

## 1. The Promise of the Spiritual Covenant

The Greeks had two words for "covenant," namely (1) *synthēkē*, used to designate a solemn compact between equals, and (2) *diathēkē*, used to denote an arrangement made by a superior for acceptance and observance by an inferior. Hence God's covenants are designated in Greek by *diathēkē*. The word *synthēkē* does not even occur in the New Testament, but *diathēkē* occurs some thirty-three times.

Three factors are implied in any covenant: (1) the covenanter, (2) the covenantee, and (3) the terms or stipulations. In God's covenants with man, God the Covenanter overtures, states the benefits, and lays down the terms; man the covenantee accepts the terms and enjoys the benefits and blessings.

The Bible is the record of two great Covenants between God and man, known respectively at the Old and New Covenants. These Covenants as they exist in Scripture in permanent written (stereotyped) form are designated Testaments. Hence, as everyone knows, the Bible is made up of two great divisions, known respectively as the Old and New Testaments.

A testament is a *will*. The Bible is, therefore, the revelation (1) of the Will of God, through the Logos, respecting the fleshly seed of Abraham or fleshly Israel—the Old Testament; and (2) the Will of God, through the Logos-Messiah, respecting the spiritual seed of Abraham or spiritual Israel—the New Testament.

When God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, He said to him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). The same promise, known as the Abrahamic Promise, was repeated subsequently to Abraham (and later to Isaac, and to Jacob) at different times and variously amplified (cf. Gen. 13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-27, 22:15-19, 26:2-5, 28:13-15, etc.) From these Scriptures, it is evident that the Abrahamic Promise as a whole embraced four distinct elementary promises, as follows: (1) that Abraham

should have a numerous progeny (Gen. 13:16, 15:3-5, 17:2-4, 22:17); (2) that Jehovah would be a God to him and to his seed after him (Gen. 17:1-8); (3) that He would give to Abraham, and to his seed after him, the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18-21, 17:8); and (4) that through Abraham and his seed He would bless all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:3, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). All these were elements of one and the same general promise made to Abraham and his seed (cf. Acts 2:39, 13:23, 13:32, 26:6; Rom. 4:14-17; Gal. 3:18, 22, 29, etc.).

Now the Scriptures make it clear that the Abrahamic Promise, in each of its parts, had a double reference: on the one hand, carnal, temporal and typical; on the other, spiritual, eternal, and antitypical. The first element, for example, was a pledge to Abraham that he should have a numerous progeny, first, according to the flesh, secondly, according to the Spirit (Gal. 3:29); the second, that God would be a God to both of these progenies, that is, both to fleshly Israel and to spiritual Israel; the third, that each should become heir to an inheritance,—earthly Canaan and heavenly Canaan, respectively; and the fourth, that through each of them the nations of the earth should be blessed, that is, in the Person and Work of the Messiah, who should be brought into the world through the instrumentality of fleshly Israel, and exalted to the dual office of Kingship and High Priesthood of spiritual Israel (Gal. 3:16, Acts 2:36). Now some four or five centuries after this twofold Promise was communicated to Abraham (cf. Heb. 11:13-16), the fleshly or typical side of it was fully developed under Moses in the Old or Sianitic Covenant, with its laws, ordinances, rites, priesthood, new moons and sabbaths, solemn fasts and feasts, etc. (cf. Gal. 3:17; cf. Acts 7:6, Exo. 12:40-41, Gen. 15:13, 16). And for several centuries thereafter the spiritual and antitypical side of the Promise remained concealed behind the fleshly or typical side. As we have already seen, God, by inspiration of the Spirit, established under the Old Covenant a system of types, metaphors and prophecies designed to positively identify the Messiah at His advent, and to confirm as well all the salient features of the Christian System as a whole. Thus matters stood until the Messiah appeared in the world, "born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that

we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5); and, having performed His redemptive work on earth, was raised up from the dead and exalted to His position of universal sovereignty. But the New Institution could not very well have been inaugurated while the Old was still standing. Hence, Christ by His death on the Cross fulfilled and abrogated the Old Covenant, and at the same time by the shedding of His precious blood, ratified the New (Col. 2:13-15, Heb. 9:11-28). Henceforth the Old Covenant was no longer binding on anyone as a *religious* Institution. God, however, graciously permitted it to continue as a *social* and *civil* Institution for some forty years longer; that is, until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans A.D. 70.

