

God's Remembrance of His Covenant

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry: And He remembered, for their sake, His Covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies." [Psalm 106:44,45](#).

THIS Psalm deserves to be read very carefully. It mentions many of the afflictions of God's ancient people, but it clearly sets forth that their afflictions were the distinct result of their rebellions and sins. It is not so with all the afflictions of God's people. It is written, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." And again, "Every branch in me that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Yet it is often so to this day that the servants of God smart because of disobedience. They are chastened for their sin, as it is written, "You only have I known of all the people of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." Sin in a child of God cannot go unchastened. The rod of chastisement is included in the Covenant and, if we are in the Covenant, the Lord will keep His promise. "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

The miseries of Israel of old were distinctly the result of their sins. They lived under a dispensation in which there was a visible reward for obedience and a prompt temporal punishment for disobedience. Therefore one might suppose that if the people fell into affliction willfully and through their own fault, the Lord might see fit to leave them in it. Did they not procure it unto themselves? Yet such is the abundant compassion of our God, that as soon as ever these people, smarting under the result of their sin, began to cry to Him, "He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry." He might have justly said, "Go to the gods that you have set up; tell your sorrows to the calves that you have made. Ask succor at the hands of the dead whom you have consulted, or of the cruel deities to whom you have sacrificed your sons and your daughters." But instead of thus meeting them in righteous wrath, He is tender and full of compassion for them!

I will read you the words again, for they are inexpressibly sweet—"Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry." There is something very powerful about the cry of a child to its own parent and God, the most tender of all fathers, cannot bear to hear His children cry—

"Such pity as a father has
Unto his children dear,
Like pity shows the Lord to such

As worship Him in fear."

If there are any here who are brought low and sorely distressed through their own wrong-doing, let them, nevertheless, cry unto the Lord. Though it is because of your transgressions and your iniquities that you are afflicted, yet you may cry unto the Lord in your trouble and He will save you out of your distresses. Turn unto the hand that wounds you and that hand will bind you up. Turn unto the Lord in repentance and He will turn unto you in loving kindness.

What was the secret reason why God thus dealt with His people and heard their cry when they were in affliction through their sin? The secret reason was that, "for their sake He remembered His Covenant." If He looked upon His people in their sin and their sorrow, He could not see anything in them to justify why He should have pity upon them. What they endured they richly deserved and He knew that if He took away His rod from them, they would go and commit the same wickedness again. They were not to be driven by judgment nor drawn by mercies. Though they humbled themselves for one moment, they would soon be proud again! The Lord could see nothing hopeful about them, nothing in their future any more than in their past which should plead for mercy.

Why should they be smitten any more? Or why should gentleness be further wasted on them? Was it not high time to say, "They are given to their idols, leave them alone, that We may see what their end will be"? One Divine reason prevented the infliction of justice—this, and this alone, sufficed—"for their sake He remembered His Covenant." If He could not see anything in the erring people, or hope for anything from them, He looked to another source for a motive and an argument for mercy—He looked to the Covenant which He had made of old with their father, Abraham, when He said, "Surely, blessing I will bless you, and in you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Because He had once permitted that promise to go out of His mouth, He would not withdraw it! And when He heard their cry, He regarded their affliction. Is it not a great wonder that God not only is willing to give mercy, should there be a manifest reason for it, but that He, Himself, finds and makes the reason? When there is no motive for Grace discoverable to our anxious eyes, there is a fountain of self-created mercy in the Lord's own heart—and this He causes to overflow and fill a channel of His own making! Though there is nothing in the creature, there is everything in the Covenant. If the Lord can find no plea in the character of the offender, He discovers an argument in Himself—He remembers His own Covenant and, for His own name's sake, He deals in mercy with the guilty!

