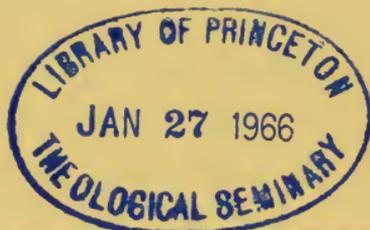


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Solly, P.

A revision of reformed  
teaching on the sacraments





## A REVISION OF REFORMED TEACHING ON THE SACRAMENTS

based on the parallel between the old covenant, which God made with the Old Testament visible church, and the new covenant, which God makes with the New Testament visible church;

by which the Reformed teaching that two persons can be under the covenant in different ways, or that the new covenant is conditional to some but unconditional to others, is shown to be wrong;

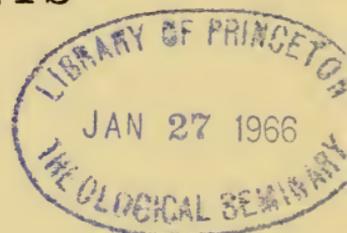
the conclusion being that baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant, that there is only one way of being under the new covenant, that all men are either under the new covenant or else are outside the new covenant, that all persons professing saving faith in Christ are under the new covenant, and that the children of covenant parents are born under the new covenant.



A REVISION OF  
REFORMED TEACHING ON  
THE SACRAMENTS

by

P. SOLL<sup>✓</sup>Y



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## PREFACE

The great work of Calvin as a Reformer was grounded upon his fearless acceptance without reservation of the infallibility and sufficiency of the Bible in its entirety on all matters of faith and practice. If anything he wrote can be shown to be contrary to the Word of God, he would not have approved of us holding fast to it simply because he was the author. If we wish to honour the name and work of Calvin, and to walk in his footsteps, we must examine all the doctrines we are to believe in the light of Scripture. If the Reformers had been unwilling to enter into controversy there would hardly have been a Reformation at all. If the teaching of the church on any particular subject involves great difficulties it does not necessarily follow that the subject itself is inherently difficult—it may be that the arguments are based upon false assumptions. It is incredible that an understanding of the sacraments should involve great difficulties. However, if the subject is difficult, surely that is all the more reason why we should give it our diligent attention. We cannot properly be aware of the importance and practical value of knowing the meaning of the sacraments, unless we properly understand the meaning of the sacraments.

Reformed teaching on the sacraments is based upon the teaching of Calvin. The great Puritan theologians, such as Owen and Goodwin, who expounded so well the doctrines of grace as taught by Calvin, wrote very little on the sacra-

ments except in controversy with Rome. On the Lord's Supper Calvin tried to establish a position between those of Zwingli and Luther. Zwingli taught that the faith whereby we receive Christ in the Lord's Supper is the faith promoted by the effect of the service on the mind of the believer, or the reaction of the believer to the service by the Holy Spirit. It is a fair exposition of Calvin's view, as we show below, to say that he taught that the faith whereby we receive Christ in the Lord's Supper is not merely that promoted by the effect of the service on the mind of the believer, but is the faith that rests upon Christ's promise to impart himself to believers as they partake of the elements of communion aright. This position fails, we suggest, because there is no such promise in the Bible.

Calvin taught in his *Consensus Tigurinus* sections ix and x, that the promises—that is, of salvation and life in Christ, are “offered” in the communion service, and that the promises are “annexed” to the signs. The question is this: In what manner, according to Calvin, are the promises connected with signs? The view given above is based upon the following points.

(i) Calvin was not satisfied with Zwingli's view.

(ii) In his *Institutes*, Book iv, chapter 17, section 5, Calvin distinguishes between the gospel and communion, and infers that in the communion service salvation is not offered merely as it is in the gospel—that is, the communion service does not merely declare and promise that all who believe have life in Christ.

(iii) In chapter 14, section 5, Calvin declares that the promises are directly connected with the signs of communion in the manner of a diploma, having a seal attached. A sacrament, however, only acts as a seal if and when it is applied, and thus Calvin directly connects the promises with the actual partaking of communion.

(iv) In the *Consensus* again, sections xii and xiii,

Calvin says that benefits are "conferred upon us by the Sacraments," which are considered as "instruments with which God works efficiently."

(v) If it were true that Christ promised to impart himself to believers as they partake of the elements of communion aright, then the sacrament certainly would be a seal of salvation, as Calvin maintains in Book iv, chapter 17, section 4.

Calvin had a similar approach towards, and high estimation of, the ordinance of baptism, but this subject is more difficult because it involves a larger view of Scripture. Most of this present book is therefore taken up with a consideration of the meaning of baptism. Reformed theology on baptism contains the following difficulty. If baptism is a sign and seal of salvation, and a sign that a person is under the covenant of grace in which God promises salvation, what is the significance of the baptism of an infant who does not ultimately come to salvation? This difficulty has given rise to the idea that there are two ways of being under the covenant. Theologians of the present day who hold the Reformed view are aware of this difficulty. For instance, L. Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* has a chapter entitled "The Dual Aspect of the Covenant," in which various views on the subject are given. John Murray in *Christian Baptism*, page 54, considers the fact that there are some unbelievers in the church to be an anomaly. P. Ch. Marcel in *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, page 211, distinguishes between subjective and objective aspects of the covenant. R. B. Kuiper in *The Glorious Body of Christ*, page 211, depicts the covenant of grace by two concentric circles—the regenerate being in the inner circle, and distinguishes between a vital relationship and a legal relationship. Now this difficulty with Reformed theology on baptism should only be tolerated if the Bible clearly and certainly teaches that baptism is a sign of salvation. If baptism is not a sign of salvation, the

difficulty does not appear. Reformed theologians are rightly concerned to guard against any undermining of belief in the sovereignty of God and the supernatural nature of Christianity, and it does not help if those who really deny that there is such a thing as salvation agree that baptism is not a sign of salvation, but does the Bible clearly teach that baptism is a sign of salvation?

If baptism is a sign of salvation, then surely all persons properly baptized should be saved. Some Baptists, who accept baptism as a sign of salvation, avoid this difficulty to some extent by saying that if an adult has not true faith he is not properly baptized, but if it is accepted that all the children of believers are properly baptized, the difficulty remains.

The difficulty just mentioned may be expressed in a slightly different form. It is said that God has promised that the children of believers will be saved. This is the same as saying that God has promised that all the children of believers will certainly be saved. (It is true that God has promised that some children of believers will be saved, for God has promised that some children of all nations will be saved—"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—but that is quite a different proposition.) It is not admitted that if God has decreed that a person will be saved, the same person can frustrate the purpose of God and be lost. Nor is it admitted that the salvation of the children of believers rests ultimately upon the faith of the parents. The difficulty lies in the fact that it is not true that all the children of believers are saved. There are certainly many difficulties in the Bible (through our ignorance), but surely such a contradiction as this should not be accepted unless the Bible expressly declares this promise of God, or there is a statement in the Bible that is meaningless unless understood as a promise that the children of believers will be saved. We do not believe that such a

promise is contained in the words of Gen. xvii : 17, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," for all the children of Israel were God's people. We do not deny, however, that the children of Christian parents are born in a privileged position, or that Christian parents should pray for the salvation of their children.

We should have a proper respect for the Westminster divines, but this does not mean that we should ignore difficulties in their teaching. Difficulties, however, are not much use in argumentation, unless there is a good alternative solution. *The Westminster Confession* was not written to prove certain doctrines, but merely to state conclusions. It is necessary, therefore, that we acquaint ourselves with the arguments. We are under a moral obligation, on account of the learning and character of the Westminster divines, at least to attempt to see whether or not their conclusions are taught by Scripture. The truth contained in *The Westminster Confession* has nothing to fear from a most thorough examination. If we have to discard a few statements of the *Confession* which on close examination do not really mean anything, in order that we may have a better view of the truth, we do not lose but gain. Reformed theologians should not object to our statement that the new covenant is conditional, for they say it is conditional also. Nor should they object to our application of the parallel between the old and new covenants, for they do the same regarding infant baptism. We are commanded to "prove all things," I Thes. v, 21.

This present work is based upon the assumption that there is sufficient teaching in the Bible—the Christian's adequate and only rule of faith—for the meaning of the sacraments to be known.



## INTRODUCTION

THE fact that many Christians today accept Reformed teaching on all points except the sacraments (and church government) suggests the possibility that Reformed teaching on the sacraments is not adequately resolved. There is no consistent Reformed teaching in precise terms on the nature of the new covenant. If we have a correct and clear understanding of the meaning of baptism, then surely we should have no difficulty in determining whether or not infants should be baptized. If we get into difficulty at the end of a line of reasoning we should re-examine the first steps in the argument. In the chapter following this we will attempt to answer these questions: Is baptism a sign that a person is under the new covenant? What is the new covenant? Who are under the new covenant? When does a person come under the new covenant? We state our answers to these questions in this introduction, but do not attempt to show that they are the correct answers until the following chapter. In the present chapter we state and examine the Reformed and Baptist views, and outline another view as a possible alternative. This introduction is in ten sections.

1. Preliminary observations.
2. Reformed teaching on baptism.
3. A revised version of the Reformed view.
4. A comparison of three views on baptism.
5. The basic arguments for baptism as a sign of salvation considered.
6. Arguments for Reformed teaching considered.

7. Arguments for Baptist teaching considered.
8. Difficulties with Reformed teaching.
9. Difficulties with Baptist teaching.
10. Baptism and the Apostolic Fathers.

#### I. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

(i) There is no statement or promise of God in the Bible that can be correctly interpreted to mean that if a person is properly baptized with water he is regenerated as the sacrament is performed. For, in the case of adult baptism the pre-requisite is faith, but if a man believes he is already regenerate. In reply to the Ethiopian's request for baptism Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," Acts viii : 37. I John v : 1 says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." And, in the case of infant baptism, the majority of believers baptized as infants will say, we suppose, that they were regenerated some time after their baptism. (There is such a thing as regeneration. It is not the same thing as the forgiveness of sins; nor is it the receiving of the Holy Spirit; nor is it adoption into the family of God. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in generating a new principle of life in the soul. The unregenerate man is dead in sin and walks in sin, Eph. ii : 2—he cannot please God, Rom. viii : 8. The will of the regenerate man is turned such that he now delights to do the will of God, I John v : 3—he has eternal life and will certainly be kept by God unto glory, I Pet. i, 5. Although the Roman Catholics speak of baptismal regeneration, they do not believe that there is such a thing as regeneration as defined above.)

(ii) Baptism is not the declaration of God through a minister that a person is, or will certainly be saved. This is because an outward sign cannot declare the certainty of a person's salvation, if the validity of the sign depends upon whether or not the person is saved or elect. Baptism is not

God's seal that a person's confession of faith is genuine. Salvation is by faith only. If a person knows that he has faith he can be sure of his salvation, and he cannot be more sure of his salvation by being baptized. It is true that baptism for the believer is an act of faith and obedience, and may be the means of increasing his faith, but salvation depends upon the existence of faith and not the degree of it.

(iii) Since the fall of Adam there has been one way of salvation only. Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith, Rom. i, 17; iii, 3, 21; iv, 1-25; ix, 32; Heb. iii, 16, 19; xi, 1-40. They realized their need of salvation; God revealed to them that there was a way of salvation; and they turned from sin and trusted in God for salvation. They were saved by Christ, I Cor. x, 49. They were regenerated by the Holy Spirit, Deut. xxx, 6; Rom. ii, 29. They received the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, Psa. li, 2; Rom. iii, 25; Heb. ix, 15; who was "slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii, 8. Solomon spoke of knowing Wisdom, meaning Christ, Prov. viii; and his Song is an account of the love between Christ and his church. Isaiah's experience of God, Isa. vi, 1, was an experience of Christ, John xii, 41. No man can do works of righteousness and serve and please God whose sins are not forgiven, who is not regenerate, and who is not being led by the Holy Spirit. No man can pray to the Father except through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. We can believe that God answered David's prayer, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," Psa. li, 11.

(iv) The word "covenant" is used in Scripture to denote an agreement or promise which is outwardly declared and revealed. Hence covenants are usually associated with outward signs. If a man intends to give something to another, he has made no covenant until he has declared his intention. That God makes a covenant concerning a certain

blessing with a person does not mean that God imparts that blessing, but that God makes a declaration concerning the blessing. An infant may be under a covenant, although unaware of the fact, if the covenant is declared—say, in a written document. If one person makes a covenant with another to give something to a third person, then the first person has not made a covenant with the third person. Covenants may be conditional or unconditional. It does not follow from the use of the word “covenant” itself that if a man is in covenant relationship with God he has already received, or will certainly receive the promises of the covenant. The nature of any covenant must be determined from its own peculiarities. The covenant that God made with Noah concerning the possibility of another flood destroying life on the earth was in no sense conditional. The Adamic covenant was certainly conditional.

(v) Matt. xxviii, 19 is an account of Christ’s institution of the ordinance of water baptism. In other words, the baptism referred to in Matt. xxviii, 19 is not spiritual baptism or the baptism with the Spirit. First, we must distinguish between spiritual baptism, and the baptism with the Spirit. There are two basic meanings of the word “baptism.” A baptism is a ceremonial washing. Sometimes the word may be translated simply “a washing,” as in Mark vii, 4. The verb is derived from a word which means “to dip into.” Thus to baptize can mean simply “to put into.” For instance, in Matt. xx, 22 Jesus says to James and John, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” Here, as in Luke xii, 50, a baptism is an experience that affects the whole person of a man. We may be said to have an experience in two ways. Either we enter into an experience, or alternatively, the experience enters into us. We are put into a baptism, but the contents of a cup are put (or baptized) into us.

To be baptized into Christ is to be put into Christ. Col. ii, 11, 12; Rom. vi, 3, 4; Gal. iii, 27; I Cor. xii, 13; and Eph. iv, 5 refer to this baptism. Col. ii, 11, 12 says, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The circumcision made without hands is the circumcision of the heart, which happens once in a believer's lifetime, and which causes his will to be turned to love God, Deut. xxx, 6. This is regeneration. Paul identifies this circumcision of the heart with baptism—that is, baptism of the heart, or spiritual baptism. A person is spiritually baptized when he is born again and receives the gift of faith. When we say that the baptism in Col. ii, 12 is spiritual baptism we assume that the people who first read Paul's letters were aware of the difference between outward baptism and spiritual baptism, having deduced it from the parallel of outward circumcision and spiritual circumcision. Rom. vi, 3, 4 says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The result of this baptism is that we shall live with Christ, verse 8. When a person becomes baptized into Christ the death and resurrection of Christ become effectual to his soul. A believer is able to walk in newness of life because he has a new life in Christ—he is born again and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He is then dead to sin; for, "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin," I John iii, 9. Paul does not say that by Baptism a person is signified to be buried with Christ, but that by baptism a person is actually buried with Christ—that is, by being vitally associated with

Christ a person actually receives the benefits of Christ's death. Thus it appears that the word "baptism" in Rom. vi, 3 is a reference to spiritual baptism, which is regeneration. Gal. iii, 27 says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." All who have been baptized into Christ are in Christ by regeneration, verse 28, and all these are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Here again the word "baptism" is used to mean spiritual baptism. I Cor. xii, 13 says, "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," and Eph. iv, 5 speaks of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." By spiritual baptism a person is put into the spiritual body of Christ, and all persons in Christ are equally regenerated, for there is only one spiritual body of Christ. Peter says that we are saved by baptism, and then makes it clear that he is not speaking of water baptism: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Christ," I Pet. iii, 21.

Now, the believing disciples were regenerate and spiritually baptized before the day of Pentecost, but they were not baptized with the Spirit until then. Thus spiritual baptism is not the same thing as the baptism with the Spirit. What then is the baptism with the Spirit mentioned in Matt. iii, 11; Mark i, 8; Luke iii, 16; John 1, 33; Acts i, 5; and Acts xi, 16? We will consider three possibilities.

(i) One view identifies the baptism with the Spirit with the filling of the Spirit as in Eph. v, 18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The context of this verse is concerned with the daily walk of every believer. Paul exhorts all believers to be filled with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be in communion with God in such a manner that the voice of the Holy Spirit is perfectly comprehended and obeyed. Communion with God is enjoyed by the exercise of faith of the believer.

Thus the believer should seek to be filled with the Spirit by exercising faith in Christ, and not by waiting to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift from God. Acts ii, 4 says of the disciples that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and these words are repeated in Acts iv, 31. In these instances the meaning is that the disciples were filled with the Spirit in such a manner that there were outward signs of the fact, and in this manner the disciples were not filled once and for all, but in the sense of Eph. v, 18 it is possible for a believer to be filled with the Spirit without any outward signs, as when he is alone in prayer.

(ii) A second view says that the baptism with the Spirit is a blessing that all believers ought to experience, and consists of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer in such a manner that it is accompanied with a supernatural sign such as the gift of tongues. Alternatively, it may be said that the baptism with the Spirit is always accompanied with a special gift of the Spirit. These two views amount to the same thing, for they both mean that every believer ought to seek a special gift of the Spirit. All believers have a gift of the Spirit, in that they all are able to understand the Word of God, but the gifts intended in the view just given are the special gifts that were given at Pentecost mentioned in I Cor. xii, 8-10. This view seems to be contrary to the general teaching of I Cor. xii. As far as the relationship of individual believers to the Holy Spirit is concerned, Paul does not distinguish between some believers baptized with the Spirit, and some not baptized. Indeed, he says that all who say that Jesus is the Lord—that is, all believers, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, verse 3, and all in Christ have been made to drink of one Spirit, verse 13. (All believers can know that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit without receiving a special gift.) If we say that all believers ought to receive a special gift of the Holy Spirit, then it follows that those who have received a special gift of the Spirit are better

Christians than those who have not. One thing that certainly makes a person a better Christian is love, I Cor. xiii, 1. The gifts of the Spirit are for the good of the church, and if a believer has love he will be concerned for the good of the church; and, according to the grace and gifts that he has received, will work for the good of others. We should not think that the more humble parts of the body of Christ are in such a position because they have not sought the gifts of the Spirit. I Cor. xii, 11 says, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." We should not expect all believers to speak in tongues or to have the gift of healing, verse 30. Each member of the church has his own particular responsibility. It is improbable that every one of the three thousand believers at Pentecost received a special gift of the Spirit. In I Cor. xiv, 1 Paul declares what should be the Christian's attitude towards special gifts: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." The word translated "desire" means "to be zealous for." In I Cor. xii, 31 it is translated "covet earnestly." This desiring of spiritual gifts is contrasted with following after charity, or pursuing after charity. The desiring of spiritual gifts is an attitude of mind towards spiritual gifts, whereas to pursue after charity is to engage in activity of the will in a persistent seeking after charity. Paul is not exhorting believers to make a determined effort to obtain special spiritual gifts. In the days of the early church before the New Testament had been written it seems that some believers received the gift of prophecy and had special revelations from God; but if any man should proclaim today any doctrine not found in Scripture, we should reject his teaching. The list of offices in I Cor. xii, 28 includes the office of the apostle, but this is not continued today. If a person earnestly seeks after the gift of tongues, and imagines himself speaking in tongues, it is quite possible for him to submit his will to some force or

other, such as his own sub-conscious mind, and to speak in a strange tongue; and this certainly cannot be known to be a work of the Holy Spirit if there is no interpretation. Paul says that there should be no speaking in tongues in public if there is no interpretation given, I Cor. xiv, 28. We do not say that Christ no longer gives miraculous gifts to his church, but simply that all believers should not expect to receive them. If this is true, then this second view cannot be accepted.

(iii) A third view identifies the baptism with the Spirit with the seal of the Spirit, mentioned in II Cor. i, 22, Eph. i, 13 and Eph. iv, 30, which is considered as an extraordinary experience of God by the Holy Spirit through faith. Now, in the three places in which Paul speaks of the seal of the Spirit he addresses believers as though they all were sealed with the Spirit. II Cor. i, 21, 22 says, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." All believers have been established and put into Christ, and all have been anointed with the Holy Spirit—that is, all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the effectual means of the perseverance of the believer, and there is a sense therefore in which a believer is sealed by the Spirit "unto the day of redemption" when he becomes indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Eph. i, 13, says, "After that ye believed (having believed) ye were sealed," but this does not necessarily imply that the sealing occurs some time after believing. We suggest that the seal of the Spirit means that the believer will continue to believe after he has first received the gift of faith. The earnest of the Spirit is said to be "in our hearts," and this suggests that the earnest of the Spirit is the experimental knowledge of the indwelling of the Spirit rather than simply the fact of the indwelling of the Spirit. The earnest of the Spirit is the experimental knowledge of the seal of the Spirit. The Holy

Spirit reveals Christ to believers, John xvi, 13, and the earnest of the Spirit may therefore be considered as the experimental knowledge of Christ in glory, and of God's love and favour in Christ towards the believer, by the Holy Spirit, through faith. There is an experimental knowledge of Christ in glory by special revelation, as was received by Stephen, Acts vii, 56, and Paul, II Cor. xii, 2, but this is something out of the ordinary. All believers who have some knowledge of the glorification of Christ, and have exercised faith in the light of it, have had some experimental knowledge of Christ in glory. There are various degrees of this knowledge, and all believers seek a greater experience of it. As far as assurance of salvation is concerned, all believers should have received it by examining their own hearts in the light of Scripture, and we should not seek a special revelation of God simply for the sake of assurance.

