

CHAPTER 6

THIS GRACE, BY COVENANT, IS FREE AND UNCHANGEABLE

Now we are to proceed, and the things that we are to treat upon in the second place are these

1. [Besides the reasons already given.] Why is it a free and unchangeable grace?
 2. Who they are that are actually brought into His free and unchangeable Covenant of Grace, and how they are brought in?
 3. What are the privileges of those that are actually brought into this free and glorious grace of the glorious God of Heaven and glory?
1. For the FIRST, Why it is a free and unchangeable grace. And for the opening of this we must consider, first, How and through Whom this grace doth come to be, first, free to us, and, secondly, unchangeable.

This grace is free to us through conditions in Another — that is, by way of covenant or bargain; for this grace comes by way of covenant or bargain to us, yet made with Another for us.

First. That it comes by way of covenant, contract, or bargain, though not personally with us, be pleased to consider these Scriptures, where it is said, “I have made a covenant with My Chosen: I have sworn unto David [The word David in this place signifieth Christ, as also in these Scriptures — (³³⁴²Ezekiel 34:23, 24; ³³⁷²Ezekiel 37:24, 25).] My servant” (³³⁰⁰Psalms 89:3). “And as for Thee also, by the blood of Thy covenant,” speaking of Christ,

“I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water,” (³³⁰⁰Zechariah 9:9-11).

Again;

“Ye have sold yourselves for nought;
and ye shall be redeemed without money” (^{253B}Isaiah 52:3).

“Blessed be the Lord,” therefore, saith Zacharias, “for He hath visited and” also “redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant,” or bargain (^{216B}Luke 1:68-72). [I might give you more Scriptures; but pray consider the second thing.] And if any should be offended with the plainness of these words, as some poor souls may be through ignorance, let them be pleased to read soberly ^{230B}Isaiah 49:1-12, and there they may see that it runs as plain a bargain as if two would be making of a bargain between themselves, and concluding upon several conditions on both sides. But more of this hereafter. Now,

Second. This covenant, I say, was made with One, not with many, and also confirmed in the conditions of it with One, not with several.

1. that the covenant was made with One (^{281B}Galatians 3:16).

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ”

(^{281B}Galatians 3:17).

“And this, I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God, in Christ,” etc.

The covenant was made with the Seed of Abraham; not the seeds, but the Seed, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head and Undertaker in the things concerning the covenant.

2. The condition was made with One, and also accomplished by Him alone, and not by several; yet in the nature, and for the everlasting deliverance of many; even by one man Jesus Christ, as it is clear from ^{281B}Romans 5:15-17, etc., and in ^{280B}Zechariah 9:11, the Lord saith to Christ, “And as for Thee” — mark, “As for Thee also, by the blood of Thy covenant,” or as for Thee whose covenant was by blood; that is,

the condition of the covenant was, that Thou shouldst spill Thy blood; which having been done in the account of God, saith He, I according to My condition have let go the prisoners, or sent them “out of the pit wherein is no water.” Those Scriptures in ^{<4816>}Galatians 3:16, 17 that are above cited, are notably to our purpose; ^{<4816>}Galatians 3:16 saith it was made with Christ, ^{<4817>}Galatians 3:17 saith it was also confirmed in or with God in Him. Pray read with understanding. “Now,” saith Paul, “the promises were not made unto seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ.”... “The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Not that the covenant was made with Abraham and Christ together, as two persons that were the undertakers of the same; the promise was made with, or to, Abraham afterwards; but the covenant with Christ before.

Further, that the covenant was not personally made with Abraham, no, nor with any of the fathers, neither so as that they were the persons that should stand engaged to be the accomplishers thereof, either in whole or in part; which is very clear.

1. Because this covenant was not made with God and the creature; not with another poor Adam, that only stood upon the strength of natural abilities; but this covenant was made with the second Person, with the Eternal Word of God; with Him that was everyways as holy, as pure, as infinite, as powerful, and as everlasting as God (^{<3082>}Proverbs 8:22-31; ^{<2006>}Isaiah 9:6; ^{<3830>}Zechariah 13:7; ^{<3076>}Philippians 2:6; ^{<8008>}Hebrews 1; ^{<6011>}Revelation 1:11-17; ^{<6219>}Revelation 22:13, 17).

2. This covenant or bargain was made in deed and in truth before man was in being. O! God thought of the salvation of man before there was any transgression of man; for then, I say, and not since then, was the Covenant of Grace made with the Undertaker thereof; for all the other sayings are to show unto us that glorious plot and contrivance that was concluded on before time between the Father and the Son, which may very well be concluded on for a truth from the Word of God, if you consider,

1. That the Scripture doth declare that the price was agreed on by the Son before time;

2. The promise was made to Him by the Father that He should have His bargain before time;
3. The choice, and who they were that should be saved was made before time, even before the world began.

For the first, That the price was agreed upon before the world began. Consider the word which speaketh of the price that was paid for sinners, even the precious blood of Christ; it saith of Him, “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe,” etc. (⁴⁰⁰1 Peter 1:20, 21). Mark, it was foreordained or concluded on between the Father and the Son before the world began.

