

## SERMON XI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS JACOMBE, D. D.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION OPENED.

*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*—Isaiah liii. 10.

OF all the prophets, this prophet Isaiah was the most evangelical prophet: Jerome calls him "Isaiah the evangelist."\* Of all the prophecies of this prophet, that which you have in this chapter is the most evangelical prophecy.† I do not remember any one piece of scripture in the Old Testament so often cited in the New Testament as this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; it being cited there no less than eight or nine times. The eunuch [whom] you read of in the gospel, was converted by a part of it; after God, by the ministry of Philip, had opened his eyes to see Christ held out in it. (Acts viii. 30—33.)

In the whole chapter you have a most lively and full description and representation of the humiliation, death, and passion of Jesus Christ; which indeed is so exact, and so consonant to what hath fallen out since, that Isaiah seems here rather to pen a history, than a prophecy.

That Christ all along is here treated upon, and not the sufferings of the Jewish state, I shall not now insist upon. Philip, when he had this scripture before him,—he "preached Jesus." (Acts viii. 35.) Christ brings it down to himself. (Mark ix. 12.) And the matter of it is so convictive, from that clear light that goes along with it, that several of the Jews in the reading of this chapter have been brought over to the Christian religion, as not able to stand out against the light and evidence of it.‡

The time allotted for this exercise being but short, I must fall upon my work presently. I come to that branch which I am to insist upon: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." In the verse before, you have Christ's innocency: "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his

\* *Non tam propheta dicendus est quàm evangelista.*—HIERONYMI *Epist. ad Paulam et Eustochium*, tom. iii. p. 9. "He is not so much to be entitled 'the prophet,' as the 'evangelist.'"—EDIT. † *Quantò propheta hic aliis antecellit prophetis, tantò hæc ejus, cap. liii., edita prophetia cæteris ejus præstare videtur oraculis.*—ALEX. MORUS in *Præfatione ad Commentarium in cap. liii. Isaie.*

‡ As much as this prophet excels all others, so much does the prediction published in this fifty-third chapter seem to surpass all his other prophecies.—EDIT. † *Ingenue profiteor illud ipsum caput ad fidem Christianam me adduxisse; nam plus millies illud caput perlegi, &c.*—JOH. IS. LEVIT. *Vide HOORNÆ., Contra Judæos, lib. vi. cap. 1, p. 408.* "I freely avow that this very chapter led me to the Christian faith; for I read it through more than a thousand times."—EDIT.

mouth," "Why then did he undergo so much? 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.' How could the Father, *salvâ justitiâ*, ['consistently with justice,'] deal thus with an innocent person, and with his own Son too?" I answer: Christ had now put himself in the sinner's stead, and was become his *εγγυος*, his "surety;" and so, obnoxious to whatever the sinner had deserved in his own person: and upon this, the Father might, without any injustice, and actually did, for the manifestation of the unsearchable riches of his wisdom and love, "bruise him and put him to grief." The Lord Jesus had no sin *in* him by inhesion; he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners:" (Heb. vii. 26:) but he had a great deal of sin *upon* him by imputation: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) It pleased Christ to put himself thus under our guilt, and therefore "it pleased the" Father thus "to bruise him."

If you ask further, "What had Christ to encourage him either to or in these sufferings?" Though there was infinite love in Christ to put him upon all this, and to carry him through all this, yet there must be something more: you have therefore here very precious promises,\* made to Christ upon this his undertaking; as, that "he should see his seed, he should prolong his days, the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand;" (verse 10;) "he should see of the travail of his soul;" (verse 11;) and God would "divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong; because he had poured out his soul unto death," &c. (Verse 12.)

This [is premised], very briefly to clear up the coherence of the words. I pass over the various readings of them, and also what might be spoke for the explication of them; (that will come in afterwards;) because I hasten to that which is my business this morning, namely, the opening of the covenant of redemption. You have heard of the misery of man by nature, of the inability of man to help himself in this lost condition, &c. I am now to speak something to his recovery or restoration, or rather to that which indeed is the foundation of his recovery; and that is the covenant here called "the covenant of redemption."