Perhaps the most fundamental element of the Old Covenant was the covenant of circumcision; in relation to the Covenant as a whole, this was a sort of wheel within a wheel; a subordinate, but essential, provision in the general arrangement which God had made originally with Abraham. The Divine provisions with respect to circumcision, as first given to Abraham and continued in the enlarged national Mosaic Covenant, were as follows (Gen. 17:9-14; cf. John 7:22, Lev. 12:3): (1) that every male child of Abraham's seed should be circumcised; (2) that the rite should be performed on the eighth day after its birth; (3) that this fleshly token should be a sign and seal of the Covenant between God and the fleshly seed of Abraham; (4) that all servants purchased with money, either by Abraham or by his seed after him, should be circumcised in like manner; (5) that this should be an everlasting covenant, that is, that, like the Levitical Priesthood, it should continue as long as the general Covenant of which it was a part should remain in force; (6) that, as the penalty for the neglect or violation of the rite of circumcision, the violator should be "cut off from his people." (Undoubtedly this phrase meant at least that the violator should be deprived of all the privileges and blessings of the Old Covenant in general; many commentators, however, think that it had reference to the death penalty. For the more serious violations of the Mosaic Law, and for violations of the Ten Commandments especially, the death penalty was usually imposed.) Thus it will be seen that *fleshly birth* was the unfailing prerequisite of inclusion under the Old Covenant. Israelites (Jews)

## THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

were members of the Covenant in virtue of having descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, according to the flesh. The circumcision of males (in their capacity of future *paterfamiliae*) on the eighth day was the sign and seal of Covenant membership. This was a sign *in their flesh*, and fully indicates the *fleshly* character of the Old Covenant as a whole. Gen. 17:13—"He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." This provision embraced two classes: (1) *infants* born of Israelite parentage, who were circumcised on the eighth day after birth; and (2) *foreign slaves*, who were forced to submit to circumcision on entering an Israelite household. Naturally, both classes—hence all members of the Covenant—had to be taught to know Jehovah, *after* their induction into the Covenant; they were first inducted by the prescribed fleshly rite, and *then* taught the principles and familiarize with the laws and institutions of Judaism. This is important: herein, as we shall see later, lay the most fundamental distinction between the Old Covenant and the New.

Let us now turn to Jeremiah, chapter 31, verses 31-34. Here we have the promise of the new and spiritual Covenant in language so simple that a child can understand it:

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah 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 a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

It should be noted, in the first place, that this promised Covenant was to be a *new* Covenant: this fact is made explicit. The Old Covenant, first made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was subsequently *enlarged* into a national Covenant under Moses at Sinai. In essence it remained the same, in that it embodied the elements of the Abrahamic Promise and the fleshly seal of circumcision; only, because of the transgressions of the people, was the Law added to the Promise, until the

Seed (i.e., Christ) should come to whom the Promise was made (Gal. 3:19, 16; cf. Exo. 34:27-28). However, this Covenant promised by God through Jeremiah was definitely *not* to be merely an enlargement, much less a universalization, of the Old Mosaic Covenant: it was to be a *new* Covenant, and one established upon better promises. Cf. Heb. 8:6—"But now hath he [Christ] obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises." Heb. 9:15—"For this cause He [Christ] is the mediator of a *new* covenant." Heb. 12:24—"to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant." 2 Cor. 3:6—"our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant." Heb. 7:22—"by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant." Cf. the words of Jesus, Luke 22:20—"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." Heb. 8:8-13: here the inspired writer, after quoting verbatim Jer. 31:31-34, concludes by saying: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away" (evidently the Epistle to the Hebrews was written prior to the Fall of Jerusalem). Nor was this New Covenant merely a *grafting* upon the Old: Paul states explicitly that Christ our Peace broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, "having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, *that he might create in himself of the two, one new man*, so making peace," etc. (Eph. 2:14-15). The Mystic Person—Christ the Head, the Church the Body—is *one new man*: in Him, there "can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