The difficulty with the view that the baptism with the Spirit is an extraordinary experience by faith which some have received and some have not, is that it infers that the baptism with the Spirit is not something that can be precisely defined. No man can have a perfect—that is, complete, knowledge of God; and all the various degrees that there are of the knowledge of God by faith are of the same kind. It is not possible to specify one particular experience as that which constitutes the baptism with the Spirit.

All agree that the disciples were baptized with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost before which time they were regenerate but not baptized with the Spirit. John vii, 39 refers to what happened on the day of Pentecost. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Jesus spoke of the same thing to the woman of Samaria, John iv, 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;

but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Jesus was hardly speaking to the woman about an extraordinary experience received by very few believers. Surely, Jesus was speaking of the fact that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who is the means of the growth and perseverance of their spiritual life. John's words suggest that all believers were to receive the Holy Spirit. We think that Ezek. xxxvi, 27, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," and Isa. xlv, 3, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty," both refer to Pentecost, as well as Joel ii, 28. John xx, 22, says that the disciples received the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. From this we conclude that the statement in John vii, 39, that the Holy Spirit was not yet given, means that the Spirit of the risen, ascended and glorified Christ was not given before Pentecost. The Holy Spirit reveals unto men the glory of Christ, and speaks of himself as the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii, 9 and Gal. iv, 6. He is not a different Holy Spirit who is given on the day of Pentecost, but he has a more glorious work in the new covenant than in the old, for the glorification of Christ relates to his finished work on the cross. We conclude that all believers from the day of Pentecost onwards have been indwelt by the Comforter promised by Christ—that is, the Spirit of the risen, ascended and glorified Christ. In view of the fact that believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the fact that the word "to baptize" can mean "to put into," we conclude also that the baptism with the Spirit is simply the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter in all believers, which indwelling occurs when a person is regenerated. We suggest that John iii, 3 speaks of spiritual baptism, and John iv, 14 of the baptism with the Spirit. Whenever the baptism with the Spirit is mentioned in the New Testament it is associated with John's baptism. John's baptism merely prepared people for the

coming of the new covenant, but when the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the new covenant was actually inaugurated. It may be objected that the Holy Spirit was not merely given at Pentecost, but was poured out. This is true, but the fact that different Christians receive different spiritual gifts does not mean that they are indwelt to different degrees. Surely, there cannot be degrees of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Either a person is indwelt, or he is not. The first giving of the Comforter was accompanied with signs from God which indicated that Christ had in fact been glorified, that the promised Spirit was given, and that the new covenant was inaugurated. John said that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. There was a need for special gifts of the Spirit before the writing of the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given in such a manner that the fact was outwardly made manifest, but it does not follow from this that no person has received the Holy Spirit unless there are outward signs of the fact. Speaking of certain people who believed after Pentecost Acts viii, 16 says, "For as yet he (the Holy Spirit) was fallen upon none of them." We suggest that this means that the Holy Spirit had not fallen upon them as he had fallen upon the disciples at Pentecost—that is, with signs. After prayer and the laying on of hands, they did not receive the signs and gifts of the Spirit. The apostles did not have the ability to impart spiritual gifts to others, and the laying on of hands was not the means of imparting spiritual gifts. We suggest that it was simply a token of the faith and prayer of the person laying on his hands. The household of Cornelius received the gifts of the Spirit without the laying on of hands.

To return to our original question, Matt. xxviii, 19 says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The question is this: Is the baptism mentioned here

water baptism, or spiritual baptism (regeneration), or the baptism with the Spirit (the indwelling of the Spirit)? Some have suggested that Christ was exhorting his disciples to be the instruments of regeneration, even as ministers are said to beget believers, I Cor. iv, 15. This argument fails because the word "begotten" here is not a reference to regeneration. Paul says that those who believed when he preached unto them were his own children. They were his children because they had become like him, and he exhorts them therefore to follow him. It has also been suggested that Christ was exhorting his disciples to declare the regeneration of souls in a manner of speaking similar to that of John xx, 23, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." This passage is to be understood in the light of the difference in the presentation of the gospel in the old and new covenants. It is certain that man cannot forgive sins. Therefore we are bound to understand the words as meaning, "Whose soever sins—that is, of the penitent, ye declare to be forgiven, they are forgiven." It is a basic rule of interpretation that simple and straightforward interpretations should be preferred to more complicated interpretations. In the case of John xx, 23 it is necessary to include the words "ye declare" to get the meaning, but is this so with Matt. xxviii, 19? In view of the fact that it cannot be proved that Christ did not institute the ordinance of water baptism we are bound to understand the word in the commission of Christ to be a reference to water baptism. This interpretation is confirmed by the practice of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when those who believed were baptized. This baptism was not John's baptism, for some who had received John's baptism were baptized again, Acts xix, 5. In Mark xvi, 16 Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This does not appear to be a reference to spiritual baptism, or the baptism with the Spirit, for these are part of salvation.

## 2. REFORMED TEACHING ON BAPTISM

*The Westminster Confession of Faith* declares in chapter 28, section 1: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life."

The covenant of grace is defined in chapter 7, section 3: "Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace: whereby he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe." This definition distinguishes between two aspects of the covenant of grace. (The new covenant is said to be a dispensation of the covenant of grace.) Firstly, salvation is offered on the condition of faith. Secondly, salvation is promised unconditionally to the elect. To all members of the visible church salvation is offered on the condition of faith, but to some only within the visible church—namely, the elect, God promises the ability to believe. To be promised the ability to believe is the same thing as being promised salvation unconditionally. Now, a covenant is a declaration in which definite promises and conditions are known. If covenants have different promises, or different conditions, then they are different covenants. Strictly speaking, therefore, we ought not to say that two people can be under a covenant in two different ways, but rather that of two people in covenant relationship with God, one may be under a conditional covenant, and the other may be under an unconditional covenant. All the

members of the visible church are under the conditional new covenant : the elect only of the visible church are under the unconditional new covenant.

We ought to add here that most Reformed theologians of the present day, as Kuiper already quoted, would say that the persons under the covenant in different ways are not the elect and the non-elect, but the believer and the unbeliever; but this seems to be contrary to the *Confession*. Also, the *Confession* seems to identify the covenant with the gospel, which suggests that all persons under the sound of the gospel are externally under the covenant; but the *Confession* rejects the idea that all persons who have heard the gospel should be baptized as a sign that they are externally under the covenant.

The twofold nature of the new covenant is the reason for the two aspects of baptism given in the first quotation above. Firstly, baptism admits a person to the visible church. Secondly, baptism is a sign and seal of salvation (ingrafting into Christ, regeneration, and the remission of sins). As far as the non-elect under the new covenant are concerned, baptism is a sign that salvation is promised to them if they will believe. As far as the elect under the new covenant are concerned, baptism is a sign that salvation is promised to them unconditionally. Thus, for the elect, baptism is a sign and seal of salvation. In Reformed theology there is a strong emphasis on this second aspect of baptism. It is often insisted that baptism is much more than a sign of visible church membership. Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology*, page 499, says : " The first point clearly taught on this subject in the Symbols of the Reformed Church is that the sacraments are real means of grace, that is, means appointed and employed by Christ for conveying the benefits of his redemption to his people. They are not, as Romanists teach, the exclusive channels; but they are channels. A promise is made to those who rightly receive the sacraments that they shall thereby

and therein be made partakers of the blessings of which the sacraments are the divinely appointed signs and seals.”

Answer 91 of *The Shorter Catechism* says: “The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.” The sacraments are said to be “channels of divine communication,” to be “means of grace,” and to have a certain “efficacy.” Hodge says, page 579, “That, so far as adults are concerned, true, living faith in those who receive the sacraments is the indispensable condition of their saving or sanctifying influence.” In adults baptism has a “saving or sanctifying influence.” Thus it is taught that there is a spiritual blessing in baptism over and above the blessing of being promised salvation. Section 6 of chapter 28 of *The Westminster Confession* says, “The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in his appointed time.” Even in infants, although not necessarily at the time of the administration of the ordinance, “the grace promised is really conferred.” We assume that the “grace promised” includes regeneration. In the previous section grace is identified with salvation, which includes regeneration; and we are told that it is not true that “all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.” We are bound to conclude, therefore, that by “grace promised” is meant salvation, including regeneration, or possibly some kind of sealing of salvation. There are, we suggest, three possible ways of understanding the statement that by the right use of baptism the grace promised is really conferred.

(i) By the right use of baptism an infant is symbolically regenerated.

(ii) By the right use of baptism an infant is actually regenerated. If, according to the sovereign will of God, an infant is regenerated at the precise moment of its baptism, or some time later, then baptism is the means whereby the Holy Spirit regenerates the infant in conjunction with its subsequent experience of faith.

(iii) By the right use of baptism the spiritual blessing of a sealing of salvation is conferred. If, according to the sovereign will of God, an infant is regenerated before its baptism, then baptism is the means whereby the Holy Spirit seals the new life of the infant.

If regeneration is merely symbolically conferred by baptism, then there can hardly be an "efficacy" in the sacrament that is not tied to the moment of its administration. Section 6 of *The Westminster Confession* is an attempt to explain what is meant by the idea in section 1 that baptism is a seal of salvation. It is sufficient to say that the Reformed view on baptism is that there is a spiritual blessing in baptism, over and above, and distinct from the blessing that can be derived from baptism understood simply as a declaration. According to Reformed teaching, baptism is not merely a sign that a person is under the new covenant.

### 3. A REVISED VERSION OF THE REFORMED VIEW

To put it briefly: baptism is simply a sign that a person is under the new covenant. Before we state our view in detail we will consider six of the covenants of the Bible in order that the old and new covenants may be more clearly identified.

(i) The Adamic Covenant. This has the form of a covenant, but is not expressly called so in the Bible. We mention it because it developed into the covenant of works. Adam had knowledge of one sin only and God simply required

that Adam should live without committing that one sin. The promise of eternal life was inferred by the existence of the tree of life. Whilst under this covenant Adam acted as the representative of the whole human race.

(ii) The Covenant of Works. When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he not only suffered spiritual death, but also accepted for himself and humanity the obligation to live entirely without sin in order to be just before God and to remain in communion with God. This is the natural position of the sons of Adam left to their own devices. Their only hope of eternal life is absolute obedience of the law. If they commit one sin they are under the curse of the law (and they all sinned in Adam), which is the impossibility of justification and communion with God. In a sense this is a non-covenant position, or a position outside a covenant, but the word "covenant" is used for it in Gal. iv, 24: "Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar." The old covenant was to be made with the descendants of Sarah's son, and not with the descendants of Hagar. Accordingly, Ishmael was cast out and God made the covenant with the children of Israel, the son of Isaac. The position outside the covenant made with Israel typified the position of bondage under law. When the law was declared, as it was on Sinai, the covenant of works was clearly revealed. If the promise of Christ is removed from the covenant made with Israel it becomes virtually a covenant of works, and some of Israel rejected Christ as the Messiah of the covenant and sought justification by works.

(iii) The Covenant of the Promised Seed. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This is the great promise concerning the coming of Christ in whom men of all nations would be blessed. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,

preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed," Gal. iii, 8. There could have been no covenant with Israel apart from this promise. Indeed, because a sinner can have nothing to do with a holy God apart from Christ's work, the promise was made immediately after the fall, Gen. iii, 15. However, as a covenant that God made with individuals, this promise was given to three people only—namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—although it was given in a slightly different form to David. The Messiah was to be directly descended from those to whom the covenant was given. It was given first to Abraham, Gen. xii, 3. It was confirmed with Abraham, Gen. xxii, 18, in connection with the offering of Isaac, and was given to Isaac, Gen. xxvi, 4, and finally to Jacob, Gen. xxviii, 14. Peter, on the occasion of the healing of the lame man, addressed the Jews as the children of this covenant, Acts iii, 25, for the promised Seed was to be a child of Israel, even as they were children of Israel.

(iv) The Covenant of Redemption. This is the covenant that the Father made with the Son in eternity past, before the foundation of the world, when the Father gave the elect chosen to salvation to the Son, who accepted the position as their Representative and undertook to be their Redeemer. Jesus prayed to his Father concerning himself, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John xvii, 3. The authority for calling this a covenant is based on the fact that both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, which are parallel with it, have a reference to Christ.

(v) The Abrahamic Covenant. "Thou shalt be a father of many nations." The covenant that God made with Abraham in Gen. xvii, 4, 5 had special reference to the fact that Abraham was a believer: it was made with him as a person already believing. That Abraham was to be the father of many nations meant that Abraham was to be the

father and pattern of all believers. If a person is to know that he is saved, as Abraham was saved, he must be like Abraham—that is, possess faith. When a person believes he becomes a child of Abraham. “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham,” Gal. iii, 7. The spiritual seed of Abraham are not the elect chosen to believe, but those actually possessing faith. In the Abrahamic Covenant, then, all the elect were given to Abraham, as it were, to become his children when they believe, even as all the elect were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption. The Abrahamic covenant relates to the elect, but is not made with the elect but with Abraham. This is confirmed by Paul’s statement concerning Abraham’s circumcision which we will consider later.

(vi) The Davidic Covenant. “I will establish the throne of the kingdom of thy seed for ever,” II Sam. vii, 13. This covenant is given in II Sam. vii, 12-16 and I Chron. xvii, and there is an exposition of it in Psa. lxxxix. This promise of God relates partly to Solomon, but more particularly to Christ. This is clear from Psa. lxxxix, 27, “Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” Thus, in the Davidic covenant God promises that the kingdom of Christ, the son of David, will be established for ever. The kingdom of Christ embraces all believers who are in Christ and who are ruled by Christ. That this kingdom is to be established for ever means two things. Firstly, there will always be a body of true believers on this earth until Christ returns: “I will build up thy throne to all generations,” Psa. lxxxix, 4. Secondly, no member of the kingdom will lose his place in the kingdom—that is, a believer cannot fall from grace and be lost. “If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him,” II Sam. vii, 14, 15. So also in Psa. lxxxix, 30-33. In the Davidic covenant there is a reiteration of the promises that

God the Father made to the Son in the covenant of redemption. In John xvii, 11 Christ prays for the preservation of believers, and virtually claims the promise of the Davidic covenant. In Matt. xvi, 18 Christ declared concerning his church that "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." So also in Isa. ix, 7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." The Davidic covenant is made with David and Christ only, but when a person becomes a believer he can know that the covenant relates to him, and can be sure of his preservation, Isa. lix, 20, 21. The covenant was made with David—not when he was born, nor when he was born again—but when God made the covenant with him through Nathan. David had experienced the gracious purposes of God in his life, and from the covenant he could have derived a final assurance of his own salvation based on the unfailing purposes and faithfulness of God.

Our view on baptism may be presented in the following thirty-eight propositions. The first ten deal with the relation of the covenant of works and the new covenant. Those following deal with the relation of the old covenant and the new covenant.

1. All men today are either under the covenant of works or under the new covenant.

2. The covenant of works and the new covenant are similar in that they both contain a covenant rule (the requirements of the covenant), and they both contain promises (the blessings of the covenant).

3. Man's highest good is fellowship with God, and fellowship with God is the basic blessing common to both the covenant of works and the new covenant.

4. The covenant of works requires that a man live entirely without sin day by day if he is to have fellowship with God. The new covenant requires, not that a man live entirely without sin, but that a man give evangelical

obedience to God day by day, if he is to have communion and fellowship with God.

5. A man does not receive the blessings of the covenant simply on the grounds that he is under the covenant.

6. First and foremost the covenants are concerned with man's life on this earth. The requirements of the covenants state what is required of man as he lives day by day on this earth, and fellowship with God is a blessing received on this earth. However, if a man does obey the covenant rule he will enjoy the presence of God in the next world also. So also, if a man under the new covenant dies as an unbeliever he will be judged according to the requirements of the covenant—"the law of liberty," Jas. ii, 12, 13. If Adam had continued to obey God he would have received eternal life without passing through death. All will not be judged on the same grounds, Rom. ii, 12.

7. Although the covenant rule is what is legally required by God of men under the covenant, and is the covenantal grounds for the receiving of the blessings of the covenant, the blessings are not received as rewards for obedience of the rule. (The obedience of the rule of the new covenant is not the legal grounds of a man's justification.) For instance, Adam in innocence had fellowship with God and would have received eternal life, but this blessing was not received as a reward for his obedience.

8. The covenant of redemption relates to the elect but is not made with the elect. Baptism is not a sign that a person is under the covenant of redemption, and is not a sign of election.

9. The invisible church consists of true believers (not those merely elected to salvation, but those possessing faith), and is an invisible body that cannot be identified by an outward sign such as baptism. Baptism is a visible church sign, and not an invisible church sign.

In the following propositions the expression "old cov-

enant" is used as in Heb. viii, 13—that is, the covenant made with the children of Israel through Moses.

10. Circumcision was a sign that a person was under the old covenant. Baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant.

11. The old and new covenants are parallel in form and function.

12. In the old covenant salvation is indirectly promised through types: in the new covenant salvation is directly promised.

13. The promises of the old covenant were earthly, such as the promise of Canaan: the promises of the new covenant are spiritual, such as regeneration and peace with God.

14. The old covenant operated until it was replaced by the new.

15. The difference between the old and new covenants relates chiefly to the fact that one looks forward to the coming of Christ, and the other looks back on the finished work of Christ.

16. The old and new covenants are means of presenting salvation, but not means of salvation. Old Testament saints were saved by the blood of the new covenant, but were not under the new covenant.

17. The old covenant was given to be the grounds or basis for the formation of a visible body of people separated from the world by God to serve God. The new covenant was given for the same reason.

18. The requirements of the old covenant were sincere obedience of the statutes and judgments, and performance of the ordinances, but not absolute obedience of the law.

19. Some under the old covenant properly fulfilled the requirements, and if all had done so, Israel would have enjoyed the covenant protection of God, instead of being taken into captivity.

20. A person could only obey the requirements of the old covenant properly if he had faith; and if he had faith he was saved.

21. The requirement of the new covenant is obedience of the Holy Spirit, or walking after the Spirit in newness of life, or living without wilful sin. All believers obey this rule to some degree, and no believer commits wilful sin.

22. The old covenant promises were in fact earthly, and some believers in Old Testament times did not come under the old covenant; but even as none could enjoy the Israelite's rest in Canaan except he be under the old covenant, so none today can enjoy communion with God unless he be under the new covenant.

23. The old covenant was made with all the children of Israel who accepted it. Proselytes were admitted according to their acceptance of the requirements of the covenant.

24. The children of parents under the old covenant were born under the old covenant, and circumcision was a sign of that fact. Adopted children and servants in covenant families were also under the covenant.

25. When a man outside the new covenant today is born again and believes, he comes immediately under the new covenant, but the formal reason for his admission to the new covenant is his acceptance of the requirements, and he accepts the requirements when he believes.

26. All the children of parents (not excommunicated) under the new covenant are born equally under the new covenant. Elect infants of non-covenant parents are not born under the new covenant.

27. The condition for remaining in the old covenant church was outward obedience and participation in ordinances.

28. The condition for remaining in the new covenant

church is outward obedience of the Holy Spirit. If a person continues wilfully in a sin that he knows and accepts to be a sin, he is outwardly breaking the rule of the covenant, and should be put out of the church.

29. The central privileges of the Old Testament visible church consisted in the ceremonial worship and the hearing of the oracles of God.

30. The central privileges of the New Testament visible church consist in corporate worship and the hearing of the Word of God.

31. What really counted with a person under the old covenant was whether or not he had received circumcision of heart, which is the same as spiritual baptism, which is regeneration. The true Israelite, of which consisted the invisible church, was not one simply elected to salvation but one actually believing.

32. The visible church today is properly a body of people signified to be under the new covenant by baptism.

33. Baptism is a sign that a person is definitely and certainly under the new covenant. Baptism does not cause admission to the new covenant, but in all cases a person must come under the covenant before baptism.

34. If an adult who is in fact not regenerate comes for baptism and his confession of faith is sincerely accepted by the minister, his baptism, nevertheless, is valid as a sign that he is under the new covenant.

35. The baptism of elect and non-elect children of covenant parents has equal significance.

36. The promise of the old covenant: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," is applied in the Bible to the non-elect as well as to the elect under the covenant. There was only one way of being under the old covenant. Even as some non-elect were properly under the old covenant, so some non-elect are properly under the new covenant, and baptism as a sign that a person is under the

new covenant is not a sign or seal that a person is or will be saved. Baptism is not a sign of regeneration.

37. There is no spiritual blessing in baptism, over and above, and distinct from that which can be derived from it as a declaration.

#### 4. A COMPARISON OF THREE VIEWS ON BAPTISM

The Reformed view we will call view A. This is more or less the official view of the Anglican church. The view held by some Baptists we will call view B. View C is the revised version of the Reformed view.

The three views will be compared under four headings.

(i) How is the new covenant understood? View A says that there are two ways of being under the new covenant. The non-elect are under a conditional covenant: the elect are also under an unconditional covenant. View B says that there is only one way of being under the new covenant, for a person enters the covenant when he is born again; and the covenant is unconditional. View C says that there is only one way of being under the new covenant, which is conditional to both elect and non-elect under it.

(ii) What positive information is conveyed in baptism, and who conveys it? View A says that God declares through baptism that a person is certainly under the conditional new covenant. Baptism, however, cannot convey the information to those attending that a person is certainly under the unconditional new covenant. View B says that it is the person baptized who conveys the information in baptism. Baptism is an individual's confession of faith and declaration that he is under the new covenant. The truth of the declaration depends upon whether the man has true faith or not. The minister can declare in baptism that a person is saved if he truly believes, but that is not positive information relating to the particular individual. View C says that God declares in baptism that a person is certainly under the new

covenant—that is, assuming that the minister is sincere and understands what he is doing.

