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THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

The Covenant of Grace Opened:

by John Brine

(London: Aaron Ward, 1734)

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
— Psa. 60: 4*



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SERMON 2

THE COVENANT OF GRACE OPEN'D

IN A SERMON Occasioned by the DEATH OF Mrs. Margaret Busfield WHO Departed this Life, May 13th, 1734 By JOHN BRINE LONDON: 1734 Printed for Aaron WARD at the King's Arms, in Little-Britain.

2SA. 23: 5.

Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

It has pleased God, the Sovereign Disposer of all things, to remove by death an honorable member of this community to whom these words were very useful and instructive: for which reason she desired they might be publicly improved after her decease, with a view to the edification of the saints and conversion of sinners.

They are some of the last words which *David* spoke, as we are informed, in the first verse of the chapter; that is, the last which he spoke by inspiration.^{f1} There is a very beautiful and elegant Preface to them, in which *David* gives an account of himself, in these respects: his parentage, *David* the son of *Jesse*. This is an eminent instance of his humility. He was not ashamed of his low and mean descent, though an illustrious and powerful monarch. Besides, he mentions his call and unction to the royal station, which he filled up with so much honor. Also he declares his admirable gift of composing sweet and spiritual songs, for the use and edification of the church. Further, he acquaints us Who was the efficient cause of his spiritual composures, and the words now to be considered, viz., God. He spake as he was divinely guided, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my tongue*. The Holy Ghost was the Author and Inditer. *The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me*. Some think the Doctrine of the Trinity is not obscurely hinted at in these words: By the *Spirit* of the Lord, they understand the Third Person;

the first by the *God of Israel*, and the second the Lord Jesus Christ by the *Rock of Israel*, who really is the Rock of Ages, on which the church is securely built. Then he gives the necessary character of a governor, and describes the happiness and flourishing estate of a prince so qualified; serenity, peace, and increasing glory attend his rule (2Sa. 23: 2, 3).^{f2} Some suppose he intends the Messiah, Who is a King that reigns in Righteousness, and Whose subjects are blessed with peace and prosperity, under His most just administrations.

The words of the text are now introduced, *Although my House be not so with God,*” that is to say, I have not so pleasing and happy a prospect in my family, yet that Covenant which God has made with me, is my support and comfort. Many irregularities were in his house; Tamar was ravished by *Amnon*, who was afterwards murder’d upon the advice of *Absolom*. He raised an unnatural rebellion against *David*, banished him from the royal city, and miserably perished in pursuing his traitorous design. *Adonijah*, a favorite son, attempts to seat himself on the throne by violence, for which usurpation he was slain (2Sa. 13:14; 28:15; 1Ki. 2:25). These were melancholy facts, which, doubtless, very much depressed the mind of the *Psalmist*,” but the Covenant of Grace furnished him with relief and comfort under them. *Glassius* upon the words says, “The sense is, although in the administration of my kingdom I have, indeed, done many things advantageously, and with great happiness, yet all this glory of my government is perishing and mortal: And if it be compared with the Kingdom of my Son, that is, the Messiah, it is obscure, and as a withered branch and trunk, which doth not sprout. This seems to be the plain meaning of this place.”^{f3}

This Covenant filled him with solid joy and satisfaction, although he was conscious to himself of many imperfections, because he evidently saw that his salvation was secured by it; wherefore I conclude, that the Covenant of Grace is here designed. *My method in treating on the words will be as follows:*

First, I shall show that the Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.

Secondly, That this Covenant is of Eternal date.

Thirdly, the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant.

Fourthly, The Stability and Firmness of this Agreement.

Fifthly, That our Whole Salvation is contained in it.

Sixthly, That this Covenant is equal to the utmost Desires of the saints.

Lastly, That this Covenant furnishes believers with Joy and Comfort, under the most afflictive dispensations of Providence.