2. The promise from God to the Son was also made in the same manner, as it is clear where the Apostle saith with comfort to his soul, that he had

“hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began,” (³⁰⁰Titus 1:2)

which could be to none but the Mediator of the new covenant, because there was none else to whom it should be made but he.

3. The choice was also made then, even before man had a being in this world, as it is evident where he saith, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 1:3, 4). [Did I think this would meet with any opposition, I should be in this more large.] Nay, did I look upon it here to be necessary, I should show you very largely and clearly that God did not only make the covenant with Christ before the world began, and the conditions thereof, but I could also show you that the very saints’ qualifications, as part of the covenant, was then concluded on by the Father and the Son according to these Scriptures, which, it may be, I may touch upon further anon (⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 1:3, 4; ⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 2:10; ⁴⁰⁰Romans 8:28). But,

Third. This covenant was not made with any of the fathers, neither in whole nor in part, as the undertakers thereof; for then it must be also

concluded that they are co-partners with Christ in our salvation, and so that Christ is not Mediator alone; but this would be blasphemy for any once to surmise. And therefore, by the way, when thou readest of the new covenant in Scripture as though it was made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, or David, thou art to consider thus with thyself —

1. That God spake to them in such a way for to show or signify unto us how He did make the covenant that He did make with Christ before the world began, they being types of Him.
2. That He thereby might let them understand that He was the same then as He is now, and now as He was then; and that then it was resolved on between His Son and HIM, that in after ages His Son should in their natures, from their loins, and for their sins, be born of a woman, hanged on the Cross, etc., for them: for all along you may see that when He speaketh to them of the new covenant, He mentions their seed — their seed — still aiming at Christ; Christ, the Seed of the woman, was to break the serpent's head (^{<ORIS>}Genesis 3:15; ^{<OTOR>}Genesis 17; ^{<IBRS>}Psalm 89:36). Now to Abraham and his Seed was the promise made; his Seed shall endure for ever, and His throne as the days of Heaven, etc.; still pointing at Christ. And,
3. To stir up their faith and expectations to be constant unto the end in waiting for that which He and His Son had concluded on before time, and what He had since the conclusion declared unto the world by the Prophets.
4. It appeareth that the heart of God was much delighted therein also, as is evident, in that He was always in every age declaring of that unto them which before He had prepared for them. O this good God of Heaven!

Objection: But you will say, perhaps, the Scriptures say plainly that the new covenant was and is made with believers, saying,

“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 when I led them out of the land of Egypt,” etc. (^{<SBRS>}Hebrews 8:8-10).

So that it doth not run with Christ alone, but with believers also — I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah, etc. (²⁴¹³Jeremiah 31:33).

Answer

1. It cannot be meant that the new covenant was made with Christ, and the house of Israel and Judah as the undertakers thereof; for so it was made with Christ alone, which is clear, in that it was made long before the house of Israel and Judah had a being, as I showed before. But,

Answer

2. These words here are spoken, first, to show rather the end of the ceremonies than the beginning or rise of the new covenant. Mind a little; the Apostle is laboring to beat the Jews, to whom he wrote this Epistle, off of the ceremonies of the law, of the priests, altar, offerings, temple, etc., and to bring them to the right understanding of the thing and things that they held forth, which were to come, and to put an end to those. If you do but understand the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is a discourse that showeth that the Son of God being come, there is an end put to the ceremonies; for they were to continue so long and no longer — “It,” saith the Apostle, “stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation;” that is, until Christ did come. “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come,” etc., puts an end to the things and ordinances of the Levitical priesthood. Read ⁸⁰⁰Hebrews 7, ⁸⁰⁰Hebrews 8, ⁸⁰⁰Hebrews 9, and ⁸⁰⁰Hebrews 10, and you will find this true. So, then, when He saith, “The days come in which I make a new covenant,” it is rather to be meant a changing of the administration, taking away the type, the shadow, the ceremonies from the house of Israel and Judah, and relieving by the birth of Christ, and the death of Christ, and the offering of the body of Him whom the shadows and types did point out to be indeed He whom God the Father had given for a ransom by covenant for the souls of the saints; and also to manifest the truth of that covenant which was made between the Father and the Son before the world began; for though the new covenant was made before the world began, and also every one in all ages was saved by the virtue of that covenant, yet that covenant was

never so clearly made manifest as at the coming, death, and resurrection of Christ; and therefore, saith the Scripture, “He hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling” not according to” the “works” of righteousness which we have done, “but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” there is the covenant, but it was “made MANIFEST by the APPEARING of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to LIGHT through the Gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9, 10). Therefore, I say, these words are therefore to discover that the time was come to change the dispensation, to take away the type, and bring in the substance, and so manifesting that more clearly which before lay hid in dark sayings and figures. And this is usual with God to speak in this manner.