(iii) What is the spiritual blessing in baptism? View A says that there is a spiritual blessing in baptism, over and above the blessing that can be derived from baptism as it is a declaration of God. View B says that the spiritual blessing in baptism is derived from baptism as it is an individual's declaration. It is the joy of a confession of faith and act of discipleship and obedience, together with the fellowship and prayers of the church. View C says that the spiritual blessing in baptism is derived from baptism as it is a declaration of God.

(iv) Points of agreement. All three views agree that in practice the pre-requisite for adult baptism is a confession of faith, and therefore in practice an adult does confess faith by baptism. Views A and B are agreed in saying that baptism is a sign of salvation, although they may mean different things. View C denies that baptism is a sign of salvation. View A deduces from infant circumcision that infants should be baptized: view C agrees. View B says that if baptism is a sign of salvation, then it should not be given to infants of whom there is no positive evidence that they are or will be saved. View C agrees—that is, with the logic of this argument, but denies the assumption that baptism is a sign of salvation (except in one sense as stated below).

## 5. THE BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR BAPTISM AS A SIGN OF SALVATION CONSIDERED

The statement that baptism is a sign of salvation can be understood five ways.

(i) Baptism is a figure of salvation, for washing is a pictorial representation of cleansing from sin.

(ii) Baptism is the declaration of God through a minister that a person is certainly saved. (This was denied in a preliminary observation.)

(iii) Baptism is essentially an appointed means whereby a believer publicly declares his faith. (This is view B above.)

(iv) Baptism is a sign that a person is saved, assuming that his confession of faith is true. (This is view B above.)

(v) Baptism is a sign that a person is or will be saved, assuming that he is elect. (This is view A above.)

The statement that baptism is a seal of salvation may be understood as follows.

(vi) There is a spiritual blessing in baptism over and above that derived from baptism as a declaration. (This is view A above.)

We will consider five arguments used by Reformed and Baptist theologians alike to show that baptism is a sign of salvation.

Firstly, the argument from the figurative significance of baptism. Because the washing by water in baptism represents the washing away of sin, baptism, it is said, is a sign that a person's sins are or will be forgiven. We answer that circumcision was a figure of regeneration, but was not a sign that a person was regenerate. Circumcision was not a sign that a person was a true Israelite. The precise number of true believers who make up the invisible church is not known by the world, and cannot be identified by a visible sign, for it is not possible for a visible and outward sign to identify an invisible body. We suggest that baptism as a figure of cleansing merely points to the necessity of forgiveness. There is such a thing as outward sanctification distinct from sanctification of the heart, and it is reasonable to associate outward baptism with outward sanctification.

Secondly, the argument from the significance of spiritual baptism. It is argued that if spiritual baptism is regeneration, then outward baptism is a sign of regeneration. This argument is shown to be false by the answer given above—namely, that circumcision of the heart is regeneration, but outward circumcision was not a sign that a person was

regenerate. Water baptism merely points to the necessity of baptism of the heart.

Thirdly, the argument from the expression "baptism into Christ." It is argued that Rom. vi, 4 implies that baptism signifies a person to be in Christ. We concluded before that this passage is concerned with spiritual baptism and not water baptism. Water baptism admits a person to the visible body of Christ. If it can be shown that the visible church consists of true believers only, then no doubt baptism as a sign of membership of this body must be a sign of salvation.

Fourthly, the argument from Tit. iii, 5. It is said that the "washing of regeneration" mentioned here is an allusion to baptism, which must therefore be a sign of regeneration. We answer that the "washing of regeneration" can be understood simply to be the washing effect of regeneration—there being no allusion here to water baptism.

Fifthly, the argument from the baptismal formula. It is said that baptism into the name of Christ must be a sign that a person is in Christ. We answer that the words of the commission of Christ "baptizing them in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" mean that the disciples were to baptize according to the teaching of, or on the grounds of the teaching of, or on the authority of God. If infants can be baptized according to the teaching of Christ, then they can be baptized in the name of Christ. If a person is baptized according to the teaching of Christ, he submits himself to obey the teaching of Christ, but baptism into the name of Christ does not make baptism a sign that a person is in Christ.

## 6. ARGUMENTS FOR REFORMED TEACHING CONSIDERED

Of the following twelve arguments the first eight are concerned with the idea that two people can be under the new covenant in two different ways. Allowing infant baptism, if the new covenant is made properly with the elect only,

because some children of covenant parents are non-elect, it follows that there must be two ways of being under the new covenant. The last four arguments relate to the idea that there is a special spiritual blessing in baptism distinct from the blessing of baptism as a declaration.

1. The argument from the fact that salvation is by grace. The new covenant is a covenant of salvation, and salvation is not received as a reward for obedience; therefore, it is argued, the new covenant is in a sense unconditional to those who receive salvation. We answer that the fact that salvation is not received as a reward for obedience simply means that, in a covenant of salvation, salvation cannot be offered as a reward for the obeying of certain conditions; but this, of course, does not prove that the new covenant cannot have a covenant rule which puts both elect and non-elect under certain obligations. We say that when a person who was born under the covenant believes, he is still under the covenant rule, and he is under the same covenant rule in the same manner as he was before he believed. As far as the earning of salvation is concerned, the new covenant is equally unconditional to both elect and non-elect under it. The idea of a conditional covenant of salvation is consistent with the teaching of the Bible that although the works of righteousness of a believer will never justify him, he will nevertheless be judged on the last day according to his works.

2. The argument from the value of covenant relationship. It is objected that our view makes the new covenant a mere outward relationship if the elect are not under it in an especial manner. We agree that covenant relationship (associated with the outward sign of baptism) is a relationship which is outwardly known, but deny that it is of little value. God, in his goodness and grace, has separated people from the world for his own purpose and glory. The gracious dealings of God cannot be of little value.

3. The argument on the covenant of grace. It is argued that some under the old covenant were saved unconditionally by grace: therefore the old covenant was not merely an outward, national, and legal covenant. It is also said that because there is only one way of salvation the old and new covenants must be different dispensations of one covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is made properly with the elect only, so that the non-elect under it are only legally or outwardly under it. The existence of the covenant of grace, and the idea that it is made properly with the elect only, is based on the following syllogism.

Major Premise: In the covenant of redemption made with Christ in eternity past, the Father gave the elect chosen to salvation to the Son, who undertook to procure their salvation.

Minor Premise: Scripture teaches that there is such a thing as the covenant of grace which God makes with men and which contains the promise of salvation, Gen. xvii, 7 and Jer. xxxi, 31.

Conclusion: Therefore the covenant of grace is made properly with the elect only.

We believe that the major premise of the above syllogism is true, that the minor premise is false, and that the conclusion does not necessarily follow.

Regarding the minor premise: Scripture does not teach that there is such a thing as the covenant of grace. There is the covenant of redemption, the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the old and new covenants, but no covenant of grace in the Bible. Jeremiah speaks of the future giving of a new covenant, not a new dispensation of a covenant—the covenant itself is new. Gen. xvii, 7 is a reference to the giving of the old covenant, and does not contain a direct promise of salvation. The simplest way to relate the old and new covenants is to say that one promises salvation indirectly, and the other promises salvation directly. It is not

necessary to invent another covenant distinct from both the old and new covenants. It is not necessary to say that the elect under the outward old covenant were under a spiritual covenant also. According to the ordinary use of the word covenant in the Bible, a person is not in covenant relationship with God unless his position is declared and knowable. The elect are not in covenant relationship with God before they are born. The circumcision of an elect infant was not a sign that he was under an unconditional covenant of grace, for such a covenant relationship could not exist because it could not be known that he was elect. The fact that the old covenant is called everlasting does not mean that it was contracted in eternity past, or that all under the covenant will receive eternal life, for Canaan is called an everlasting possession : it means simply that God is everlastingly faithful in his promises. The " everlasting covenant " in Heb. xiii, 20 is the new covenant as in chapter xii, 24. It is said by some that Old Testament saints were spiritually under the new covenant—that is, the covenant of grace is identified with the new covenant. That, however, cannot be allowed, for the new covenant gift of the Comforter was not given before Pentecost.

Regarding the conclusion of the above syllogism : if God has covenanted with the Son regarding the salvation of the elect only, and if God covenants with men regarding salvation, then, it is concluded, God covenants with the elect only. This conclusion is based on the assumption that God cannot justly and sincerely do otherwise. If it is possible for God to enter into covenant relationship with men regarding their salvation in a conditional covenant in which those who obey the conditions are enabled to do so by grace, and those who do not obey the conditions are justly punished for their sin, then the above conclusion does not necessarily follow. This, of course, was precisely the form of the old covenant. The old covenant that God made with Israel, in which sal-

vation was indirectly promised, was certainly made with both elect and non-elect. There is no distinction in the Old Testament between two ways of being under the old covenant, although it is clear that not all received the blessings of the covenant. God calls both elect and non-elect his own covenant people, Psa. lxxviii. The promises of the old covenant were presented to all under the covenant who were under the obligation to obey the rule of the covenant, Rom. ix, 4. If two people are under the same covenant rule and the same covenant promises, then they are both equally under the same covenant. If a person is under the covenant outwardly, he is under the covenant in the only way possible.

It may be objected that the covenant promise of God, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," may be understood two ways: therefore, there are two ways of being under the covenant. For instance, God says to unbelieving Israel, "Ye are not my people," Hos. i, 9. It is true that there are two ways in which a person may be one of the people of God. One way is to be a member of the visible church, and the other is to be a child of God. Or, in other words, one way involves covenant relationship, and the other involves regeneration. Thus, of these two ways of understanding this covenant promise of God, only one involves covenant relationship. Therefore it is not proved that there are two ways of being under the covenant.

4. The argument from Jer. xxxi. This argument says that Jer. xxxi teaches that the new covenant is partly unconditional to the elect. Salvation is offered to men on the condition of faith, but in the covenant God promises to the elect only the ability to believe. This, it is maintained, is confirmed by Jer. xxxi, 31-34. "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 neighbour, 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." It is said that the " all " in verse 34—" they shall all know me"—refers to the elect only: therefore the promise of God " I will write my laws in their hearts " is addressed to the elect only. Now, if certain blessings are promised in a covenant, which blessings are received by the elect only, it does not necessarily follow that the blessings are promised to the elect only. This is confirmed by the fact that the elect only of Israel received the blessings of the old covenant, which was conditional, but all the promises were given to all under the covenant. Also, if no conditions to the new covenant are mentioned here, it does not follow that there are none. This is confirmed by the fact that when God first revealed the old covenant to Moses the promises only were given. If the Reformed view is to be proved correct from Jer. xxxi it must be shown that the promise of God " I will write my laws in their hearts " (which is the same thing as " I will circumcise their hearts ") is definitely addressed unconditionally to the elect only. This idea, however, is refuted by Deut. xxx, 1, 2, 3, 6, 10. " And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine

heart, and with all thine soul; that the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." All the promises of the old covenant, including the ability to fulfil the conditions of the covenant, were "set before" all the people under the covenant.

5. The argument from *Psa. lxxxix*. It is said that there are other references in the Old Testament to the new covenant which treat it as unconditional, such as *Psa. lxxxix, 31-34* and *Isa. lix, 21*. We answer that *Psa. lxxxix* is a reference to the Davidic covenant—not to the new covenant. The covenant in *Isa. lix, 21*, is the promise of preservation presented to people already believing: it is made with those that "turn from transgression." One of the blessings of the new covenant is the promise of the perseverance of the saints. We suggest that the covenant in *Isa. lix, 21* may be considered as the new covenant presented to believers, or as the Davidic covenant related to believers.

6. The argument from the covenant considered as a testament. It is said that the new covenant is the last will and testament of Christ, but because inheritances are received unconditionally, the new covenant must be unconditional. We answer that the reason why the new covenant is considered as the last will and testament of Christ in *Heb. ix, 17* is to show that the new covenant itself is sealed by the blood of Christ. It is true, nevertheless, that the blessings of the new covenant are received as an inheritance and not as a reward, but the visible church is warned, "That ye be

not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi, 12. Thus even the elect must obey the covenant rule, in which case the covenant is conditional to the elect.

There is an objection against understanding the word covenant in Heb. ix, 16, 17 as a testament. There are two arguments. Firstly, it is said that nowhere else in the Bible, the Hebrew and Greek words corresponding, does the word covenant mean a testament. Secondly, it is said that God the Father is the one who institutes the new covenant, but the Father does not die to make the covenant valid. It is suggested that the translation "testator" should be "covenant victim." It is true that the word can be understood in the passive sense to mean "one covenanted," but it is not true that an ordinary covenant requires the death of "one covenanted." In favour of the usual interpretation is the fact that the writer has just used the word "inheritance," and he seems to be thinking of inheritances that are received when a person dies. If this is so, then the meaning is simply that the inheritance belongs to Christ, which inheritance Christ gives to people through his death. It is not necessary to understand that it is Christ who writes, as it were, his last will and testament. Nor is it necessary to take the same idea of a testament into the following verse—verse 18, for there it is simply stated that the dedication of the first covenant involved death.

7. The argument from the expression: "the blood of the everlasting covenant," Heb. xiii, 20. It is argued that because the blood of the new covenant was shed for the elect only, all properly under the new covenant are elect. We answer that the blood of the new covenant may be understood two ways. It means, either the blood shed for the people under the covenant, or else it means the blood shed for the procurement of the promises of the covenant. Since the new covenant is a declaration of salvation, it is most

natural to understand the blood of the covenant as the blood that procures the salvation promised in the new covenant, in which case it does not follow that all properly under the covenant are elect. (Not all the elect were under the new covenant, for Old Testament saints were not under it.) The blood of the new covenant was shed also to procure the blessings of salvation indirectly promised in the old covenant. Heb. ix, 15 says, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Even as the elect only of the old covenant received the forgiveness of sins, so the elect only of the new covenant are saved. (The suretyship of Christ as a high priest is related in Heb. vii to the perseverance of persons actually believing—not those simply elect.)

8. The argument from the parallel between the covenant of works and the new covenant. It is argued that because Adam acted on behalf of all who are under the covenant of works, it follows that Christ, the second Adam, acted on behalf of all who are under the new covenant. We answer that the parallel does not work; for Adam acted for all humanity, including those now under the new covenant. Christ acted on behalf of all given to him in the covenant of redemption. A person is not dead in sin because he is under the covenant of works, and a person is not in Christ because he is under the new covenant. The covenant of works and the new covenant do not exactly correspond, for man is under the one by nature and the other by grace.

Now some arguments for a special spiritual blessing in baptism.

9. The argument from the value of baptism. It is said that if a special spiritual blessing in baptism is not allowed, then baptism is reduced to a mere figure of salvation. This argument suggests that baptism as an outward declaration

has no practical value, for it assumes that if there is no special spiritual blessing in baptism the only thing left is the figure. We answer that the knowledge that a person is under the new covenant is of great practical value.

10. The argument that there are two parts to baptism. If baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace then it follows, it is argued, that there are two parts to baptism: an outward declaration and a spiritual blessing. This, however, does not necessarily follow, for it is possible for an outward sign to indicate the presence of something already existing, or a fact that is already true, without actually imparting anything.

11. The argument from the parallel between the word and the sacraments. It is said that even as there is a sense in which we are regenerated by the Word, so there is a sense in which we are regenerated by baptism. Now regeneration by the Word may be understood two ways. Firstly, it may be understood from the point of view of the teaching effect of the Word causing faith. Baptism as a declaration certainly has a teaching effect, but the special spiritual blessing intended is not through baptism as a declaration. Secondly, we are regenerated by the Word in the sense that the experience of regeneration is an experience of knowing truth. In this sense there is no parallel with baptism, for although we can know truth, we cannot know baptism. (Strictly speaking, the instrument of regeneration is the sovereign power of God.) Thus the parallel between the Word and baptism regarding regeneration, except from the point of view of the teaching effect, does not work.

12. The argument from Abraham's circumcision. It is argued from Rom. iv, 11 that circumcision was a seal of salvation and not merely a visible church sign. Therefore, baptism is also a seal of salvation. "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he

might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also," Rom. iv, 11. We answer that Abraham's circumcision as a seal of salvation was unique. It is possible to see precisely why Abraham's circumcision was a seal of salvation, how it operated as such, and how Abraham could have derived absolute assurance of his own salvation from it. On the other hand, it is not possible to see how circumcision ordinarily administered to the children of Israel acted as a seal of salvation. In circumcision Abraham was declared to be the father of believers. No one else became the father of believers by circumcision. Paul mentions Abraham's circumcision to show that people of all nations will be saved if they believe. Abraham's circumcision was a sign that he was saved by faith before his circumcision. Abraham did not become the father of believers on the grounds of his being the first man circumcised, for that would infer that only those who are circumcised can be believers, which is exactly the opposite of what Paul is teaching. The verse shows that Abraham's circumcision as a seal of salvation relates to the covenant that God made specifically with him—namely, "thou shalt be a father of many nations,"—the Abrahamic covenant.

Thus Abraham's circumcision identified Abraham as a pattern and example of the person who believes and is saved, and was therefore a sign that Abraham himself was saved. Hence, and for this reason only, Abraham's circumcision was a seal of salvation. It is true that ordinary circumcision was instituted on the occasion of Abraham's circumcision, but it is not true that there is only one covenant in Gen. xvii, and it does not follow that Abraham's circumcision did not have a special significance. After covenanting specifically with Abraham, in verses 4 and 5, God turns his attention to the children of Israel with whom he was to make a covenant, verses 6 to 8. The "nations" of verse 6

are earthly nations whereas the "nations" of verse 5 are believers. Abraham was circumcised as an adult believer and his circumcision had reference to his faith, but circumcision was ordinarily and properly to be administered to elect and non-elect infants of Israel. Ishmael (who may or may not have been saved) was properly circumcised and was in the covenant family until he was cast out, but his circumcision did not have the same significance as Abraham's circumcision. The covenant signified by ordinary circumcision was made with the physical seed of Israel through Isaac, the son of Abraham, and not with the spiritual seed of Abraham who are believers of all nations. Nowhere in the Old Testament is ordinary circumcision considered as a seal of salvation.

#### 7. ARGUMENTS FOR BAPTIST TEACHING CONSIDERED

If the Baptist is to prove our thesis false he must show that the old and new covenants are not parallel, or that baptism is not a sign that a person is under the new covenant, or that true believers only are under the new covenant, or that professing believers only are under the new covenant, or that it is wrong to say that a person can be a proper member of the visible church without being a member of the invisible church, even though in the old covenant the invisible church was not the same body of people as the visible church.

1. The argument from the difference between the old and new covenants. It is said that there was a distinction between the visible church and the invisible church of the old covenant because the old covenant was partly civil and partly spiritual, but this does not apply to the new covenant. We answer that all who were in the Old Testament church were under the civil as well as the spiritual aspects of the covenant. Alternatively, it may be said that

the distinction resulted from the fact that some who had no interest in spiritual things were compelled to remain in the Old Testament church because of family ties. We answer that even if these persons had been excluded there would have remained a number of unregenerate persons professing to be serving God, and these would have been in the visible church but not in the invisible church.

2. The argument from baptism considered as a sign of salvation. If baptism is a sign that a person is saved, then it should not be given to persons of whom there is no positive evidence that they are saved. In other words, infants should not be baptized. We answer that we do not think that it has yet been proved that baptism is a sign that a person is saved.

3. The argument from baptism considered as an outward identification with Christ. Baptism admits a person to the visible body of Christ: therefore, it is argued, infants who do not profess to be in Christ should not be baptized. If infants can in no sense be outwardly identified with Christ, then it follows that they should not be baptized. Now, to be outwardly identified with Christ is not necessarily the same thing as to be outwardly signified to be in Christ. If the visible church is considered as a body of people who are under an obligation to live like Christ, and are responsible to present Christ to the world, then it can include infants. There is a sense, therefore, in which infants may be outwardly identified with Christ. The infants of Israel who were redeemed from Egypt were outwardly identified with Moses, I Cor. x, 2. It is possible for a member of the visible body of Christ to be cut off, John xv, 2.

4. The argument from Christ's commission in Matt. xxviii, 19 and Mk. xvi, 16. Christ commissioned the apostles to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them. From this it follows that believers should be baptized. It is argued that Matt. xxviii, 19 is conclusive proof, allowing no possible

alternative, that believers only should be baptized. This is confirmed, it is said, by Mk. xvi, 16 which puts belief before baptism, and clearly makes belief a pre-requisite for baptism. We answer that Matt. xxviii, 19 was not given as a doctrinal statement on baptism: it assumes that the apostles understood the significance of baptism and knew who should be baptized. We agree that believers should be baptized in the sense that any person not connected with the visible church who is converted should be baptized. Matt. xxviii, 19 certainly teaches that believers should be baptized, but if it is to be taken to mean that believers only should be baptized, then we must be allowed to treat Mk. xvi, 16 in the same manner. In this case Mk. xvi, 16 teaches that only those who believe and are baptized will be saved. This is, of course, not true, for baptism is not essential to salvation. If Matt. xxviii, 19 teaches that the only grounds for baptism is faith, then surely we must take Mk. xvi, 16 to mean that the only grounds for salvation is faith with baptism. It is not necessary to interpret these verses in this strict manner, and Matt. xxviii, 19 can be considered as consistent with the idea that believers should be baptized and their children, in which case it is still true that believers should be baptized.