First, *The Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.*

It was not personally entered into with them, when we read of God's making a Covenant with His people, which we sometimes do, as in these Words, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isa. 55: 3). And elsewhere, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn a way from them to do them good* (Jer. 32:40). By such modes of expression we are to understand the discovery of Covenant promises and blessings to the saints, and not taking them into Covenant; for they are interested in the Covenant of Grace, previous to any such act of God upon them; which I apprehend is very evident from these things. If the Covenant of Grace is made with the elect in their own persons, it must be either before or after their regeneration. It cannot be before, because in an unregenerate state they have no proper love to, or desires to fear and obey God; and therefore they are incapable of devoting themselves to His service. There is no disposition in them to such a spiritual act. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be* (Rom. 8: 7). If the Covenant of Grace is made with them, after, or upon their regeneration, then they partake of one eminent blessing of that Covenant, before they are interested in it, which is not to be supposed; for a right to the benefits of the Covenant depends upon an interest therein. That faith is a gift, the Apostle expressly affirms; *By grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Eph. 2: 8,9). Nor is it less manifest, that it is a blessing secured to the elect by the Covenant of Grace; Faith and all other graces are absolutely promised therein, as we learn from these words, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* (Psa. 110: 3). Therefore those to whom this grace is communicated, must be interested in the Covenant of Grace before, and in order to the production of it in their Hearts. Besides, elect-infants who die in infancy, are incapable of

entering into covenant with God; or they cannot give a personal consent unto the Covenant of Grace: They are unable to dedicate and devote themselves to the service of God, and of consequence no covenant can be entered into with them; yet doubtless they are saved by virtue of an interest in the Covenant of Grace, which sufficiently proves that our personal consent to that Covenant is not necessary, in order to partake of its benefits.^{f4} It is readily granted, that the saints under divine influences give up themselves to the Lord, and engage to serve Him as assisted by His Grace; but such a dedication of themselves, to holiness and the fear of God, gives them no further interest in the Covenant of Grace, than what they had before; for all their sanctification and holiness is derived from that Covenant.

That there was a covenant entered into between God and Christ, and that that is the Covenant of Grace, I shall now endeavor to clear and prove. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, wherein the one proposes terms and conditions to be performed, the other engages to fulfill those conditions; which agreement is a formal covenant. Such a contract was settled between God and Christ, as the Holy Scriptures sufficiently demonstrate. God the Father is brought in and represented by the Prophet, as proposing to Christ a work wherein His Glory was nearly concerned. Thus, *Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;* and at first offers but low terms to Him as a reward for His service, that is to say, the salvation of the elect among the Jews: Whereupon Christ says, *I have labored in vain, I have spent My Strength for naught and in vain; yet surely My Judgment is with the Lord, and My Work is with my God* (Isa. 49: 3,4,6): *i.e.*, if it is Thy Pleasure that My saving benefits should be confined to the elect among that people, I readily submit to Thy Will. After which God the Father enlarges His offer, promises to give Him *for a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be his Salvation to the Ends of the Earth:* which proposal gave Christ a full satisfaction. Wherefore He readily consented to undertake and finish the work, that the Father assigned to Him, which consists of several branches.

1. God propounded to His Son, that He should assume our nature into a personal union with Himself, which was absolutely necessary to our redemption: For unless He became man, He could not bear and expiate our guilt. Wherefore, God, to infallibly secure our recovery and salvation, decreed and fore-ordained, that His Son should appear in our nature. Hence the Apostle observes, that Christ was *fore-ordained before the*

foundation of the world, and was manifest for us in these last times (1Pe. 1:20). As I apprehend we have Christ's full and free consent to this, expressed in these words; *Then said I, lo I come* (Psa. 40: 7): *i.e.*, since it is Thy Will that I should visit the lower world, and reside among men, I cheerfully agree to it.

2. Another proposal was, that He should stand in our law place, or stead, and become our Substitute, that He might deliver us from the menaces of the violated Covenant of Works. As the time of His Incarnation was settled in counsel and covenant between Him and the Father, which seems evident from these words of the Apostle, *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son* (Gal. 4: 4, 5), so also His being *made under the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law*, was a matter pre-determined and before agreed to.

3. The Father propounded to him to obey the law for us. We are unable to exhibit such an obedience to it, which is absolutely necessary to our justification, because our nature is very much weakened and vitiated by sin. One branch of the Mediator's Work was to *bring in an everlasting Righteousness* (Dan. 9:24); which He has done. That Righteousness is accepted for and imputed to us, and will always avail to our acceptance in the sight of God.

4. It was the will of God, that Christ should bear our guilt, without which it could not possibly be removed. He proposes this affair to Christ in this manner; *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin* (Isa. 53:10). His being a Sin-Offering, necessarily supposes a charge of guilt, which always must be in order to suffering of any penal evil. Thus the same Prophet affirms, that the *Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all* (Isa. 53: 6): And the Apostle asserts, that *He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (2Co. 5:21). The ponderous load of our guilt was not laid on Christ, contrary to His own Will, but with His free and voluntary consent.