It will be noted, in the second place, that this New Covenant was to be a Covenant of *faith*, hence a Covenant of the Spirit: the Old Covenant fleshly basis of membership was to be set aside altogether. The Old Covenant included, as we have seen, infants and foreign-born slaves, all of whom had to be taught to know Jehovah *after* they had been inducted into the Covenant by fleshly circumcision. But it shall not be so under the New Covenant, said Jehovah through Jeremiah: in that Covenant "they shall teach no more every man his

neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." *Why* shall they all know God under the New Covenant? Let Him answer the question: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart I will write it." That is to say: Under the New Covenant, My law shall no longer be the law of a carnal ordinance impressed upon their flesh by the circumcision of their foreskins, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2) impressed upon their minds and hearts by the preaching and acceptance of the facts, commands and promises of the Gospel; hence, under the New Covenant they shall no longer have to be taught to know Me *after* their induction into the Covenant, as under the Old; for their knowing Me as I shall have revealed Myself in my Son Jesus Christ—the effulgence of My glory, and the very image of My substance—shall be the essential condition of their membership in the New Covenant; in a word, they shall have to know Me in order to enter the Covenant. The New Covenant is the Covenant of Faith; and obedient faith in Christ is the essential prerequisite of induction into that Covenant. Cf. Heb. 11:6—"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." John 14:1—"Ye believe in God; believe also in me" (the words of Jesus). John 17:3, again the words of Jesus: "This is life eternal: that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Rom. 10:9, 10—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 5:1—"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 2:8—"By grace have ye been saved through faith."

This faith in Christ, however, which is the ground of membership in the New Covenant, and which is, on the human side, the active principle of both regeneration and sanctification, is begotten and nurtured in the human heart *by the agency of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word.*

[1 Cor. 4:15]: in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel. [1 Pet. 1:23]: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. [Jas. 1:21]: receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. [Rom. 10:17]: belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. [Col. 3:16]: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. [1 Cor. 1:21]: It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe [Rom. 1:16]: For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth [Faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ, the message of the Gospel, as revealed by the Spirit; the power of the Spirit is embodied in this message of the Gospel, and is exerted upon the minds and hearts of men through it; hence, where there is no preaching of the Gospel, there is no faith, no conversion to Christ, no operation of the Spirit.] [Hence wrote Paul to the Christians at Corinth]: Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, *written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh* [2 Cor. 3:2-3]. The fleshly tables of the human heart—the very source of life itself—are that which receives and holds the message of the Spirit, the Word of the Gospel; as a matter of fact only the tables (or tablets) of the human heart could receive such a spiritual message. [Also] No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit [1 Cor. 12:3]. [John 6:63]: It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. [Thus it will be seen that the New Covenant is the Covenant of the Spirit. It was ratified, of course, by the blood of Christ, but its blessings are realized in the human heart and life by the agency of the Holy Spirit.]

Should anyone entertain any doubt whatever as to the spiritual nature of the New Covenant, all he needs to do is to study the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, as recorded in the third chapter of John's Gospel, especially verses 1-10. "Now there was a man of the Pharisees," we read here, "named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him [Jesus] by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now the first question that arises here is this: What connection is there between what Nicodemus said to Jesus, and what Jesus said in reply? Obviously, there is no logical connection whatever. Hence, we can only conclude that Jesus did not reply to what Nicodemus said, but to what was in Nicodemus' mind. In a word, Jesus saw clearly what Nicodemus, like all good Jews, had it in mind to claim citizenship in the Messiah's