5. The argument from the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament. All the cases of baptism recorded in detail in the New Testament are associated with a profession of faith. In Acts viii, 37, for instance, faith is given as a pre-requisite. Thus, it is concluded, baptism is for believers only, and a person is properly baptized only after he has experienced salvation. This is certainly a good argument, but it is not conclusive for the following reason. If we assume that infants may be baptized, it is still required of adults that they profess faith, and since all the cases of baptism specifically mentioned in the New Testament are of adults, in each case a profession of faith was required. This argument, then, is based simply upon the fact that a specific case of

infant baptism is not recorded in the New Testament, and is therefore not conclusive. We say that if an adult comes to true faith after baptism, having been baptized on a confession of faith which was in fact false but was accepted by the minister, then re-baptism is not necessary.

6. The argument from the parallel between the old and new covenants. The outward old covenant was a type of the spiritual new covenant; circumcision admitted a person to the old covenant: therefore, it is argued, regeneration admits a person to the new covenant. We answer that it is not true that circumcision admitted a person to the old covenant. Circumcision was a sign that a person was already under the old covenant. Females were also under the old covenant.

7. The argument from Jer. xxxi. Those who support the Reformed view will argue that Jer. xxxi, quoted before, confirms the idea that the new covenant is made properly with the elect only. On the other hand, the Baptist will argue that the same passage teaches that the new covenant is made with believers only. There are two main arguments.

(i) It is said that the new covenant is shown to be absolutely unconditional. This, it is suggested, is made clear by the contrast between the conditional old covenant and the unconditional new covenant. For Jeremiah points out that Israel broke the old covenant, but the efficacy of the new covenant depends entirely upon the work of God. In the old covenant God promised salvation on the grounds of absolute obedience of the law, but since none were able to obey these conditions it was necessary for another covenant to be given in which One would obey absolutely the law on behalf of all under the covenant, so that the covenant itself could be unconditional. Some have suggested that those who were saved under the old covenant were saved by being under the Abrahamic covenant. Regarding this last point, we have shown before that the Abrahamic covenant is made with

Abraham only. The passage from Deut. xxx that we quoted before when considering the Reformed argument refutes the idea that none obeyed the conditions of the old covenant. Believers under the old covenant did in fact obey the conditions of the covenant. And those who did obey the old covenant rule did not receive the blessings as rewards for obedience. Old covenant blessings were given by grace and not by law, Gal. iii, 8. If all under the old covenant were required to obey absolutely the ten commandments for salvation then none were saved under it. If some were under such an old covenant and spiritually under the new covenant also, then they were under two antithetical covenants at the same time. A covenant of works can have nothing to do with a mediator, ark, sacrifices, and the like. What then is the meaning of the contrast between the old and new covenants in Jer. xxxi? In the old covenant there was a greater emphasis upon man's obligation under the covenant to obey the covenant rule than there was upon the fact that those who did obey the conditions were enabled to do so by grace. We suggest that both these elements—namely, man's obligation and God's enabling, are in the new covenant, but the emphasis has been moved to the latter.

(ii) The second argument says that Jeremiah does not merely declare that all under the new covenant will come to a saving knowledge of God, but that all under the new covenant are now in possession of a saving knowledge of God, for no one under the covenant need be told "know the Lord." Indeed, does not the passage teach that God enters into new covenant relationship with a man by working regeneration in his heart? We agree that if the words of Jeremiah are taken strictly as they stand, then when God enters into new covenant relationship with a man, that man is saved. This is to identify the words "covenant" and "salvation." Now the chief objection to this exposition is the fact that Jeremiah's words are a prophesy concerning the

future giving of the new covenant. The new covenant was not given before Christ, and when it was given it was a new thing. But if we identify the words "covenant" and "salvation" we make Jeremiah speak of a new salvation, or a new way of salvation, that was not given before. This cannot be allowed for there is only one way of salvation for all time, and men were regenerated by the Holy Spirit before the new covenant was given. Another objection to this interpretation is the fact that the word "covenant" is normally used in the Bible to denote the promising of a gift, rather than the imparting of a gift. We suggest that the fact that the new covenant is called "new" compared with the "old" infers that there is a parallel between the old and new covenants. This is confirmed by the fact that the promise "I will be your God" is in both covenants. Although salvation was not directly promised in the old covenant, that covenant was a means of presenting salvation. The new covenant is not a new salvation, or a new way of salvation. We conclude, therefore, that the new covenant is in fact a new way of presenting salvation. Jer. xxxi may be considered simply as containing a declaration of the promises of the new covenant. We cannot expect to derive all our knowledge about the new covenant from Jer. xxxi. But if Jer. xxxi merely states the promises of the new covenant, it can hardly be asserted that the passage teaches that the new covenant is unconditional. If the old covenant has a covenant rule, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the new covenant has a rule also. This rule is found throughout the New Testament. The new covenant is "not according" to the old covenant because it contains "better promises," Heb. viii, 6, for in the new covenant salvation is directly promised, whereas in the old covenant salvation is indirectly promised through types. What then is the meaning of the words "they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord?" These words can be understood to mean

that salvation is so clearly presented in the new covenant that the least believer can know that he knows God. We conclude that Jer. xxxi does not prove it wrong to consider the new covenant as having a covenant rule which obliges all persons under the covenant, and that this rule is obeyed by believers only, so that the blessings of the covenant are received by believers only.

8. The argument from the use of the word "church" in the New Testament. It is said that unregenerate persons who profess faith are not proper members of a visible church. This position is defended on the grounds of such verses as I Cor. i, 2 where it appears to be stated that the visible church consists of saints only. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Now I Cor. i, 2 was not written as a doctrinal statement on the church, but is simply Paul's salutation to the Corinthians. In II Cor. xiii, 5, also addressed to saints, Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," and from the text of the epistles it is clear that Paul is not speaking exclusively to true believers. If, however, the visible church is not the same thing as the invisible church, but merely contains within it the invisible church, and if Paul wishes primarily to speak to true believers, he can address his letter to the visible church and then specify in particular those to whom he wishes to speak. The visible church, when identified with the invisible church, is invisible to the world in the sense that it is not a definite body of people that can be known as such by the world. But in Acts vii, 38 the word church is used to denote the visible body of people under the old covenant separated from the world, which body was identified and known as such by the world. The word means "a called out assembly." When Paul speaks of the whole church of Corinth coming together, I Cor. xiv, 23, he infers

that the visible church is a definite visible body. Rom. ix, 6 says "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Here the visible church is distinguished from the invisible church, and the two are shown not to be the same body of people. The visible church is the body of people called out from the world, and the invisible church is the body of people effectually called. The churches addressed by Christ in Rev. ii and iii contained some unbelievers.

It will be noticed that most of the arguments given above work upon the assumption that certain passages of Scripture have only one possible meaning. We have shown that there are other possible ways of interpreting these verses, and if the Baptist's position is to stand, these alternatives must be eliminated according to the teaching of Scripture. The fact that the Reformed view involves certain difficulties does not prove that the Baptist's position is correct.

It is appropriate here to mention the definition of the invisible church given in *The Westminster Larger Catechism*. Answer 64 says, "The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head, Eph. i, 10, 22, 23." This implies that elect persons alive today who have not yet received the gift of faith and the new birth are now actually members of the invisible church. The whole number of the elect gathered into one body does not yet exist, and when it does exist, and when Christ presents to himself the glorified church, it will be a visible church and not an invisible church.

There are two main reasons for rejecting the idea that elect unbelievers are now members of the invisible church, and for asserting that a person becomes a member of the invisible church when he is born again. Firstly, the teaching of Rom. ii, 29, Rom. ix, 6, and John i, 47. "Visible church" and "invisible church" are not scriptural expressions, but the idea is certainly scriptural. Rom. ii, 29

says, "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart." Circumcision of the heart is regeneration. All the children of Israel under the old covenant were members of the visible body. Not all, however, were regenerate, but the precise number of true believers did not constitute a body that could be identified as such by man. Herein lies the necessity for the concept of an invisible body. Paul says that the person who is inwardly, or hiddenly, a Jew, is one who is regenerate. This verse is clearly a doctrinal statement regarding the difference between the visible and invisible church of the Old Testament, and in view of the fact that regeneration and not election is mentioned, it seems right to conclude that a person becomes a member of the invisible church when he is born again. In Rom. ix, 6 Paul is considering the question, Why did so many of the children of Israel under the old covenant fail to receive the promises? The answer is this: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect (failed). For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Now if the invisible church is properly the whole number of the elect, then Paul is saying that many of the children of Israel failed to receive the promises of the old covenant because many were non-elect. This is not true. People do not fail to receive blessings from God because they are non-elect, but because of their sin. It is true that Rom. ix is concerned with the doctrine of election, but if we say that the invisible church properly consists of believers only, then Paul's answer to the question agrees with the teaching of the Bible elsewhere—namely, that many of the children of Israel failed to receive the promises of the covenant because they had not faith and did not follow God according to the rule of the covenant. Jesus said of Nathanael "Behold an Israelite indeed," John i, 47. This was a reference to the fact that Nathanael was a true believer.

The second reason for denying that an elect unbeliever is

a member of the invisible church is based upon the meaning of the word "church." "Ekklesia" means "that which is called out." The visible church is the body of people called out from the world and separated from the world. The members of the visible church did not join the church entirely on their own initiative, but it was God who called them into the church. The invisible church is, we suggest, the body of people that God has effectually called into the body of Christ, all the members having received the gift of faith and the new birth. In view of the fact that elect unbelievers who have not yet heard the gospel are in no sense called, they can hardly be considered as members of a called-out assembly. It is true that all the elect are separated from the world in the purposes of God, but that does not constitute a calling.

If our definition of the invisible church is correct, then two things follow. Firstly, it is right for men to be told that if they are not born again they are not members of the invisible church even though they may be elect. Secondly, all who are in Christ are members of the invisible church, and this body therefore includes "the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb. xii, 23. When Paul says that the elect are chosen "in Christ," Eph. i, 4, he does not mean that all the elect are in Christ in the sense of being in the body of Christ, but simply that the elect are chosen with Christ as their representative. Only those who have faith are properly "in Christ," verse 1.

Our view of the invisible church is objected to on the grounds that the word "church" is used in the Bible, in the sense of the invisible church, to include elect unbelievers—for instance, Acts xx, 28 and Eph. v, 25.

In Acts xx, 28 Paul says to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own

blood." It was the duty of the elders of the church at Ephesus to ensure that all the true believers in the church were properly instructed in the Word of God, so that they might grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. It was also their duty to declare the gospel to any unbelievers in the visible church, whether elect or non-elect. Now, if we say that Christ died for all the members of the invisible church that now exists, it does not necessarily follow from that, that all for whom Christ died—that is, all the elect alive today, are members of the invisible church that now exists; for, we can say of all those who are now regenerate that Christ died for them, but by this we do not imply that all for whom Christ died are now regenerate. Paul is not exhorting the Ephesian elders to feed the whole number of the elect at Ephesus; nor is he exhorting them to feed exclusively the elect within the visible church at Ephesus. Thus it cannot be asserted that the word "church" in Acts xx, 28 is a reference to the elect as such.

Eph. v, 25-28 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." The objection to our view is in two parts. Firstly, if the cleansing by the word is regeneration, and if Christ loved the church and gave himself for it in order that the members of the church might receive regeneration, then it can hardly be asserted that a person becomes a member of the church by regeneration. Or, to put it in a different way, it is an unnatural way of speaking for a man to say that he loved his wife in order that he might make her his wife. Our answer to this objection is that in the Greek Paul says that Christ gave himself for the church in order that he might sanctify it,

having cleansed it by the word—that is, having already given new life to the members. We are not saying that our English translation is necessarily wrong because the Aorist participle is used, but we are saying that the objection just stated cannot be maintained. The second objection to our view is the argument that the glorified church consists of the whole body of the elect, but if we say that the invisible church that Christ loved that now exists consists of believers only, then we are being inconsistent in our understanding of the word “church.” To this objection we answer that if we say that the invisible church that now is consists of believers only, it is not inconsistent to use the same word for the glorified church, for that also will consist of believers only. It is true that the glorified church will be larger than the present body of believers, but the present invisible church will have grown in other ways also.

In Eph. v, 22-23 Paul makes a doctrinal statement on the church to add weight to his exhortation concerning the Christian husband and wife relationship. He is not primarily concerned with the doctrine of the atonement, but he speaks of the church and declares that the church is the body that is united to Christ. The church is subject unto Christ, verse 24. Verse 32 says, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” The “great mystery” that Paul is speaking of is the manner in which the members of the church are united to Christ. It is true that Christ is the representative of all the elect, but the unity of Christ and his church is much more than a legal unity. It is the unity that results from the fact that all believers have in them a principle of life, which life is in Christ. The church is the body of Christ and consists of living members. Elect unbelievers are dead in sin, Eph. ii, 1, and are not members of the body of Christ. There are two senses in which the church is the body of Christ. When Christ presents to himself the glorified church, the marriage of Christ to his church

will be outwardly declared and perfectly consummated, but the invisible church is now the bride of Christ in the sense that the church is the body that is now united to Christ. To return to Eph. v, 25, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"—if a man says that he loved his wife before they were married, he does not mean that his fiancée was properly called his wife before they were married. Likewise, the fact that the church consists of true believers is not contradicted by Paul when he says that Christ loved the church before the members of the church were united to Christ.

We conclude that the word "church" (in the sense of the invisible church) is not properly used to include elect unbelievers in Acts xx, 28 or Eph. v, 25. These arguments have been given because the idea that the invisible church is the whole number of the elect goes hand in hand with the idea that the covenant of grace is made with all the elect; but, we believe, there is no such covenant in the Bible.

#### 8. DIFFICULTIES WITH REFORMED TEACHING

(i) If baptism is the means of conveying a spiritual blessing, then the blessing ought to be conveyed at the time of its administration.

(ii) Baptism is supposed to be a sign that an infant, if he is elect, is under an unconditional new covenant; but baptism cannot convey positive information to that effect, for it is not known whether the infant is elect.

(iii) If a person is regenerate before baptism, it is difficult to see what is the supposed spiritual blessing in baptism. If it is to be insisted, by Baptists or Reformed theologians, that there is a spiritual blessing in baptism over and above and distinct from the blessing that is derived from baptism as an outward declaration, then such a spiritual blessing must be described and shown to exist. Salvation is by faith only. If a person has true faith, then he is in Christ, and his salvation

cannot be more secure. If a person is born again he cannot become more certainly saved. It may be suggested that God gives a spiritual blessing in baptism (and communion) according as a man believes God to do so: indeed, this exercise of faith is the instrumental cause. We answer that a man cannot properly trust God to do something unless he has a promise in Scripture upon which to base his faith.

(iv) Baptism is said to be parallel with circumcision of the old covenant, and any special spiritual blessing in baptism must be associated with circumcision also. If there was a special spiritual blessing in circumcision, then the women of Israel were born under a distinct spiritual disadvantage.

(v) Thomas Boston comments on Sect. 3, Sect. 11, Chap. 11, Part 1 of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* as follows.

“The strength of the objection in the preceding paragraph lies here, namely, that at this rate, the same persons, at one and the same time, were both under the covenant of works, and under the covenant of grace, which is absurd. Answ. The unbelieving Israelites were under the covenant of grace made with their father Abraham externally and by profession, in respect of their visible church state; but under the covenant of works made with their father Adam internally and really, in respect of the state of their souls before the Lord. Herein there is no absurdity; for to this day many in the visible church are thus, in these different respects, under both covenants. Farther, as to believers among them, they were internally and really, as well as externally, under the covenant of grace; and only externally under the covenant of works, and that, not as a covenant co-ordinate with, but subordinate and subservient unto, the covenant of grace; and in this there is no more inconsistency than in the former.”

This statement contains several difficulties. If it is absurd

to say that a person can be internally under the covenant of works and internally under the covenant of grace at the same time, why is it not absurd to say that a person can be externally under both covenants at the same time? If the children of Israel were under the covenant of works, either internally or externally, then they ought to have sought justification by their own works. If a person internally under a covenant is under it really, it follows that a person under a covenant externally only is not really under it. If all unbelieving infants were really under the covenant of works, why did God ordain that they should be circumcised as a sign that they were under the covenant of grace? To be more logical we ought to say that circumcision was not a sign that a person was under the covenant of grace, but simply a sign of the fact of the existence of the covenant of grace. In this case circumcision would not have been a sign of salvation to the person circumcised.

#### 9. DIFFICULTIES WITH BAPTIST TEACHING

(i) The parallel between the old and new covenants is rejected. Baptism is an outward sign even as circumcision was an outward sign. Outward circumcision and outward baptism are both figures of regeneration, but the old covenant was made with a definite visible body of people, which body of people was identified and known as such by the world. If believers only are under the new covenant, then the new covenant is not made with a definite visible body of people known by the world as certainly under the new covenant.

(ii) As far as the conveying of information is concerned, the Baptist view makes baptism essentially the declaration of an individual and not the declaration of God through a minister. (If a person enters the new covenant when he is born again, a minister cannot declare that an individual is certainly under the new covenant.) This does not seem to agree very well with the form of the service in which a

minister does something in the name of God. Christ has instituted a sacrament for true believers individually to declare their faith—namely, the communion service. It is said that there is a need for an initial ceremony to indicate a person's conversion and change of heart. This need, however, is satisfied as far as adults are concerned, even allowing infant baptism, for in practice an adult does confess his faith in baptism. It is true that children born of Christian parents also need to experience a change, but it often happens that they cannot tell when they are regenerated. In this case their first communion is their initial outward declaration of faith.

#### 10. BAPTISM AND THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

If our understanding of baptism is correct, then the apostles should have baptized infants. It appears, however, from the few references to baptism that we have of the Apostolic Fathers, who knew what was the practice of the apostles, but who may or may not adequately represent the whole church at that time, that they did not allow infant baptism themselves. The question is this: Is it impossible to believe that the apostles baptized infants even if we accept that their disciples did not? Two facts need to be stated here.

(i) The Apostolic Fathers who speak on baptism have a wrong understanding of the meaning of baptism. They associate baptism directly with the forgiveness of sins, and some consider it the means of regeneration.

(ii) The Apostolic Fathers do not expressly state that the apostles did not baptize infants.

Assuming that the apostles did baptize infants, it is possible that the Apostolic Fathers thought that the baptism of infants by the apostles was something out of the ordinary. They may have believed that in the apostolic age of miracles, signs, and extraordinary gifts in the church, God had appointed many infants to be regenerated and had given a

special authority for the baptizing of them, which authority and practice was not to be continued. This is pure speculation given merely to show that our position is not impossible.

The persecution of the church must have hindered the proper outward ordering of the churches. When the later Fathers argue either for, or against, infant baptism, they do so on the wrong grounds. It seems that one reason for the rise of the error of baptismal regeneration was the failure of the Apostolic Fathers to realize that the apostles occasionally used the word baptism to mean spiritual baptism. Augustine taught that there was some kind of connection between baptism and regeneration, but also that baptism was ineffectual to a person remaining in unbelief. This view has been modified in one direction to become the Roman Catholic view, and in the opposite direction to become the Reformed view. We suggest that Zwingli was right when he rejected the Reformed teaching that considers baptism to be a seal of salvation, but Zwingli did teach baptism to be a sign of salvation. Reformed theologians have often said that Zwingli's low view of the sacraments is wrong, but we should not look down on a view simply because it is low—the question is this: What does the Bible teach? If there is no conclusive historical evidence that the apostles did or did not baptize infants, then our attitude towards infant baptism should be based upon what the Bible teaches concerning the meaning of baptism.

## THE PARALLEL BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

BECAUSE some were saved before the new covenant was actually made with men, the new covenant is not a new way of salvation, but a new declaration of salvation, or a new way of presenting salvation. For "covenant" we can read "declaration of salvation" or "promise of salvation." The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matt. xxvi, 28, Mark xiv, 24, Luke xxii, 20, and I Cor. xi, 25. Jesus said, "This cup is the new testament (covenant) in my blood which is shed for you." In the blood of Christ is a new declaration of salvation. The finished work of Christ on the cross made it possible for salvation to be promised to men in a new way—that is, directly, and not indirectly as in the old covenant. The cup represents the fact that salvation by the blood of Christ is now clearly revealed and directly promised in the new covenant. Thus the communion service is a new covenant sacrament. If the new covenant came into being at Pentecost, and those who came under it then were baptized, it follows that baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant.

The Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. These may be properly called "The Books of the Old Covenant" and "The Books of the New Covenant," II Cor. iii, 14. In calling one covenant "new" and the other "old" or "first" it is implied that there is a paral-

lel between the two. Because the new covenant takes over from the old, the two covenants are parallel in purpose and function. Because the various elements of the old covenant are types of things to follow, the two covenants are parallel in form. That the new covenant takes over from the old is shown in Heb. viii, 13, "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." So also in Heb. x, 9, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." That the elements of the old covenant are types of things to follow is shown in Heb. ix, 1, 9 and x, 1, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and an earthly sanctuary . . . which was a figure for the time then present . . . a shadow of good things to come." The Lord's Supper corresponds with the Passover, for one was instituted when the other became obsolete. Baptism, as a sign that a person is under the new covenant, corresponds with circumcision, which indicated that a person was under the old covenant. That baptism corresponds with circumcision is confirmed by the fact that Paul uses the word "baptism" to correspond with "circumcision" when he says that baptism of the heart is the same thing as circumcision of the heart, Col. ii, 11, 12. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God."

Because the old and new covenants are parallel, the nature of the new covenant and the meaning of baptism can be determined. The parallel between the old and new covenants will be considered under the following headings.

