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John Gill's

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

Book 4—Chapter 3

**OF THE EXHIBITIONS OF THE
COVENANT OF GRACE UNDER THE
MOSAIC DISPENSATION**

Having traced the manifestation and application of the Covenant of Grace from the times of our first parents, through the patriarchal state, to the times of Moses; I shall now consider it as exhibited in his time, and unto the times of David and the prophets; and shall begin,

1. With Moses himself, who was a great man of God; and though the law was by him, he had large knowledge of Christ; of his person, offices, and grace; of the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it. "Had ye believed Moses," says Christ to the Jews, "ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). Moses was an eminent type of Christ, in whom the grace of Christ, and of the covenant, was eminently displayed. The apostle in Hebrews 3:1-14 runs the parallel between Moses and Christ, though he gives the preference to Christ, as it was just he should; they were both, he observes, concerned in the house of God; both faithful therein; with this difference, Moses as a servant, and Christ as a Son in his own house. Moses was a mediator when the covenant on Sinai was given, at the request of the people of Israel, and by the permission of God; and stood between God and them, to deliver his word to them (Gal. 3:19; Deut. 5:5), in which he was a type of Christ, the Mediator of the new and better covenant, and the Mediator between God and man. He was a prophet, and spoke of Christ as who should be raised up a prophet like unto him, and was to be hearkened to; and who has been raised up; and God has spoken by him all his mind and will to the sons of men. When Moses and Elias were with Christ on the mount, which showed harmony and agreement between them; a

voice was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," as the great Prophet of the church; (see Deut. 18:15; Heb. 1:1,2; Matthew 17:5). Moses was a priest, and officiated as such before Aaron was appointed to that office; and he, indeed, invested him with it by the offering of sacrifices (Ex. 29:1; Ps. 99:6), in which he prefigured Christ in his priestly office, who became man, that he might be a merciful and sympathizing one; and being holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, was fit to be one, and to offer a pure sacrifice for sin. Moses was also a king and a lawgiver under God; a ruler and governor of the people of Israel (Deut. 33:4,5). Christ is King of Zion and King of saints; by the designation of his Father, and with the acknowledgment of his people, who own him, and submit to him as such; and of whose government there will be no end (Ps. 2:6; Isa. 33:22 9:7). Once more, Moses was a deliverer or redeemer of the people of Israel, out of that state of bondage in which they were in Egypt (Acts 7:35), and in this bore a figure of Christ the Redeemer of his people, from a worse than Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; and herein and hereby through him were held forth the grace of the covenant, and the blessings of it in Christ to the faith of God's people.

There were many things done by him, and under him, and in his time, which exhibited and showed forth the covenant of grace, and the things contained in it. The whole ceremonial law was nothing else than a shadowy exhibition of it; it was a shadow of good things to come by Christ, the great high Priest, which are come by him; as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation. The priests, their garments, and their sacrifices, with other numerous rites, all prefigured Christ, and the grace of the covenant, which is by him: the ceremonial law was the gospel of the Israelites, it was their pedagogue, their schoolmaster, that taught them the A B C of the gospel in their infant state. Christ was the mark and scope it aimed at, the end of it, and in whom it had its full accomplishment; the Israelites, by reason of darkness, could not see to the end of those things, which are now abolished, and which we with open face behold. It would be too tedious to go over the various particulars in the former dispensation, which held forth the grace of Christ, and of the covenant to the faith of men. It may be sufficient to instance in three or four of them, which were for a time, or of longer continuance; and were either stated ordinances, or extraordinary works of providence, which typified spiritual things.