By which "covenant" I mean *that federal transaction that was betwixt God the Father and the Son from everlasting about the redemption of lost and fallen man*. Understand me here aright: I am not to speak to the covenant of grace, but to the covenant of redemption. We make a difference betwixt these two. It is true, the covenant of redemption is a covenant of grace; but it is not strictly and properly that covenant of grace which the scripture holds out in opposition to the covenant of works, but rather the means to it or foundation of it. Amongst other things wherein these two covenants do differ, this is one: they differ in the *fœderati*; for, in the covenant of redemption, the *fœderati* are God and Christ; but in the covenant of grace, the "confederates" are God and believers. I lay down this as my judg-

\* Mr. Baxter looks upon these rather as prophecies than as promises.—"Appendix," p. 39.

ment with much submission, because I know herein I differ from some of great repute, whom I very much honour in the Lord.\* The Lord Jesus, I grant, is the very kernel and marrow of the covenant of grace; "the Mediator of this better covenant," (Heb. xii. 24,) the "Surety" of this covenant, (chap. vii. 22,) "the Testator" of this covenant, (chap. ix. 16, 17,) "the Messenger of this covenant." (Mal. iii. 1.) All this is very clear; all that I say is this,—that Christ is not the *persona federata*, ["covenanting party,"] but believers. The covenant of grace was not made with God and Christ, as a common Head, but it is made with God and believers: and therefore, whereas the promise is said to be made to the seed, and that "seed is Christ," (Gal. iii. 16,) you are to take Christ there not personally, but mystically; as you have it taken in 1 Cor. xii. 12: "So also is Christ."

I only say this to clear up my way, and therefore shall not lay down any arguments for the confirmation of this opinion. He that desires satisfaction in this point, let him peruse the authors cited in the margin.† To the business in hand:—

The covenant of redemption, I say, is that federal transaction, or mutual stipulation, that was betwixt God and Christ in the great work of man's redemption. I call it "a federal transaction, or mutual stipulation," because therein lies the nature of a covenant. It is, as civilians define it, "a mutual stipulation or agreement betwixt party and party upon such and such terms, with reciprocal obligations each of the other."

That the business of man's redemption was transacted "betwixt the Father and the Son" is very clear. "The counsel of peace shall be between them both:" (Zech. vi. 13 :) the counsel of reconciliation, how man, that is now an enemy to God, may be reconciled to God, and God to him; (for, whatever the Socinians say, the reconciliation is not only on the sinner's part, but on God's also;) this "counsel," or consultation, "shall be between them both;" that is, Father and Son. I know, some interpret it of Christ's offices; the priestly and the kingly office of Christ both conspire to make peace betwixt God and man: but I rather take it in the other sense.

That this transaction betwixt these two glorious persons was also "federal," or in the way of a covenant, and that, too, "from everlasting," is to me a very great truth, though I am not ignorant that some learned men are not so well satisfied about it.

For the explication and confirmation of this great mystery, I will lay down these seven PROPOSITIONS:—

#### PROPOSITION I.

The first is this: *God the Father, in order to man's redemption, stands upon satisfaction.*—The sinner shall be justified, but first God will be satisfied. Man is now fallen from that happy state wherein at first God made him; and by this fall he hath offered an affront to God, and wronged God, so far forth as he was capable of such a

\* MUSCULUS, &c., DR. PRESTON, MR. RUTHERFORD, "Assembly's Greater Catechism."

† BULKLEY, "On the Covenant," p. 28, &c.; BLAKE, "On the Covenant," chap. vi. p. 24; BAXTER'S "Appendix" to his "Aphorisms," p. 35, &c.

thing. In this case, therefore, God will have satisfaction, in the reparation of his honour, in the manifestation of his truth, in the vindication of his holiness and justice. It is true, he being the *persona læsa*, ["the injured party,"] he might freely have remitted the offence, and done what he pleased: but *supposito decreto*, (some go higher, even to God's nature, which necessarily puts him upon the punishment of sin,) I say, "supposing God's decree," he having decreed thus and thus, and also threatened thus and thus, he will have satisfaction. And therefore, though he doth in election give such and such freely unto Christ, yet, for the carrying on and execution of his purpose herein, he stands upon terms for the satisfying of his justice; which attribute God will advance as well as his mercy; for all are alike dear to God. He will have "an offering for sin" in an expiatory and propitiatory way; (Isai. liii. 10;) a price and ransom shall be paid him down, or the captive shall never be released. (1 Tim. ii. 6.) And in order unto this, or for the manifestation of this, you do not only read in scripture of election as to believers, but also as to Christ, whom God calls his "elect." (Isai. xlii. 1.) The Father chooses him, and "sets forth" or "fore-ordains" him, (*προεθετο*, as it is Rom. iii. 25,) to make satisfaction, without which fallen man shall not be taken into his favour again; who shall be redeemed and justified, but in such a way that God may "declare his righteousness." The apostle doubles his expression as to this: "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins; to declare, I say, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Verses 25, 26.) You will have this great truth more fully insisted upon by another in the carrying on of this exercise; I will here say no more to it.

