

"Two Immutable Things"

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine." [Ezekiel 16:8](#).

DURING this last summer I took a little journey into the country, as I had an opportunity of preaching and visiting in the region where I lived as a little child and where I afterwards spent some of my school-boy days. Everything was very vividly interesting to me, much more so than it could have been to anybody who was a stranger to the district. Now I want some of you, especially you who love the Lord, to go back in thought to your early days when you were children in Grace. Yes, go back even further than that—to the time of your spiritual birth—those first hours when your love to your Lord was true and fervent, and everything round about you was fresh and bright and joyous.

Biographies are generally interesting if they are biographies, that is to say, if the events of the person's life are truly told. But I think that the most interesting biography to any man is his own life. Take that book down from the shelf and look into it. You say that you have not kept a diary? Well, perhaps not, but you have one in your memory. You may have read Pepys' Diary, or Evelyn's Diary—they are interesting—but I want to get you to read your own! Turn over the pages of the book of memory and think of those first times when you sought and found the Savior, when you repented, when you believed, when you yielded yourself up to Jesus—when He took you to be His and you took Him to be yours! I am sure that this exercise will awaken many happy thoughts and I feel equally certain that it will suggest many regrets. But the happiness will be good for you if it excites your gratitude—and the regrets will be good for you if they deepen your penitence.

I want you, then, to go back for a little time and think of what God did for you, then, and of what He has done for you since. You are called to this retrospect by such a chapter as the one before us, which is God's own statement of how He dealt with the chosen nation. It is also, in a parable, the Lord's declaration of how He has dealt with us. He remembers it and He would have us remember it and, in the words of our text, He reminds us of the Covenant He made with us—"Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine."

Beloved, the time of our conversion, the time when we joyously realized that we were saved, was a covenanting time! The Covenant, itself, as to God's part in it, was made with Christ on our behalf before the earth was! It is older than the hills, it is as ancient as God,

Himself! But, as far as we are concerned, the Covenant comes into practical, experimental context with ourselves when we believe in the Lord Jesus, rely upon His atoning Sacrifice and depend upon His promises of Grace. I repeat that converting times are covenanting times. We made a Covenant with God then. We said—

"'Tis done! The great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's, and He is mine.
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear,
Till in life's latest hour I bow,

And bless in death a bond so dear!" The Covenant was also on God's part, for He has promised to save all those who trust Him. And that promise became ours when we trusted His dear Son. All the promises of the Covenant of Grace became promises made particularly to ourselves when we received the seal of the Covenant by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is a somewhat singular thing that in this chapter God does not say anything about Israel's part of the Covenant. He seems to pass that over as though it were never worth mentioning. The nation had so entirely forgotten it and had been so altogether untrue to it, that the whole stress of the chapter seems to lie on what God did, how God kept the Covenant. Though the sin of the people is brought to their remembrance, yet the Lord does not say to them, "You entered into Covenant with Me," but He says, "I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine." So, at this time, I shall not say much about the Covenant that you made with God—do not you forget it—and do not forget that you have often forgotten it. You covenanted with God that you would be His and you meant it when you made the promise. You know how far you have been true to it, but what I want to remember, myself, and for you to remember, too, is God's Covenant with us—what He promised to do for us and what He has done for us! Let this thought dwell in our minds, that it may renew our love to our Lord and make us continually to realize that we are truly His because He has made a Covenant with us.

Here, then, is our text—"Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine." My remarks upon it will be, first, that it was a Covenant freely made. Secondly, it was a Covenant entirely of love. Thirdly, it was a most sure Covenant and, in closing, I will try to show you that this Covenant involves very gracious consequences.

I. In the first place, IT WAS A COVENANT FREELY MADE.

The context tells us that this child, with whom God entered into Covenant, was one who could not have had any claim upon Him. It was a Covenant which He made at His own suggestion, out of the greatness of His own love, for the nation of Israel, of which He speaks,

had nothing in its pedigree to suggest it. The Lord says, "Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite." Yet Jehovah entered into Covenant with that people. And now, if you look back upon your pedigree—

"What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?"