Again; if at any time you do find in Scripture that the Covenant of Works is spoken of as the first covenant that was manifested, and so before the second covenant, yet you must understand that it was so only as to manifestation — that is, it was first given to man, yet not made before that which was made with Christ; and indeed it was requisite that it should be given or made known first, that thereby there might be a way made for the second, by its discovering of sin, and the sad state that man was in after the Fall by reason of that. And again, that the other might be made the more welcome to the sons of men. Yet the second Adam was before the first, and also the second covenant before the first. This is a riddle]. And in this did Christ in time most gloriously answer Adam, who was the figure of Christ, as well as of other things. Romans 5. For, Was the first covenant made with the first Adam? so was the second covenant made with the second; for these are and were the two great public persons, or representators of the whole world, as to the first and second covenants; and therefore you find God speaking on this wise in Scripture concerning the new covenant — “My covenant shall stand fast with HIM.” “My mercy will I keep for HIM for evermore,” saith God: “My covenant shall stand fast with HIM” (Psalm 89:28, 34, 35); this HIM is Christ, if you compare this with Luke 1:32, “My covenant will I not break” — namely, that which was made with HIM — “nor alter the thing that is gone out of My mouth. Once I have sworn by My holiness that I will not lie

unto David,” [David here is to be understood Christ.] to whom this was spoken figuratively in the Person of Christ; for that was God’s usual way to speak of the glorious things of the Gospel in the time of the Law, as I said before.

Secondly, The conditions also were concluded on and agreed to be fulfilled by Him: as it is clear, if you understand His saying in ⁽⁴¹²⁾John 12:27, where He foretelleth His death, and saith, “Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I” into the world “unto this hour;” as if He had said, My business is now not to shrink from My sufferings that are coming upon Me; for these are the things that are a great part of the conditions contracted in the covenant which stands between My Father and Me; therefore I shall not pray that this might be absolutely removed from Me; For, “for this cause came I” into the world; even this was the very terms of the covenant. By this you may see, “we are under grace.”

Now in a covenant there are these three things to be considered — First. What it is that is covenanted for. Second. The conditions upon which the persons who are concerned in it do agree. Third. If the conditions on both sides be not according to the agreement fulfilled, then the covenant standeth not, but is made void. And this new covenant in these particulars is very exactly fulfilled and made out in Christ.

First. The thing or things covenanted for was the salvation of man, but made good in Christ — “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. I gave My life a ransom for many. And this is the will,” or covenant, “of Him that sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (⁽⁴¹³⁾John 6:39).

2. As touching the conditions agreed on, they ran thus:

First. On the Mediator’s side, that He should come into the world; and then on the Father’s side, that He should give Him a body. This was one of the glorious conditions between the Father and Christ; “Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not” — that is, the old covenant must not stand, but give way to

another sacrifice which Thou hast prepared, which is the giving up My Manhood to the strokes of Thy justice — “for a body Thou hast prepared Me” (^{300P}Hebrews 10:5). This doth prove us under grace.

Secondly. On the Mediator’s side, that He should be put to death; and on God the Father’s side, that He should raise Him up again; this was concluded on also to be done between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. On Christ’s side, that He should die to give the justice of His Father satisfaction, and so to take away the curse that was due to us, wretched sinners, by reason of our transgressions; and that God His Father, being every ways fully and completely satisfied, should by His mighty power revive and raise Him up again. He hath “brought again — our Lord Jesus;” that is, from death to life, through the virtue or effectual satisfaction that He received from the blood that was shed according to the terms “of the Everlasting Covenant” (^{300P}Hebrews 13:20).

Thirdly. On the Mediator’s side, that He should be made a curse; and on the Father’s side, that through Him sinners should be inheritors of the blessing. What wonderful love doth there appear by this in the heart of our Lord Jesus, in suffering such things for our poor bodies and souls? (^{300P}Galatians 3:13, 14). This is grace.

Fourthly. That on the Mediator’s side there should be by Him a victory over Hell, death, and the devil, and the curse of the Law; and on the Father’s side, that these should be communicated to sinners, and they set at liberty thereby —

“Turn you to the stronghold,” saith God, “ye prisoners of hope;
even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee”
(^{300P}Zechariah 9:12).

Why so? It is because of the blood of My Son’s covenant (^{300P}Zechariah 9:11); which made Paul, though sensible of a body of death, and of the sting that death did strike into the souls of all those that are found in their sins, bold to say, “O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin.” That is true, and the terrible Law of God doth aggravate and set it home with insupportable torment and pain. But shall I be daunted at this? No, “I thank my God through Jesus Christ He hath given me this victory.” So that now, though I be a sinner in

myself, yet I can, by believing in Jesus Christ, the Mediator of this new covenant, triumph over the devil, sin, death, and Hell; and say, Do not fear, my soul, seeing the victory is obtained over all my enemies through my Lord Jesus Christ (^{<4155>}1 Corinthians 15:55-57). This is the way to prove ourselves under grace.

Fifthly. That on the Mediator's side He should by thus doing bring in everlasting righteousness for saints (^{<2024>}Daniel 9:24); and that the Father for this should give them an everlasting kingdom (^{<4008>}1 Peter 1:3-5; ^{<4004>}Ephesians 1:4; ^{<5048>}2 Timothy 4:18; ^{<4228>}Luke 22:28, 29).