PROPOSITION II.

Secondly. The Father, you see, demands satisfaction. Well; *to this he annexes many excellent, "great, and precious promises."*—That if Christ would engage in this work, and undertake thus to satisfy, (for he alone could do it,) he would do thus and thus for him; as, that he would fit him for the work, own him and strengthen him in the work, succeed and prosper him in the work, and then reward him for it. And all this the Father makes good to Christ.

1. *He fits him for this work.*—Both in a large effusion of the graces and gifts of the Spirit upon him: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" (John iii. 34;) and also in the preparing of a body for him. (Heb. x. 5.)

2. *He strengthens him and supports him in the work.*—"Behold my servant," (Christ is our Lord, but in the work of redemption he was the Father's servant,) "whom I uphold." (Isai. xlii. 1.) And therefore you find, when Christ was put upon the greatest trials, God gave in eminent succour to him; as in the case of temptation: "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him;" (Matt. iv. 11;) and in his agony in the garden: "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening

him." (Luke xxii. 43.) And certainly, if Christ had not had support and strength from the Godhead, he had never been able to have borne up under and carried through his terribly sharp work. You find him encouraging himself and acting faith upon this,—that God would own him, and stand by him in this undertaking: "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. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together: who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." (Isai. l. 7—9.) "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm xvi. 8—10.)

3. Further: *God the Father succeeds and prospers him in the work.*—"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." This was promised and also made good to Christ, in the numerous body of believers, past, present, and to come. I might here enlarge upon a threefold gift which the gospel holds forth: there is *the Father's gift*, *the Son's gift*, and *the believer's gift*. *The Father's gift* lies in election: such and such individual persons he gives to Christ: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." (John xvii. 6.) We are a free gift to Christ in election, as Christ is a free gift to us in redemption. *The Son's gift* lies in the giving of himself for us: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) And then there is *the believer's gift*: and that is,—he gives up himself to Christ, to be ruled by Christ, disposed by Christ, saved by Christ; he gives up himself "to the Lord." (2 Cor. viii. 5.) The Father giving believers to Christ, and promising that believers in time should also give themselves to him, was a great encouragement to Christ to give himself for believers; and if you read John xvii. you shall see there, that Christ, when he had done his work, takes much notice of the accomplishment of this promise to him, in believers' (who are his "seed") owning of him and closing with him.

4. Lastly: *God will and doth reward Christ upon his undertaking to redeem man.*—He tells him, he shall not lose by it: his "days shall be prolonged;" (Isai. liii. 10;) that is, his kingdom shall be set up in the world to endure for ever: God would "divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death." (Verse 12.) And many such promises you have made to Christ. Accordingly "God hath exalted him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; hath put all things under his feet, made

him to be the Head over all things to the church ;” (Eph. i. 21, 22;) “given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:” (Phil. ii. 9, 10 :) and all because (to give satisfaction to his Father) he “made himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Verses 7, 8.) And thus you see what the Father demands, and what he doth indent and promise to his Son, in case he will engage in this undertaking: not as if the Son was unwilling so to do; (you must not so understand it;) but the work being of such a nature, so hard, so grievous, it pleased the Father thus to treat with him.

PROPOSITION III.

In the third place. *The Lord Jesus Christ engages in the work, accepts of the terms and conditions set before him, and undertakes to satisfy his Father's demands.*—And in order to satisfaction, (which God stands upon, as you have heard before,) Christ is willing to fulfil the whole law, which was the rule or measure or standard for this satisfaction. God had been dishonoured by the violation of his law, and the disobedience and non-performance of it was that which kept God and the sinner at a distance; and therefore he will only be satisfied and reconciled upon the fulfilling of it. “Here is my law,” saith God: “satisfy it, and my justice is satisfied.”

You must know this,—that though a sinner, as to himself, is justified upon the terms of the covenant of grace, yet, as to his Surety, he is justified upon the covenant of works: for the Surety must pay the whole debt, and the Father will bate him nothing.

OBJECTION. “Where is, then,” some will say, “the freeness of grace in the justifying and acquitting of a sinner? If God will be satisfied to the utmost, what becomes of mercy? If the surety pay the debt to the creditor, is it any great favour for the creditor to let the debtor out of prison?”