There are some who do not believe in the depravity of human nature. I must believe in it if I am, myself, a fair specimen of human nature. And every man who has watched his own heart and has any idea of the sin which dwells within him will know that his origin is tainted, that from the very first there is a tendency to evil and only evil and, therefore, that there is nothing in him as to his birth that can command or deserve the favor of God. If God enters into Covenant with unfallen man, man is so insignificant a creature that it must be an act of gracious condescension on the Lord's part! But if God enters into Covenant with sinful man, he is then so offensive a creature that it must be, on God's part, an act of pure, free, rich, Sovereign Grace! When the Lord entered into Covenant with me, I am sure that it was all of Grace— nothing else but Grace—and I think that all of you who know what that Covenant means and can claim an interest in it, will say, "In my case, at any rate, it was of Grace and of Grace, alone." It was a Covenant freely entered into by Divine Grace, for our pedigree did not suggest it.

There was also nothing in our condition to commend it. This poor child had never been washed or clothed. It was left in all its filthiness to die—there was nothing about it to commend it to the attention of the passer-by. And what were we by nature? Oh, dear Friends, let us think, with shame and confusion of face, of what we used to be before we knew the Lord—

"Backward with humble shame we look On our original!

How is our nature dashed and broke In our first father's fall!"

We were, not all of us, open, profligate sinners—some were, however. If I speak of drunks, swearers, fornicators and the like, I may add with the Apostle, "And such were some of you; but you are washed." And others of us, who were not suffered to run in those evil ways, yet with our hearts, with our thoughts, with our tempers and with our spirit we sinned grievously in the sight of God. When I remember what a den of unclean beasts and birds my heart was, how strong was my unrenewed will and how obstinate and rebellious against the Sovereignty of the Divine rule, I always feel inclined to take the very lowest room in my Father's house. And when I enter Heaven, it will be to go among the less than the least of all saints and with the chief of sinners.

Yes, dear Friends, it is only too true there was nothing in our condition to commend us to God, or to induce Him to enter into Covenant with us! It was just because He would do it, because He will have mercy on whom He will have mer-cy—because when He is showing the greatness of His mercy He feels that He may as well show it where it is most needed! So He looks, not for merit, but for misery! Not for deserving, but for undeserving!

According to the riches of His Grace, He abounds in mercy towards the very worst of us, pardoning our sin, passing by our transgression and blotting out our iniquity.

It was, then, a Covenant freely entered into because there was nothing in our condition to commend it.

It was also a Covenant freely made because there was nothing in our beauty to warrant it. Indeed, there was a total absence from us of everything that might be reckoned comely and beautiful. Are you now penitent? Yet, then your heart was harder than adamant stone! Are you now believing? Then you were an unbeliever! Are you now zealous for God? Then you were rather zealous against Him, or if not, you were quite indifferent to Divine things! Is there any virtue, is there any praise, is there anything of good repute in you? It was not there when God entered into a Covenant with you! If there was any beauty in the wife who is mentioned in this parable, it was after the marriage. But before she was cast out, she was not grown. Whatever there was there was undeveloped and, still worse, unclean! And in that day when Jesus took us to Himself and we took Him to be our Savior, there was nothing as yet apparent of that which His Grace has now worked in us—it was totally absent. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us praise and magnify that Free Grace that entered into Covenant with you and with me!

That is the first point. It was a Covenant most freely made.

II. But we cannot linger long on any one part of our glorious subject, so we notice, in the next place, that IT WAS A COVENANT ENTIRELY OF LOVE.