5. God propounded to Christ that He should suffer the demerit of sin, or to die for us, that we might be delivered from eternal death, which is the proper reward demerited by our offenses. To this He freely consented, and laid himself under a federal obligation to become obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the Cross. His crucifixion was what He could not avoid, consistent with fidelity to His own free engagement. Wherefore He observes to His disciples, *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,*

and then enter into his glory (Luk. 24:26)? According to the Father's Will and His voluntary promise, He was to die before His advancement to honor and dignity.

6. The Father proposed to Christ to take the care and charge of the elect. Those who were the objects of God's special Love and free choice, He gave into Christ's Hands. Hence He says unto the Father, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me* (Joh. 17: 6). With what view this was done, it is easy to collect from these words of our Lord; *I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day* (Joh. 6:38,39). That is to say, it is the pleasure and fixed determination of my Father, that none of those should perish, whom He has made My care and charge. Christ, with the utmost freedom promised to redeem and preserve them safe; wherefore when He shall have collected all these persons together, he will present them to the Father, with saying, *Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me.*

As Christ consented to fulfill the whole will of the Father, concerning our redemption, the Father promised several things to him, some of which respect Himself, personally considered; such as,

1. That He would suitably furnish and qualify Him for the work of mediation, to the discharge of which an extraordinary unction of the Holy Ghost, in His graces and gifts were necessary, as well on account of the greatness and difficulty of the undertaking, as for that He was to be an Head of life and influence to all the elect; for *of His fulness they were to receive, and grace for grace* (Joh. 1:16). Such an uncommon measure of the Spirit He received from the Father, is evident from these words, *thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows* (Psa. 45: 7), the same is affirmed by the Evangelist; *for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him* (Joh. 3:34).

2. Assistance and support in it, of such a nature is this promise; *He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the Earth, and the isles shall wait for his law* (Isaiah 42); which federal engagement on the Father's part, animated and encouraged Him in the most difficult branch of His Work, at the time of His dolorous sufferings; when, *He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and*

hid not his face from shame and spitting (Isa. 1: 6); for then He said, *The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed* (Isa. 1: 7).

3. As a reward for His Service, when He appointed Him work He promised Him wages; for which reason it is said, *His reward is with him, and his work before him* (Isa. 40:10): which was,

(1.) The salvation of all His seed. On the condition of making His soul an offering for sin, the Father engaged that He should see His seed, prolong His days, and that the pleasure of the Lord, *i.e.*, the salvation of sinners should prosper in His hand.

(2.) Everlasting honor and dignity. It was the will of God that Christ should suffer on the Cross; but as a reward for such an eminent instance of obedience to Him, He promised Him an immortal crown; on which account it is said, that *his glory is great in the Father's salvation*; (that is to say, which He decreed and contrived) *Honor and Majesty are laid upon him* (Psa. 21: 4,5); *because he became obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the cross. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name* (Php. 2: 8,9); *i.e.*, a glory far superior to that of men or angels. These things were the joy that was set before him, which caused him to endure the cross with so much cheerfulness and courage, and to despise the shame. There are other promises which have their immediate reference to the elect, though primarily made to the Lord Jesus Christ in their behalf; such as, *I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more* (Heb. 8:12): All promises of pardon, peace, justification, regeneration, final perseverance and eternal life, concern His members. These transactions of the Father and Son amount unto a full, formal and explicit covenant, which is called a Covenant of Peace; because the terms and articles of our peace were agreed on in it. *The mountains shall depart; and the hills shall 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* (Isa. 54:10).

Some suppose, that this is not the Covenant of Grace, but another distinct from it; though without reason, as a judicious writer observes, who upon this argument delivers himself thus: “It may be asked, whether there is not a real difference, between what several divines call the Covenant of

Redemption or Suretyship, made by God the Father with Christ, and that which they call the Covenant of Grace, or Reconciliation, made by God with believers through Christ. To this I answer, custom without reason, has given a kind of sanction of this way of speaking, and many persons of great piety and learning have fallen into it, without considering the bad use men of corrupt minds make of it; turning what they call the Covenant of Grace into a more rigorous Covenant of Works to us than *Adam's* Covenant was.

