

Verse 17

Thou hast avouched the Lord - The people avouch - publicly declare, that they have taken Jehovah to be their God.

Verse 18

And the Lord hath avouched - Publicly declared, by the blessings he pours down upon them, that he has taken them to be his peculiar people. Thus the covenant is made and ratified between God and his followers.

Verse 19

Make thee high above all nations - It is written, Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people, Proverbs 14:34. While Israel regarded God's word and kept his testimonies, they were the greatest and most respectable of all nations; but when they forsook God and his law, they became the most contemptible. O Britain, even more highly favored than ancient Israel! learn wisdom by what they have suffered. It is not thy fleets nor thine armies, howsoever excellent and well appointed, that can ultimately exalt and secure thy permanence among the nations. It is righteousness alone. Become irreligious, neglect God's ordinances, profane his Sabbath, despise his word, persecute his followers, and thou art lost. But fear, love, and serve him, and thy enemies shall be found liars, thou shalt defeat their projects, and trample on their high places.

The form of confession when bringing the first-fruits, related Deuteronomy 26:4-10, is both affecting and edifying. Even when brought into a state of affluence and rest, they were commanded to remember and publicly acknowledge their former degradation and wretchedness, that they might be ever kept humble and dependent; and they must bring their offering as a public acknowledgment to God that it was by his mercy their state was changed, and by his bounty their comforts were continued. If a man rise from poverty to affluence, and forget his former state, he becomes proud, insolent, and oppressive. If a Christian convert forget his former state, the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged, he soon becomes careless, unthankful, and unholy. The case of the ten lepers that were cleansed, of whom only one returned to give God thanks, is an awful lesson. How many are continually living on the bounty of God, who feel no gratitude for his mercies! Reader, Is this thy state? If so, then expect the just God to curse thy blessings.