

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 7.-Of God's Covenant with Man.

V. This Covenant was differently administered in the time of the Law, and the time of the Gospel<sup>1</sup>; Under the Law, it was administered by Promises, Prophecies, Sacrifices, Circumcision, the Paschal Lamb, and other Types and Ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come<sup>2</sup>: which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the Elect in Faith in the Promised Messiah<sup>3</sup>, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternall Salvation: and is called, the Old Testament<sup>4</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Was the Covenant of Grace administered differently in the time of the Law and the time of the Gospel?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Cor. 3:6-9. As appears in these several aspects: 1.) They differ as to time, because the Old Testament preceded Christ and the New follows Him. The former referred to Christ to be manifested and to come, while the latter refers to Christ already manifested and exhibited. Hence, Christ pronounces the eyes of the apostles happy because they saw those things which the prophets and kings desired to see and yet did not see, Luke 10:23, 24. 2.) As to clearness and obscurity because in the New Testament the mysteries are set forth far more clearly, the veils and shadows of ceremonies and types being taken away, 2 Cor. 3:7, 18. The Old Testament was wholly symbolic and figurative, having only the shadow of things to come and not the very image of the things, Heb. 10:1. But the New Testament is plain and open, Tit. 2:11. 3.) As to easiness because administration and service was far more burdensome in the Old than in the New Testament. 4.) As to sweetness because in the Old Testament the law and its perfect obedience was more frequently urged (not to the exclusion of the Gospel promises, but still with this intention—that by that rigorous exaction of obedience, the people in infancy might be held under guardianship and compelled to seek Christ, Gal. 3:24, 25), while in the New, the Gospel promises are more frequent (still not to the exclusion of the law impelling to offer new Gospel obedience, 1 Cor. 9:21). Christ tells us that His burden is light, Matt. 11:30. Gospel obedience ought to be viewed not so much as a burden as it is the honour of the disciples of Christ, Gal. 6:14. So to the fulness of the gift of the Holy Spirit, who, although not denied to the fathers under the Old Testament, yet exercised His power more sparingly and less fully than now. As the revelation of the grace of God is greater and more extended now, so the Spirit ought to be communicated under the New Testament according to the prophecy of Joel, 2:28, whose fulfillment Peter claims on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:17, 18. 5.) As to perfection, for although the Old Testament had an essential perfection as to the substance (that being the same in both Testaments), still it did not have an accidental perfection as to degree.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 3:6-9.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 8, 9, 10 chapters. Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 5:7.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Heb. 11:13; John 8:56.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 3:7-9, 14.

The whole of that economy was typical and shadowy, Heb. 7:8-10. This was true of the sacrificial system, which was imperfect, Ps. 40:6, 7; and also of the worship in tabernacle and temple. Tabernacle and temple worship were shadowy and carnal compared to that predicated by Christ, and instituted by the apostles, John 4:23. It is no longer confined only to one place, but must be performed with "the Spirit" (without carnal types, Heb. 9:10) and "in truth" (without Mosaic shadows, Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). 6.) As to freedom, because under the Old Testament the spirit of bondage unto fear prevailed, Rom. 8:15. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. 3:17. 7.) As to amplitude because the Old Testament was restricted to one nation—and salvation was then only of the Jews, John 4:22; Ps. 147:19, 20. But the New extends to all indiscriminately, Acts 10:34, 35. Before the Gentiles were "afar off", but now the wall of separation is broken down, Eph. 2:12, 14. In Christ there is no more Jew or Gentile, Col. 3:11. 8.) As to duration because the Old was only temporary, Heb. 9:10; Jer. 31:31. But the New Testament is administered by Christ whose priesthood shall endure, Heb. 7:16. Hence, the Gospel is called everlasting, Rev. 14:6.

Question 2.—*Why did God will to dispense the single Covenant of Grace in different ways?*

*Answer.*—There are various wise reasons for this counsel. 1.) God's mode of acting seems to demand this. He does not accomplish great things together and at once (which however He might easily do), but successively and by various steps that thus his wisdom and power may be the more clearly perceived. So the Covenant of Grace (deservedly called the greatest of His works and of highest admiration) He willed to perfect and promulgate by degrees that the greatness and wisdom of God might unfold incrementally unto its full consummation. This the apostle teaches in Heb. 1:1; the term "sundry times" (*polytropos*) denotes the various modes of revelation under the Old Testament; the term "divers manners" (*polymeros*) denotes the various degrees by which He manifested Himself unto the fathers. 2.) The condition of the church demanded it. The church in her infancy required to be treated as an infant, Gal. 4:1, not having reached maturity. 3.) The dignity of the Messiah and excellence of His work. A conviction of the weakness of man ought to precede the necessity of grace and a more ardent desire for the Saviour. 4.) The nature of things, for since there must be prophecies before fulfillment; so too the difference in dispensations. The light of the promised Messiah increased incrementally throughout the Old Testament dispensation. Prophet added to prophet, and thus the light increased. From the beginning, Messiah was promised as the seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15; then the son of Abraham, Gen. 12:2; to spring from Judah, Gen. 49:10; from the family of David, 2 Sam. 7:13; born of a virgin, Isa. 7:14; born in Bethlehem, Mic. 5:2; the time of His appearance, Dan. 9:24-27; his twofold state of suffering and glory, Isa. 53; His forerunner, Mal. 3:1, *etc.*

Question 3.—*Did all these sacrifices and other types and ordinances, by which the covenant of grace was administered before our Saviour's incarnation, foreshadow, and foreshadow Christ to come?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Heb. 8, 9, 10; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 5:7. The apostle calls these legal sacrifices a shadow, Heb. 8:5; 10:1, and in Heb. 9:9, he calls them a figure; and in verse 24, he calls them "figures of the true;" and in Col. 2:17, he calls them a shadow of things to come—which is fulfilled in Christ.

Question 4.—*Was the administration of the Covenant under the Old Testament, sufficient for the time and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect, in the faith of the promised Messiah; by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 1 Cor. 10:1, 3, 4; Heb. 11:13; John 8:56. Because: 1.) There are promises extant in the Old Testament of life eternal, Isa. 45:17; Dan. 12:2. 2.) The fathers living under the Old Testament, believed and expected life eternal, Job 19:25, 26; Ps. 17:15; Heb. 11:9, 10. 3.) Some at that time were put in actual possession of it, as Enoch, Heb. 11:5, and Elijah, 2 Kings 2:11. 4.) The Scriptures of the Old Testament point forth the way of eternal life, as Christ witnesses, John 5:39; and Paul, 2 Tim. 3:15. 5.) Believers under the Old Testament were most happy, Ps. 144:15. 6.) The temporal good things of the Old Testament were to them pledges of spiritual good things, and life eternal, Heb. 11:8, 9.