

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

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"As for me, behold my covenant is with thee." Gen. 17:4.

This is known as the Abrahamic covenant, and in it is supposed by some to be found proof substantial for the baptism of unconscious infants. Let us examine the leading features of this covenant and if we can here find a warrant for the baptism of our infants we are bound as honest men to receive it. If however, after a careful examination we fail to find any such warrant, then as honest men we are equally bound to utter our protest against that practice which, if universally indulged in, would at once annul believer's baptism, and set at defiance the command of our gracious Saviour: "Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." First, Then what is the Abrahamic Covenant? Second, Can we literally follow it? Third, Under what covenant are we?

The Abrahamic covenant may be considered as having a letter and a spirit. First, a numerous posterity, which was fulfilled in the letter in the nation of Israel. It was fulfilled in the spirit by the divine constitution that makes all believers the children of Abraham. Secondly, this promise was to be a God to him and his seed after him, which was fulfilled in the letter by his protection of Israel in Egypt; his delivering them from bondage; his taking them into covenant at Sinai; and all his subsequent dealings with them, till they were cast off by their rejection of Christ. This promise was fulfilled in the spirit by God being a God to all believers and to them alone, in a higher sense than he was to Israel. The third promise was of the land of Canaan fulfilled in the letter to Israel, and in the spirit to the true Israel in the possession of the heavenly Canaan. Now it must ever be remembered it belongs to those who urge the practice of infant sprinkling to prove from this covenant that all Christians are under obligations to adopt this practice. But can any Christian feel that this is the covenant which God has made with him? Christian parents has God covenanted to give you these blessings? Though he may have covenanted to give you some of these blessings together with many others, yet the question is, Is this covenant the covenant God has made with you; If it is then let me say you are under obligations to perform the rite of circumcision on every man child in your house—and that, too on the eighth day—neither one day before nor yet one day after that period. But it is said by some baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Where is the proof of this? If we are yet under the covenant of circumcision only baptism having taken the place of the ancient rite why has not the Bible informed us of the fact? When some who had embraced the religion of Jesus, Acts 15th chap., insisted that the Christian converts should be circumcised why did not the great council of the Apostles and Elders, who decided that circumcision was abolished, satisfy those who were jealous of the law, by reminding them that the baptism of infants was to be practised as a substitute for circumcision. And when St. Paul wrote to the Galatians in opposition to the Judaizing teachers who held to circumcision, why do we find in his epistle not a single hint of the same fact? And if circumcision and baptism were the same thing why was baptism administered to persons who had been previously circumcised? And again, if baptism be a substitute of circumcision it will of necessity follow that all servants whether born in the house or bought with money must be baptized on the faith of their master. The fact is, the Abrahamic covenant differs in many respects from the covenant of grace, some of which we shall notice. The most eminent theologians all agreed that the Abrahamic covenant furnishes no ground for infant sprinkling. The Scriptures themselves have decided who are entitled to the spiritual blessings of this covenant, viz., the spiritual seed of Abraham. But only they that are of faith are the children of Abraham, Gal. 3:7 and 5:29. If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. So then we learn that believing Gentiles are the spiritual seed of Abraham. The children of believers are in no way his seed by mere virtue of having believing parents. Believing Gentiles may have believing children but they will not be infants any longer. Gentile or Jew they cannot be Abraham's seed in a spiritual sense but believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved; and thy house." "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of the Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children and to all

that are afar off, even as many as the Lord Our God shall call." Acts 2:38-39. The promise is unto your children upon precisely the same conditions that it is to yourself, namely upon repentance for your sins not your repentance for your children, but your repentance toward God every one of you. The promise is from generation to generation in behalf of those who repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. What for? For the remission of sins. What blessing is promised upon obedience to this command? Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is worthy of notice that this blessed gift is not promised in the absence of baptism. Having become Christ's they will be Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. The Abrahamic covenant differs from the covenant of grace in several important particulars.