The passover, which was instituted at the time of Israel's going out of Egypt, was kept by faith; not only of deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but in the faith of a future redemption and salvation by Christ; hence he is called "Christ our passover" (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:23). The passover was a lamb without blemish, slain by the congregation of Israel, between the two evenings; it was then roasted with fire, and eaten whole with bitter herbs, and its blood was sprinkled upon the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites; that when the destroying angel passed through Egypt, to destroy their firstborn, seeing the blood where it was sprinkled, passed by the houses in which the Israelites were, and left them unhurt; and hence the institution had the name of the passover; (see Ex. 12:1-51). All which was typical of Christ, who is the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish; who was taken by the Jews and crucified and slain; who endured the fire of divine wrath, whereby his strength was

dried up like a potsherd; is to be, and is fed upon by faith; even a whole Christ, in his person, and offices, and grace, attended with repentance and humiliation for sin; believers in him, when they look to him by faith, mourn; and a profession of him is, more or less, accompanied with bitter afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions; and his blood, which from hence is called the blood of sprinkling, that being shed and sprinkled on the hearts of men, not only purges their consciences from dead works, but secures them from the wrath and justice of God; who, looking upon this blood, which is ever in sight, is pacified towards them, and passes by them, when he takes vengeance on others.

The manna was another type of Christ; that was typical bread, Christ is the true bread; hence Christ, speaking of the manna, and of himself, says, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32), meaning himself, the truth of the type; the manna was only a shadow, Christ is the substance, the solid and substantial food, signified by it, and therefore is called "the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17), which every believer in Christ has a right to eat of, and does; so the Old and New Testament saints "all eat of the same spiritual meat" (1 Cor. 10:3). The Israelites being in the wilderness, and hungry, complained for want of food, and murmured; God promised to give them bread from heaven, which he did: this when they first saw, they knew not what it was; and asked one another, What is it? it was small in bulk, white in color, and sweet in taste; this they gathered every day for their daily food, as they were directed; and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans: and on this they lived while in the wilderness, until they came to the land of Canaan; (see Ex. 16:1-36 and Num. 11:1-35 and Joshua 5:12). All which pointed to Christ and his grace, the food of faith; who, when he came into the world, the world knew him not; nor is he known to the Israel of God before conversion; they are without Christ, without the knowledge of him while unregenerate; until it pleases God to call them by his grace, and reveal his Son in them. And he is entirely hidden from the men of the world; in whose eyes, and in the eyes of carnal professors, he is little, mean, and contemptible; yet white and ruddy, comely and beautiful, pure and holy, and desirable, to truly gracious souls; to whose taste his fruits, the blessings of his grace, his doctrines, his word, and ordinances, are sweet and pleasant; and a crucified Christ, whose sufferings are signified by the manna being ground, beaten, and baked, is the food of believers in this present state; what is their daily food, and which they live upon while they are in the wilderness, till they come to Canaan's land, and eat of the "old corn," the things which God from all eternity has prepared for them that love him.

The water out of the rock the Israelites drank of in the wilderness, was another emblem and representative of Christ and his grace; hence called "spiritual drink," and the rock a "spiritual rock; and that Rock was Christ," (1 Cor. 10:4).

The Israelites wanting water in the wilderness, murmured, when Moses was ordered by the Lord to smite a rock at two different times and places, from whence water gushed out for the supply of them, their flocks, and herds. Christ was signified by the rock, who may be compared to one for height, shelter, strength, and duration;

and with which they are followed and supplied while they are in this world: and as it was by the rod of Moses the rock was smitten; so Christ was stricken and smitten in a legal and judicial way, being the surety and representative of his people, by which means the blessings of grace flow unto them; as justification, pardon, &c. just as the blood and water sprung from his side when pierced with the spear; and this rock being thus smitten for believers, they have a never failing supply of grace through the wilderness.