Now, observe that in the text it does not say, "He remembered their covenant." They stood at the foot of Sinai and said, "All these things which You have commanded, we will do!" They willingly, eagerly, hastily, loudly entered into a covenant with God, before whose terrible thunders they trembled. But that covenant they soon broke. Within a few days they had departed from the living God and fallen down before the image of an ox which eats

grass! The Lord does not dwell upon the matter, since it would be to their destruction. He forgets their falseness and treachery and casts them behind His back. But what He does remember is His Covenant—"Nevertheless, for their sake, He remembered His Covenant." This proves that the Covenant referred to must have been one of pure Grace.

Do you not see this? These people were in affliction through sin! If that Covenant had only been a Covenant of Works, in which they were to be rewarded for good and punished for evil, the more the Lord remembered that Covenant, the more He would have been bound to punish them for their offenses! But a Covenant which led Him to cease from punishing the guilty must have been one of only Grace! Is it not so? A Covenant was made long before that of Sinai, a Covenant of Grace which is called, in Scripture, "the everlasting Covenant." This was made known to man in that first promise which was given to him at the gates of Paradise and it was, afterwards, revealed more clearly in the Lord's Covenant with Noah and in His gracious promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Lord said to Abraham, "I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto you and to your seed after you." This same Covenant, after being made more fully known in promises to Moses and other saintly men, was stated anew in the Lord's dealings with His servant, David, whom He exalted as one chosen out of the people—"I have made a Covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David, My servant, Your seed will I establish forever and build up your throne to all generations." Since then the Lord has given us promises, by His Prophets and Apostles, and specially in the Person and ministry of His only-begotten Son. All these various forms of manifestation relate to one and the same Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, which God had made with men in the person of His dear Son. It was that Covenant which God thought upon and, when He remembered it, He was able to deal with them upon terms of Grace, and even to change His hand and no longer crush them with afflictions, for He "repented according to the multitude of His mercies."

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I want to show, this morning, how this remembrance of the Covenant on God's part is the great ground of hope to all of us who are in Covenant with God. Indeed, the Lord's mindfulness of His Covenant is the ground of hope to everyone of you, whether as yet you have embraced the Gospel promise or not! Inasmuch as God must, according to His Law, look upon you with anger on account of your sin, He has devised a way by which He can have regard unto the voice of your cry! Remembering His Covenant, He can pass by your transgressions and receive you as His returning children into the bosom of His love!

I. The first head of our discourse will be this—THE COVENANT EXISTS. God cannot remember, to any practical purpose, that which does not exist. Had the Covenant been repealed or abrogated, it could not have availed for God to remember it, except to strike the people into a more complete and settled despair. In love He remembered the Covenant as

an abiding thing, according to the Word of God, "My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips."

Beloved, the Covenant is, in its own nature, everlasting. Dying David said, "Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure." The Covenant is everlasting in its beginning, for it was made, "or ever the earth was," between the first Divine Person of the sacred Trinity and the Second, on the behalf of His chosen. It is everlasting, also, as to its duration, for all things are still governed under this Covenant, and shall be, world without end. "And I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant." "Thus says the Lord, if you can break My Covenant of the day, and My Covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My Covenant be broken with David, My servant." Sooner shall the Covenant with the earth concerning seedtime and harvest be broken, than this Covenant of Grace. By everything that is permanent in the universe and by everything that is permanent in the Godhead, we are made to know that the Covenant of Grace is a fixed and settled thing and abides today as it always has done, for there is no variableness nor turning with Him from whom every good gift comes down.

The promises in Christ Jesus are Yes and Amen, to the Glory of God by us. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail, much less shall the Covenant of Divine Grace be disannulled. Thus says the Lord— "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you." God, in remembering His Covenant, falls back upon everlasting and immutable things!

