will be constrained to agree with us here also. Providentially, we have the testimony of the New Testament in so

explicit and distinct an utterance as to leave no chance for dispute on this point. Paul quotes this very record in Ex.24:8, respecting the dedication of the covenant concerning the law of God, and makes the explicit statement that this covenant thus dedicated was the first covenant. Here are his words:-

"Whereupon neither the FIRST TESTAMENT [covenant] was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament [covenant] which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb.9:18-20.

Here, also, we have a right to ask our opponents to agree with us. In fact, the testimony is so explicit that there is no chance for them to do otherwise. Paul settles this point in dispute, and shows that the first covenant is not the law of God, but the solemn contract between God and Israel respecting that law. And that which makes Paul's testimony in this case very valuable is, that he writes as a commentator upon those words of Jeremiah which constitute the theme of this discourse.

And now let us return to the words of Jeremiah, to ascertain what he himself means by the covenant made with Israel when God led them out of Egypt.

When Jeremiah predicts the establishment of a new covenant with Israel and Judah, he uses the following language respecting the old covenant. Thus he says:-

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord." Jer.31:32.

This text sheds much light on the nature of the covenant to which Jeremiah refers. But it is remarkable that Jeremiah, in another place preceding this, has defined with great precision what he means by the covenant made when God led Israel out of Egypt. Thus we read, Jer.11:3,4:-

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you; so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God."

Here we have Jeremiah's own definition of what constituted that covenant which the children of Israel had, by their disobedience, dissolved. And it identifies this covenant with the solemn contract between God and Israel, which Paul designates as the first covenant. For Jeremiah makes the essential feature of this covenant to consist in one grand stipulation on the part of God toward his people; viz., "Obey My Voice; . . so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God." Now it is a remarkable fact that this is the very stipulation, and the only one, made by God in entering into solemn contract with Israel. It is a

stipulation exacting obedience to the voice of God, which was about to utter the ten commandments. Thus the contract was opened by the God of Heaven: "If ye will OBEY MY VOICE indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." Ex.19:5. We cannot, therefore, fail to identify the covenant to which Jeremiah refers. It is not the ten commandments, but the solemn contract made between God and Israel respecting those commandments.

But the words of Jer.31:32, are entitled to particular attention in determining what the prophet understood by this covenant of which he spoke. He says: "Which my covenant they brake, although I was an HUSBAND unto them." The expression sheds great light on the nature of the covenant in question. Was that covenant simply the law of God? or was it the solemn contract between God and Israel by which the people pledged themselves to obey that law, and God pledged himself on that condition to accept them as his people, and to be their God? Surely, we cannot mistake here. The first covenant made God the husband of his people. The solemn contract between them and himself was that whereby he espoused, or married, that people. Jer.2:2. There can be no mistake, therefore, that a contract was requisite, in order that God should become the husband of that people; and that contract is found in Ex.19 and 24. He could be their lawgiver, by virtue of proclaiming his law to them; but to be their husband, he must enter into contract with them, and it is precisely this relation that he sustains to Israel by virtue of the covenant of which Jeremiah speaks. See Webster's second definition of contract, previously quoted.

And this distinction properly introduces a further argument on the nature of this covenant, from Rom.9:4: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Paul elsewhere informs us that there are two "covenants." Gal.4:24. Here he distinguishes between the giving of the law and the covenants. Our opponents claim that the giving of the law was the making of the first covenant. We say, Not so; for that covenant was the solemn contract between God and Israel which preceded and followed the "giving of the law;" and that the law of God was that which the people covenanted to obey, when it should be spoken by the voice of God. This text preserves the distinction between the law of God and each of the two covenants.

And this distinction between the law of God and the first covenant is further shown by another important fact. The new covenant was made because the first covenant had been destroyed by the sins of the people, and because God still desired to save them. The first covenant was rendered null and void by the disobedience of the people. "Because," says Paul, "they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Heb.8:9. "Which my covenant they break, should I have continued an husband unto them? saith the Lord." Jer.31:32, margin. If, therefore, we hold, as do many at the present day, that the covenant between God and Israel was simply the ten commandments, then we have the people of Israel weaken, and finally bring to an end, the law of God, simply by disobeying it! So that the law of God did depend for its strength upon the obedience of the people, and not upon the authority of the Lawgiver! But let us test the other view of this subject. It has been shown from Moses, from Paul, and from Jeremiah, that the first covenant was the mutual agreement