The brazen serpent was another figure of Christ and his grace. The Israelites being bitten with fiery serpents, of which many died; Moses was ordered by the Lord to make a fiery serpent of brass, and set it on a pole, that whoever was bitten might look unto it and live; which was done accordingly, and the promised effect followed (Num. 21:6-9). Our Lord takes notice of this very significant type himself, and applies it to himself (John 3:14,15). The serpent Moses made had the form of a serpent, but not the nature of one: Christ was in the likeness of sinful flesh, but his flesh was not sinful; he was without the poison of the serpent, sin, original or; actual: it was a fiery one, denoting either the wrath of God sustained by Christ, or the vengeance he took on his and our enemies when on the cross; or rather, it may denote his flaming love to his people, expressed in his sufferings and death. It being of brass, denoted not only his lustre and glory, but his strength; who, being the mighty God, is able to save to the uttermost all that come and look unto him for salvation. The situation of the serpent of Moses on a pole, may signify the crucifixion of Christ, which he himself expressed by being lifted up from the earth (John 12:32), or his exaltation at the right hand of God; or rather, the setting of him up in the ministry of the gospel, where he is erected as an ensign and standard to gather souls to him; and where he is held forth evidently as crucified and slain, as the object and ground of hope. And as the end of the erection of the serpent was, that such who were bitten by the fiery serpents might look to it and live; so the end of Christ's crucifixion, and of the ministration of him in the Gospel is, that such who are envenomed with the poison of the old serpent, the devil, and whose wound is otherwise incurable, might, through looking to Christ by faith, live spiritually, comfortably, and eternally; as all such do who are favored with a spiritual sight of him (John 6:40).

2. Besides Moses, there were others in his time, in whom the grace of the covenant was remarkably displayed and manifested; particularly Aaron, his brother, called "the saint of the Lord" (Ps. 106:16), the Holy One, with whom were the Urim and Thummim (Deut. 33:8), a type of Christ, in whom all lights and perfections are; and though Christ, as a priest, was not of the order of Aaron, but of another; yet Aaron, in his priestly office, prefigured him; he was taken from among men, from among his brethren, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin, and did not take this honour to himself, but was called of God to it; "so Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest;" but was made so by his divine Father (Heb 5:4,5), and has offered up a sacrifice for the sins of his people, of a sweet smelling savour to God; which the sacrifices of Aaron and his sons were typical of, by which the faith of believers in those times was led to the great and better sacrifice of Christ. Aaron was also a type

of Christ in his intercession, as well as in his sacrifice; he could speak well, and therefore was appointed the spokesman of Moses unto the people (Ex. 4:14-16). Christ is an advocate for his people; he can speak well to their case for them, and ever lives to appear in the presence of God, and to make intercession for them, and is always heard.

3. Joshua, the successor of Moses, was also a type of Christ, and in him the grace of Christ, and of the covenant, was evidently displayed. Their names agree, both signify a Saviour; Joshua is called Jesus (Heb. 4:8). Moses conducted the people of Israel through the wilderness, to the borders of the land of Canaan, but was not allowed to lead them into it; intimating, that it is not by the works of the law, or by the works of righteousness, done by men, that they are or can be saved; that a man must have a better righteousness than his own, or he will never enter into the kingdom of heaven; there is no salvation but in and by the name of Jesus, the antitype of Joshua: as Joshua led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, and settled them there; so Christ, by his blood and righteousness, has opened a way for his people into the heavenly state, and gives them an abundant entrance into his kingdom and glory. Joshua did not give the true rest in Canaan; for then another would not have been spoken of; it was only a typical one he gave; but Christ, our spiritual Joshua, gives spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter.

The scarlet thread which Rahab the harlot was ordered by the spies in the times of Joshua, to bind at her window, that her house might be known by them, in order to save her, and all in it, when Jericho was destroyed, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which are peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation for the chief of sinners; for Gentile sinners, as well as Jews; and through which is security from wrath, ruin, and destruction. Joshua was favored with an appearance of Christ unto him, with a sword drawn in his hand, who declared unto him, that he came as the Captain of the host of the Lord, to animate, encourage, and assist him. Christ is the Captain of salvation, who has fought the battles of his people for them; conquered all their enemies, and made them more than conquerors through himself. There were later appearances of Christ to others in this period of time, as to Manoah and his wife, who declared to them his name was "Pele," a Wonder, or Wonderful, which is one of the names of Christ (Isa. 9:6), and to Gideon, Samuel, and others, I shall take no further notice of.