

But let us consider a little more attentively, in the first place, this "covenant" to which the Psalmist prays God so earnestly to have respect,—and it is stated in very plain language, at the 8th verse of the 2nd Psalm. "Ask of Me," says God there to His son, "and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." This promise of God is the covenant—which His Son has made it, by His asking it with so much earnestness, as the shedding of His own blood could make it. It was mercy, pity, and love to His new fallen and helpless human creatures which influenced the Almighty to make the promise—and it was also mercy, pity, and love to us, which influenced the only eternal Son of God to ratify this promise into the form of a covenant, in the way He did. He has now, in consequence, a seed of faithful ones to serve Him on the earth, and who look to Him as their only Saviour:—he now, by the conditions of this covenant, can call; and is calling, "His sons from afar, and His daughters from the ends of the earth."—"Look unto Me, all ye ends of the earth," says He, "and be ye saved."—How wise, then, in every human being, who is acquainted with these gracious words, to do so, seeing there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved, but that of Jesus Christ alone. To the covenant of grace, thus sealed and made eternally firm and sure, we look with unwavering assurance—and on Him, who has made it savingly effective to us, we place all our confidence for salvation,—in Jesus Christ and His finished work we have all our trust for this—and in virtue of the same we look, through faith, for our heavenly inheritance.

But let us consider why the Psalmist prays God to have respect to His covenant. Are we—from the way he thus expresses himself—to understand that the Almighty has not respect unto it,—that God is grown careless, if I may so speak, about it? Such an idea could not find place for a single instant in the mind of any enlightened christian, so as to become a standing article in his belief:—but in this mode of expression we rather see the earnestness of the desire of the pious Psalmist's heart—that God would execute speedily what He had promised to do in His covenant for the dark places of the earth. This mode of expression is somewhat akin to what is recorded at the 14th v. of the 49th Chap. of Isaiah, "But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me." Yet the words of the Lord, in answer to this desponding spirit, in the two verses immediately following, are—"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands: thy walls are continually before Me." It is thus an utter impossibility for God to forsake His people, or forget those who put their trust in Him, after having made this promise; for heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word of His shall ever fail in being fully accomplished.

This is matter of abundant thankfulness to us; and although the impatience or weakness of man may sometimes wish for a more speedy fulfilment of God's promises, yet the Almighty himself very often delays their accomplishment for wise and gracious ends. By this mode of procedure does He strengthen the sovereign grace of faith in our heart, and teacheth us, how strong or weak our faith in Him and His promises is—and which we could never learn were He to perform quickly all His promises to us, as which we might be pleased to petition Him in certain cases to do. It is also of the nature of true faith, that it cannot be strengthened, unless it has some object placed against it to overcome, and this seeming unwillingness of God to grant us a speedy reply to our desires, to lend a deaf ear to our petitions, for long, is one of the common ways that He takes to strengthen it.

Like the fence over which the child would climb, that he may gather some lovely flowers, which he perceives through the bars to be growing in the field