It is said by some who ought to know better; the Jewish church was the same as the Christian and as children were connected with their parents by a religious rite under the old dispensation, this relation may with propriety be marked by a religious rite under the new dispensation. In this statement are two gross errors. First, it is assumed that the two dispensations bear such a resemblance to each other as to affect the point in debate; but this is a great mistake. No matter how extensive may be the similarity between the ancient and the Christian dispensations provided they are not alike in respect of their members and ordinances, there exists no sameness in these. The one by its constitution included carnal members; the other by its constitution admits spiritual members only. The one was a national establishment into which its members were introduced by a mechanical process. The other is a spiritual organization composed of those and of those only who have received the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Another error is, it supposes circumcision marks some wonderful spiritual relation between the parent and the child. But so different is the truth we pause to wonder at the imbecility of one professedly divinely enlightened and taught, holding such anti-Christian dogmas. Not a particle of an argument either inferentially or otherwise can be drawn from God's word to support such a theory. The truth is, circumcision was a mark of national distinction intended to separate the people of Israel from surrounding nations, and to bind them together as one people. Circumcision of itself and by itself secured to the circumcised person no blessing. It was enforced by the penalty of death. It was not enjoined upon nor could it possibly be performed upon over half of the Hebrew children. Those upon whom it was not and could not be performed enjoyed all the blessings and all the privileges and all the immunities claimed for those upon whom it was physically possible to perform the rite.

It was not enjoined upon believers from other nations. It therefore could not be a spiritual privilege to any individual. Hence it is plain that as children are not baptized that is sprinkled we deprive them of the privileges which Jewish children enjoyed. Even admitting for the sake of argument that circumcision was designed to stand connected with peculiar blessings, still the child of the Christian has great advantages over the Jew. Like Timothy the child of Christian parents is from his infancy made to know the Scriptures which are able to make him wise unto salvation. From infancy he is the subject of Christian care and sympathy. From his infancy he is blessed with praying parents consecrating him to God by their supplications, and on his expanding character are sweetly shed the influences of holy example, of religious education and a home where God's honor dwells. This peculiarity in the condition of a believer's child is recognized by the Apostle where he bids Christian parents bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, recognizing in all the promises of a divine blessing on parental fidelity blessed by the application of the Spirit's power to the heart of the child thus trained up, though they may never have had the so called holy waters of baptism sprinkled on their brow, or approached a baptismal altar or sprinkling priest. Again it is said that the Jews had been accustomed to baptize the children of proselytes to their faith and therefore the Apostle must have understood the direction baptizing all nations to include infants. This assertion depends for all its force on the fact assumed that proselyte baptism was practiced among the Jews in the time of Christ. But this rests on mere assumption. Prof. Stuart after the most elaborate examination has come to the conclusion that such baptism was practiced at, or not long after the time when the second Temple was destroyed which would be about seventy years after Christ. This conclusion agrees with all the Biblical critics of any note. The foundation of the above argument being thus removed, the argument itself falls to the ground.

We have thus shown briefly what the Abrahamic covenant was and as a covenant that there is positively not the slightest ground in it for infant baptism so called.