between God and Israel respecting the ten commandments. This is a covenant in the primary sense of the term. This covenant it was in the power of the people to destroy, by violating its conditions, i.e., by breaking the law of God. This transgression could not in the slightest degree weaken the authority of the law of God; but it could, and did, render null and void the contract which made God a husband unto them. The truth on this point may be expressed in a word: Men could not release themselves from the obligation to obey God's law by breaking that law; but they could release the God of Heaven from the obligation he had taken upon himself, toward them in the first covenant, by violating its conditions, and thus bringing the covenant to an end. Hence the distinction is palpable between the law of God and the solemn contract made respecting that law. One could be destroyed by a failure on the part of the people to fulfill its conditions. The other can neither be destroyed, nor even weakened, by such transgression; and it will, in due time, demand the death of all its transgressors.

The law of the Lord is perfect. Ps.19:7-11; 111:7,8; 119:96;
James

1:25; 2:8-12. It is God's great rule of right by which sin is shown. 1John 3:4,5; Rom.3:19,20; 7:12,13. But the first covenant is declared by Paul not to have been faultless. Heb.8:7. This is another palpable proof of a distinction between the moral law and the covenant which God entered into with Israel respecting it. Nor is this to be met by the statement that Paul pronounces the law itself to be faulty, and therefore the law and the covenant may be identical. For the law thus designated by Paul was not the ten commandments, but the Levitical law. And here are a few points out of many in proof of this assertion:-

1. 1. This law was received under the Levitical priesthood. Heb.7:11. But the ten commandments were received before that priesthood had been appointed. Compare Ex.20 with Ex.28.
2. 2. This was a law relating to priesthood, tithes, and offerings. Heb.7:5,12,28. But the ten commandments said nothing concerning this.
3. 3. It was a law which required that the priesthood should be of the tribe of Levi, and which had to be changed in order to have a priest arise out of the tribe of Judah. Heb.7:12-14. But the ten commandments had no precept that related to the subject, or that needed to be changed for that reason.

Finally, with one further proof of the distinction between the moral law and the first covenant, this point of the argument shall be closed. The first covenant having waxed old and vanished away, the new covenant is made by God in its place. Jer.31:31-34; Heb.8:8-13. And now observe the grand promise of the new covenant: "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." Jer.31:23. It is therefore certain that the dissolution of the first covenant is not the abrogation of the law of God. That which was the law of God in the days of Jeremiah, six hundred years before Christ, is the subject of this prediction. This law was not only to survive the dissolution of the first covenant, but it was to continue to exist under the new covenant, and to sustain even a more sacred relation to the people of God under the new, than under the old,

covenant. Here the argument on this part of the subject is rested. It has been shown,

1. 1. That the first, or old, covenant was not the law of God, but the contract between God and Israel concerning that law.
2. 2. That the law of God is a covenant only in a secondary sense; viz., in that it constituted the condition of that agreement or contract by which God became a husband to Israel.
3. 3. That when the old covenant vanishes away, the law of God remains in full force, and is ready to enter into the most sacred relations with the people of God under the new.

Let us now consider wherein the first covenant was faulty. It was not because it was so closely connected with the law of God; for the new, or better, covenant is even more intimately connected with the law of God than was the first, or old, covenant. The old covenant gave man the law of God upon tables of stone; but the new puts it in his heart. It was not because the law was faulty: for that is so perfect that even under the New Testament it is made the standard by which sin is shown. Ps.19:7-11; Rom.3:19,20,31; 1John 3:4,5. But Paul plainly intimates wherein the new covenant is better than the old one. It is "established upon better promises." Heb.8:6. Then it follows that the first covenant was established upon promises not so well adapted to man's case; and this very fact is, of itself, a decisive proof that the first covenant was not simply the law of God, but a contract between God and his people. Let us now examine the nature of the promise upon which the first covenant was made. Jeremiah designates the first covenant as made when Israel came forth out of Egypt. And thus he has laid open this covenant, and the nature of that promise upon which it was established. Jer.11:3,4: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you; so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God." The promise of the Lord that he would be their God was upon condition that they obeyed his voice. Nay, the condition was even stronger than this: "Do them according to all which I command you; so shall ye be my people." But suppose they should fail to do this? Then the promise was forfeited. Surely, fallen man needs a better promise than this. It was just in God to require a man to live in exact conformity with his perfect law of right; but it was inevitable that man would forfeit his title to the promises of God. It is true that there were in the ceremonial law ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary connected with the first covenant. Heb.9 and 10. But these could not take away sins. They could only point forward to Christ. The promises of the first covenant were upon condition of obedience to God's perfect rule of right. But such promises were insufficient to meet the helpless condition of fallen man.