Well may the Covenant of Grace be everlasting, for it was made with deliberation and foresight. If two persons enter into a contract and one, afterwards, wishes to escape from it, he may plead that he made the agreement in great haste, or under compulsion, or through being misinformed and over-persuaded—on any of these grounds he may object to the fulfillment of the covenant and thus may attempt to justify his failure to keep his word. Now, on God's part, nothing of the kind can ever be urged, for He made the Covenant, Himself, on His own suggestion, according to the good pleasure of His will. It was a free Covenant, entered into through the love of His own heart, according to the wise counsel of His infinite mind. He made it knowing all that would happen in time or in eternity! When He made the promise that whoever believes in Christ Jesus shall have everlasting life, He knew that those who believed in Christ Jesus would, nevertheless, be fallible creatures and would commit mistakes and sins—He made the promise well knowing what Believers would be!

When He chose Abraham to be His friend, He knew what failures there would be in Abraham and in his seed. He made His choice deliberately, knowing the end from the be-

ginning and foreseeing all the provocations which He would endure for 40 years in the wilderness—and how they would anger Him when they came to their own land. His choice of His redeemed was made deliberately and the promises made to them were given forth in the full foresight of all our unbelief, lukewarmness, backsliding, selfishness and folly! The Lord is not deceived in the subjects of His Grace. Hear how He puts it in the 48th of Isaiah, verse four—"Because I knew that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your brow brass." And again, verse eight—"I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb." Man's love is blind, but the Lord's love sees all things—

"He saw me ruined in the Fall Yet loved me notwithstanding all." He knew as well in that day when He called me, by His Grace, what I should be as He knows today! Every fault and folly stood clear before His vision and yet, notwithstanding all, He determined to give faith and, through faith, to give eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Dear Friends, every promise in the Bible is a part of the Covenant. The Covenant that now stands between the Believer and his God is on this wise, that you take Him to be your God and He takes you to be His people. He gives His promises to you and you rely upon them. He will bless you in this life and perfect you in the world to come. The tenor of the Covenant is not according to what you deserve, but according to the greatness of the Lord's love! In making this Covenant, it is clear that God knew from the beginning what He was doing. He made no mistake and said no more than He intended to fulfill. He deliberately said, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." And in the day wherein we believed in Him, He guaranteed to us that we should never perish, neither should any pluck us out of His hand. This Covenant was made with such judicious deliberation and Infallible foresight, that there is no conceivable reason why it should be revoked. God is not a man that He should lie or repent.

Moreover—and this is a point to which every child of God delights to turn his eyes—that covenant was sealed and ratified in the most solemn manner. When God made a Covenant with Abraham, there was a slaying of sacrifices and a dividing of their bodies and the Lord, under the image of a burning lamp, passed between the pieces—in this solemn sacrificial manner was the Covenant established. But when the Lord made a Covenant with us, the seal He gave was much more precious. He took from His bosom His only-begotten Son and He gave Him to be a Covenant to His people. He died to make the eternal Covenant sure. Paul speaks of "the blood of the everlasting covenant" and when we come to the communion table we hear our Lord say, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Jesus has gone into Heaven bearing with Him the blood of sprinkling! Can God deny His promise to His bleeding Son? Can He run back from the promise which He has made to the Only-Begotten in His death? "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." Can these promises fail? Impossible! The very thought would be blasphem-

ous! A Covenant which has been made in so solemn a manner, by the death of our great Surety and Sacrifice, can never be repealed, neglected, or changed!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we may rest fully sure that this Covenant will stand because the Divine Glory is wrapped up in it. Why did God promise to save men through faith in Christ Jesus? Why? That He might manifest to angels, principalities and powers, the splendor of His love and the riches of His Grace! He has selected for this reason the very worst of men, that in them He might show forth all long-suffering and display the magnificence of His pardoning love. He selected beings that were depraved and subject to grievous temptations that, by regenerating them by His Spirit and sustaining them by His Grace, He might display the greatness of His power! We are witnesses to time and to eternity of the Glory of the Lord! Are not these His own words—"This people have I formed for Myself: they shall show forth My praise"? The manifestation of the glorious love of God is the design of the Covenant—that where sin abounded, Grace might much more abound! He intends to show to all the ages His Truth, His faithfulness, His patience, His tenderness and His power. He designs to set Heaven and earth wondering until the whole universe breaks forth into the song—"Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains not His anger forever because He delights in mercy."