In the second place we proceed to investigate whether we can follow it in the letter. It must be borne in mind that the two specific gifts promised under that covenant were, 1st. A numerous posterity. 2nd. The land of promise an earthly inheritance. As to the first we cannot follow it, such an idea can surely never possess the mind of any intelligent parent when presenting his child at the baptismal altar. As to the second, we think Scripture is sufficiently plain, "A wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein," John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world, saith our blessed Saviour, else my servants would fight for me, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence, John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, verse 31. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all, verse 32; and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony." He that received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true, Luke 1:33. Of his kingdom shall be no end. The kingdom of God then is not an earthly possession. It is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace. It is a spiritual kingdom. Here we look for no reward for our services in our Master's cause, but we look beyond this world for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. 13:14. We seek one which is to come. As the children of Israel during their passage through the wilderness were upheld and cheered on their way by their anticipations of the goodly possession, the land flowing with milk and honey, so the Christian pilgrim is cheered and supported by every day's anticipations of the benefits of that land which is afar off. The city of the Great King, the walls of which are jasper, and the streets of pure gold. Into this spiritual enclosure all may come, for it is not written, Rev. 22:7-17, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely. But we are not born Christians, John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And if not see it certainly he cannot enter into it, neither can we be brought in by any act of our parents, certainly not by baptism. There are those with us who made a voluntary profession of faith in Christ and we baptized those who live far from what the Christian should. Simon Magus, perhaps made as good a profession at his baptism as any of the disciples, yet he was subsequently told he was still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. No! a thousand times no! My brethren, you cannot get converted to God by being baptized, though you come yourself, willingly, publicly, conscious of what you are about to do. If this position is correct, and men cannot be saved this way, nor yet gotten into the kingdom of Christ, how much greater the impossibility of getting them into that kingdom while they are yet unconscious of all matters relative to the nature of their position and the divine requirements. And yet we are reluctantly compelled to confess that, that is precisely the way multitudes are being constantly taken into the churches, and if we offer a word of remonstrance we are stigmatized as disturbers of the peace, called cruel and heartless towards our children, and told that the Jew brought his child into the Abrahamic covenant by circumcision, and so ought the Christian to bring his in by baptism. Really, logically, this makes baptism the saying means used. We have shown conclusively enough, I hope, that between the two covenants in their essential features there exists no sameness, whatever. The Abrahamic covenant of works is not the Christian covenant of grace. Perhaps, dear brethren, we do not rightly appreciate the blessing of having Christian, God-fearing parents, I believe that is of itself a blessing we cannot overestimate, and yet the child of the most pious godly man on earth must come into the kingdom of Our Lord and Saviour, just as the child brought up in a home where the name of Jesus as our Saviour is never heard. That is, he must believe for himself, he must repent for himself. That theology is wanting in common intelligence, that connects the Abrahamic covenant with the day of Grace, and in its important efforts to trace a similarity between the two quotes Peter's language to the people on the day of Pentecost. Acts, 2:39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord Our God shall call." The promise as Scripture repeats again and again, is to every man and to his posterity upon the same conditions, repentance, faith, baptism. Third, we are under not a carnal covenant, not a covenant with carnal objects in view, not a coven-

ant that begins or makes members by works. 2 Ephesians 5 to 8, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. John 1:17, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Law and the Prophets were until John, since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. Luke 16:16, "For ye are bought with a price." 1st Cor. 6:20 and 7:23. God's people, young as well as old have been purchased at a terrible sacrifice, the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb slain out of due time without spot or blemish. 1 Peter 1:19. This then is the ground of our salvation. The Lamb slain, the sacrifice offered, the price paid, the blood shed, the purchase effected. Under the Abrahamic covenant the parent circumcised the child, and this brought him into that great national establishment. Under the economy of grace, Christ having died for the sins of his people, by his Spirit in their hearts, he sweetly draws them to himself. "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44; "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Christ's people therefore drawn unto him by his Spirit in their hearts convincing them of sin and of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. My people, God says, shall be willing, they are made willing by God's grace in their hearts. They are not willing of themselves, they cannot be made willing by any external rite or ceremony. External rites or ceremonies should only be performed in obedience to the Divine command, and then upon willing people, willing converts, made so by God's especial grace. No persons of any age should be received into the church of Christ for salvation, or because they more than half hope that they are saved, neither much less should any one be baptized to effect this. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. Under the Christian dispensation individuals are admitted into the church of Christ after their baptism, but their baptism has little to do with their salvation other than, "It is the answer of a good conscience toward God," 1 Epistle of Peter, 3:21. It is the putting on of Christ publicly. Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision," Colossians 3:9, 10, 11. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Romans 13:14. The repentant sinner having found peace through believing in Christ makes this public avowal of his faith and that henceforth by his grace he will not serve sin, he has been saved, admitted by faith into the household that everywhere calls upon God, so having experienced that circumcision of the heart he desires to unite with the church of Christ upon earth to obey, realizing that obedience is better than sacrifice. God will my brethren, save such. Many of the Israelites fell into the wilderness, never reaching the goodly possessions. "But God will save those who are of the circumcision of the heart, and who have thus avowed their determined purpose to follow him. He will save them because Christ their passover has been sacrificed for them; Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. 7:8. He, himself bare the iniquities of us all. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should not live any longer therein, but live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed." 1 Peter 2:24. This is the reason we make the assertion, God will save those who have repented of their sins. 1st Because Christ is the sacrifice, he has been slain for them, and having given his life for his people and his pledge to save them, save them he will, as for me, behold my covenant is with thee. Well might Dr. Watts sing, and well may every child of God sing.