Taking our text in its context, we learn that this Covenant was a marriage Covenant. It is a very wonderful thing that God should enter into a marriage Covenant with His people, but He has done so. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself our Nature and has become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, so that, when Paul is speaking of marriage, he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." And then he adds, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church," which means that Christ has joined Himself to His people and become one in Nature with His chosen henceforth and forever! The Lord Jesus Christ has taken His people to be henceforth as joined unto Him as the wife is joined to her husband! They become one and so does Christ make His people one with Himself. This is a very easy thing to say, but it is an almost impossible thing to compass and understand! Can it really be so, my Soul, that you are wedded to the Son of God? Is it really so that He says, "Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you," and that Covenant is a Covenant of marriage by which He has joined with Him all His people unto His own heart, world without end? Catch that thought if you can, and enjoy all the comfort of it—but give God the glory for such wonderful condescension—

"On such love, my Soul, still ponder, Love so great, so rich, so free! Say, while lost in holy wonder, Why, O Lord, such love to me? Hallelujah!

Grace shall reign eternally!"

That it was a Covenant, which was meant to be entirely of love is proved by the way in which it was carried out. See how it is said, "Then I washed you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you, also, with brodered work, and shod you with badgers' skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you, also, with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head." And so on. This is a Covenant all of love, for these are all love tokens, love-gifts to the beloved one!

Now, will you go back in thought and recollect when you used to receive those gifts from the Lord? You remember when your ears were hung with earrings. Oh, what hearing that was! You did not grumble at the preacher, then—you enjoyed listening to him whenever you could! You would be up early and work hard so as to get a half-holiday, that you might go and hear the Gospel. Your ears were hung with earrings then! And, oh, how you rejoiced in God as He gave you humility, patience, zeal, love and all the precious jewels out of the Divine case! You hardly thought you had them,

but other people could see them, and they told you that they were there. And they would sometimes say, "How beautiful God has made you by His Grace!" Do you remember that? You cannot have forgotten, I hope, those happy times when love tokens came to you so fresh and frequent! Those evening meditations, how delightful! That sitting up in bed at midnight, enjoying the Presence of your Lord—those morning prayers, those quiet walks! Oh, how precious were many texts of Scripture! How delighted you often were with the visits of the Spirit of God when He brought home this and that great Truth to your soul with overwhelming comfort!

I am only reminding you what the Lord has done for you. As for myself, He has been all love, goodness, kindness and nothing else to me. Truly, a blessed Husband have You been unto my soul, O Jehovah! I cannot find fault with You! Neither am I able to find words with which to sufficiently praise You for all the love and kindness You have made to pass before me. Do you not say the same? I think you do. As we sang, just now—

"Do You ask me who I am?

Ah, my Lord, You know my name.

Yet the question gives a plea

To support my suit with Thee.

You did once a wretch behold,

In rebellion blindly bold

Scorn Your Grace, Your power defy—

That poor rebel, Lord, was I.

Once a sinner near despair

Sought Your Mercy Seat by prayer.
Mercy heard and set him free
Lord, that mercy came to me.
Many days have passed since then,
Many changes I have seen.
Yet have been upheld till now—

Who could hold me up but Thou?" Let us praise the name of the Lord for the Covenant which, in the way it has been carried out, has proved to be a Covenant all of the Love of God!

And, dear Friends, I would not have you forget that it must be a Covenant all of Love which God has made with such creatures as we are, because it could bring the Lord no profit. What benefit could He get from us? He may well say, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof." What glory can we bring to Omnipotence? What tribute can we render to Him who is Possessor of Heaven and earth?—

"Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,"

of what use would they be to Him? No, if the Lord enters into Covenant with us, it cannot be for any gain to Himself! It must be only out of a desire to benefit us. Therefore, let us bow in reverent adoration of the unselfish, self-created love of God to us which we have known since that dear hour which brought us to His feet and He entered into Covenant with us and we became His own! Surely I have said enough upon this topic to suggest many a grateful thought within the minds of all God's people.