The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace, is a distinction without any real or material difference, it is to make two covenants of Grace of one. The Covenant of Redemption, as it is called and described by them, who say it is a distinct Covenant, is of pure Grace.”^{f5} In order to prove that this is the Covenant of Grace, and not another distinct from it, I would offer these things to be considered,

1. The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption from the Covenant of Grace is unscriptural; I cannot apprehend, that the sacred Oracles give any countenance to it; the Word of God is so far from supporting this distinction, that it seems to militate against it^{f6}; we therein read but of two covenants, in which the eternal state of men is concerned, the one is called, a *Law or Covenant of Works*; the other is called, *the Law of Faith* (Rom. 3:27); that is to say, a Covenant of Grace; since the Scriptures give us an account but of two covenants wherein the future state of man is interested: It is anti-scriptural to conceive of the covenant which God made with Christ, as the Head of the elect, as distinct from the Covenant of Grace; for hereby an addition of a third covenant is made to the two covenants, of which the Divine Records treat.

2. This compact is the result of pure Grace; it was merely the Love and free Favour of God the Father, that moved Him to exercise His Wisdom in the contrivance of our Redemption, and to enter into covenant with His Son, to secure this stupendous design: nor can any other reason be assigned, why Christ so voluntarily became our Surety, or undertook for us, than His boundless Goodness and Grace.

3. It was founded upon a purpose of Grace; the resolution which God fixed upon in His eternal mind to bring us to Glory, was the effect of infinite Love; hence our election is called an *Election of Grace* (Rom. 11: 5). That was an act put forth by God, without any external motive; it was His own Sovereign Will, and nothing else that determined

Him in this matter. This purpose of God rose up into a covenant between Him and His Son.

4. All Grace is promised in this Covenant; doubtless, that Covenant in which all Grace is granted to the elect, is the Covenant of Grace; but thus it is in this compact.

The privilege of Adoption in it, is this, God engaged to be the God and Father of Christ, as Mediator and Head of His seed in this Covenant, as is evident from these words, *He shall cry unto me, my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation* (Psa. 89:26). Now by the same act that God became the Father of Christ as Mediator, He also became the Father of His members; and therefore our Lord says unto His disciples, *I ascend to my God and to your God, to my Father and to your Father* (Joh. 20:17). Again, remission of sin is contained in this Covenant, as the very nature of it plainly demonstrates; Christ on His part promised to bear our guilt, and suffer the demerit of it; and God the Father on His part engaged fully to acquit and discharge us; for he *was in Christ*, (i.e., from Everlasting, when this Covenant was entered into) *reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them* (2Co. 5:19). Besides, justification is a privilege given in this eternal compact, which we learn from the words of God the Father; *by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many," for He shall bear their iniquities* (Isa. 53:11). Moreover, the grace of regeneration is treasured up herein, as is manifest from these words, *thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* (Psa. 110: 3); that is, Thy members who are naturally perverse and obstinate, shall freely bow to Thy scepter, and submit to Thy laws, as King in *Zion*. Add to these things, final perseverance is insured to the elect, by this Covenant; this gracious benefit is fully and clearly expressed in this sweet promise; *As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, i.e., those who turn from transgression in Jacob*, and are described by that character in the preceding verse, *My Spirit that is upon thee*, that is to say, *the Redeemer who came to Zion; and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds' seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever* (Isa. 59:20). Young converts may be called the seed of the church, because they are born, nourished and brought up there; for of *Zion it shall be said, that this and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her* (Psa. 87: 5). The carnal seed of believers are not intended, but the spiritual seed of Christ: I add once more, that everlasting life is given to the elect,

in this Covenant; this is very evident, from the words of the Apostle, *in Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began* (Tit. 1: 2): thus the members of Christ were blessed with all spiritual blessings in this eternal Covenant, which was entered into by God and Christ before time commenced; therefore it is the Covenant of Grace. For though, as Mr. *Petto* observes, “In covenants between princes, some articles may be concerning prerogatives and royalties, peculiar to them in their public capacities, which the people share not in, but in them, as striking sail, etc. Other grants may concern the people in their private capacities, as merchants, mariners, etc., yet prince and people are within the same contract: so doubtless there may be divers grants to Jesus Christ in his public capacity, in the office of mediator, and other promises made to his seed; yet king and subjects, head and members, are within the same covenant, as the principal debtor, and the Surety are within the same obligation.”^{f7}

There being some promises in the Covenant which regard Christ, as personally considered, and others that concern His people, is not a foundation sufficient to support the distinction we have been now considering.

In the opinion of the Assembly of Divines, this is the Covenant of Grace; thus they express themselves concerning it in their larger Catechism: “The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ the second Adam, and with all the Elect in him, as his Seed.” This is a very full and clear definition of the Covenant of Grace, and plainly shows that they understood the agreement between God and Christ, to be that Covenant; but to proceed.

Secondly, This Covenant is of Eternal date, which I apprehend may be thus made evident.