Kingdom on the ground of his lineal or fleshly descent from Abraham. From time immemorial, the members of the Old Covenant had enjoyed membership therein on the basis of their having been born of Jewish parents and circumcised on the eighth day after birth. And no thought had ever entered the mind of any orthodox Jew that this Old Covenant fleshly basis of membership would be changed in the Kingdom of the Messiah. Nicodemus was thinking: "Your signs, Jesus, prove you to be a Teacher come from God. If you are the Messiah whom we Jews have been expecting for many long centuries, then you will surely grant us citizenship in your Kingdom as soon as it is established, simply because we are the fleshly seed of Abraham." "Not so," replied Jesus in substance, "you must be born again to get into my Kingdom. Being a Jew is of no consequence, fleshly circumcision will avail you nothing, under my Reign. We no longer have any confidence in the flesh or in a fleshly relation to Abraham. Away, then, with your genealogical tables and your controversies regarding them; henceforth they are valueless. It matters no longer whose children you are, whether the blood of Abraham, Isaac or Ishmael, Jacob of Esau, flows in your veins. It matters no longer whether you are Jew or Gentile, of this nation or that. You must be born again. You must become new creatures morally and spiritually. The question is no longer whether you have the blood of Abraham in your veins, but whether you have the faith of Abraham in your heart." No wonder that Nicodemus failed to understand: he was thinking only of fleshly or natural birth; hence, he explained: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus then undertook to explain what He meant by being "born anew": it was, He said, to be "born of water and the Spirit." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To this He added the significant statement: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew." To be "born anew" is to be born of the Will of God through the acceptance of the Word, as revealed by the Spirit, into the human heart. John 1:11-13: "He [the Logos] came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him,



to them gave he the right to become children of God; even to them that believe on his name: *who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" Regeneration, in Scripture, is attributed to God as the *Source* (1 Pet. 1:3, John 1:13, Jas. 1:18); to the Spirit as the *Agent* (John 3:5, 6:63); to the Word as the *means* (1 Pet. 1:23, Jas. 1:21); to the preacher as the *instrument* (1 Cor. 4:15, Philem. 10); and to the water as the *element*, out of which the birth takes place (John 3:5). Now the only place where the alien sinner comes in contact with water, in the process of becoming converted to Christ, is in Christian baptism; hence baptism is called "the washing of regeneration" (Tit. 3:5); hence also the whole Church is said to have been "cleansed by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26). It is significant that in every case of conversion recorded in the book of Acts, specific mention is made of the fact that the process of conversion was consummated in baptism. First, there is the Divine begetting as a result of the sowing of spiritual seed ("the seed is the word of God," Luke 8:11) in an honest and good heart. In this manner alone can *faith in Christ* be generated. 1 John 5:1—"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God." 1 John 5:12—"He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." Gal. 4:19—"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you." Col. 1:27—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Following the begetting, the person thus begotten must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); this is the birth. And because the Holy Spirit is the Agent of the Godhead on earth throughout the present Dispensation, the entire process is designated a birth of the Spirit. The New Covenant is the Covenant of the Spirit.

Moreover, fleshly circumcision characteristic of the Old Covenant is superseded under the New Covenant by *spiritual circumcision*. Rom. 2:28, 29—"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Phil. 3:3—"For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The antitype

of fleshly circumcision is not baptism. This erroneous view is frequently put forward to justify the "baptism" of infants. It is argued that as infants were inducted into the Old Covenant by circumcision, so infants are inducted into the New Covenant by baptism, baptism having taken the place of circumcision. Obviously, those who put forward this argument, in order to be consistent should "baptize" only male infants. But the Scriptures do not teach that baptism is the antitype of fleshly circumcision. Nor do they teach that baptism is spiritual circumcision. According to Scripture, spiritual circumcision is the cutting off of the body of sin from the soul, and the sealing of the latter by the Holy Spirit. And spiritual circumcision is wrought by the Holy Spirit in connection with the baptism of every true believer. The Holy Spirit Himself enters the heart of the Christian at his baptism and dwells therein both as the seal of his circumcision and as the earnest or pledge that in due time, if he fail not, he shall enter into full enjoyment of his eternal inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled. Col. 2:9-12: "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power: *in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*" That is to say, circumcision of the spirit is wrought by the Spirit Himself, when the penitent believer is baptized into Christ. Acts 2:38—"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Gal. 3:27—"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Rom. 6:1-7: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;