So the apostle says: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Heb.8:7. But because the people of Israel broke the covenant of the Lord, he justly finds fault with them, and seeks to give the place to a second and better covenant, established upon better promises. And hence

it is, that God, by his prophet, gives the people of Israel to understand that they have forfeited the blessings of that covenant, and that the branches of their olive tree will be broken off. Jer.11. And following this announcement, a few years later, is the cheering promise of a new covenant. Jer.31:31-34. It was about 600 years before the birth of Christ that the new covenant was thus foretold. The apostle Paul makes the following expressive comment: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb.8:13. Thus it appears that the first covenant had in Jeremiah's time become old, and thenceforward, to its close, it was "ready to vanish away." And when our Lord came to do his work, he took away the first that he might "establish the second." Heb.10:9.

Let us now consider the excellence of the new covenant, and learn wherein it is a better covenant than the one which it supersedes. Here are the terms of this covenant: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer.31:33,34.

Certainly, this is "the better covenant," and these are the "better promises." Let us enumerate them. 1. "I will put MY LAW in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." 2. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 3. They shall teach no more every man his neighbor; . . . for they shall all know me." 4. "I will forgive their iniquity." 5. "I will remember their sin no more."

This is a very remarkable list of new-covenant blessings. First and foremost in this enumeration, stands a promise concerning the law of God. Surely, this is worthy of our notice. But what is this promise respecting the law? Is it, "I will abolish my law"? No. Is it, "I will change my law"? No. Is it, "I will supersede my law by a better code"? By no means. It is very different indeed from such declarations as these. This is the promise: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." He will make his law a part of their very being. He will establish it in their affections; he will engrave it upon the table of their hearts. This is wonderful indeed. The law of God is still uppermost in the mind of its Author. The first covenant required obedience to the law of God, but failed to secure it. The second covenant insures obedience by making the law a part of the very nature of those with whom the covenant is made. God does not leave his law till he has accomplished that which he has spoken, the raising up of a people who shall obey him from their hearts. The first covenant was made concerning the law of God. In a still higher sense is this true of the second. The great work of the new covenant is to take away the carnal mind, which is enmity against the law of God, so that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom.8:1-7.

And so the Mediator of the new covenant lays down the immutability

of the law of God, and solemnly enforces its observance as the condition of entering eternal life. Matt.5:17-19; 7:12; 15:1-9; 19:16-19; 22:35-40; Luke 16:17. And the apostles, Paul, and James, and John, have faithfully testified to the same great truth. Rom.2:12-16; 3:19,20,31; 7:7-14; 8:3-7; 1Cor.15:56; Eph.6:1-3; James 1:25; 2:8-12; 1John 3:4,5; Rev.11:19; 12:17; 14:12; 22:14.

But how is it that the second covenant is so much more efficacious than the first in securing obedience to the law of God? The answer is found in the difference between Sinai and Calvary. At Sinai the law of God entered in terrible majesty, but the hard heart of sinful man is incapable of submitting to the law of God. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, and, indeed, cannot be. At Calvary enters, not the law of God, but the lamb of God, as our great sin-offering. Not the condemning law, but the sin-atonement sacrifice, is the central object upon the hill of Calvary. And yet the law was present there to strike the Son of God with the sword of divine justice. Gal.3:13. How astonishing the events of Calvary! The new covenant is given to us in the blood of Christ. We have pardon through his blood. With his stripes we are healed. Mercy and truth meet together in the sacrifice made for us by the Son of God.