1. It is called an everlasting Covenant: *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isa. 55: 3). And elsewhere, *Now the God of Peace which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant* (Heb. 13: 20). It is so called, not only because the benefits of it will eternally continue, but also on the account of its being actually entered into, before time began; which will further appear by what follows.

2. Christ is an everlasting Counsellor: Some of his titles are *wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father* (Isa. 9: 6). Dr. Goodwin observes, that Everlastingness which is affixed to him as a Father, is also true of him as a Counsellor.^{f8} It is with relation to this Covenant, that He bears such a character, being jointly concerned with the Father in the contrivance of our salvation, which is agreed on in it. He was in His bosom from all eternity, and privy to the secret purposes of His heart.

3. He was invested with the office of Mediator before time began, which is manifest from the words of wisdom of Christ: *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was* (Pro. 8:23): *i.e.*, I was constituted the Head and Mediator of those persons on whom My delights were fixed. It is the Covenant of Grace, of which He is the Mediator, and therefore the Covenant is of the same date with the office and capacity which he bears in that Covenant: but He stood in the capacity of Mediator before the world was framed; hence it follows, the constitution of this Covenant was in eternity.

4. Grace was given to the elect in Christ before the world was formed, as I have already shown. *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began* (1Ti. 1: 9). All Grace and Glory were granted to Christ as the federal Head and Representative of His people, in the Covenant of Grace; since therefore this was done before the commencement of time, it may be justly concluded, that this Covenant is eternal.

5. If it was not thus, the Old Testament saints could not be saved by virtue of the Covenant of Grace: They were saved even as we, by the very same Covenant. It was from hence that they were furnished with all necessary supplies of Grace, as believers now are. God did not save them by one Covenant, and under this dispensation brings us to happiness by another. Though Christ had not actually accomplished the work of redemption, yet having re-stipulated and agreed with the Father to perform it in the appointed time; all the blessings of the new Covenant were communicated to the elect of God, as much as if it had been really completed, but with a view to the future Satisfaction of Christ, promised in this Covenant; which seems clear from those words of the inspired writer, *And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they*

which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). I pass on,

Thirdly, To consider the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant.

The original word signifies aptly or fitly disposed and ordered.^{f9} All things relating to our salvation are most wisely and beautifully disposed in this federal agreement, for the Glory of God, abasing the creature, the security of the church, and the confounding of Satan.

1. This Covenant is most wisely ordered for the Honor of God. The Glory of the Father as the Contriver of our Redemption, is greatly displayed in this compact. He is to be considered as the first Mover in this weighty affair: He drew the plan and model of it, and concerted the best methods to accomplish it. The Honor of the Mediator is herein highly advanced, His Glory is great in our salvation. It was agreed on, that He should perform the work of our redemption, in every branch of it, that all the glory arising from thence might be attributed to Him. Nor is the Honor of the divine Spirit less secured by this Covenant; for as the Father projected the way of our recovery, and the Son completed the work of our redemption, agreeable to his Word and Promise in this great transaction, the Holy Ghost discovers and applies what the Father and Son have done for us. Wherefore the three divine Persons equally divide the glory of our salvation, according to everlasting agreement. Besides, the Perfections of God have a most beauteous display in our recovery, as it was fixed and settled in this Covenant. Wisdom shines with an eminent lustre in the whole affair; hence the revelation of salvation, by a crucified Jesus, or the Gospel, is called *the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory* (1Co. 2: 7). How the Law might be fulfilled, Justice satisfied, and sinners saved, was worthy of infinite Wisdom to contrive. Again, the Power of God is abundantly discovered in this business, upon which account, Christ as crucified is called *the Power, as well as the Wisdom of God* (1Co. 1:14). A finite or created strength was insufficient to support our Lord under the intolerable pressure of guilt and sufferings which He bare and underwent: Divine Power is also manifest in quickening the souls of the elect in their regeneration, and carrying on that work in opposition to sin and Satan: 'Tis only by the Power of God that *we are kept through faith unto salvation* (1 Peter. 1: 5). Moreover, the Love and Grace of God is