As for me, behold my covenant is with thee. Amen and amen.

Christ is made a leader and commander of the people to bring many sons into glory, but if he fails in getting them into glory, you see at once, my brethren, his covenant engagements to save whosoever cometh unto him would be but a boastful expression which he was not able to fulfill. Perish the thought; if the blood of Christ only atoned for the sins of a few weeks, and then our sins returned upon us, where would be the virtue of Calvary's sacrifice? "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," John 17:24; where then were the supplications of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." John 17:11, 12. Yes, my brethren, you see under this covenant of grace, salvation is guaranteed to every repentant sinner. Is not our Great High Priest now at the right hand of God the Father, is he not preparing a place for his saints in glory. Brethren, the losing of one who has honestly, and sincerely repented of his sins, so manifestly antagonizes the covenant, and the promise of the Lord Jesus, I cannot even think of it without considering it horrid blasphemy. Can you, dare you honestly think of such a conclusion, behold a child of God in hell. A true believer in perdition, the price of life and glory defeated. No! no! a thousand times no! They whom Christ Jesus Our Lord has really taken into union with himself will be saved; to doubt it would be atrocious blasphemy. And now, my brethren, let me propound the important question this morning, has the Lord really and truly taken you into union with himself? Have you day by day fellowship with the Eternal King? Have you men and women of this baptized church received the evidence that your sins have been pardoned, and are you living in such a way as to justify such a conclusion? Remember not every one which saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. So saith our blessed Saviour. The conviction that we have really repented of our sins, that we have experienced that vital union with Christ which has placed us in a state of friendship with him, this conviction lightens all afflictions, brightens every prospect, gives peace in the hour of death, and at the last day amidst the wreck of elements, amidst the dissolution of the material heavens and earth,—that spark of celestial immortality kindled by our repentance towards God, and faith in the merits of our Saviour, will emerge from the darkness of the sepulchre, and shine forever in the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The time is coming it may be very near when you will have nothing left to do, but to lay down your head on your death-bed pillow. In that solemn hour the last apprehension that you are a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, the faintest hope that you are united to God your Saviour will give you far more satisfaction than any event of your life. Then I beseech you that you may be prevailed upon to retire, and in the stillness of your closets and the solitude of your souls, pour forth a fervent and importunate prayer, that you may dear brethren may be numbered amongst those who will hereafter obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ Our Lord. That you may see the whole weight of your guilt transferred at the cross, and see at once how God can be justified and the justifier of those who put their trust in him. Take of the blood of the everlasting covenant, and be at peace. His blood cleanseth from all sin. He will send his Spirit into your hearts which will manifest himself to you. And where that Spirit is there is liberty and love. He is the mystical ladder let down from heaven to earth on which angels are continually ascending and descending in tokens of alliance established between God and man. Until by faith in Jesus Christ you shall become a habitation of God through the Spirit, the Father will make you a partaker of his love, the son of his grace, angels of their friendship, and you shall be preserved and progressively sanctified, and by the last change all traces of the great disease, sin shall be forever removed from your soul, and the love of God shall constitute your eternal felicity.