God is more glorified in the Covenant of Grace than in creation, or in Providence—in fact, creation and Providence are but the temporary scaffold of the great house which God is building, even the God who inhabits the praises of Israel! The Lord cannot break His Word, nor forego His designs, nor forget His promises. Do not even think it! The crown jewels of God are staked and pawned upon the carrying out of the Covenant of Grace!

Furthermore, it is not possible for God to break a Covenant. When you and I stand and tremble before a Divine promise for fear it should not be fulfilled, we cast a slur upon the truth, faithfulness and Immutability of God. Has He ever changed? Has He ever been false? Has He ever lifted His hand and sworn by Himself, because He could swear by no greater and by two Immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie—has He given us strong consolation and yet has He failed us? Far from it! Brothers and Sisters, there has been nothing in the past to cast suspicion upon the veracity of Jehovah! Therefore, should we doubt Him or distrust His Covenant?

My text gives us an instance of a great strain that was put upon the Covenant. These people whom God had chosen to be His heritage constantly provoked Him! I cannot imagine a greater extent of sin than that which is pictured in this 106th Psalm. The chosen seed were degraded below other nations—they had forsaken their own God to go after alien deities. Was it ever known in any other case that a nation changed her gods? Yet Israel departed from the one living and true God willfully and wantonly, times without number! And God, instead of breaking His Covenant because of their treachery, had pity upon them! When

He found them in the throes of their grief as the result of their sin, He turned His eyes upon His Covenant and, because of that Covenant, He delivered them!

From which I gather that the Covenant purpose of God to save His own people shall stand fast, come what may. "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself." They that trust in the Lord, notwithstanding all the enormous weight of their sin, shall find Him faithful to His Word of pardon. He will keep His Word to sinners who put their trust in Him—and they shall be saved. Oh, glorious fact, the Covenant still exists!

II. But, secondly, THIS COVENANT IS TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN BY US. The children of Israel had quite forgotten the Covenant of their God. Elijah said, "They have forsaken Your Covenant." Starting aside like a deceitful bow

which fails the archer in the day of battle, they had been false to their God and useless for those great purposes for which He had chosen and ordained them. Have we not failed in the same manner?

Are not God's people at this day chargeable with forgetting the Covenant by their un-spiritual carelessness? Have you thought of yourself, my Brothers and Sisters, as covenanted ones, as ones with whom God has entered into solemn compact, saying, "I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward: I am God Almighty: walk before Me, and be you perfect"? Have you realized your position as in covenant with God? When you have been staggered with its wonderful condescension and blessedness, as I have often been, have you not soon forgotten your great obligation and thought only of earthly things? Have you not doubted your God because you have forgotten His Covenant? When Heaven and earth were rejoicing, Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me." Under such a slanderous charge, the Lord is gladly to speak with plaintive earnestness and ask, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me." Let it be realized by us and not passed over in a wicked carelessness, that as many as believe in Christ Jesus are in covenant with God and He has promised not to turn away from doing them good.

This cannot be better described than as a marriage covenant, even as it is written in the Book of the Prophet Ho-sea—"And I will betroth you unto Me forever; yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness: and you shall know the Lord." O my Brother and Sister Believers, as the man puts the ring on the woman's finger and the words are said, and she is his, and he is hers, so has God, by giving you faith, put the ring on your finger once and for all—and you are His and He is yours— and He says to you, today, "You shall not be for another; so will I also be for you." Our response should be—"Other lords have had dominion over us, but now we are the Lord's alone." Oh, you covenanted ones, angels

look at you with wonder! They regard you as the favorites of Heaven and yet you forget this and live as if there were no Covenant between God and you.