1. The Preparation for the giving of the Old Covenant.

2. The Inauguration of the Old Covenant.
3. The Promises of the Old Covenant.
4. The Privileges of the Old Covenant.
5. The Law and the Old Covenant.
6. The Requirements of the Old Covenant.
7. Adults under the Old Covenant.
8. The Requirements for Remaining in the Old Covenant Church.
9. Children under the Old Covenant.
10. Circumcision.
11. The Comparison of the Old and New Covenants in Hebrews.
12. The Preparation for the giving of the New Covenant.
13. The Inauguration of the New Covenant.
14. The Promises of the New Covenant.
15. The Privileges of the New Covenant.
16. Christ fulfils the Law.
17. The Requirements of the New Covenant.
18. Adults under the New Covenant.
19. The Requirements for Remaining in the New Covenant Church.
20. Children under the New Covenant.
21. Baptism.

#### I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE GIVING OF THE OLD COVENANT

The old covenant proper is the covenant that God made with the children of Israel through Moses, and this is the covenant that is compared with the new covenant in Hebrews. Heb. ix, 18 says, "Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." This is a reference to the formal giving or inauguration of the old covenant, Ex. xxiv, 3-8. Before that occurred, however, several events of a preparatory nature took place.

(i) The covenant of the promised Seed was given. There could have been no old covenant apart from the promise of Christ.

(ii) It was foretold that the old covenant would be given.

(iii) God made his covenant with Abraham, whose obedience and faith were signified to be the marks of a person fulfilling the requirements of the old covenant; and circumcision was instituted.

(iv) Moses was appointed and prepared and began to teach the people as the minister of the old covenant.

(v) The Passover lamb was sacrificed.

(vi) The children of Israel were delivered from Egypt and separated from the world to become God's own people.

(vii) The law was given. If a person is to have communion with God he must be justified. In the justification of the sinner the law is not made void but established, Rom. iii, 31.

## 2. THE INAUGURATION OF THE OLD COVENANT

“And he (Moses) sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half the blood, and put it in basons; and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. 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,” Ex. xxiv, 5-8. Before the children of Israel were formally admitted to the old covenant, the blood of animals was shed, the people declared their acceptance of the conditions or requirements of the covenant, and the blood of the covenant was sprinkled upon them. Thereby the people were sanctified by the blood of the

covenant and were signified to be God's people separated from the world. Now, although all the people declared their intention to follow the requirements of the old covenant, not all fulfilled the requirements, but all were sanctified by the blood.

### 3. THE PROMISES OF THE OLD COVENANT

Salvation was not directly promised to the children of Israel under the old covenant. This was because Christ, in whom are all the promises of salvation, had not come, Heb. xi, 13, 39, 40. God did not promise that sins would be forgiven by virtue of the animal sacrifices. However, the gospel was preached to Israel through types, Heb. iv, 2; "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," II Tim. i, 10. The central promise of the old covenant was the promise of Canaan. With this was the promise of protection, peace, and prosperity in Canaan, Lev. xxvi, 4-10; Deut. xxviii, 3-13. Canaan has two antitypes. Considered as the land reached after the wilderness journey it signifies the promise of a heavenly country reached after a pilgrimage in this world, Heb. xi, 13. Alternatively, the rest in Canaan represents peace and communion with God in this life, as Heb. iv, 3 says, "for we which have believed do enter into rest." Regarding God's covenant promise, "I will be your God and ye shall be my people," all the children of Israel (including those who broke the covenant) are considered as God's people, as in Ex. iii, 10; Psa. lxxxi, 11; and Isa. i, 2, 3; but the blessing in the promise is God's love to, and fellowship with, those who keep the covenant rule, Lev. xxvi, 11-15. Only the justified believer can have fellowship with God, and thus justification is indirectly promised. The corresponding promise in the new covenant is the promise that believers are the children of God, I Cor. vi, 18. Because

the old covenant was not actually a covenant of salvation, some believers did not come under it: for instance, Jonah's Ninevites. The promises of the old covenant were not offered as rewards for obedience; as Deut. ix, 4 says, "Speak not in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them (the Canaanites) out from before thee saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land." The old covenant is called an "everlasting covenant" and Canaan an "everlasting possession" because the covenant was to be given to all generations of Israel until the new covenant was given, and because God is everlastingly faithful in his promises.

#### 4. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE OLD COVENANT

If it is true that some of the children of Israel under the old covenant failed to receive the benefits of the old covenant, the question arises concerning the value of being under the covenant. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," Rom. iii, 1, 2. The people under the old covenant were entitled to participate in the covenant ordinances and to join in ceremonial worship, and were privileged to hear the Word of God. Paul says concerning his kinsmen according to the flesh, "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," Rom. ix, 4.

#### 5. THE LAW AND THE OLD COVENANT

That the requirement of the old covenant was not absolute obedience of the law is clear from the following observations. Firstly, the sacrifices instituted under the old covenant assumed inability to keep the law. Secondly, if the old covenant required absolute obedience of the law, then none

under it were saved. In Gal. iii, 15-18 Paul shows that the blessings of the covenant were not offered or received as rewards for obedience of the law. Verse 16 says that the promises were made to Abraham and his Seed—that is, Christ, before the old covenant was given. This seems to be a reference to the covenant of the promised Seed, meaning that all the blessings are in Christ. If a person is to receive these blessings he must therefore receive them from Christ by grace. Verse 18 says, "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave (granted by grace) it to Abraham by promise." If any man is to receive the blessings of the covenant he must be like Abraham (have faith) and be in Christ.

The law was given to Israel as an essential part of the old covenant for the following reasons. Firstly, to reveal the will of God as a rule for daily living. Secondly, the law was a statement concerning justification. It declared what must be absolutely fulfilled by One on our behalf if we are to be justified before God. Thus the law pointed to the coming of Christ, the promised Redeemer—the "righteous servant" who would "justify many," Isa. liii, 11. Thirdly, the law was given as a description of righteousness to convince men of sin and to lead the sinner to Christ, Gal. iii, 19-24. We conclude, then, that the children of Israel were not under law. This was indicated by the fact that the law (the tables of the covenant) was put under the mercy seat, Ex. xxv, 21, and the law was viewed, as it were, through the mercy seat which typified the atoning work of Christ. We must not, therefore, interpret the words of Moses, "this do, that ye may live," as in Lev. xviii, 5 and Deut. v, 33; viii, 1, in a manner which suggests that Moses was charging Israel to seek justification by works.

We suggest that the words of Moses "this do, that ye may live" have nothing to do with justification by works for the following reasons.

(i) Lev. xviii, 4, 5 says, "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein; I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." Moses declared that the covenant God of Israel required the people to walk day by day in obedience to his commandments. If the word "live" implies justification by works, then Moses was clearly teaching the people that they ought to seek justification by their own works. In Gal. iv, 21 Paul teaches that we should not seek justification by our own works. We cannot allow that Moses is contradicted by Paul, and so we are bound to conclude that the word "live" does not imply justification by works. Furthermore, if it were so, the Jews in Paul's day could hardly have been blamed for seeking justification by their own works.

(ii) The words in Lev. xviii, 5 do not say "he shall live on account of" or "as a reward for" his obedience, but "he shall live in" his obedience.

(iii) If Lev. xviii, 5 is a statement concerning justification by works, then surely it ought to say that he that keeps the ten commandments (which is a summary of the moral law) shall live. In verse 4, however, the ordinances are included, and these—that is, the sacrifices, assume that men (including believers) are not able to keep the law absolutely.

(iv) In Deut. iv, 1 "to live" is associated with entry into the promised land. "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you." Moses does not present the commandments of God to the people as a law requiring absolute obedience which is impossible. On the contrary, Moses implies that some of the people will do the commandments of God, will live and prolong their days, and will possess the land.

(v) In Deut. iv, 10 "to live" is associated with the fear of God. "I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth." These words do not mean that the children of Israel were to be subject to a servile fear of the judgment of God all their days, but rather that they were to learn to trust in God and to serve him in true humility.

(vi) In Deut. viii, 1-3 "to live" is associated with living by the Word of God. "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." This is to be "sanctified through the truth."

(vii) In Deut. xxx, 6 "to live" is associated with regeneration. In his final summing up of God's requirements of the children of Israel under the old covenant Moses says, in verse 2, "Thou shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." Then in verse 6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Those who do obey the commandments of God are those who "live." The word "live" here certainly includes the idea of prolonging one's days, but being associated with circumcision of the heart which is regeneration, means primarily living and walking in righteousness. The believer does in fact walk in righteousness; as John says, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him (Christ)." Thus we suggest that the words of Lev. xviii, 5, "if a man do the statutes and the judgments, he shall live in them," mean that if a man keeps the commandments of God he shall be alive in his obedience, and shall live and walk in righteousness by virtue of his being in Christ.

(viii) In Deut. xxx, 19, 20, "to live" is associated with cleaving unto God. Moses says, "I have set before you life

and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Those who obey the voice of God are those who cleave unto him—that is, trust in him; and they have life in Christ.

(ix) In Rom. x, 6-8 Paul shows that in Deut. xxx, 11-14 Moses taught the people to seek justification by faith and not by works. In Rom. x, 3 Paul declares that the unsaved Jews who were prepared to present themselves as just before God on account of their own obedience of the law were tragically ignorant of what is a perfect righteousness. In verse 4 he says that as far as a perfect righteousness is concerned, the believer, who is justified in Christ, does not look to any law which he must obey. Then follows verse 5, "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live in them." The law relates to the whole life of a man. The man who obeys the law walks in righteousness day by day. The Jews were not only ignorant of what is a perfect righteousness, but they also thought, apparently, that good works would cover past sins. The believer knows that because the law relates to his entire life there is no hope for him if he is to be justified by his own works. The believer, however, does have a righteousness of the law, which is his obedience as he is led by the Holy Spirit, but this does not justify him. (The unbeliever has no righteousness of the law at all.) The righteousness of the law is contrasted with the righteousness which is of faith. One is connected with a continual doing of works: the other is connected with an attitude of faith in the heart. One is the actual works of the believer: the other is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer. In verses 6 to 8, Paul says, "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into

heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, Who descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." This is a description of the attitude of mind of the justified believer. The words are taken from Deuteronomy, and unless Paul is quoting out of context, he is saying that the word nigh thee of which Moses speaks is in fact the word of faith—that is, the gospel. Deut. xxx, 11-14 says, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." We suggest that Moses in this passage, after having reminded the people of all the commandments of God, is concerned to answer an objection and a question. The objection is this, "It is too hard!" The question is this, "How can we do these things?" Some of the children of Israel may have said, "We cannot do all these things that God requires of us: it is too much! We must therefore look elsewhere for another law which we can obey." Moses would then have answered, "If you say that the commandments of God are too hard, but it shows that you have completely missed the point of God's revelation of his law to you. (See Deut. xxx, 29.) The commandments certainly are hard, if you seek to be justified by your own obedience of them, but they were not given for that purpose. Do not therefore seek another law to obey in order that you may be justified." The questions then arise, "Who then can be just before God?" and "How can a person obey the commandments of God?" To this Moses replies, "If you had understood the dealings of God with his

people, and if you had realized the significance of the ordinances of the covenant, you would know the answer to this question. In fact I have just told you the answer. It is those who sincerely turn unto the Lord and receive circumcision of heart who obey the commandments of God. The word of faith is nigh unto you : I have told you the gospel—if you would understand it. When I lifted up the serpent of brass, and said, “ He that looks upon it, shall live,” I was telling you the gospel. The person who understands these things, who does not seek justification by his own works, and who has faith in his heart, is the one who is justified before God, and is the one who obeys the commandments of God.” This seems to be a straightforward interpretation of the words of Moses. If a person rejects the way of justification made known in the gospel and seeks another, he is saying, in effect, that the incarnation and resurrection of Christ were to no avail, and he is requiring Christ to come again to declare a new way of justification.

We conclude that Moses was not charging the people to seek justification by works. Also, we must not interpret the words of Moses, “ Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them,” Deut. xxvii, 26, to mean that the children of Israel were under a covenant of works. In Deut. xxvi, 18, 19 Moses says to Israel, “ And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.” God separated the people of Israel from the world to be an holy nation keeping his commandments. This is repeated in chapter xxvii, 9, 10, “ Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and his

statutes, which I command thee this day." Then follows a list of sins, to each of which is attached a curse. At the end of the list is verse 26 quoted above and the final words, "And all the people shall say, Amen." When Moses caused the people to say amen after his pronouncement of God's curse upon sin he was not mocking the people by making them undertake to obey the law absolutely to be justified. Verse 26 means that the person who disregards the law of God, and wilfully and deliberately breaks the law, will not receive the blessings of the covenant, and will not enjoy communion with God. The believer, who by the grace of God does obey the commandments, receives the blessings. This is the primary meaning of the verse, but even as the law of God may be understood two ways—namely, to teach the believer what is the will of God, and to teach the unbeliever his need of salvation in Christ, so also the verse has a different meaning as far as the person seeking justification by works is concerned. To the person seeking justification by works Deut. xxvii, 26 declares that if he has committed but one sin only, he is under the curse of the law, which is the impossibility of justification by his own works. In this sense—that is, from the point of view of the person seeking justification by works—the verse is quoted in Gal. iii, 10. In verse 9 Paul speaks of those who are of faith, and in verse 10 of those who are of works. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." In verses 11 and 12 Paul is concerned to show that we should not in fact seek justification by our own works; and the people of Israel should not have done so either. First he quotes a verse from the Old Testament which declares that justification is by faith. Then he says that the obedience of the law is not the same thing as faith ("the law is not of faith")—obedience consists of works, but faith is an attitude of heart towards God. The

conclusion is that justification is not by the works of the law. The law was given as a rule for living ("the man that doeth them shall live in them") and not as a means of justification. In II Cor. iii, 7 Paul says that the giving of the written law in the old covenant was a "ministration of death." This does not mean that the old covenant itself was a ministration of death. In the old covenant the righteousness of the law is presented in a written form: in the new covenant the righteousness of the law is presented in a living form in the person of Christ. Of itself the written law can do nothing but condemn the sinner and pronounce the sentence of death. In this sense, the giving of the written law was a ministration of death. If the promise of Christ is removed from the old covenant, it becomes in effect a ministration of death, but the old covenant is properly understood when Christ is viewed in it, II Cor. iii, 14. John i, 17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." We do not think that John is here contrasting the old and new covenants to show that they are contrary to each other, but rather that he is comparing the person of Moses with the person of Christ. Moses could merely tell people what the law was, and point them to Christ; but Christ, who is the Truth, enables those who are in him by grace to obey the law. It may be objected that it can be inferred from Rom. vii, 10 that the law was given as a means of justification: "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." We answer that Rom. vii, 7-25 is not concerned with the doctrine of justification, but with the questions, What does it mean to obey the law? and, How does a believer obey the law of God? Paul shows that the believer, because of his regeneration, has a will to do what is right, but apart from the Spirit of Christ he has no ability to obey the law. Before Paul obtained a spiritual understanding of the law he thought that his outward obedience of the law was accepted by God; but when

he was brought to understand the law spiritually, the law, which was given as a rule for daily living, condemned him, and he realized that as an unbeliever he was not obeying the law at all—all his works were sin, and none of his works were accepted by God.

#### 6. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE OLD COVENANT

The requirements of the old covenant are many times repeated: Ex. xix, 5-8; xxiv, 3-8; Lev. xviii, 1-5, xxvi, 3, 14, 15; Deut. iv, 1; v, 1, 31-33; vi, 1-5; viii, 1; x, 12, 13; xii, 1; xxviii, 1; xxx, 1-10; Josh. xxii, 25. "Thou shalt keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments." God did not require absolute obedience, but he did require sincere obedience. This is often emphasized, as in Deut. vi, 5, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Some of the children of Israel did obey the conditions of the covenant. Those who sincerely obeyed God were those who had faith. Those who had faith were justified and saved by Christ. In theory, all those who obeyed the requirements of the covenant should have received the earthly and temporal blessings of the covenant, but in practice the sin of the majority often prevented it. If the children of Israel had believed and trusted in God in the wilderness they would have entered into Canaan. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief," Heb. iii, 19. So also in Deut. 1, 32, and Jude 5. We now mention three verses in the Bible which show that some (those who had faith like Abraham) obeyed the requirements of the old covenant.

(i) Some were enabled to fulfil the conditions by receiving circumcision of heart, Deut. xxx, 6.

(ii) Josh. xxii, 2 says, "And (Joshua) said unto them, Ye have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you."

(iii) Luke i, 6 says of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

#### 7. ADULTS UNDER THE OLD COVENANT

By leaving Egypt, the children of Israel signified their acceptance of the requirements of the old covenant and indicated their willingness to follow the leadership of Moses. These were the people with whom God made the old covenant, and God separated them from the world as his own people. God said to Moses, "I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt," Ex. iii, 10. The body of people under the old covenant included both elect and non-elect, and indeed the majority failed to obey the covenant rule, Psa. lxxviii, 1, 10, 62. Proselytes were admitted to the visible church of the old covenant when they professed acceptance of the requirements of covenant, the males being circumcised, Ex. xii, 48. The covenant was made with the men of Israel and with their wives and children, Deut. xxix, 11. Parents accepted the covenant requirements on behalf of their children.

#### 8. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR REMAINING IN THE OLD COVENANT CHURCH

The Old Testament declares that some persons were to be put out of the visible church of the old covenant, but nowhere are we told that a person once under the old covenant could cease to be under the old covenant. A person under the old covenant did not release himself from the obligations of the covenant by deserting Israel, and such a person will be judged according to the rule of the old covenant. A legal position cannot be changed at will. If a person under the old covenant made it known that he was not

concerned to obey the rule of the covenant by deliberately breaking one of the commandments, then he was to be separated from the people and the privileges of the covenant. Num. xv, 30 says, "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." To sin in ignorance, and to fall into sin, is different from sinning presumptuously. A presumptuous sin is committed when a person is conscious of the true nature, sinfulness and seriousness of the sin at the moment of his committing the sin. It was not required of the rulers of Israel that they judge men to be sincerely obeying the rule of the covenant or not, but if any were not outwardly obeying the rule they were to be put out. Sometimes this involved the sentence of death, as in the case of deliberate Sabbath breaking, Ex. xxxi, 14. If parents refused to have their sons circumcised, Gen. xvii, 14, or deliberately broke the ceremonial law, Num. xix, 13, then they were to be "cut off from the congregation of Israel," Ex. xii, 19. It is true that the rule for remaining in the church put the people of Israel under a certain kind of bondage, even as a pupil has to do what he is told whilst he is being taught, Gal. iii, 24, but the old covenant was not a covenant of works. What was required of the people under the covenant was a sincere following of God. The children of parents cut off from Israel were not born under the covenant, because the parents would not have accepted the obligations on their behalf.

#### 9. CHILDREN UNDER THE OLD COVENANT

The male and female children of parents under the old covenant were born under the covenant. As a sign of this fact the males were circumcised the eighth day. Adopted children came under the covenant when they became members of a covenant family. Parents were under a covenant

obligation to teach their children to fear God and to walk in the covenant rule, Psa. lxxviii, 5.

#### 10. CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision was given as a “token of of the covenant,” Gen. xvii, 11. It was a sign that a person was in fact in covenant relationship with God. It is true that circumcision was instituted on the occasion of God’s giving to Abraham the Abrahamic covenant, but circumcision administered to the physical children of Abraham was not a sign that a person was a spiritual child of Abraham. The spiritual seed of Abraham are believers, and if circumcision had been a sign that a person was a spiritual child of Abraham it would have been a sign that a person was in fact a believer; but circumcision was properly given to unbelieving infants. Circumcision was not a sign that an infant was actually a believer, or a sign that a person would become a believer. We are bound to conclude, therefore, that circumcision was a sign that a person was under the old covenant, as given in verses 7 and 8. Because some under the old covenant were non-elect, it is clear that circumcision was not a sign or seal of salvation. A true Israelite was one who had received circumcision of heart, Rom. ii, 29, but outward Israel was the people under the covenant signified by outward circumcision. Circumcision was not a sign that a person was a true Israelite. Circumcision looked back upon the Abrahamic covenant, and pointed to the fact that it is the believer only who receives the benefits of the old covenant. Circumcision (as given to males only) looked forward to the coming of Christ in whom are all spiritual blessings. And circumcision reminded the Israelite that he was under an obligation to be separate and holy and to obey the covenant rule day by day. Circumcision was a sign of God’s gracious favour of covenant relationship freely bestowed upon an individual.

II. THE COMPARISON OF THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS  
IN HEBREWS

We have shown that baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant. The crucial question now is whether or not the non-elect can be under the new covenant. If the New Testament teaches that the non-elect can be under the new covenant, then the parallel between the old and new covenants is confirmed.