As for me, behold my covenant is with thee. Amen and amen.

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Notice of Sale.

To James Donnelly, and John Donnelly, both of the Parish of Lancaster, in the City and County of Saint John, and Province of New Brunswick, Millmen and all others whom it may concern. Take notice that there will be sold at Public Auction, on Friday the eighteenth day of November next, at twelve of the clock noon, at Chubb's Corner (so called), on Prince William Street, in the City of Saint John, in said Province, all those certain lots of land and premises with the buildings thereon, situate lying and being in the said Parish of Lancaster, and conveyed by way of mortgage, dated the twenty-eighth day of November, A. D. 1876, and made between the said James Donnelly and John Donnelly of the first part, and the Saint John Building Society, of the second part, and described in the said indenture of mortgage as follows, that is to say:—

All that certain piece and parcel of land, situate lying and being in the Parish of Lancaster aforesaid bounded as follows: Beginning at a marked Haematac Bush on the southern side of the road leading from the Saint Andrews Road near Sawyers, to the mills presently in the occupancy of the said James and John Donnelly, thence from the said Bush south, three degrees west, twenty chains of four poles each, or to the low water line of the River Musquash thence following the shore in a southerly direction to the western line of land held by William O'Neil, thence northwardly, on O'Neil's fence, to the edge of the upland adjoining the Dyked Marsh, thence easterly on the northern side of O'Neil's possession, five chains, or to the western line of land, granted by the Crown to Patrick White, thence on the western line of land granted White in a northeasterly direction, fifty chains or to Menzie's Brook (so called), at the southern bounds of land, purchased from Archibald Menzies by John Cairns, thence following the Brook southwardly, about sixteen chains or to the eastern line of another parcel of land purchased by said Cairns, from said Menzies, thence north three degrees east, eleven chains, or to land owned by said Cairns, thence following the southern line of Cairns' land, in a westerly and southerly direction, to the eastern line of land owned and occupied by Israel Sherwood, thence southerly on Sherwood's east line, fifteen chains, or to the Mill privilege, thence on the line of the Mill reserve, northerly and easterly to the bridge, crossing Menzie's Brook, and thence westerly on the Mill road to the place of beginning, containing forty acres more or less."

Also "All that two certain pieces, pieces, and parcels of land, situate in the parish of Lancaster in the County of Saint John, heretofore granted by the Crown to the said John Hamilton Gray by grant bearing date the twentieth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven; being numbers thirty-two and thirty-three in the said Grant, the whole of the lands granted in the said grant being described as follows:—Beginning at a Spruce tree, standing on the southerly bank or shore of the Menzie's Brook, at the northerly angle of Lot number thirty-four Block thirty, thence running by the Magnet, south fifty-six chains to a stake; thence west sixty-nine chains to a stake; thence north fifty chains, thence east forty-six chains; and thence following the several courses of the aforesaid bank or shore in an easterly direction to the place of beginning, containing three hundred acres, more or less, distinguished as lots, numbers, thirty-one, thirty-two, and thirty-three."

The above sale will be made under and by virtue of the power of sale, contained in the above mentioned Indenture of Mortgage which Indenture of Mortgage is duly recorded by the No. 45,266 in Book B. No. 8 of Records, pages 481, 482, 483, and 484, in the office of the Registrar of Deeds, in and for the City and County of Saint John, because default has been made in the payment of the money, or contributions secured by the said Indenture of Mortgage, and by virtue of an order of the Board of Directors of the Saint John Building Society made for that purpose. Terms and particulars made known at the time of sale, or on application to the under signed. In order of the Board of Directors, of the Saint John Building Society. Dated the fifth day of October, A. D. 1881. W. CHAPMAN SKINNER, WILLIAM PUGSEY, Solicitors for Mortgage.

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