III. But now I want to carry you with me to another point. That is, thirdly, IT WAS A MOST SURE COVENANT—"I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you."

The Covenant which God makes with Believers is intended to remain forever. It is not something which may be broken in a few hours, like a child's toys—it is an everlasting Covenant. Read that 60th verse—"Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant." How I love to get among the everlasting things! You know, in Canada, they build palaces of ice in the winter time and very beautiful things they are. But then, when spring comes, where are those palaces? And in summer, the very foundation upon which they were built has melted back into the St. Lawrence. God does not make with His believing people Covenants like those ice palaces—His Covenant stands secure, though earth's old columns bow. If God has promised to save you—as He has done if you believe in Jesus—He will save you in the teeth of death and Hell! Rest you sure of this, and say with David,

"He has made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Here is something to rest upon—"I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you." He intended it to remain!

And in proof that He intended it to remain, He ratified it by an oath. Even among men, where there is an oath, there should be an end of all question. And if Jehovah lifts His hand to Heaven and swears, who shall, after that, dare to suggest that a question is possible? In the day in which we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, He did, as it were, swear unto us—"Surely, blessing, I will bless you." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." We needed nothing more than the promises of Jehovah to rest upon, but, "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the Immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two Immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." My Soul, be you full of comfort, for the God who entered into Covenant with you has ratified that Covenant by an oath—

"His oath, His Covenant and His blood Support me in the sinking flood! When all around my soul gives way He, then, is all my hope and stay! On Christ the solid Rock I stand— All other ground is sinking sand." To make a Covenant even surer than by an oath, men were accustomed to seal it by a sacrifice. They struck hands and then they said, "Let us kill a bullock, let us slay a lamb—and the blood shall be the token that this covenant is made between us." Now, Beloved, you who believe have the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, to confirm the Covenant of Grace. God cannot break it! If you believe in Jesus, He must save you, by the pledges of His own Son's life and death! If you truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God. If you believe that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. If you are trusting in Him, alone, He cannot, He will not cast you away, for the Sacrifice of His Son makes the Eternal Covenant sure. Is not the blood of Jesus called, "the blood of the Everlasting Covenant"? And herein we see the Covenant most surely established.

I would have you notice, in our text, that the Covenant is remembered by God. It is He who says, "I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you." He does not forget it. He does not want to forget it. He does not intend to forget it. He says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they 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." The Lord remembers what He did when He swore that He would save His people and when He gave Christ to make the Covenant sure!

Yet once more, this Covenant will be remembered by Him forever. I will read again that 60th verse—"Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant." And then the 62nd verse—"And I will establish my Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord." He made a Covenant with Noah that He would not again destroy the earth with a flood. And He promised to hang His rainbow in the cloud as a token of that Covenant—and He has done so to this day. He has not destroyed the earth with a flood and His Covenant, which He has

made with the greater Noah, who is our true Rest, stands fast, and shall still stand fast when Heaven and earth have passed away!

I want you to think with deepest gratitude of this wondrous condescension, that God should ever have entered into such a Covenant with you and with me. Why, if I believed what some preach about the temporary, trumpery salvation which only lasts for a time, I would scarcely be at all grateful for it! But when I know that those whom God saves, He saves with an everlasting salvation. When I know that He gives to them an everlasting righteousness. When I know that He settles them on an everlasting foundation of everlasting love and that He will bring them to His everlasting Kingdom, oh, then I do wonder and I am astonished! Such a blessing as this to be given to you and given to me!—

"Pause, my Soul! Adore, and wonder! Ask, 'Oh, why such love to me?'" Sit still and meditate till your hearts burn within you because of this amazing love!

IV. I finish by noticing that THIS COVENANT INVOLVES VERY GRACIOUS CONSEQUENCES. Let me read the text again—"Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine." Read those last three words again—"Fou became Mine."