Sometimes, too—and in the case of Israel it was so—we get away from that Covenant by wanton sin, or by negligent omission of most delightful duties. I need not go into the story of Israel, again. You see in this Psalm how they transgressed. They took no notice of the Covenant they had made with God, but violated all His precepts. May I ask whether we have not been guilty of this same sin? May not each man bury his face in his hands as he confesses, "My God, You know how often I have acted as if I were not in covenant with You. I have lived as if I were my own master instead of yielding myself wholly to Your service. I have sometimes acted as a man of the world would have done, and not as one that belonged to Christ"? Be ashamed and be confounded for all this! And then wonder and admire that Covenant still stands and the Lord has not recalled his gracious promises. He says, "Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant." This ought to yield in our hearts a harvest of repentance. It should bind us to God with intense affection that should tend towards perpetual sanctification from this day and onward!

These people had forgotten their God for another reason, namely, in the depth of their sorrow. A great sorrow stuns men and makes them forget the best sources of consolation. A little blow will cause great pain, but I have frequently heard, in reports of assaults, that far more serious blows have occasioned no pain, whatever, because they have destroyed consciousness. So do extreme distresses rob men of their wits and cause them to forget the means of relief. Under the chastening rod, the smart is remembered and the healing promise is forgotten! The people of Israel, when they were under the afflicting visitations of God, failed to remember His Covenant from the crushing effect of their sorrow and despair. Is it so with any of us? I may be addressing at this moment an ear which has grown dull through grief, a heart that is forgetful because of heaviness. Do not men even forget to eat bread in the hour of dire calamity? Ah, my Brother! Your affliction seems more present to you than even God, Himself! The black sorrow that lowers over you eclipses all the lamps of Heaven and earth!

May I be my Master's messenger to you, to remind you that He is still in covenant with you and though He causes grief, yet will He have compassion? He has said, "All things work together for good to them that love God," and He will keep His Word. He has also said, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon

you." Depend upon it, He will preserve you! "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Remember, "He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," but in love He corrects and chastens.

Therefore, brush those tears away, anoint your head, wash your face and be of good courage, for the Lord will strengthen your heart—

"What cheering words are these!

Their sweetness who can tell?

In time and to eternal days,

'Tis with the righteous well."

Oh that you could learn to sing in the dark like the nightingale and praise God out of the midst of the furnace like the three holy children! Oh that you may cry with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!" This is what you should do and it may help you to do it if you will remember the Covenant which God has not forgotten.

O Soul, why do you forget the Covenant? Fall back upon it and sing with Habakkuk, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!" According to the Covenant, God is to be everything to you. The Covenant does not stipulate that you shall not lose your friends, nor does it promise that you shall not lose your property, nor that you shall have no sickness—the Covenant is that God will be everything to you. Take care that you use Him as such. "These things have I spoken unto you," said our Lord, "that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." If you have received the tribulation, be not satisfied till you have enjoyed the peace in Jesus which is equally promised! Alas, God's people forget this Covenant! We have said enough upon this.

III. Though we forget the Covenant, yet GOD REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT—"For their sake He remembered His Covenant." What does this word mean? Beloved, of course the Covenant is always on the mind of God, for the infinitely wise God cannot forget anything. But the text means that He stands to His Covenant—He remembers it so as to cause it to abide. Even though these people had so grievously provoked Him, He remembers His Covenant so as to find in it a reason for pardoning their sin and dealing with them in a way of mercy. He meets the flood of their sins with the flood of His faithfulness—"Nevertheless for their sake He remembered His Covenant." He remembers it practically, that is, He puts it into effect and, in this case, He did so by repenting "according to the multitude of His mercies." He had formerly smitten them, but now He puts the rod away. He made His people to be pitied of all them that carried them away captive. He came to their relief and succor. And this is just what God will do with you, my afflicted Friend, if you turn to Him with cries and tears and a humble, penitent faith! He will remember, for your sake, His Covenant by acting in a covenant way towards you, according to that word in the Book of Zechariah, "As for you, also, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