In the epistle to the Hebrews it is shown how the old, or first covenant, foreshadows the new. Moses the servant, who could but lead men to salvation in Christ, foreshadows Christ the Son of God who has life in himself. The rest of Canaan entered by faith foreshadows rest in Christ entered by faith. The many sacrifices of the old covenant foreshadow the one sacrifice of Christ. The blood of animal sacrifices foreshadows the blood of Christ. The promises of the old covenant foreshadow the promises of the new covenant. Aaron foreshadows Christ as high priest. The tabernacle of the old covenant foreshadows Christ as means of access to the Father. Many times it is repeated that some of the children of Israel failed to receive the benefits of the old covenant: chapter iii, 7-19; iv, 1-11; vi, 4-6, 12; viii, 8, 9; x, 23-39. Some, however, did receive the blessings, Heb. iii, 16. The failure of Israel is mentioned as a warning to be heeded by members of the visible church of the new covenant: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," iii, 12. Chapter x, 28, 29 says, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" If a man under the old covenant despised the law

of Moses, not by falling into sin, but by deliberately breaking the first of the ten commandments, he was to be put to death at the mouth of two or three witnesses, Deut. xvii, 6. If a man makes a mockery of the promise of salvation in Christ, and rejects the authority and commands of Christ, he will take his place with the wicked on the day of judgment. The question is whether the person in verse 29 is under the new covenant or not. The man who despised Moses' law was certainly under the old covenant. The sanctification by the blood of the covenant is either a reference to Christ's sanctification by his own blood, or is a reference to the sanctification of the man.

The sanctification by the blood of the new covenant in Heb. x, 29 does not refer to Christ's sanctification of himself for the following reason. There is no sense in which it could be so. Indeed, when Christ died he became cursed rather than sanctified. Christ was sanctified by the Father before he was sent into the world, John x, 36. Christ sanctified or separated himself as a sacrifice in his prayer to his Father, John xvii, 19. And Christ was sanctified to the office of high priest by the Spirit, Heb. ix, 14. Christ did not sanctify himself as a priest by his own blood, for the central act of Christ as priest was the offering up of himself as a sacrifice to God, and if he was to be sanctified to that office he must have been so before his death. Lev. viii records the manner in which priests of the old covenant were to be consecrated. Three sacrifices were to be offered: a sin-offering, verse 14; a burnt-offering, verse 18; and the ram of consecration, verse 22. In each case Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the animal to be slain, and the purpose of the whole was to make "atonement" for them, verse 34. In other words, the three sacrifices were required because Aaron and his sons were sinners. The blood of the ram of consecration was applied to the head, right hand, and right foot of each priest, for although the guilt of the sins of the priests had been

accounted for (typically), they still suffered the defilement of sin, and the offerings that they were to present to God would otherwise have been defiled. There was a special ceremony for the consecration of Aaron as high priest, performed before the animals were slain, which has reference to Christ's sanctification as a priest, verse 12. This was by anointing oil and not by blood: "And he poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him." Upon the other priests the oil was sprinkled only, verse 30. Anointing oil was used in Old Testament times to appoint men to particular offices in the church. The anointing of the high priest is a type of the sanctification of Christ as priest by the Holy Spirit. Thus Christ was sanctified as a priest by the Holy Spirit, and not by his own blood.

That the sanctification by the blood of the covenant in Heb. x, 29 refers to the sanctification of the unbelieving man who rejects Christ is confirmed by a consideration of the use of the word "sanctification" in Hebrews. The word means "to separate." The word is used five times: ii, 11; x, 10; x, 14; x, 29; xiii, 12. The first three of these refer to the sanctification of the believer in being cleansed from the guilt of sin. In the fourth place, chapter x, 29, it is certain that the sanctification of the believer is not intended. In the fifth place the context shows that an outward, sanctification or separation is intended. We are suggesting, then, that a believer is sanctified (according to Hebrews) in two ways: firstly, he is cleansed from the guilt of sin; and secondly, he is separated from the world. These are suggested in Heb. x, 22, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscious, and our bodies washed with pure water." These two kinds of sanctification were typified in the old covenant. The cleansing from the guilt of sin was typified by the sacrifices for sin, Heb. ix, 9, 14; and the sanctification by the blood of the covenant of the people under the

covenant at its inauguration, Ex. xxiv, 8, was an outward sanctification, or separation from the world. The outward sanctification is called a purification of the flesh, Heb. ix, 13. The fifth and last mention of sanctification in Hebrews is in chapter xiii, 12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." The "wherefore" connects the sanctification of the people with the previous two verses, and the "therefore" in verse 13 joins the following two verses. Verse 10 teaches that the old covenant forms of worship cannot co-exist with the new covenant forms. This is proved in the next verse from the fact that the receiving of the elements of communion is exactly opposed to God's command concerning certain old covenant sacrifices which were not to be eaten but burned without the camp. Christ's death made an end of the old covenant ordinances, and this fact was demonstrated when Christ left Jerusalem with its temple and ceremonies to suffer without the gate. Hence Christ's suffering without the gate was the means of inaugurating the new covenant and its forms of worship. Furthermore, in suffering without the gate of the city of Jerusalem, Christ separated himself from the world, and this was in order that we might be separated from the world. Therefore the most natural interpretation of the sanctification of the people in verse 12 is to consider it as the separation from the world of the people under the new covenant by the blood of the new covenant. This, of course, exactly corresponds with the old covenant type in Ex. xxiv, 8. And since the expression "the blood of the covenant" is used in chapter x, 29, we conclude that the sanctification there is the same thing.

The question now is whether it is possible for a person to be sanctified by the blood of the new covenant without being properly under the new covenant. If it is admitted that a person sanctified by the blood of the covenant is outwardly

under the covenant, we ask, Is it necessary to distinguish between two ways of being under the covenant? If the Bible gives us a simple and straightforward answer to the question, What does it mean to be under the new covenant? we should not get involved with unnecessary complications. We think that the idea of the dual nature of the new covenant introduces more difficulties than it solves. Baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant; but baptism is an outward sign and identifies an outward body. From this it is natural to assume that if a person is outwardly under the covenant he is properly under the covenant. The rule and promises of the covenant are properly presented by God to all the people outwardly under the covenant. In view of the absence of evidence to the contrary, we are bound to assume that a person sanctified by the blood of the new covenant is properly under the covenant. We conclude, then, that a man properly under the new covenant may apostatize by rejecting Christ, his covenant position, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus the non-elect can be under the new covenant, and the parallel between the old and new covenants is confirmed.

## 12. THE PREPARATION FOR THE GIVING OF THE NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah prophesied that the new covenant was to be made with "the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." On the day of Pentecost three thousand souls of the house of Israel at Jerusalem came under the new covenant. The new covenant was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost when the new covenant gift of the Comforter was first bestowed upon the church. Before that day, however, there were several events preparatory to the giving of the new covenant.

(i) The old covenant was given to Israel; which covenant foreshadowed the new.

(ii) Particular prophecies were given in the Old Testament: chiefly Jer. xxxi, 31-34. Also in Jer. xxxii, 38-40; Ez. xxxvi, 26, 27; and Joel ii, 28, 29.

(iii) The prophesy concerning the promised Seed was fulfilled. Christ was born at Bethlehem.

(iv) John the Baptist taught the people that the Messiah had come.

(v) John prepared the people for the giving of the new covenant by his baptism.

(vi) Christ was baptized.

(vii) Christ taught the people concerning the new covenant. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," Luke iv, 18 quoting Isa. lxi, 1. Christ was the prophet of the new covenant, Acts iii, 22 and vii, 37 quoting Deut. xviii, 18, even as Moses was the prophet of the old covenant.

(viii) Christ chose and appointed the twelve Apostles.

(ix) Christ finished the work of redemption that his Father had given him to do; instituted baptism, Matt. xxviii, 19, and ascended into heaven to be exalted on his throne at God's right hand.

Even as circumcision was being administered before the old covenant was properly inaugurated, so baptism was being administered before the new covenant was inaugurated. John's baptism and the baptism of the disciples of Christ operated during the transitional period from the giving of the doctrine of the new covenant by John and Christ to the actual inauguration of the new covenant on the day of Pentecost. It was a "baptism of repentance," and adults who presented themselves for baptism confessed their sins and professed repentance. It was chiefly for people under the old covenant, and was administered before the coming of the Comforter, whereas the new covenant is for all nations and the gift of the Comforter is a new covenant

blessing. John looked forward to the sealing of the new covenant by the blood of the Lamb and prophesied concerning the giving of the new covenant by speaking of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Thus John's baptism was not a sign that a man was under the new covenant, but was a sign that a man could enter the visible church of the new covenant at its inauguration if he continued to profess repentance and faith at that time, Acts xix, 4. John's message to the Jews was a warning that although they were outwardly obeying the law some of them were not fulfilling God's requirement of sincere obedience from the heart. Fulfilling the requirements for remaining in the old covenant church would not admit a man to the new covenant. If an adult was to enter the visible church of the new covenant he would have to give evidence of repentance and faith. The body of people baptized by John was not those certainly obeying properly the requirements of the old covenant, but those professing to do so.

John's baptism outwardly prepared men for entry into the new covenant, and John's baptism of Christ outwardly prepared Christ for his office as Mediator of the new covenant. In John's baptism the adult professed that he was properly fulfilling the requirements of the old covenant, but Christ's baptism became in the event a seal of the fact that Christ was absolutely fulfilling the law of the old covenant. For, "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii, 16, 17. Thus, even as Abraham's circumcision was unique, so Christ's baptism was unique. Abraham's circumcision was a seal of his salvation, and Christ's baptism was a seal of his Sonship. Abraham's circumcision teaches us that those who are like Abraham—that is, believers, are saved; and Christ's baptism teaches us that all the blessings of the new

covenant are in Christ.

### 13. THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

Fifty days after the feast of the Passover on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem the disciples of Christ came properly under the new covenant. Then they were sanctified by the blood of the new covenant and separated from the world as God's people. In Heb. ix, 16 the new covenant is considered as a will regarding an inheritance. A testament comes into operation after the testator has died and the new covenant itself, therefore, was sealed by the death of Christ. The new covenant was made first with Israelites, even as Christ was concerned first for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. xv, 24. However, the new covenant which replaced the old covenant was not a national covenant, and in it distinctions of race, social status, and sex do not count, Gal. iii, 28. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." To be baptized for, or unto, the remission of sins is to be put under the direct promise of the forgiveness of sins. The words of Jesus, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark xvi, 16, seem to mean that he that believes, and is baptized as a sign that he is under the new covenant, shall be saved according as salvation is promised in the new covenant. The believer is not saved simply in order that he might go to heaven, but also that he might serve and have communion with God under the new covenant. The presentation of the promises to the children and to those afar off would probably have reminded the Jews of the old covenant promises given to "your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp," Deut. xxix, 11. The stranger is the Gentile

proselyte and Paul uses the expression "you that are afar off" for the Gentiles in Eph. ii, 17.

#### 14. THE PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT

These are as follows.

(i) Communion with God is promised in a direct manner such that men may know that they know God. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, 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. xxxi, 34.

(ii) The forgiveness of sins. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi, 34.

(iii) A new heart and spirit through regeneration: a new principle of life in the soul causing a new desire to know and to serve God. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," Jer. xxxi, 33.

(iv) Adoption into Christ's family. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer. xxxi, 33.

(v) Assurance of preservation and final salvation. "I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii, 40.

(vi) The gift of the Holy Spirit to lead the believer in the way of righteousness. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ez. xxxvi, 27.

These promises are revealed and presented to all under the new covenant, and are considered in detail in the New Testament. The great tragedy is that some under the new covenant, "do despite unto the Spirit of grace," and fail to receive the promises through unbelief. These promises are offered as gifts to be received by grace.

## 15. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE NEW COVENANT

All under the new covenant are entitled to assemble with their local congregation in the name of Jesus Christ to call upon his name and to worship God. They also enjoy the privileges of Christian fellowship and instruction in the Word of God. The Bible has been given to the church of Christ, and the church has the responsibility to make known the gospel to every creature.

## 16. CHRIST FULFILS THE LAW

Christ, who is the "last Adam," I Cor. xv, 45, was not represented by the first Adam in the Adamic covenant. Consequently, Christ was not born with the guilt of Adam's sin. Gal. iv, 4 says, "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Christ was not born under the covenant of works (which originated with the first Adam) but under the old covenant, and this was signified by his circumcision—indeed, Christ was the central figure of the old covenant. The requirement of the old covenant was sincere obedience of the law of God. Because Christ was born without original sin, it was possible for him to obey the law perfectly. Thus sincere obedience for Christ was perfect obedience. Therefore the requirement of the old covenant for Christ was perfect obedience of the law. We know that Christ did perfectly obey the law, but we should not think that his obedience was either easy or automatic. The eternal Son of God lived as a real man on this earth, and was really tempted to sin as other men. Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and perfectly obeyed the written law. Through the perfect obedience of Christ, and his fulfilling of the requirements of the covenant of redemption, Christ procured all the spiritual blessings that were indirectly promised in the old covenant, and that are directly promised in the

new covenant. All the blessings of salvation are in Christ.

#### 17. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW COVENANT

God's requirement of all under the new covenant may be expressed in four ways, each amounting to the same thing.

(i) Sincere love and obedience of the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. "He both shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Mic. vi, 8. This is to know the presence of God by walking after the Spirit, walking in the light, and by abiding in Christ. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii, 1.

(ii) Perseverance to the end. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi, 12. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise," Heb. x, 36. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end," Rev. ii, 26.

(iii) In the covenant of works there is no justification except a man live entirely without sin. In the new covenant it is required that a man live without wilful sin. If a believer, who is dead to sin, is led by the Spirit to know that a certain action is wrong, and he accepts the fact that it is wrong, he cannot sin against that knowledge—that is, whilst he remains in that frame of mind. Such a sin would be a wilful or "presumptuous" sin, Psa. xix, 13; Num. xv, 30. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii, 14. This includes confession of sin upon conviction by the Holy Spirit, I John i, 9.

(iv) In the new covenant we are required to obey Christ as our King. The kingdom of heaven is invisible and consists of believers only, John iii, 5. Christ rules the hearts of all in the kingdom so that they walk in righteousness. Christ's

coming in the flesh was the means of the setting up of the kingdom of heaven, Dan. ii, 44, Isa. ix, 7. Christ received authority as King when he ascended into heaven and was seated at God's right hand, Psa. ii, 6, 7. Thus Christ's exaltation as King, and the believer's responsibility to obey Christ as King, relate to his work of redemption.

The person who is in Christ, and who is like Abraham and has faith, does fulfil the requirements of the new covenant. "He walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii, 4. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," Heb. x, 39. No believer commits wilful sin, but there are various degrees of sincere obedience.

#### 18. ADULTS UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

From the parallel between the old and new covenants we deduce that the formal reason for the admission of adults to the new covenant is their acceptance of the requirements of the covenant. When a person is born again he is brought to acknowledge Christ as his Lord and King, and he will desire to serve Christ as King. He will also believe the words of Christ and will acknowledge the authority of the Bible, and will therefore intend to obey Christ. Thus when a person is born again he accepts the requirements of the new covenant, and comes under the new covenant. A person who desires to enter the visible church must declare his faith in Christ. Now, it is possible for a person to think himself a true believer when he is not, and to accept intellectually the requirements of the covenant. If a minister accepts his confession of faith and the person is baptized, then his baptism is still valid as a sign that he is under the new covenant. It is not possible for a person to admit that he is an unbeliever and at the same time to accept the requirements of the covenant.

19. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR REMAINING IN THE NEW COVENANT CHURCH

John chapter v contains a solemn declaration by Christ concerning the possibility of members of the visible body of Christ being cut off. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away," verse 2. The vine typifies Israel and the church. If a person under the new covenant makes up his mind that he is no longer concerned to obey the rule of the covenant, or rejects the authority of Christ, he is to be put out of the visible church. If a person continues in wilful sin, or rejects the deity of Christ, then he is outwardly breaking the rule of the covenant. Such a case is mentioned in I Cor. v where Paul says, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Thus it appears that persons who reject the covenant rule, after being admonished, Tit. iii, 10, are to be put out of the congregation of the church. When a person is put out of the church his flesh, or body, is destroyed in the sense that he is separated from the visible body of Christ and the privileges of the new covenant. He is delivered unto the accusations of Satan, but remains under the obligations of the covenant, and if he repents his spirit is saved. Excommunication is for the good of the offender as well as the good of the church.

20. CHILDREN UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

From the parallel between the old and new covenants we deduce that children born of parents under the covenant are born under the covenant. Or, when the parents come under the covenant, the children come under the covenant. This is confirmed by I Cor. vii, 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sancti-

fied by the husband : else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy." That the child is clean because one of the parents is a believer has been interpreted various ways.

(i) The child is clean because the marriage is made lawful.

(ii) The parents living together is better for the child.

(iii) The wife will have a sanctifying influence on the husband, which in turn will be good for the child.

(iv) The child is clean in the sense of the words of Peter : " God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

We believe that the last view is the correct view for the following reasons. In verses 10 to 13 Paul considers the question as to whether or not a married couple should separate on account of one being converted. Paul answers clearly that the fact that one is an unbeliever should not be a reason for separating. The question concerning the position of children if the parents should remain together is then considered in verse 14. In the days of the old covenant a female of the Gentiles and her children could not enter the covenant if the husband did not wish to do so also. Thus the question arises concerning the position of children in the new covenant when the husband is an unbeliever. Paul answers that the children are clean because the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.

I Cor. vii, 14 does not teach that the marriage of an unbelieving couple becomes lawful when one becomes a believer, because it is not true that the marriages of unbelievers are unlawful. The Old Testament nowhere says that the marriages of those outside the covenant are unlawful, but it does condemn the marriage of a person under the covenant with a person outside the covenant—for instance, Ezra x, 17. Our verse does not deal with the question as to whether a believer should marry an unbeliever, but with the position if one of a married couple should become a believer, which

is a different matter. Thus interpretation (i) above is rejected.

View (ii) above, insofar as it differs from (iii), depends upon the idea that a marriage is sanctified, or blessed by God, if the couple live together. The verse, however, speaks of the sanctification of persons, and not the sanctification of marriage itself. Paul does not say that the child is clean simply because the parents remain together, but because the husband is sanctified by the wife.

Regarding view (iii) above, Paul speaks of the sanctification of the husband and the child as a completed thing—"Now are they holy." The use of the perfect tense in "is sanctified" denotes a completed action. The original may be rendered: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife"—that is, not "by" the wife; which indicates a state rather than a process. Thus the sanctification of the husband intended is not that resulting from the good influence of the wife, and the sanctification of the child is not that resulting from the reflection of the good influence on to the child.

The sanctification of the husband and the child in I Cor. vii, 14 is not a sanctification of the heart, but is an outward and completed standing or position. Peter says, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean," Acts x, 28; which means that no man is clean or unclean by virtue of nationality. The sanctification by the blood of the covenant in the Old Testament was an outward sanctification of separation from the world. In the present age, people of all nations can be sanctified and separated from the world under the new covenant. I Cor. vii, 14 is unintelligible unless we identify the sanctification of the husband and child with the outward sanctification of covenant relationship.

Thus we conclude that the sanctification of the child means that the child is under the new covenant. Because God

considers man and wife as one flesh, and because the position of the believer is higher than that of the unbeliever, the status of covenant relationship of the believer takes precedence, so that the whole family is under the covenant. Although I Cor. vii, 14 was not written primarily to state the position of the unbelieving husband, we must say that he is also under the new covenant on account of the believing wife, and is entitled to the privileges of the covenant. He would not, however, be baptized, because as an unbeliever he would not desire baptism. The practical difference between the position of the unbeliever married to a believer, and other unbelievers, lies simply in the fact that one is invited to join in the worship of God with the believing partner whilst others are not. People outside the covenant are not properly invited to church meetings of worship although, of course, they should not be refused admission if they desire to attend, I Cor. xiv, 23.

There is an objection to infant baptism which says that the parallel between the old and new covenants can be interpreted differently. It is said that if the old covenant is outward and the new covenant spiritual, then because a person came under the old covenant by natural birth, a person comes under the new covenant now by spiritual re-birth. This view is rejected for the following reasons.

(i) The statement that the old covenant is outward and the new covenant spiritual is true if it means that the promises are respectively earthly and spiritual, but is false if it means that the bodies of people under the covenants are respectively visible and invisible. If true believers only are under the new covenant, then the body under the new covenant is invisible and cannot be identified by a visible sign such as baptism, and the parallel between the old and new covenants completely fails. The old covenant acted as if salvation was directly promised in it, and within the old covenant church there was a body of people who had

received circumcision of heart, even as there is today a body of people within the new covenant church who have received baptism of heart. The old covenant was not only a kind of parable teaching the way of salvation, but God actually entered into covenant relationship with a definite visible body of people. So also, if there is any parallel between the old and new covenants, the new covenant is made with a definite visible body of people.

(ii) Not all under the old covenant came under the covenant by natural birth.

(iii) To say that people come under the covenant because they are born again does not agree with the fact that regeneration is a promise of the covenant.

(iv) The covenant rule is in practice given to infants.

(v) Members of the visible church may be cast out, John xv, 6.

(vi) Children may be under the new covenant, I Cor. vii, 14.

(vii) Non-elect may be under the new covenant, Heb. x, 29.

From the parallel between the old and new covenants we say that children properly adopted into a covenant family are also under the covenant. It may also be objected that it does not seem right that some children should be born into a privileged position whilst others are not, but it is a fact that to have Christian parents is a great privilege, but not all children have Christian parents.

## 21. BAPTISM

Baptism is a visible sign that identifies a visible body. There are four main aspects.