Beloved, if God has entered into Covenant with us, we have become the Lord's. Whose were you before? The world's? Your own? The devil's? Well, we will not dispute with the many claimants, but now you can truly say, "O Lord our God, other lords beside You have had dominion over us: but by You only will we make mention of Your name."

"You became Mine." Do you recollect the spot—perhaps it was your own little room—where, as a youth you sat, after having long prayed and wept? And at last you felt that Jesus was yours and you sat still, and you said to yourself, "Yes, I am His, every bit of me. He has bought me with His blood, I am His." Do you remember those first few days in which you felt half afraid to do anything lest you should grieve that dear Lover of your soul? Then you wanted to do everything that you might please Him whose servant you had become. I remember a verse of Scripture, which, as a young Believer, I often used to repeat, for it was very dear to me. I daresay you love it too. It is this—"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." We felt, then, that we were wholly Christ's! Do we feel it as much now? "You became Mine." To come back to the marriage Covenant of which the Lord speaks—when the husband put the ring upon his bride's finger, he said to her, "you have become mine." Do you remember when you felt upon your finger the ring of infinite, everlasting, Covenant love that Christ put there? "You became Mine." Oh, it was a joyful day, a blessed day! Happy day, happy day, when His choice was known to me, and fixed my choice on Him!

Now, Beloved, we ought to be the Lord's more and more. Ever since we became His, we have been the objects of His love and mercy. He has done everything for us. I cannot tell you what He has done, nor can I tell you what He has not done, for everything that could

be desired and wished for, Christ has done for you and for me! This long list which He gives, here, of how His spouse was clothed, and shod, and adorned, and crowned, reminds me of that verse in the 103rd Psalm where the list of benefits reaches its climax—"Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies." Well now, after having experienced the blessings of this Covenant, we ought to love our Lord Jesus Christ more than ever, and we ought to feel that we are more and more completely His than we ever were in our lives!

If that is our feeling, it will lead us to practically renew the bond of the Covenant. "You became Mine." After all that the Lord has done for us, let us become His, again! Let us come and yield ourselves up to Him once more. If any of you have backslidden, or grown cold towards your Lord, come and renew your vows unto the Most High. Say, with me, "My Savior, I repent not of having yielded myself to You; but I repent that I have not more fully carried out my resolve to be wholly Yours. If I had never trusted and loved You before, I would desire to begin to trust You and love You now, for You are unutterably lovely, You are unspeakably worthy of the confidence of every redeemed man and woman!" Let us each come and lay our hands, once more, on that dear head which was bowed with the burden of our sins—and look up into that dear face which has brightened our life so often with its love-glances. And let us now surrender ourselves fully, perfectly, joyfully, over, again, unto Him whose we are and whom we serve. God help you to do it!

And you who have never done so, may you come to Jesus this very moment! Your only hope lies in Him. God says by the mouth of His servant Isaiah, "Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." There is no Covenant between God and man except in Jesus Christ! Come, then, and take Christ as your Savior, and God has sworn to you, and entered into a Covenant with you, that He will never cast you away, but you shall be His in that day when He makes up His jewels. God grant it, for His name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EZEKIEL 16:1-3, 6-16; 60-63.

In this very remarkable chapter, God describes His ancient people, Israel, under the figure of an infant which had been cast away, but which He had cared for and tended and upon which He had lavished much love, making it the object of His choice, on which His very heart was set. Yet this specially favored one had gone astray and committed all manner of wickedness. But for all that, the love of God had not been withdrawn. The whole chapter is a graphic picture of the way in which Israel and Judah went after false gods and forsook the only living and true God.

Verses 1, 2. Again the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. This is a very necessary command, for unless men know their disease, they will not apply to the great Physician. Only he who knows that he is poor will be willing to accept alms. It is, therefore, a necessary part of the duty of God's

servants to make sinners know their evil ways—"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations."