The new covenant proposes to save those who have broken the law of

God. It is able to forgive their sin, the transgression of the law, and not only to pardon them for violating the law of God, but to put that law in their hearts so that it shall be their very nature to obey it. This is what the Bible means by conversion. Rom.7:7-25; 8:1-9; Acts

3:19. But the Mediator of the covenant can thus give life to the guilty, only by the sacrifice of his life. We have life from his death. We have pardon from his blood. We have grace from the fountain of his grace. The new covenant is a system of salvation wherein God is shown to be just, even in the very act of justifying the sinner, and wherein the law is shown to be established even by the doctrine of justification by faith. Rom.3:24-26,31.

If we place the blessings of the new covenant in chronological order, they will stand thus: 1. The forgiveness of sins. 2. The writing of the law in the heart. 3. The blotting out of sins so that they shall be remembered no more. 4. God fully unites himself to his people, thenceforward forever to be their God, and they to be his people. 5. All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.

But the forgiveness of sins is upon condition of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20:21. Repentance involves, 1. Godly sorrow for sin; 2. Confession of sin; 3. Reparation of wrong acts, when it is in our power to make it. 4. Change of conduct, so that we cease to transgress, and henceforward obey. And faith in our Lord Jesus Christ views him, 1. As our great sin-offering, and accepts his blood as our only ground of pardon; 2. As our great High Priest to plead our cause when we come to God for mercy and grace;

3. And finally it views his life as the perfect example of that obedience which the law of God requires, and the perfect model after which we must pattern.

The writing of the law of God upon the heart is not the work of a moment. When God begins the work of conversion, the first act is to forgive the sins of the past. The next is to write his law in the heart. When this work is fully wrought in men, then they are, in the highest sense, Christians; for they are like Christ. He had the law of God in his heart. Ps.40:8. Then they love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves. Then, also, they observe in truth the precepts of the law written upon their hearts, not less than upon the tables of stone. The whole gospel dispensation is devoted to the work of writing the law upon the hearts of the people of God, even as the whole period of probation with each individual is devoted to this work in each individual case. Our first ideas of God's law are at best but poor. As the Spirit of God enlightens our minds, we have clearer conceptions of the character of the law; and as the work of conversion progresses, these elevated principles become established in our character. Whenever the minister of Christ opens to our minds new and clearer views of the principles of right, and causes us to see, as never before, the extent of God's demands upon us in his law, then the Spirit of God, if we will cooperate, writes these principles in our hearts. And so the work progresses till the law of God is fully written in our hearts; in other words, till our characters are perfected in virtue.

But human probation does not last forever. The great work of our Lord in saving his people from their sins (Matt.1:21), is brought to a final conclusion when all their sins are blotted out. Acts 3:19-21. Then the books of God's remembrance will be as clean from the record of his people's sins as though that record had never been entered therein. Their raiment having been washed in Jesus' blood, so that not one stain of guilt remains upon them, last of all, the record of that guilt is removed from the book, and its pages are left as pure as their character has been rendered by the cleansing blood of Christ. And thus it is that the promise of the new covenant, "I will remember their sin no more," has its perfect accomplishment. The record of their sins is washed out by the blood of Christ, and then God himself promises that he will remember their sins no more. The probation of the people of God ends in the perfect recovery of their lost innocence, never again, thank God! to be lost by them.

When the work of our High Priest is thus completed, and the saints made meet for their inheritance in light, the consummation of the new covenant hastens. The Saviour can no longer bear to have his people so far from him. It is the good pleasure of the Father to give him the kingdom. He must show them the glory that Christ had with him before the world was. John 27:24. So he sends his Son for them, to bring them to himself. 1Thess.4:14. And Jesus, having made all his saints immortal, and taken them into his Father's presence, celebrates his marriage supper, serving his saints in person, and drinking anew, with them, the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of God, which he had not before tasted since the night when he gave them the cup representing the new covenant in his blood. 1Cor.15:51-55; John14:1-3; Rev.19:7-9; Luke12:36,37; 22:15-20. Then they sit with Christ in thrones of judgment while the cases of the wicked are examined (1Cor.6:1-3; Rev.20:1-4); and after the execution of the judgment, when the lake of fire has given place to the new creation, then the immortal saints

shall receive the eternal inheritance in the new earth. And thus John describes this grand consummation of the new covenant when he says: "And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev.21:3.

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Jer.31:34. And thus Isaiah describes this state of things when all shall know the Lord: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. THY PEOPLE ALSO SHALL BE ALL RIGHTEOUS; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time." Isa.60:19-22. And thus the grand result may be stated in one sentence: God is all in all.