gloriously displayed in this Covenant. It was mere favor in God that moved him to ordain Christ to be the Mediator and Surety of it, to give our persons and all spiritual blessings into His Hand: it was pure Grace in Christ which induced Him to undertake for us to secure our eternal felicity: 'Tis stupendous and boundless Grace that forgives our abounding sins (Rom. 5:20,21) according to the full and precious promises of this Covenant. Farther, Justice has an equal shine with all the other attributes of God: The honor of Mercy is not advanced to the prejudice of Justice, but that hath the same Glory with Grace. The Righteousness and Justice of God is clearly seen, and fully vindicated in the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons, through the obedience and blood of Christ; so that He appears to be just, in justifying of those who believe in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). Thus there is a perfect harmony between Grace and Justice, Goodness and Holiness in our salvation, which is expressed in these words; *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other* (Psa. 85:10). Add to these things, the Faithfulness of God is evidently seen, in fulfilling Covenant promises, and communicating Covenant blessings to His people; for His Faithfulness He *will not suffer to fail* (Psa. 59:33), but will perform all that He hath promised to the elect, in this Covenant; says the Apostle, *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it* (1Th. 5:14). *Believers shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to show the Lord is upright; he is their rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him* (Psa. 92:14,15). Therefore the attributes of God are greatly glorified in this Covenant.

2. It is disposed in the best manner for abasing the creature. Man is naturally full of pride and arrogance, entertains a very high opinion of his ability, and the worth of his services; falsely imagines that it is within the compass of his own power to secure his future happiness: He is really *poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked* (Rev. 3:17), yet conceits himself to be rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing. This haughty disposition in man, God is determined to bring down, and to lay his glory in the dust. In order to which, every branch of our salvation is of Grace, in direct opposition to works; as the Apostle affirms, *By Grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast* (Eph. 2: 8, 9). All boasting and pride are entirely excluded by the Covenant of Grace; for *where is boasting? it is excluded: by what law? of works? nay, but by the Law of Faith* (Rom. 3:27); that is, by the New Covenant, or the Gospel.

3. The Covenant is well ordered for the security of the church. Had our Salvation rested on the uncertain will of man, how precarious, nay, impracticable would it have been? But since it is wholly dependent on the immutable Will of God, it is indubitable, certain, and sure. Grace alone could secure it; and therefore *it is of faith, that it might be by Grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed* (Rom. 4:16). Pardon, peace, nor justification, nay, not any of the blessings of the New Covenant are suspended, till we have performed conditions on our part; but all of them are effectually secured to us, by the mutual engagements of God and Christ in this everlasting Covenant, which are a solid and firm foundation.

4. It is most agreeably disposed for the confounding of Satan. When man was in a state of innocence, Satan formed a design against him, resolved to bring him into the same miserable circumstances with himself, if possible; which to effect, he tempts him to violate the Law of his Creator: man unhappily yields to his temptation, acts contrary to the express command of God. It was no small satisfaction to this fallen spirit, to see his malicious design so far succeed; but that which he thought would have issued in the eternal destruction of man, God takes the advantage of, to render His own Glory the more conspicuous, and to advance apostate man to a far higher dignity than that of which he was possessed in his primitive estate. According to the gracious Decree of God, the works of the Devil are destroyed, his design is frustrated, and eternal confusion is thrown upon himself: *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil* (1Jo. 3: 8).

Fourthly, The Covenant of Grace is Stable, Firm and Sure.

The Stability and Firmness of it may be concluded from these things:

1. The Love of God, which gave rise to this Covenant, is invariable: it is without any alteration, and always the same. God freely fixed His favor upon the elect; and not because He foresaw any qualifications in them which recommended them to His Goodness; the direct contrary of that is true: for when He placed His Love upon them, *He knew that their necks would be as iron sinews, and their brows brass* (Isa. 48: 4). As the foreviews of their obstinacy did not prevent His kind thoughts concerning them, their unworthiness cannot cause Him to change. His Immutability is the solid foundation of their security, which is affirmed by Himself in these words; *I am the Lord, I change not; and therefore ye the Sons of Jacob are not consumed* (Mal. 3: 6). His Love admits of no vicissitudes; it

is as unchangeable as Himself, yea, it is Himself; and He will as soon cease to be, as cease to love His people, says the Apostle, *God is Love* (1Jo. 4:16): that is, it is His Nature and Essence. The interest which the saints have in Divine favor, can never be lost; nothing shall ever separate them from the *Love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord* (Rom. 3:35-38): therefore the Covenant of Grace, which is the result of that Love, will eternally remain inviolable and sure.

2. It is founded upon a steady purpose of Grace. The designs of Love which God has formed in His infinite Mind about His elect are unalterable. They are infinitely more firm than mountains of brass: we have His own Word for it; that *His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure* (Isa. 46:10). Eternal Election, on which the everlasting Covenant is fixed as its proper basis, is *a foundation that standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His* (2Ti. 2:19); from whence the stability of that Covenant may, with very good reason, be inferred.