(i) Baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant. It is a sign that God has separated a person from the world for his own purpose and glory. Covenant relationship relates primarily to daily living upon this earth. Outside the

new covenant a man can live in a state of salvation, justified, and in communion with God, only if he lives entirely without sin day by day. Under the new covenant a man can live in a state of salvation if he lives without wilful sin: the believer who is obeying the covenant rule day by day remains justified even when he falls into sin. We do not say that a man cannot be saved outside the new covenant, but that he cannot live in a state of salvation outside the covenant. If a man is born again he comes under the covenant. A man cannot have fellowship with God and walk with God unless he is under the new covenant. Thus covenant relationship is a great mercy indeed, and baptism is a sign of God's gracious favour towards an individual. This is most evidently displayed in the baptism of a helpless infant. A person comes into covenant relationship with God before baptism, and therefore baptism does not cause entry into the covenant. Baptism is a sign that a person is definitely under the covenant, and has equal significance for both elect and non-elect. A man is not condemned outside the new covenant simply because he is outside, but because he sinned in Adam and does not obey the law. Similarly, a man is not justified simply because he is under the new covenant, but because he is in Christ, and if he is in Christ he does obey the covenant rule. No man can have communion with God except he obey the covenant rule, but it is also true that he can only obey the covenant rule according as he enjoys communion with God.

(ii) If a person is under the new covenant he is under the obligation to obey the covenant rule. Thus baptism is a public acceptance of the requirements of the covenant. Parents accept the obligations on behalf of their children. Because children of covenant parents are under the covenant, the parents, before they can know that their children are regenerate, teach them to pray to God as Father and to live as members of the kingdom of God, notwithstanding the

fact that children should be taught that they are not Christians because their parents are, that regeneration is instantaneous and involves a change, and that they must make sure for themselves that they have true repentance and faith.

(iii) Baptism is the sign that admits a person properly into the visible church. Thus baptism signifies that a person is entitled to the privileges of the visible church, and is an acceptance of the responsibilities of the same—to love the brethren and to honour the elders. Water was the means of separating Noah and his family from the pre-flood society, and Israel from the Egyptians, I Cor. x, 2. Similarly, water baptism signifies separation from the world.

(iv) Because the visible church is the visible body of Christ, baptism is an outward identification with Christ. This obliges the individual to live like Christ, and the church to present Christ to the world.

As a secondary consideration we may say that baptism reminds us of Christ's baptism, which in turn reminds us that all blessings of salvation are in Christ. Baptism also reminds us that baptism of the heart is necessary for a person to become a member of the invisible church. In the case of adult baptism a person publicly confesses his faith and renounces his past life of sin; as Ananias said to Paul, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins," Acts xxii, 16. So also in Isa. i, 16. In the case of infant baptism the parents publicly confess their own faith and accept the obligation to teach and to train their children to obey the covenant rule.

There is much in print today that deals very well with the question of the mode of baptism. It used to be insisted that immersion is essential to the meaning of the Greek word "baptizo." This, however, is not true of the word as used in the New Testament. For instance, the word is properly translated "washings" in Heb. ix, 10, in a reference to certain old covenant ordinances, some of which "washings"

were certainly not by immersion. The essential idea in "baptizo" is not immersion but washing. Baptism is not a declaration of God through a minister that a person has been "buried with Christ," and immersion is therefore not essential to the meaning of baptism. Regarding the practice of the apostles, Hodge in his *Systematic Theology* points out that due to the lack of water in Jerusalem "it is to the last degree improbable that the thousands mentioned in the early chapter of Acts were baptized by immersion." Paul was baptized in the house of Judas immediately he had received his sight, Acts ix, 18, but private baths were not common in Palestine in those days. There is not a single case of baptism recorded in the New Testament which we can be certain was by immersion.

Before concluding this chapter we must consider a difficulty which appears to be an objection to our basic argument on baptism. If it is true that the new covenant is parallel with the old covenant, and that the new covenant takes over from the old such that baptism takes the place of circumcision, why were these principles not used to decide the question discussed at the council at Jerusalem? And why is it that the apostles actually allowed circumcision? We suggest that there are two main answers to this difficulty. Firstly, there was a certain amount of overlap between the old and new covenants. For instance, a Jew living after the time of the inauguration of the new covenant, if he had not heard of Christ and the new covenant, would have been right to continue practising the ordinances of the old covenant. Secondly, the apostles did not campaign for the abolition of all old covenant practices and ordinances simply because the new covenant had been inaugurated, for the old covenant is only abolished insofar as it is taken over by the new covenant. It was the apostles' method to preach Christ in the synagogues, as they were permitted, and if Jews were converted they would have understood properly the

significance of the old covenant and would have naturally entered into the new covenant practices. At the council at Jerusalem Paul could well have stated the words of Eph. ii, 15 to conclude the matter, but he preferred to point to simple facts of experience. In his preaching Paul did not give anyone good grounds for a charge against him of disrespect for the old covenant, and no one should have deduced from his teaching that the Old Testament was to be discarded. It is true that there is only one verse in the New Testament which directly confirms the implication of the parallel of the covenants that the non-elect can be under the new covenant, and there is only one verse which directly confirms the implication that infants can be under the new covenant; but we believe that these are sufficient. On the other hand, is not the parallel between the old and new covenants one example of the perfect consistency and unity in the teaching of the Word of God?

In conclusion we make four observations.

(i) Baptism does not admit a person into a local visible church only, but it admits also into the whole visible church worldwide.

(ii) Many persons properly baptized have failed to receive the promises of the new covenant.

(iii) The rule of the new covenant should not be considered as something that keeps us in bondage, but as something that leads and directs us in the Christian life. To the Christian the yoke of Christ is easy and the burden is light.

(iv) A public meeting should be distinguished from a church meeting. People outside the covenant are not properly invited to attend a church meeting for worship, although none should be refused admission. It ought to be made known to people outside the covenant what is their position under law. All men ought to worship God, and all believers can worship God in private, but when an adult comes to a church meeting for the purpose of worshipping

God, his mere attendance is a profession of his faith in Christ. Because of the responsibility of the church to preach the gospel to every creature public meetings should be held, if possible, to present the gospel to all, and to exhort all men to acknowledge their sin and to seek salvation in Christ. All men are under an obligation to serve God, but we cannot serve God unless we know God; therefore all men are under an obligation to seek after a knowledge of God. No man can know God apart from salvation in Christ: therefore all men are under an obligation to seek salvation in Christ. All men should acknowledge their sin and seek salvation, and the gospel informs men that there is salvation in Christ. Thus the gospel should be preached, not only to persons under the new covenant, but also to persons outside the covenant, as did the Apostle on Mars' hill. Furthermore, the preaching of the gospel to those outside the covenant should not be restricted to those who realize and feel themselves condemned by the law, for although a person who does not acknowledge his sin will not seek salvation, he is nevertheless under an obligation to do so. The first task of the preacher addressing those outside the covenant is to declare the law of God. If a person knows nothing of the law of God he can hardly know much of the grace of God. But it is true that law and grace can be proclaimed together, even as they are most evidently displayed in the cross of Christ, and persons under grace have always to learn more of the law of God. We suggest that Sunday Schools to which all children are invited should be primarily for instruction. Although it is true that corporate prayer and hymn singing are church privileges it does not follow that believers cannot pray or sing hymns when not at church meetings; for believers can pray on their own. Whenever a number of believers are met together, notwithstanding the presence of unbelievers, it is right and proper that one should lead them in prayer. Thus in a Sunday School meet-

ing to which all are invited it is not unlawful to have prayers and hymns of worship. We do not think that the obligation of the church to preach the gospel is met by the "if" of I Cor. xiv, 23.

Finally, a word about Israel and the new covenant. Jeremiah's prophesy concerning the giving of the new covenant is written as though it was to be given to Israel only. However, Paul, who was the "apostle of the Gentiles," Rom. xi, 13, was also an "able minister of the new covenant," II Cor. iii, 6. In Rom. xi, 26 Paul says, "And so all Israel shall be saved," then follows a quotation from Isa. lix, 20, 21, and then he mentions the new covenant promise of forgiveness of sins. Immediately before this in verse 25, and immediately after in verse 28, Paul refers to national Israel. Thus it seems that the prophesy in Isa. lix, 20, 21 has a special significance for national Israel. Isaiah says, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." This is the Davidic covenant related to believers. Two things are promised. Firstly, those who believe under the new covenant and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit will not fall from grace and cannot be lost. This is the promise of assurance that is in the new covenant. Secondly, there will be a number of true believers in all generations. The first 7 verses of Romans xi speak of the remnant of Israel that was saved in Old Testament times. The question arises concerning Jews only. Because Israel rejected Christ can Jews not be saved today? "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" verse 11. Paul answers: "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in," verse 23. In the New Testament age

Israel is blinded in part only, verse 25. Thus it appears that even as there was always a body of believers in Old Testament Israel, so there will always be a body of believing Jews whilst the new covenant operates. "And so all Israel shall be saved." "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee," Jer. xxx, 11. God also says in verse 17, "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds."

## THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WATER OF BAPTISM

THE purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it is to show that Paul uses the expression "under grace" to mean the same thing as "under the new covenant," such that a person outside the new covenant is under law. If a person is under the new covenant he is not under the obligation to live entirely without sin day by day in order to be just before God and to have communion with God—that is, he is under grace and not under law. Secondly, it is to show that the water of baptism is a symbol of separation from the law.

Now Paul uses the expression "under the law" in two very different ways. It is the same law in both, but "under the law" refers to two different positions. In both cases the expression is used to denote a contradistinction between one position and another. They are as follows.

(i) A person under the law has received a revelation of the law from God whereas a person not under the law has not received or heard the law. This is the meaning in Rom. iii, 19, 20; I Cor. ix, 20; and Gal. iii, 23. (See also Rom. ii, 12).

(ii) A person under law is not under grace. This is the meaning in Rom. vi, 14; Gal. iv, 21; and Gal. v, 18.

Rom. iii, 19, 20, says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is

the knowledge of sin." These two verses teach that if a man has heard the law he should be aware of the fact that he has not kept the law. In the passage preceding verse 10 Paul has proved that all Jews and Gentiles have sinned. Verses 10 to 18 refer more particularly to the unregenerate. To be "under the law" as in verse 19 is not the same as being under the old covenant, for Paul has in mind the whole world and not the Jews only. Nor does it refer to the unregenerate, as such, for some unregenerate have not heard the law, and even the justified believer has a knowledge of sin by the law. "Under the law" is the position of all persons today, whether Jews or Gentiles, who have heard the law, and this law is to be presented to all men living.

On the other hand, Gal. iv, 21 says, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" The Galatians did not merely desire to continue Old Testament ordinances, but they considered them as essential to salvation. Paul's answer to their desire does not deal particularly with the ceremonial law. Some of the Galatians believed, apparently, that a person could not be saved unless he was circumcised. In other words, they believed that the obedience of the ordinance of circumcision in some manner assisted in their justification. Paul answers that if justification depends upon one work of righteousness then a man must obey the whole law. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace," chapter v, 3, 4. The Galatians were in practice seeking justification by works, although they did not realize it. Here, being under the law is contrasted with being under grace, and is the position of men under the obligation to live entirely without sin day by day to be just before God and to have communion with God. Thus to be under the law is to be outside the new covenant. To be under the law is to be in a legal

position; but law and grace are antithetical: therefore, to be under grace must also be a legal position. We conclude, then, that to be under grace is to be free from the obligation to live entirely without sin to have communion with God, but under the obligation to obey the rule of grace—that is, to walk in the Spirit. Thus to be under the new covenant is to be under grace, which is to be under the “law of liberty,” Gal. v, 1.

Rom vi, 14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” There are four ways of understanding the law here which we reject as follows:

(i) The verse does not mean that a Christian is not under the moral obligation to obey perfectly the law of God. If a Christian breaks the law he falls into sin.

(ii) The law in this verse is contrasted with grace and therefore cannot refer to the ceremonial law.

(iii) The sinner under the law is under the dominion of sin. Consequently, the law here is not the old covenant as made with Israel: otherwise all Israel would have been under the dominion of sin.

(iv) The law here is not the “law in my members” mentioned in chapter vii, 23. The Christian is free from the “law” of Rom. vi, 14, but he is not completely free from the “law” in his members. When Paul introduces the “law in my members” in chapter vii, 21 he at once defines it. It is not a legal law, but a force of tendency to sin in the Christian. If a Christian knows what is right and his regenerate nature desires to do it, if he is not being led by the Holy Spirit he has not the ability to perform the work. This is because of the law of sin in his members.

The most natural interpretation of the word law in Rom. vi, 14 is that which considers it as a legal law, as in Gal. iv, 21, such that to be under it is to be under the legal obligation to live entirely without sin in one’s own strength in

order to have communion with God. Gal. v, 18 says that a person who is being led by the Holy Spirit—that is, who is obeying the rule of grace by the Spirit, is under grace, but it does not necessarily follow from that that if a person is under grace he will certainly be led by the Spirit. (Similarly, it does not follow from the fact that believers should be baptized, that believers only should be baptized.)

To be under the law as in Gal. iv, 21 is to be in the natural position of all the sons of Adam left to their own devices, from which position it is necessary to be redeemed. All the children of Israel under the old covenant were under the law in the sense that the law was given to them, but the believers, at least, amongst them were certainly not under the law in the sense contrasted with grace. The two meanings of “under the law” come together in Christ, Gal. iv, 4, 5, who was not a son of Adam but was born under the law in the first sense, in order to redeem men from being under the law in the second sense.

It is commonly suggested that a person is under the law whilst he is an unbeliever, but when he is born again he comes under grace. As an unbeliever he is under the obligation to live entirely without sin to be just before God, which leads him to Christ and repentance; and when he believes he comes under grace and the obligation to obey the rule of grace. The question is this: Is it possible for an unregenerate unbeliever to be under grace? We answer that Gal. iv, 21; v, 4 teaches that Isaac was born, not under the law but under grace; but because Isaac was not born regenerate, he was under grace whilst unregenerate. The passage specifically deals with the question, Who is under the law and who is under grace? Paul is not primarily concerned with the question, What does it mean to be under the law? but with the question, Who is under the law? The passage also directly associates covenant relationship with being under grace.

Who is under law? Paul's answer is in two parts.

(i) The mothers of Isaac and Ishmael indicated by an allegory that Isaac was not under law but under grace.

(ii) We are in the same position as Isaac was: therefore we are also not under law but under grace.

We say that the allegory of the mothers of Isaac and Ishmael is not merely an illustration of what it means to be under the law, but the allegory indicated that Isaac, being under the old covenant, was actually under grace, for the following four reasons.

Firstly. If the allegory is merely an illustration it has no force as an argument to prove that the Galatians were actually under grace and not under law.

Secondly. The words "Do ye not hear the law? For it is written," infer that the Old Testament explicitly teaches that the Galatians were under grace. This would not be so if the allegory were merely an illustration, similar say, to the illustration of a free Roman citizen and a slave.

Thirdly. The fact that those who were under law persecuted those under grace in Old Testament times, verse 39, is not merely an illustration of what happens now, for the same thing actually happens now. The verse clearly shows that Old Testament circumstances continue today.

Fourthly. Paul says that even as Isaac was a child of promise, so we are children of promise, verse 28. Isaac's position does not merely illustrate ours, but we are in the same position. That Isaac was a child of promise is not principally a reference to the fact of his miraculous birth, for all under the old covenant were children of promise, and Isaac as a child of promise is not an illustration of the believer who has been miraculously born again. We must distinguish between a believer, a person under the covenant (old or new), and a person elected to salvation. Abraham is a type of the believer, and the spiritual seed of Abraham are

believers. Isaac is a type of the person under the covenant (as opposed to Ishmael), and the physical seed of Abraham through Isaac were under the old covenant—"In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Jacob is a type of the person elected to salvation (as opposed to Esau). This is the teaching of Rom. ix, 6-13. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," verse 6, means that some under the old covenant were not true believers. To illustrate this Paul shows that a person is not under the covenant merely by being a child of Abraham, for the covenant was made with Isaac's seed and not with Ishmael's. Verse 8 says, "The children of the promise are counted for the seed"—that is, the children of Isaac are the children of promise. The children of promise are not those elected to salvation, nor those actually believing, but those under the covenant. Isaac became a child of promise when he was born—that is, he was born under the old covenant. The statement that Isaac was born after the Spirit, Gal. iv, 29, is not a reference to Isaac's regeneration, but means that the body of people under the old covenant was a body in which the Holy Spirit worked.

The fact that Hagar was a bondwoman and Sarah a freewoman is an allegory, and the two mothers represent two covenants. Isaac represents those who were under the old covenant, and the fact that his mother was a freewoman indicates that those who were under the old covenant were not under bondage but were free. Hagar is identified with mount Sinai—that is, the law. Because the law was in fact given to the children of Isaac, Ishmael does not represent those who have merely received the law, but those who are under the law in the sense that they are required to obey the law absolutely in order to enjoy communion with God. Hagar is also identified with Jerusalem which now is. Jerusalem which now is is contrasted with Jerusalem which is above, which is identified with the barren woman of Isa. liv, 1. We are said to be the children of this mother. The

important question is whether or not these are believers only. We will consider first the passage in Isaiah. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." This verse follows a prophecy concerning the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, and we can therefore believe that the sudden increase in the family of the barren woman happens historically after the death of Christ. Verse 3 says that Gentiles are to be included in this family. In verse 4 two past stages of the barren woman are described—"the shame of thy youth" and "the reproach of thy widowhood." The first is apparently a reference to the time when the children of Israel were under bondage in Egypt. The second corresponds with the desolation of the woman, and is a reference to the time of the Babylonish captivity. If this is so, then the barren woman represents the old covenant itself, and the children are the people under the covenant. Israel did not properly come under the covenant until they were redeemed from Egypt; and in captivity the people under the covenant were hardly identifiable as such. If the new covenant is understood as taking over from the old covenant, then the increased family of the woman, including Gentiles, that comes into being after the death of Christ, is plainly the body of people under the new covenant. The statement in verse 5 "thy Maker is thy husband" can apply either to the barren woman or to the children of the barren woman. It means that God not only institutes the old and new covenants in the first place, but that God brings people under the covenant. In Jer. xxxi, 32 God is said to be the husband of all the children of Israel who were led out of Egypt, including those unbelievers who did not follow the covenant rule. Thus the reference to God as husband here is not the same as that in which the body of true believers in

Christ is considered as the bride of Christ. We conclude that the children of the barren woman in Gal. iv, 26 are not believers only, but all under the new covenant. It appears that the "covenant of peace" in Isa. liv, 10 is the same thing as the new covenant in Jer. xxxi, 31; and Isa. liv, 13 corresponds with Jer. xxxi, 34.

We must now consider the two Jerusalems in Gal. iv. Jerusalem which is above is the same as the barren woman, which is the new covenant. Thus we can say that Jerusalem which is above is the old covenant considered spiritually, and Jerusalem which now is is the old covenant considered carnally. The Jews who continued Old Testament ordinances in Jerusalem after the death of Christ were rejecting the promise of Christ in the old covenant, and with it all the spiritual significance of the ordinances. They were left with merely the written law and the observance of ordinances, which, as far as justification is concerned, kept them under bondage, for to be justified under such a covenant they would have had to have obeyed absolutely all the commandments and ordinances. Considered properly and spiritually, however, the old covenant was not a covenant of works but a covenant of grace, even though grace was only indirectly revealed through the types. In Col. iii, 1 we are exhorted to seek and to set our affection on things above—that is, on spiritual things. These spiritual blessings are in Christ, and the seeking of these blessings does not involve bondage but merely a coming to Christ. Thus Paul says that the Jerusalem which is above is free. If a person is under the old covenant properly understood, or under the new covenant, he is under grace and is free, and is not under law and bondage. Thus Paul proves the first part of his argument—namely, that Isaac was under grace. (Jerusalem which is above is not the same as the "heavenly Jerusalem" of Heb. xii, 22, or the "new Jerusalem" of Rev. xxi, 2; for these consist of true believers only. In Gal. iv, 26 the church

is not considered as Jerusalem itself, but as the children of Jerusalem which is above.)

The second part of the argument is as follows. If Isaac under the old covenant was under grace, how much more sure it is that we under the new covenant are under grace. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free."

We conclude, then, that even as unregenerate infants of Israel were under grace, so children born under the new covenant are also under grace.

The symbolic significance of the water of baptism may be understood from a consideration of the expression "born of water" in John iii, 5. In verse 3 Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In verse 5 Jesus says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Being born of water is as absolutely necessary for salvation as being regenerated by the Holy Spirit: therefore, to be born of water is not baptism by water. In verse 3 one birth is necessary for salvation: in verse 5 two births are necessary for salvation. Between these two verses, in verse 4, the natural physical birth is mentioned. Verse 5 hardly means that if a person is to be saved he must first of all be born physically and then be born again spiritually; but, when Nicodemus was born physically he was also born under the old covenant. And, since a person cannot continue in a state of salvation outside the new covenant, being born of water appears to be a reference to coming under the new covenant. Thus, except a man come under the new covenant and be regenerate he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Tit. iii, 5 speaks of the washing effect of regeneration and the renewing effect of the Holy Spirit: there is, as it were, a subtracting effect of regeneration and an adding effect; but John iii, 5 seems to speak of two distinct births or

generations. To be born of the Spirit is in fact to receive both negative and positive effects of regeneration. That to be "born of water" is to enter the new covenant is confirmed by the following four considerations.

(i) Three things are considered as seals in the Bible: blood, water, and the Spirit.

Blood seals the covenant itself.

Water seals a man into the new covenant.

The Holy Spirit seals to a man the benefits of the new covenant.

The Spirit's seal relates to the fact that a person is regenerate, and the water's seal relates to the fact that a person is under the covenant. Thus, if being born of the Spirit is to be regenerated, it is reasonable to suppose that being born of water is to enter the covenant.

