

the goal set before the Jews to which they were to aspire. Rather, they were adopted into the hope of immortality; and assurance of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets. Secondly, the covenant by which they were bound to the Lord was supported not by their own merits, but solely by the mercy of the God who called them. Thirdly, they had and knew Christ as Mediator, through whom they were joined to God and were to share in his promises.¹

We lack nothing for an abundance of all good things and for assurance of salvation so long as the Lord is our God. And rightly so! For if his face, the moment that it has shone forth, is a very present pledge of salvation, how can he manifest himself to a man as his God without also opening to him the treasures of His salvation? He is our God on this condition: that he dwell among us, as he has testified through Moses (Lev. 26:11). But one cannot obtain such a presence of him without, at the same time, possessing life. And although nothing further was expressed, they had a clear enough promise of spiritual life in these words: "I am . . . your God" (Ex. 6:7). For he did not declare that he would be a God to their bodies alone, but especially to their souls. Still, souls, unless they be joined to God through righteousness, remain estranged from him in death. On the other hand, such a union when present will bring everlasting salvation with it.²

Let us, therefore, boldly establish a principle unassailably by any stratagems of the devil: the Old Testament or Covenant that the Lord had made with the Israelites had not been limited to earthly things, but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life. The expectation of this must have been impressed upon the hearts of all who truly consented to the covenant. But away with this insane and dangerous opinion--that the Lord promised the Jews, or that they sought for themselves, nothing but a full belly, delights of the flesh, flourishing wealth, outward power, fruitfulness of offspring, and whatever the natural man prizes! Christ the Lord promises to his followers today no other "Kingdom of Heaven" than that in which they may "sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Matt. 8:11). Peter declared that the Jews of his day were heirs of the grace of the gospel because they were "the sons of the prophets included in the covenant which the Lord of old made with his people" (Acts 3:25 p.).

¹ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 429-30.

² Ibid., p. 435.