Friend, God must remember His Covenant, for He can never forget what the making of that Covenant has cost Him. It cost Him nothing to make the heavens and the earth—He spoke and it was done. It costs him nothing to rule the nations—in the serenity of His Omnipotence, the Lord sits upon the floods—the Lord sits King forever. But to make the Covenant with man and to carry it out, cost Him His innermost Self! It cost Him His Only-Begotten—the eternal Son, the Well-Beloved, must die the death of the Cross—so that the Covenant may be established! Covenant-making was no trifle with God. I have heard people speak sneeringly of the Covenant. Indeed, no one of note preaches upon it, now, but yet it is the grandest of themes. It is a wondrous fact Godward, for it cost Him His dear Son's heart's blood. "It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief," that this Covenant might be fulfilled and eternally settled!

See how readily God turns to this Covenant. You can be sure that He delights in it, for no sooner do His children cry than He, at once, remembers for their sakes, His Covenant. It was only a cry forced from them by misery, but instead of upbraiding them for the past and shutting out their cry, He straightway remembered His Covenant! When a man is easily reminded of a thing, it shows that it is agreeable to him to think of it. We are sure that God's heart is much wrapped up in the Covenant of Grace since the feeble cries of His children remind Him of it.

I think, however, the reason why God remembers His Covenant most of all is because He remembers with whom He made it. A certain man had lived abroad for a while and there he found a friend with whom, for years, he enjoyed delightful fellowship. In due time he returned to England, to carry on a business, but he never forgot his friend. He had promised and entered into brotherly covenant, that he would help his friend's family and so, in due season, he received into his

employment the young son of his old friend. And he was minded to instruct him and help him, and promote his interests. He had given his friend his right hand and said, "Trust your boy with me. I will see him through." The youth came to London and entered the service of his father's friend, with every prospect bright before him. But, alas, the boy proved unworthy. He fell into all sorts of vices and follies and grieved his friend—his father's friend. His employer said, "I shall be glad to get rid of this fellow for he is a burden to me. I cannot advance him for he is unworthy of my favor." Look how loath he is to deal severely with the boy, for his father's sake! He calls him into his private office and pleads and reasons with him. He says, "I have borne more with you than with anyone else in my establishment. Remember, it is for your father's sake. Had it not been for my promise to your father, I would have dismissed you long ago." One day he cries, "I really must dismiss him! He must go." But he thinks of the father and of their days of fond familiarity with each other and he cannot bear to deal harshly with the son of such a man and, therefore, he says, "I will try him again; I will still bear with him, for my promise's sake, which I made to his father."

Now I am sure it was so with God and the seed of Abraham. These people had revolted and rebelled continually, but the Lord remembered Abraham, His friend. A memory rose before the Divine mind of the faithful man lifting the knife to slay his only son, Isaac, in obedience to the Most High. As the Lord saw that act of believing obedience, He seemed to say, "I will still have pity on his offspring—they are the most undeserving and provoking people that ever breathed, but I have entered into a Covenant with Abraham, My friend, and therefore I will have pity upon them." The fact is, with regard to the great God and you and me, that He would often say, "I must destroy them." But then He thinks of His dear Son upon the Cross. He hears ringing through the midnight of that great day of sorrow, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And the great heart of God is moved to pity us because of the death of His Son. There is merit enough in Jesus to remove all the demerit of our sins!

The great God was not thinking of a dead man when He thought of Abraham. Our Savior tells us, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Abraham is with God and God looked at Abraham, His living friend, and restrained His indignation when Abraham's children provoked Him. Jesus also lives! He has gone up on high; He sits at the right hand of God and when the Lord has looked at us and grown weary of our sins, He turns His eyes upon the perfections of His dear Son and He is well pleased, for His righteousness' sake, for He has magnified the Law and made it honorable. Thus the Lord turns back to the Covenant made with Jesus—He hears our cries and remembers, for our sake, His Covenant. Oh, the Grace of this! Because of Him with whom the Covenant of Grace is made, who is forever the Father's delight and the joy of His soul, the Father has compassion on us! Does it not make you pray, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your Anointed"? Or, to quote our hymn, do we not say—

"Him and then the sinner see, Look through Jesus' wounds on me?"