(ii) Old Testament saints were born of the Spirit and saw the Kingdom of Heaven but could not enter it then, for the kingdom was not properly founded until Christ was appointed King after his ascension into heaven. Hence the distinction between verses 3 and 5.

(iii) Regeneration is directly promised in the new covenant, Jer. xxxi, 33. In the parallel passage in Ez. xxxvi, 25-27 the promise of regeneration is associated with, and immediately preceded by, the cleansing of water, even as in John iii, 5 spiritual regeneration (born of the spirit) is preceded by the regeneration of water (born of water). The cleansing in Ezekiel is the cleansing from idols—not the forgiveness of the sin of idolatry, but the outward separation from the idol worship of the heathen. To be under the new covenant is to be separated from the world.

(iv) "Water" in the expression "born of water" is symbolic and not figurative. A symbol or emblem may represent a thing even when there is no obvious connection between the sign and the object represented; in fact it may be quite impossible to discover the symbolic significance of

a sign from the substance of it. On the other hand, a figure or representation illustrates the object intended. For instance, the spiritual meaning of cleansing by water is clear, and in this case the water is figurative. However, in "born of water" the word "water" is symbolic. Now, in the Old Testament there is one instance in which water is used in this symbolic sense. That is in the "water of separation" in Num. xix. If an Israelite touched a dead body, bone, or grave of a man, or was present when a man died, he was considered unclean and was not allowed to join the congregation of Israel in the worship of God in the sanctuary until he had received the sprinkling of the water of separation containing the ashes of a red heifer. But, excepting the chief priest, Lev. xxi, 11, and a Nazarite, Num. vi, 6, it was not a sin for a man to be in the presence of his dying father: a man did not break the law if he touched a dead body, unless, of course, he was intending to mock the law. The resulting uncleanness was not due to the defilement of sin, and the heifer in this case was not sacrificed as a type of Christ's blood taking away sin. The literal Hebrew in verse 9 says that the ordinance is a sin offering. Why, then, is it called a sin offering? To touch a dead body is to identify oneself with death. What is the connection between sin and death? Plainly, the law of sin and death. Thus to touch a dead body is to identify oneself with the law of sin and death, and the water of separation signified the passing from a law-covenant relationship to a grace-covenant relationship. In this ordinance water is a symbol of separation from the law. Now there were two types of sanctification in the old covenant. One was typified by the sacrifices for sin, and the other was a separation from the world such as the sanctification by the blood of the covenant. The sanctification of the unclean person by the water of separation containing the ashes of a heifer was a sanctification of the flesh and not of the heart; as in Heb. ix, 13, "the ashes of an heifer

sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." We learn from this that the blood of Christ, the blood of the new covenant, avails for the separation of all under the new covenant from the law to the sanctification of the flesh. (Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin takes away the sin of believers only.) If water is a symbol of separation from the law, to be born of water is to enter the new covenant.

The following passages speak of law and grace.

1. Rom. vi, 14-18, "Not under the law but under grace."
2. Rom. vii, 1-6, "Dead to the law."
3. Rom. viii, 1-4, "Free from the law of sin and death."
4. Gal. iii, 10-14, "Redeemed from the curse of the law."
5. Gal. iv, 1-5, "Redeemed from the law."
6. Jas. i, 25, "Under the law of liberty."

1. Rom. vi, 14-18, particularly verse 14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace." We have shown that the most natural way to interpret the word 'law' here is to consider it as a legal law. To be under the law in this sense is to be under the legal obligation to continue living entirely without sin to be just before God and to have communion with God.

If a person under law commits one sin, none of his subsequent works, no matter how much they may appear to conform to the law of God, are accepted by God as works of righteousness. This is because the law is a unity, Jas. ii, 10, and under law it is not possible to break one law and properly obey another. (We are not speaking now of the fact that all the works of unbelievers are sin because they are unregenerate.) Therefore, if a person is under law and falls into a single sin, he cannot yield his members as

instruments of righteousness unto God, verse 13, because he cannot present himself or any of his subsequent works unto God. Thus one sin of a person under the law puts him under the dominion of sin. This is a legal dominion, and we suggest that this is the meaning of verse 14.

Using the word 'law' in this legal sense naturally leads to the objection given in the following verse: If we are not obliged to live entirely without sin, what then, shall we sin? Paul answers that both the law and grace have the power to enslave. If a man yields his heart and submits to obey sin (disobey law) he becomes a servant or slave of sin – that is, he will continue in sin because he has a desire to sin. Similarly, if a man yields his heart and submits to obey the rule of grace by walking in righteousness by obedience of the Spirit he becomes a slave of righteousness – that is, he will continue in the rule of grace because he has a desire to do righteousness. The believer is the servant of righteousness and under the "reign of grace," chapter v, 21. Now a person is not a servant of righteousness simply because he is under grace, for the expression 'under grace' in Rom. vi, 15, cannot be replaced with the words 'servants of righteousness.' The objection is absurd: Because we are free from sin and are the servants of righteousness, what then, shall we sin? A person is not saved simply by being under grace: he must yield himself a servant to obey the rule of grace. So also the expression 'under grace' cannot be replaced with the words 'dead to sin' in verse 2. To be dead to sin is to be united to Christ such that it is impossible for a person to continue walking in sin: he cannot wilfully sin. Again the objection is absurd: Because we cannot continue in sin, shall we sin? A man is not a slave of sin simply because he is under the law, but because of his sin. Because the words 'under law' cannot be replaced with the words 'slaves of sin' we conclude that the dominion of sin due to the fact that a person is a sinner under the law

in Rom. vi, 14, is a legal dominion and not a dominion of the power of sin in a man's heart.

The objection in verse 1 is this: Because we are saved by grace and not by works, shall we cease to work righteousness? Paul answers that the Christian saved by grace cannot continue in sin. The objection in verse 15 is this: Because we are not obliged to live entirely without sin, shall we sin? Paul answers that the Christian who has submitted himself to obey grace has a desire to do righteousness. Because a Christian is not under the legal dominion of sin and can work righteousness, he should yield his "members as instruments of righteousness," verse 13. So also, because a Christian has a desire to work righteousness he should yield his "members as instruments of righteousness," verse 19.

2. Rom. vii, 1-6, particularly verse 4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God." With reference to the six verses we make the following negative observations.

(i) The passage does not teach that by being dead to the law a person is justified. Paul is concerned with the fact that being dead to the law makes it possible for a person to bring forth fruits of righteousness unto God.

(ii) The passage does not teach that we become dead to the law by being married to Christ – that is, by becoming regenerate. We are freed from the law by death, but this death is not the death of the old nature itself, for this occurs when a person is regenerated.

(iii) The passage does not teach that we become married to Christ merely by becoming dead to the law.

To "serve in newness of Spirit," verse 6, is to work righteousness acceptable to God by being led by the Spirit and by receiving strength from Christ. To "serve in the

oldness of the letter ” is to try to obey the written law in one’s own strength. Under law we are obliged to work righteousness in our own strength. We cannot “serve in newness of Spirit ” until we are released from this obligation of law. Under the covenant of works a man is, as it were, married or joined to himself as the source of strength to work righteousness. In verses 1 to 3 Paul gives the illustration of the woman whose husband dies. This frees the woman from the law of her husband, so that she is free to marry another. Now, Christ had the ability in himself to work righteousness, and Christ was therefore a source of strength to work righteousness. Christ died representing all under the new covenant. Thus Christ died representing all under the new covenant (who have no strength of themselves to work righteousness) as the source of strength to work righteousness. Thus all under the new covenant are dead legally as a source of strength to work righteousness. Therefore all under the new covenant are released from the obligation to work righteousness in their own strength, and are free to be united to another — that is, Christ, as a source of strength to work righteousness. Christ’s death had an effect reverse to that of Adam’s sin. When Adam sinned, he accepted, on behalf of all men, the obligation to work righteousness in his own strength, because his sin was an act declaring his desire to be independent of God. When Christ died, he committed unto death his ability to work righteousness in his own strength on behalf of all under the new covenant in order that they might be free from the obligation to work righteousness in their own strength. Verses 5 and 6 may be paraphrased as follows. When we were unregenerate (in the flesh), whether under grace or law, not one of our works was a proper obedience of the law—that is, all our works were sin (fruit unto death); but seeing that we are under grace, we should seek the leading of the Holy Spirit that we may walk in right-

eousness, and not try to obey the written law in our own strength.

The teaching of Paul in Rom. vii, 1-6, is found also in Gal. ii, 19-21. Verse 19 says that freedom from the law is the result of a legal process which makes it possible for a person to live unto God. Verse 20 says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The crucifixion of 'I' here is to be distinguished from the crucifixion of the 'old man' in Rom. vi, 6. In Gal. ii, 20, Paul uses the Perfect tense, but in Rom. vi, 6, the Aorist. The Perfect tense denotes a completed action, but the Aorist is to be understood from the context. In Rom. vi, 6, Paul is describing what happens when a person is baptized into Christ—that is, when a person is regenerated. The 'old man' is the 'body of sin,' which is the person who can do nothing but sin. The unregenerate man can do nothing but sin, and at regeneration that person dies. Thus the 'old man' is crucified when a person is put into Christ at regeneration. Now when Paul speaks of the crucifixion of Christ in Gal. iii, 1, he uses the Perfect participle (to emphasize the permanence of the effect of the death of Christ). (So also in I Cor. i, 23, and ii, 2.) This suggests that the crucifixion of 'I' in Gal. ii, 20, happened when Christ died. Thus it appears that this 'I' is a person considered legally from the point of view of covenant obligations. The body of people under the new covenant can know that they died legally when Christ died. (The crucifixion of the flesh in Gal. v, 24, is in the Aorist tense, but the crucifixion of the world unto me in Gal. vi, 14, is in the Perfect tense.)

Although Christ died to make atonement for the sins of the elect only, the death of Christ avails in a certain manner even for the non-elect under the new covenant. All under the new covenant are sanctified by the blood of the new covenant. A price has been paid for covenant relationship

for all under the covenant including unbelievers. Peter speaks of members of the visible church "denying the Lord that bought them," 2 Pet. ii, 1. The old covenant parallel is in Deut. xxxii, 6, "Do ye requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee?"

3. Rom. viii, 1-4. The believer may fall into sin, but, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Why? "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." How? "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We must first consider whether or not 'the law of sin and death' is the same thing as 'the law of sin in my members.' A person is free from the effect of the law of sin in his members by being led by the Holy Spirit. Thus if the 'law of sin and death' in Rom. viii, 2, is the same as the 'law of sin' in Rom. vii, 25, then the law of the Spirit must be the leading of the Holy Spirit. Now verse 2 shows why a person remains justified when he falls into sin. But, a believer does not remain free from condemnation by virtue of his being led by the Spirit: that would infer that justification is by our works of obedience of the Spirit. Therefore, the law of the Spirit is not the leading of the Spirit, and the 'law of sin and death' is not the 'law of sin in my members.' The verses read naturally if the 'law of sin and death' is taken as the 'law' of verse 3, which is a legal law.

Romans chapter viii must be understood in the light of what Paul has already said concerning justification. The law of the Holy Spirit declares that those who are in Christ are justified, even when they fall into sin, and that those

who are in Christ can work righteousness acceptable to God according as they are led by the Holy Spirit. The law of sin and death declares that those who fall into one sin are under condemnation and are under the sentence of death. The law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin and death. Verses 3 and 4 may be paraphrased as follows.

The law was unable to justify men, for all men in the flesh (the descendants of the first Adam) have sinned. But God provided the means of justifying the ungodly by sending his Son (the second Adam), who became a man to represent men who have sinned, to bear the punishment of the sin of men in order that they might be justified and the law fulfilled. Also, the death of Christ made it possible for men to be united to Christ as a source of strength to work righteousness, that the law might be fulfilled by believers walking after the Spirit. The believer's obedience of the law, however, is not the righteousness of his justification. A believer is justified through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, Rom. iv, 11; v, 8; Phil. iii, 8.

The words "condemned sin in the flesh" seem to be included to emphasize the fact that in justifying the ungodly God does not ignore or overlook sin, but God takes into account the guilt of the sin of men.

4. Gal. iii, 10-14, particularly verse 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." If a person under the law breaks one commandment he is under the curse of the law. If a person under the law breaks many commandments he is equally under the curse of the law. The curse of the law is not the same thing as the condemnation of the law. The curse of the law does not relate to the guilt and relative demerit of particular sins, but is simply the declaration of the impossibility of a person's justification. Deut. xxi, 22, 23, says, "And if a

man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." A man came under the curse of the law by being hung on a tree, and he was under the curse all the while he remained on the tree. Hence, it was required that the body be removed as soon as possible. Hanging was not a sign that a person was already under the curse, but a man actually came under the curse by being hung. Hanging was a sign declaring a man's hopeless position. Thus the curse of the law that relates to this particular law of Moses is the declaration of the impossibility of a person's justification. Gal. iii, 13, tells us how we are redeemed from the curse of the law. We are redeemed from the curse of the law because Christ came under the curse of the law on our behalf. Now, by the law of Moses, Christ came under the curse of the law when he was hung on a tree. This happened in time before sin was imputed to Christ. Before Christ took our sin and bore the punishment of it he was justified in the sight of God. Thus there was a time when Christ was justified in the sight of God and at the same time under the curse of the law which declares the impossibility of a person's justification. In this manner a new legal position was created in which the law has no power to curse. Christ came under the curse of the law on behalf of all who would come under the new covenant in order that the law might have no power to curse them, making their justification possible even if they continue to fall into sin. If a person is redeemed from the curse of the law it does not mean that he is justified, but that his justification is possible. The word translated 'redeem' in Gal. iii, 13, means 'to redeem out' or 'to buy out.' This word

is used in Gal. iv, 5, and also in Eph. v, 16, and Col. iv, 5. In these last two references the word is used in the expression 'redeeming the time.' Thus the word is used with an emphasis on separation rather than payment. The result of Christ's hanging on a tree is given in verse 14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." This statement implies that the blessing of Abraham – that is, justification by faith, had already come on the Jews. Justification by faith was promised (though indirectly) to the Jews under the old covenant. Thus we say that the coming of the blessing on the Gentiles must be considered in the same way. In other words, Christ's hanging on a tree made it possible for the promise of justification by faith to be declared as it is in the new covenant. To be redeemed from the curse of the law is not to be justified, but to be separated from the law and its curse.

5. Gal. iv, 1-5, particularly verses 4 and 5, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Christ was born under the old covenant (in which the law was presented to man in a written form) and obeyed the law absolutely in order to redeem men (not only those under the old covenant) from the obligation to obey the law absolutely themselves as the grounds for communion with God. The verse does not mean that none under the old covenant were the children of God; but, it was not outwardly declared in the old covenant that believers were the sons of God: salvation was only indirectly promised. Verses 1 to 3 illustrate the point by saying that an heir may not be easily identified as such whilst he is a child at school subject to his tutors. However, the adoption of sons is clearly revealed in the new covenant, and believers can now be sure that they are the children of God.

6. Jas. i, 25, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

The law of liberty, as in Gal. v, 1, is the rule of the new covenant stated negatively: a man is not required to live entirely without sin to be justified. It relates to justification, and is not merely being free from old covenant ordinances. Jas. ii, 10, says that if a man commits one sin under the law he is guilty of the whole law. But, we are not under that law but under the law of liberty: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty," verse 12. Under the new covenant we are required to keep the law, Gal. v, 13, 14, but not as a means of justification. It is required that we "continue therein" by being a "doer of the work." The unsaved under the new covenant will receive judgment without mercy on the last day.

We conclude that the water of baptism is a symbol of separation from the law and curse of the law, and baptism is a sign that a person is under the new covenant and sanctified by the blood of the covenant. Zech. ix, 11, 12, says, "As for thee also, by the blood of the covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Outside the new covenant there is no hope of survival, but under the new covenant we must turn to Christ and rely entirely upon him for salvation. If we are under grace we must live day by day by grace that is in Christ.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

WE begin with four preliminary observations.

1. There is no statement or promise in the Bible specifically relating to the Lord's Supper to the effect that believers receive Christ in communion. The eating of bread at communion is certainly a representation of receiving Christ, but it does not follow that there is a promise of receiving Christ in the service, for the sign can simply mean that a person has already received Christ. Three passages of Scripture are sometimes cited to prove the contrary.

(i) John vi, 53 : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This is not a consideration of the communion service, but is simply a statement of the absolute necessity of regeneration. The man who has eternal life has received a new principle of life in his soul, which life is in Christ. And this life can be received because Christ died. The elements of communion do not represent life that is in Christ, but they are a figure of the death of Christ – the blood separated from the body.

The believer does not receive more eternal life by partaking of communion. Christ's death procured the forgiveness of sins, but sins are cleansed, not by the communion service, but as they are confessed.

(ii) I Cor. x, 16-21. Verse 16 says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the

communion of the body of Christ?" The word 'communion' means 'fellowship' and not 'to partake,' and is explained in the following verses. When believers partake of one loaf they declare their unity in Christ. Each communicant declares his faith that Christ offered up himself as a sacrifice to God on his behalf. Verse 16 does not mean that the believer partakes of the spiritual body and spiritual blood of Christ, for there is no such thing as the spiritual blood of Christ, and the spiritual body of Christ is his church.

(iii) I Cor. xi, 27-29. Verse 29 says, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." To discern the Lord's body means simply to understand the significance of Christ's death. In communion we present ourselves to God in the light of the cross, but in the cross is revealed God's righteous judgment of sin. Thus, if the unbeliever acknowledges God's justice without repentance, he is presenting himself before God as Judge, and is, as it were, looking for damnation.

There is, we believe, no promise in the Bible for the receiving of Christ in communion to which the believer can direct his faith. So also in the Old Testament, believers had no promise to look to for the receiving of Christ in the Passover. The effectual faith in communion is not the belief that we receive Christ in the communion service, but is that which the service fosters in the conscious mind by the Holy Spirit. This encouragement of faith results in a real growth in the knowledge of God. There is no secret spiritual blessing in communion. The receiving of Christ that is supposed to spring from the belief that Christ actually imparts himself spiritually through the act of communion is purely hypothetical.

2. The bread used in the communion service does not change in appearance, taste, or chemical composition. Thus,

instead of saying that the bread is changed into the body and soul of Christ, the Roman Catholic ought to say that the body and soul of Christ are changed into bread. The only way in which a substance can be changed and yet remain the same in appearance and chemical composition is for it to cease to exist and be replaced by another identical piece. Thus, if the Roman Catholic is to insist that the bread becomes Christ, he should say that the original bread is made to cease to exist, being replaced by another identical piece of bread which is made from the body of Christ. When Christ took bread in his hands and said, "This is my body," the disciples must have understood him to be speaking about the bread that he actually took into his hands, and not about another piece newly created out of himself; but when they observed no change in the appearance of the bread, and indeed it is still called bread after the giving of thanks, I Cor. xi, 27, the disciples must have concluded that Christ meant "This represents my body."

3. The communicant does not partake of the human body of Christ. Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," John vi, 63.

4. Baptism is the declaration of God that a person is under the new covenant and the subject is passive. In communion each individual believer actively declares that he is trusting in God for salvation. The communion service is not a declaration of God that men are saved: it is not God's seal of the salvation of men.

The Passover and the feast of unleavened bread of the old covenant correspond with the Lord's Supper of the new covenant. The seven days of unleavened bread were to remind the children of Israel of their first week out of Egypt and to show that redemption involves the whole of life. "And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day

in your generations by an ordinance for ever," Ex. xii, 17. Thus the feast of unleavened bread commemorated the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. So also the Lord's Supper commemorates the deliverance of the sinner from sin by the finished work of Christ—the sacrifice "once offered to bear the sin of many," Heb. ix, 28. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." In communion we "shew the Lord's death till he come," I Cor. xi, 26. The Lord's Supper is a corporate act of worship and thanksgiving of a number of believers commemorating the death of Christ and declaring their faith and unity in Christ. The death of Christ is shown because the bread and wine represent the separation of the body and blood of Christ. When the individual receives the bread and the wine he declares his faith in Christ. There are four main aspects of the service.

(i) The elements of communion present the central truth of the Christian gospel—the historical fact of the death of Christ—the blood which has sealed the new covenant in which salvation is revealed and directly promised. In the service we are reminded that all the blessings of salvation are in Christ, and that only the redeemed of the Lord can worship God aright. The cross of Christ reveals the holiness, justice, righteousness, love, and mercy of God, and a consideration of the character of God leads to a true worship of God. On the other hand the cross of Christ reveals the sinfulness of sin and God accepts the worship of a broken and contrite spirit.

(ii) The consideration by the believer of the blessings of salvation that he has received through the death of Christ naturally leads to thanksgiving.

(iii) In receiving the elements of communion a man is declaring that he is trusting in Christ for salvation. This should compel him to enquire whether or not he has been walking according to the rule of the covenant.

(iv) In communion believers declare their unity in Christ

— that is, in the church, the spiritual body of Christ. This should lead to prayer and concern one for another.

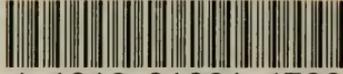
One reason for the giving of the sacraments is the weakness of the memory of man and the tendency of man in the flesh to forget the goodness of God. Baptism brings before the people the general principles of the rule and promises of the new covenant: communion presents the central truth of the gospel, and reminds us that redemption is the central theme of worship. Growth in grace and the knowledge of God is by faith. The object of faith is Christ. The highest exercise of faith is in prayer. The rule of faith is the Bible. Christian fellowship encourages faith. The sacraments promote the exercise of faith.







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