knowing this, *that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin*; for he that hath died is justified from sin." Eph. 1:13, 14—"Christ, in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory." Thus it will be seen that the circumcision of the New Covenant is spiritual circumcision, which is effected by the Holy Spirit Himself, who, by entering the obedient believer's heart cuts off the body of the guilt of his sins (Acts 2:38, Gal. 3:2).

Again, this New Covenant, we are told, *is established upon better promises*. Under the New Covenant, said God through Jeremiah, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." *Under the Old Covenant there was no actual remission of sins, because as yet the Atonement for sin had not been provided*. There was instead a remembrance of sins from year to year, when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, on each annual Day of Atonement, and sprinkled the blood of animal sacrifice upon the Mercy Seat, "blood which he offered for himself and for the errors of his people" (Heb. 9:7). "For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. . . . But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4). All sacrifices under the Old Covenant were only substitutionary and typical. And the burden of the sins of the people simply continued to pile up from year to year, until Christ came, "born of a woman, born under the law, *that he might redeem them that were under the law*" (Gal. 4:4-5). Heb. 9:15—"For this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." That is to say, Christ's death was just as necessary to the redemption of the transgressions which were committed under the Old Covenant as

to the redemption of those which are committed under the New. Christ had to die before the "called" of any age or nation could have an absolute right to the free and full enjoyment of their eternal inheritance. By the very ceremonial and typical character of Old Testament worship, the Holy Spirit signified "that the way into the holy place had not yet been made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb. 9:8). *There was no remission of sins under the Old Covenant*; under the New, however, God forgives our iniquities and our sins He remembers no more. Again, *there was no clear promise of immortality and eternal life under the Old Covenant*. True, there were hopes, insinuations, aspirations: Abraham, for example, "looked for a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11:16), and Moses "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" and "looked unto the recompense of reward" (Heb. 11:26, 27). But one will search in vain throughout the Old Testament Scriptures for a definite answer to Job's great question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). As a matter of fact, Job's question was never answered until Jesus answered it, by affirming: "I am the resurrection, and the life . . . whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25-26); and then, subsequently, answered it once for all by His own resurrection from the dead. In a word, the Old Covenant had only the "copy and shadow of the heavenly things," only "a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things" (Heb. 8:5, 10:1). The Old Covenant abounded in earthly rites and ceremonies, in "gifts and sacrifices that could not, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) *carnal ordinances*, imposed until a time of reformation." The "time of reformation" began with the inauguration of the New Institution. The "good things to come" are those of the New and spiritual Covenant. Under the New Covenant they who worship God must worship Him, not with sacrifices and burnt-offerings, not with new moons and sabbaths and solemn fasts and feasts, but "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

"For it is written," says Paul, "that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit, the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the free-woman is born through promise. Which things

contain an allegory: for these women are the two covenants; one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. . . . But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother" (Gal. 4:22-26). Hagar was a handmaid, a bond-woman; therefore her son who was born after the flesh was the son of a bond-woman. Bondage was his status, his very nature, his life: he could never escape it. Such was the Old Covenant. It was a Covenant of the flesh, a Covenant of bondage; its rites and ceremonies were visible, temporal, of the earth, earthy; it contained no promise of freedom from either the guilt or the consequences of sin, no promise of redemption either of spirit or of body. (For the doctrine of consequences of sin, read Exo. 20:1-17; for that of *guilt*, see Ezek. 18:19-20.) Sarah, on the other hand, was the free-woman. Her son, the child of promise, was a free man; freedom was his status, his nature, his life. Such is the New Covenant, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, the Bride of Christ and the Spiritual Mother of all who have looked into the Perfect Law of Liberty, all who have been made free in Christ Jesus. Under the New Covenant, there is realization of freedom from both the guilt and the consequences of sin, there is redemption full and complete, of both spirit and body, redemption of the whole man—holiness. As Jesus put it: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). As a matter of fact, true freedom is never experienced in the realm of the flesh, but only in that of the spirit.