The Person of the Lord Jesus is the Substance and Seal of the Covenant of Grace and God remembers it because He remembers Him!

IV. I will finish with this last point, which I am sure you will feel to be of the utmost importance. If God remembers, for our sake, His Covenant, LET US REMEMBER IT. You that are the Lord's covenanted ones, think of the sacred promise and begin to enjoy it and live upon it practically. What is the Covenant? Here is one form of it—"I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be you perfect." That is an early and condensed shape of it, that is to say, the Lord God Almighty gives Himself up to be our portion and we are to yield ourselves to Him, to walk before Him in perfect obedience. This also is the Covenant—"I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Come, Beloved, make God your God. This means—make God your everything! Say not, "I am poor." Not so, for God is yours and so all things are yours! Say not, "I am weak." Not so, God Almighty is yours—when you are weak, then you

are strong. "But I have no wisdom." Is not the Lord Jesus made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification? He that has God has everything!

Will you belittle your God and limit the Holy One of Israel? Come, find your all in God! This is your part of the covenant, to accept God as being to you what He says He is. He has made Himself to be your All in All—accept Him as such. Did not David say, "He is all my salvation, and all my desire"? This is the portion and heritage of the children of God. "Cursed be the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm; but blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is." Cast yourself upon the Covenant and find rest in it. Sing in your heart of hearts—

"He that has made my Heaven secure Will here all good provide, Since Christ is rich, can I be poor? What can Ineei beside?"

"The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters." Oh, the blessed result of standing to the Covenant and letting God be our All in All!

In this Covenant it is incumbent that we rest alone in our God. You have not taken God to be your God if you cannot be content with Him, alone. Abraham forsook everything for God. He went to a country he had never seen, followed a path that had never been mapped out and God said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am your shield." He was in the midst of enemies who would have destroyed him but for the mysterious protection which surrounded him like a shield. The Lord's word had gone forth, "Touch not My anointed and do My Prophets no harm." Abraham had no shield but his God and yet no man in the world dwelt in greater safety! God said to him, "I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward"—and so He was! Abraham once lamented that he had no seed and that the steward of his house was his only heir. But the Lord who had promised him a seed yet said to him, "I am your exceedingly great reward." Not the seed, but his God must be his joy and crown! And Abraham felt it was so and, therefore, stood ready to surrender that seed if the Lord commanded.

That is what the Lord would have you do, Beloved. Look not to what is seen with the eyes. Listen not to what is heard with the ear. Live in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High—in the place where faith takes the place of sense. Endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Penetrate into the substance which is unseen and pass by the shadow which is all that sense can discern. Live on the living God and then you know the secret of the Covenant! Your soul shall dwell at ease and your seed shall inherit the earth! Your soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness and you shall praise the Lord with joyful lips!

Remember, lastly, in order to look well to this Covenant, you must give yourselves wholly up to God. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Live only to glorify God! Have no other aim or objective but your God. Brother, if God gives you much, glorify Him with it by your generous consecration. If He take it away, glorify Him by your patience under loss. Wherever you are, be always aiming to love your God with all your

heart and with all your soul—and your neighbor as yourself and, verily, it shall be well with you and blessed shall you be—for God will remember, for your sake, His Covenant!

I wish that the unconverted here would desire to be a participant in this Covenant. If you do so, the very desire is the gift of Divine Grace! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you have entered into Covenant with God! He that has faith in the Lord Jesus is a child of the Father of the faithful and, therefore, he is a participant in the Covenant which God made with Abraham and his spiritual seed! O Lord of these poor stony hearts, raise up children unto Abraham, for Jesus' sake! Amen.