

A SERVICE OF COVENANT RENEWAL

January 1st 1775 : “At the renewal of the covenant ... I do not know that we ever had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon ... or for a fresh manifestation of God’s grace”.

January 1st 1776 : “About 1800 of us met together in London in order to renew our covenant with God; and it was as usual a very solemn opportunity”.

January 1st 1777 : “We met as usual to renew our covenant with God. It was a solemn season, wherein many found His power present to heal (their souls), and were enabled to urge their way with strength renewed”

(John Wesley’s Journal).

Hymn 5 : Jesu, we look to Thee

THE MINISTER ADDRESSES THE CONGREGATION

DEARLY beloved, the Christian life to which we are called is one of dedication to Christ, who redeemed us from sin and brought us into God’s presence. By faith in God the Son we are now in covenant with God the Father, to live no more to ourselves, but to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. We meet today to re-affirm our baptismal promises and to declare anew, “To me, to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21).

We give thanks unto God that we are parties to the covenant which shall not be removed, “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure” (2 Samuel 23:5). In full assurance, we humbly rest in the

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word of His grace spoken to God's ancient people, and made ours in Christ Jesus: *“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:10).*

God's word to us, brethren, has never failed. It never can fail. It is *our part* in the covenant which may at times be deficient. We come together, therefore, to declare anew that we willingly take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ. By a solemn act of deliberate consecration, we would yield ourselves afresh to God for the obedient fulfilling of all His righteous will.

Let us resolve to be bound to our God, who declared, *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days ... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16-17).*

Let us give up ourselves wholly to the fulfilling of God's perfect will. Servants must do that work which their master appoints them. Christ appoints both our station and our condition: whether it be higher or lower, prosperous or afflicted. He has the command and the disposal of us.

Brethren, search your hearts. Be certain that you can freely make a sincere and unreserved closure with God in Christ. Examine your resolve to forego all sin and pursue all holiness. Compose your spirits into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance. Be determined to be faithful. Engage your hearts to serve Christ, resolving in His strength never to go back, but to uphold His cause in this world, whatever the opposition.

Let us now publicly before God and men renew our covenant with Him, making the following solemn promises (After each petition offered up by the Minister, the congregation is asked to reply audibly, using the words in italics) :

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CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES

Minister : Lord, Help us in the year ahead to be earnest servants of Thee, remembering the obligations upon us within thy covenant

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us diligently to pray, read the Scriptures, and meet with the people of God regularly and as our absolute priority

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us to witness boldly for Christ, never fearing the world's disapproval or hostility.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us to ensure that this local gathering of believers is a pure church, untarnished by lukewarmness, irreverent worship and the un-Biblical philosophies of men.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us to pursue that holiness of life without which no man shall see the Lord, keeping wholeheartedly all thy commandments.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us to support the life of this church, to be an encouragement to our fellow-believers, and to further the preaching of the Gospel with great zeal.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us to make the service of Christ the focus of our lives, and to live, not for ourselves, but for thy glory.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

Minister : Lord, Help us always to remember that we have no merits of our own, but rely solely on the blood-bought merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Congregation : This, Lord, I promise to do, thy grace enabling me

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Minister :

Heavenly Father, who hast called us through Christ to be partakers in the gracious covenant of salvation, we take upon ourselves with joy the gentle yoke of obedience, and engage ourselves, for the love of Thee, to seek and do thy perfect will. We are no longer our own, but Thine. Fill us with thy Holy Spirit, and enable each one of us to say with the apostle Paul, "To me, to live is Christ".

We praise Thee for thy wonderful grace whereby we are constituted thine own people. We give thee thanks for the unspeakable blessings in which Thou hast fulfilled to us thy unchanging word. Work, we pray thee, in our hearts such ongoing obedience that our whole wills may shun anything which would transgress thy holy covenant. Impose upon us what conditions Thou pleasest, command us whatever Thou wilt have us to do. Let us be exalted for Thee, or brought low for Thee. We resign all to thy pleasure and disposal, resting wholly in thy promised grace that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. So be it. This is the covenant which we have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. In our Saviour's precious Name. Amen.

Hymn 20 : Glory to God, whose sovereign grace

Notices/Offertory

Reading : Revelation 20:11 - 21:8

Hymn 57: Since the Son hath made me free

Sermon : Revelation 21:3-5

Hymn 103 : O my God, what must men do?

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Hymn 102 : O all that pass by, to Jesus draw near