3. This may be argued from the inviolable Word of God. The blessings of this Covenant are all promised by that God Who cannot lie. If any of the promises of the New Covenant should fail of their accomplishment, the Truth of God would be impeached; but that shall not, nay, never can be: for *His Covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips* (Psa. 89:34). Therefore the Covenant of Grace is more firm than the most immovable things in nature, which is expressly affirmed: *The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall 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* (Isa. 54:10).

4. God hath confirmed this Covenant with His solemn Oath. Thus He speaks concerning it; *Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David my Servant* (Psa. 89:35). Wherefore the Covenant of Grace is forever established by God's Word and His Oath. They are the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for him to lie. If the God of Truth cannot break His Promise, nor act contrary to His Oath, then the Covenant is stable and firm; but neither of these He can do, for that were to deny Himself.

5. Christ has ratified this Covenant, by fulfilling all the Conditions of it. The work which the Father gave him to do, He has fully completed, and thereby confirmed the Covenant of Grace. That no part of the Father's

Will concerning our redemption remains to be fulfilled, our Lord Himself assures us, by the last words which He delivered on the Cross; for just before He resigned His Soul, He said, *It is finished* (Joh. 19:30); that is, I have now perfected the whole pleasure of My Father, concerning My Sufferings to atone for sin. Now as Christ on His part has punctually performed the utmost of what He promised, Justice requires on the Father's part, that He make good all His federal engagements to Christ. From the whole we may strongly conclude that this Covenant is stable, firm, and sure. It is sure in its promises; not one of those many sweet and gracious promises, with which it is so well stored, shall fail of its fulfillment; for *all the promises of God in him are, yea, and in him, Amen, to the glory of God by us* (2Co. 1:10). The blessings of this Covenant are sure, therefore called sure mercies; *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isa. 55: 3). The remission of our sins, the acceptance of our persons, effectual calling, final perseverance, and eternal blessedness in the fruition of God are all as certain and sure as the unchangeable Love, steady Purpose, firm Promise, and solemn Oath of the God of Truth, and Faithfulness can make them: wherefore not one good thing shall fail, of all that the Lord hath promised. Let the saints adore the free Grace and infinite Goodness of God, which has rendered their everlasting felicity thus secure.

Fifthly, All our salvation is contained in this Covenant.

For this is all my Salvation. Some think Christ is designed,^{f10} He is sometimes so called. *Simeon* gives him this character; *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation* (Luk. 2:29,30). He may very justly be styled salvation, because *there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Act. 4:12). The whole of our recovery and redemption was effected by him: He is our pardon, peace, justification, and sanctification; yea, our all, and in all. Besides, He is given to us, and all things with Him, in this everlasting Covenant. Salvation itself may be intended; all the various Parts of which were fixed and settled in this Covenant. Our acquittance and discharge from guilt was promised by God on the condition of Christ's suffering the demerit of our crimes. The acceptance of our persons was agreed to upon the terms of Christ's being made under and obeying the Law for us. Grace and glory were absolutely granted to us in this compact; every branch of our salvation comes within the compass of it. Wherefore it is a very dangerous

mistake, that men may safely depend upon the uncovenanted Mercy of God for eternal happiness; because it is only through, by, and in the Covenant of Grace, that Divine Goodness is discovered to poor sinners. But I apprehend it is not necessary to enlarge here, having before observed what promises God made to Christ, concerning our Salvation, when this Covenant was entered into between Them.

Sixthly, *The Covenant of Grace is equal to the largest Wishes, and most extensive Desires of the saints.*

And all my desire, says the *Psalmist* Some understand this of Christ, in Whom really there is every thing which is excellent and desirable: hence He is called *the Desire of all Nations* (Hag. 2: 7). Infinite Excellencies center in His Person, all Beauties and Perfections reside in Him, and everything that is necessary to our happiness dwells in Him, and flows from Him: the Amiableness of His Person, and the Fulness of His Grace, render Him the proper Object of the saints' highest love and pleasure. He indeed is all their delight.^{f11} It may intend that ample and large provision which is made in the everlasting Covenant, for the supply, consolation, and future felicity of God's people. Under the influences of Grace, they ardently desire the extirpation of sin, and a perfect conformity to Christ; greater nearness to God, more clear and lasting prospects of His Love, and a fuller knowledge of the mysteries of Grace: they cannot but aspire after, yea, they vehemently long for an uninterrupted enjoyment of God; nor can any thing less afford them a full and constant satisfaction.