The relation of the law of God to the two covenants has been, by many persons, strangely misunderstood. But, having stated the Bible doctrine of the law and covenants, let us now illustrate it. A young American visits Russia, and, by a remarkable turn of events, attracts the attention of the emperor. That monarch, becoming interested in the young man, proceeds to make a covenant with him. He says to him, "You see my wealth, my power, my greatness; and you have already formed some acquaintance with me. I propose now to take you for my special friend, and to be a special friend to you on this condition: That you obey the law of this realm." To this, the young man gladly assents. The emperor then places in his hand the volume containing the law of the empire. This the young man carefully reads. When he has thus read the volume, the emperor calls up the whole matter anew. He says, "You have now read the volume concerning which we have entered into covenant. Do you now choose to make this a firm covenant, or do you now decline so to do?" The young man replies that, having read the volume with care, he heartily approves of all that it enjoins, and will obey all its precepts; and that he wishes to consummate the covenant which they have made concerning all its words.

The reader can see the difference between the covenant and the law. The contracting parties have made a covenant concerning all the words of the law. In the primary sense of the word covenant, the agreement between the emperor and the young man is the covenant. In the secondary sense, the law of Russia is the covenant, as being the condition on which that agreement rests. Yet, when the covenant which the parties have made concerning all the words of the law of Russia is spoken of, there is a clear, plain, and unmistakable reference to the contract, and not to the law.

We will now suppose that the young man falls under evil influences, and breaks the law of Russia in many particulars. The emperor informs him that the covenant between them is at an end, being

rendered null and void by his transgression. Question: What is it that the young man has destroyed by his evil course? Is it the law of Russia? By no means. That rests upon the sovereign authority of the emperor, and not upon the obedience of this young man. But what is it, then, that is abrogated? Simply the contract which they have made concerning the law of the empire. It was in the power of either party to violate its conditions, and thus to release the other from the obligation of the covenant. This the young man had done; and thus, by his own act, he had terminated the covenant.

But we will further suppose that the emperor, out of pity for the inexperience of the young man, and in view of the great temptations which surrounded him, and moved by feelings of true benevolence, makes a second proposition to him. He says, "I will make a new covenant with you, not according to the one which you broke; for I will this time, by means of faithful instruction, put my law in your heart; and if you break it, I will give you an opportunity by genuine repentance to find forgiveness, and to prove yourself a man worthy of my favor."

Suppose, now, that this young man is told that his violation of the first covenant had destroyed the law of Russia, and that the new covenant was framed expressly to enable him to disregard the law of that empire; who does not see that such counsel would be ruinous for him to follow? And who does not also see that great as is the care of the emperor to save that young man, his care that the law of Russia shall be obeyed is still greater? Who will say that the abrogation of the first of these covenants, or the establishment of the second one, rendered null and void the law of the empire of Russia?

With a few words concerning the allegory in Isa.54, and Gal.4:21-31, this subject shall be concluded. 1. The two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent, not the law and the gospel, but old Jerusalem and Jerusalem above. For the mothers of the two families are not the covenants, but the Jerusalems. See verses 25-31. 2. The two covenants, whereby God is in his worship connected with these two Jerusalems, are represented by the relation which Abraham sustained to these two women. 3. The children of old Jerusalem are the natural descendants of Abraham. 4. Those of the new Jerusalem are those who are his children by faith and obedience. John 8:39. 5. The bondage of old Jerusalem was not caused by the law of God, but by sin. John 8:32-36. 6. The freedom of the children of the heavenly Jerusalem is not their liberty to violate the law of God, but their freedom from sin. Rom.8:1-7. 7. Those who are not under the law, but under grace, have been pardoned in consequence of faith and repentance. Rom.3:19-31. 8. Finally, our heirship is under the new covenant, not under the old. We have deliverance from sin through the blood of Christ, but not permission to violate the law of God. The design of the new covenant is to rescue us from the condemnation of the law, and not leave us till the law of God is made a part of our very being, and its righteousness fulfilled in our lives. The old Jerusalem, with its sanctuary, its ark, and its priesthood, has passed away. But Jerusalem which is above is our mother; and in its sanctuary is found, not alone our High Priest with his atoning blood, but also the ark of God, wherein is that law which the new covenant writes in our hearts. Rev.11:19.

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