3, 4. And say, Thus says the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem. Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite. Abraham, the father of the nation, came from beyond the flood. But here, because of the sin of the people, God attributes their birth to the place of their settlement rather than to that chosen and noble man. They had lived so long in Canaan that they had grown to be Canaanites. Their habits were so evil that there was little difference between the Israelites and the Amorites and Hittites whom God had smitten in His wrath. So the Lord says, "Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite." Then, in the fifth verse, He describes the condition of the nation when it was in Egypt, when nobody cared for it.

5. No eye pitied you, to do any of these unto you, to have compassion upon you; but you were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born. You remember that Pharaoh tried to destroy all the male children of the captive Israelites. No mortal eye had any pity upon the downtrodden race in the house of bondage! But God looked down from Heaven in love, pity and Grace.

6, 7. And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live. I have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field. Israel came out of Egypt exceedingly multiplied, a great people! And when they settled down in Canaan, they still increased till they became a numerous and powerful nation. Remember that all this description applies to us spiritually. There was a day when we seemed polluted, cast away and left to perish—but God, in great mercy passed by and said unto us, "Live."

8, 9. Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread My skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became Mine. Then washed I you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. How wondrously the Lord did all this for us! Our washing and our anointing, we can never forget.

10. I clothed you, also, with broidered work, and shod you with badgers' skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. All that God could do for Israel, He did. That poor poverty-stricken nation increased and multiplied till, in the days of David and Solomon, it was of high repute among the nations and exceedingly rich and wealthy! Even so has God dealt with us—He "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We who, a little while ago, were cast out as helpless and worthless, He has greatly enriched with heavenly treasure!

11-13. I decked you, also, with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel upon your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work. The work of the Lord Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit have made marvelously glorious "brodered work" for our spiritual adornment! Well does good Dr. Watts sing—

"How far the heavenly robe exceeds What earthly princes wear! These ornaments, how bright they shine! How white the garments are! Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed By the great Sacred Three! In sweetest harmony of praise Let all your powers agree."

13,14. You did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceedingly beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord GOD. Doubtless, these words apply to Israel, but they are still more appropriate to us when we are covered with the righteousness of Christ and made beautiful in His beauty!

15,16. But you did trust in your own beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and poured out your fornications on everyone that passed by; his it was. And of your garments you did take, and decked your high places with divers colors, and played the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. As soon as the Israelites grew rich and powerful, they began to build altars to the false gods! The very treasures that God had given them, they desecrated to the making of idols! God calls this a spiritual harlotry, turning aside from the one true God, who was the Husband of the nation, to follow after false gods. It is an evil sign in any of us when God's blessings are, themselves, made into idols. If you begin to worship your wealth, your health, your children, your learning, or anything that God has given you, this is exceedingly provoking to the Most High! It is a breach of the marriage Covenant between your soul and God!

The rest of the chapter is rather for private reading than for the public assembly. It gives a truly awful picture of the sin of Israel and heaps up most dreadful descriptions of the way in which the people turned aside from God. I confess that after reading to the end of this chapter, I am astonished to think that it should close as it does. It is an amazing instance of the immutable love of God, Turn to the 60th verse.

60. Nevertheless—Blessed "nevertheless"!

60, 61. Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant. Then you shall remember your ways and be ashamed. Infinite mercy makes men ashamed of their sin-fulness. Great pardon produces both humility and holiness. The ungodly think that for God to forgive great sin will be to give a license to it, but the Lord knows that it is not so. He understands that the greatness of His forgiving love will be the cause of the pardoned sinner's hatred of sin—"Then you shall remember your ways and be ashamed."

61-63. When you shall receive your sisters, your elder and your younger: and I will give them unto you for daughters, but not by your covenant. And I will establish My Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the LORD: that you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord GOD. Pardon from God for great sin is a silencer to all our pride. We never dare open our mouths, again, because of our shame. Yet the blessed silence of a grateful heart makes true music before the Throne of God—and when the Lord opens our lips—then our mouth shall show forth His praise.