All these things, and far more than we are able to express or conceive, are comprehended in that one promise of this Covenant. *They shall be my People, and I will be their God* (Jer. 32:38). Therefore it may well be called all our desire, and all our delight.

Lastly, *The Covenant of Grace furnishes the saints with suitable Support and Consolation, under the most afflictive dispensations of Providence.*

Although He make it not to grow, Some think the Messiah is intended in these words, and take this to be the sense; though the promised Branch of *Jesse and David* doth not as yet appear, or is not come, yet He is all my salvation, and all my desire; and He certainly will bud, grow, and flourish in the time appointed in this Covenant.^{f12} Others thus; Christ, Who is all my salvation, and all my desire, shall not grow as the tender grass of the

field, which soon fades, decays, and withers, but He shall always reign and govern.^{f13} There be others who understand it of the disorders and irregularities of David's family, and of those afflictions that attended him in his royal station,^{f14} under which the Covenant of Grace was His support and comfort. That this Covenant is well suited to comfort the saints under pressing difficulties and trials, thus appears;

1. The Covenant of Grace has severed them from all penal evil. No curse attends their afflictions, however great or heavy they may be; for it was agreed and settled by God and Christ in this compact, that the curse due to their offenses should be inflicted on their Surety: therefore *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 8: 1). There is not the least drop of wrathful anger, or vindictive displeasure poured into their cup.

2. They spring from Love, as we learn from these words; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten* (Rev. 3:19). In the Covenant of Grace a rod is laid up for the correction of Christ's seed; but from the nature of the Covenant, we must necessarily conclude, that everlasting Love provided it, and that infinite Compassion only uses it.

3. All afflictions, under the influence of this Covenant, serve the true interest of their souls. The apostle affirms, *That all things work together for good to those that love God, and are the called according to his purpose* (Rom. 8:28). They are brought nearer to God, are weaned from the things of this world, and their graces, faith, hope, and patience, are exercised by the tribulations which attend them (Rom. 5: 4,5).

4. The Covenant of Grace secures their deliverance out of all afflictions. *In this world they shall have tribulation* (Joh. 16:33): but to this world, blessed by God, it is limited; for none will invade them in the next. A period will be fixed to their lives and their griefs at the same time. When we say that a believer is dead, we pronounce him so from all sin and sorrow. These things being thus, it may well be allowed that the Covenant of Grace administers suitable comforts under distresses. An instance of which we have in the person, whose decease occasioned this discourse. Many things might be mentioned concerning her, worthy of our imitation; but I shall not enlarge on her character: her manner of life was well known to many of you. This I think may be said of her, without any suspicion of flattery to her honorable memory, that the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, and has appeared to all men, taught her to deny

ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. Her afflictions were many, which so far as I am able to judge from my acquaintance with her, she bore with patience, resignation, and cheerfulness.

In her last tedious and heavy one, she was generally comfortable, and the nearer her time of dissolution drew nigh, her faith grew stronger in Covenant-Love. When I paid her my last visit, she spoke very freely of divine things, with a remarkable degree of pleasure: but the state of her body being then very low, I was fearful speaking too much might be prejudicial to her, which I signified: She answered, “What can I say too much about my dear Lord? Can I talk too much about him who has done and suffered such great things for me?” Thus joyful she then was, at the prospect of approaching death. She now is, I doubt not, delivered out of all affliction and trouble, and received into the blessed mansions above, by her dear Savior, with this rapturous invitation: *Come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee, before the foundation of the world;* where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feeds, and leads her to living fountains of water, and God wipes away all tears from her eyes.



FOOTNOTES

^{ft1} *Vid. Poli Synop. in loc.*

^{ft2} *Vid. Poli Synop. in loc.*

^{ft3} *Glassius'*, Philol. Sac. 1. 3. Gram. Sac. p. 616.

^{ft4} See my, Defense of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification, pp. 60- 64.

^{ft5} *R. Taylor's*, The Covenant of Grace, pag. 233.

^{ft6} *Neonomianism Unmasked*, 2nd Part, pag. 127

^{ft7} *Petto* on The Covenant, pag. 20.

^{ft8} *Goodwin*, Christ the Mediator, 1. 4, pag. 136.

^{ft9} A Rad. ערך ordinavit, disposuit, aptavit, *Roberts'* Lexicon.

^{ft10} *Vid. Poli Synop. in loc.*

^{ft11} כלחפצ

^{ft12} *Vid. Poli Synop. in loc.*

^{ft13} *Ibid.*

^{ft14} *Ibid.*