In one of the most eloquent passages in the New Testament, Paul employs a series of vivid terms and phrases to contrast the essential characters of the two Covenants. 2 Cor 3:6-11: "Our sufficiency," he says, "is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant: not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." By the "letter" here, the Apostle means the Old Covenant, by the "spirit" he means the New. The Old Covenant was a Covenant of Law; it was given in letters graven upon tablets of stone; it was a law of letters governing its subjects exclusively from without; it was a voice of external authority which, in the nature of the case, awakened no response in their hearts, no craving for the higher spiritual values of life. But the New Covenant, even though it is committed to writing

and is in that sense external to us, is essentially a code of principles which governs our lives from within by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle then goes on to describe the Old Covenant as "the ministration of death" and the "ministration of condemnation," and the New Covenant, by way of contrast, as "the ministration of the spirit," and "the ministration of righteousness." "But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face, which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory," etc. The Old Covenant was the Law, the Letter. Now it is never the function of Law to reform, much less to save. Law, by distinguishing wrong from right and by putting the wrongdoer under the penalty of his crime, serves only to condemn, actually to kill. Even the Ten Commandments were powerless to save men; they were designed only to check the transgressions of the people; hence, in the vast majority of cases the penalty for their violation was death. Thus the Old Covenant was, in its essential nature, truly the "ministration of condemnation" and the "ministration of death." The New Covenant is, on the other hand, the "ministration of the spirit," "the ministration of righteousness." Whereas the Law imposed from without could bring only condemnation and death (Rom. 7:7-11, 1 Cor. 15:56), the law of the spirit within us—the law indited by the Spirit of God upon the fleshly tables of the heart—gives only life, the abundant life, the Life Everlasting. And because this law of the Spirit of life brings justification through righteousness, it is therefore the "ministration of righteousness." Summing up, we have on the other side of the Cross: the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, the Law, the Letter, the Ministration of Condemnation, the Ministration of Death; on this side of the Cross, we have the New Covenant, the New Testament, the Gospel, the Spirit, the Ministration of the Spirit, the Ministration of Righteousness, etc. The genius of the Old Covenant is aptly illustrated by the thundering forth of the Thou-stalt-not's of God from the summit of Sinai; that of the New Covenant, by the gentle accents of the Son of Man proclaiming the Beatitudes. "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 ordinances of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after Spirit" (Rom. 8: 3-4).

## 2. The Promise of the Spirit

According to Luke 24:49, Jesus, just before His Ascension to the Father, said to His apostles: "And behold, I send forth the *promise of my Father* upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." And Peter said, in his Pentecost sermon: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Spirit*, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear" (Acts 2: 33). By correlating these two Scriptures, we learn that "the promise of the Father" was "the promise of the Holy Spirit," that is, the "promise" of the Advent of the Spirit.

*John 7: 37-39*: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." To this, the inspired writer adds the following comment: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: *for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.*" Here we are told (1) that there was a time when the Holy Spirit was not yet given, and (2) that this time was prior to the glorification of Jesus. That is to say, there was a time when the powers and influences were not bestowed upon God's people generally. Under the Old Covenant, as we have learned, the gifts of the Spirit were conferred only upon God's chosen leaders for the accomplishment of specific tasks in the development of the Plan of Redemption. The Spirit did not, however, indwell the whole congregation, that is, all the people of Israel individually: the Old Covenant was essentially a fleshly and national Covenant, not a spiritual Covenant. There was no general outpouring of the Spirit in Old Testament times. In a word, there was a time when the Holy Spirit was not given to all saints, when He had not yet come to make the Church His dwelling-place