SOLUTION. To this I answer: Free grace is very well consistent with full satisfaction; and, notwithstanding the latter, the former is very glorious; partly because God himself found out this way of satisfaction; partly because God accepts it for the good of the sinner, as though he had made it in his own person. That place of the apostle is observable: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 24.) Notwithstanding redemption by Christ, yet we are “justified freely,” as freely as though Christ had done and suffered nothing at all. But this is a digression.

I say, the Father demanding the fulfilling of the law, Christ undertakes to do it; and therefore he willingly puts himself under this law: “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) And he submits not only to the duty of the law, but also to the penalty of the law; not only to do what the law enjoins,

but also to suffer what the law threatens : and the former he makes good by his active obedience ; the latter, by his passive obedience.\*

To open this a little further : Christ here doth two things :—

1. *He undertakes to perform the whole moral law.*—And therefore, when he comes into the world, his eye was upon this : “ Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” (Matt. iii. 15.) “ I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil.” (Chap. v. 17.) And all this Christ did for our good : “ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us ;” (Rom. viii. 4 ; ) a very convincing place for the imputation of Christ’s active obedience.

2. *Whereas a special law was laid upon him, as he was our Mediator ; he is willing also to obey that, in order to our redemption.*—That Christ should die, was no part of the moral law ; but it was a positive special law laid upon Christ. Well, he makes it good : “ I lay down my life. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John x. 17, 18.) Christ, as Mediator, had a command from his Father to die ; and he observes it. And, to be short, whatever the Father put him upon in his whole mediatory work, he did it all. So he tells us : “ I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John xvii. 4.)

#### PROPOSITION IV.

Fourthly. *In this federal transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, both parties were free.*—Here was no necessity, co-action, or any thing of this nature ; but both were free.

*The Father* was free in his demands of satisfaction. He might have let man alone in his state of guilt and wrath ; he might have suffered all mankind to have perished, and to be thrown into hell. He had been infinitely happy in himself, though there had been no such thing as redemption by Christ. It is true, without this, God had not had satisfaction to his justice ; for if Adam and his posterity had burned in hell to all eternity, all would have been nothing in a way of satisfaction : but there had not been the least diminution of his essential glory and blessedness in himself.

*The Son* is free too on his part. He freely consents to the terms of this covenant ; and, in the fulness of time, freely engages in the making of them good : “ Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” (Heb. x. 7.) “ I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Psalm xl. 8.) And therefore he says there, “ Mine ears hast thou bored.” (Verse 6.) As the servant in the law, when he was willing to stay with his master, and to do his work,—his ear was bored ; (Exod. xxi. 6 ; ) so it was with Christ : he was willing to serve his Father in this business, the greatest that ever was carried on in the world ; and therefore says he, “ Mine ears hast thou bored.”

\* *Quod requirit lex ; nempe, tum plenam pœnæ reatibus nostris debitæ luitionem, ut a condemnatione liberemur ; tum plenam legis præstationem, ut ad æternam vitam icævari inveniamur, ex illâ promissione, Hoc fac, et vives.*—BEZA. “ What the law requires ; namely, both a full payment of the penalty due to our guilt, that we may be freed from condemnation ; and a complete fulfilling of the law, that we may be found fitted for eternal life, according to that promise, ‘ Do this, and thou shalt live.’”—EDIT.

Christ was free in all his obedience ; and if it had not been free and voluntary, it would not have been satisfactory or meritorious. Whatever he did or suffered, it was from love, not necessity. This truth is so evident from the whole current of the gospel, that I need not enlarge upon it.

PROPOSITION V.

Fifthly. *These two Persons in this blessed covenant,—they do mutually trust each other.*—I say, They do mutually trust each other for their respective making good the terms of this covenant. The Father trusts the Son, and the Son trusts the Father : the Father trusts the Son for the “making of his soul an offering for sin ;” the Son trusts the Father for the “seeing of his seed.” To bring this assertion down to time : in the times of the Old Testament, the Father trusts the Son ; in the times of the New Testament, the Son trusts the Father. Before the coming of Christ, the Father takes up the patriarchs and others to heaven, upon assurance of this,—that Christ, in the fulness of time, would take our nature upon him, and therein make full satisfaction. Christ having promised to do thus, the Father takes his word ; and so takes up Old-Testament believers to glory. Since the coming of Christ, the Son now trusts his Father : for he hath offered up himself, paid down the full ransom ; and yet he doth not reap the full benefit of it, many believers being not yet glorified ; but he trusts his Father, that, one by one, they all shall be so in due time. This may seem to be but a notion. I confess, we have no place of scripture positively asserting this ; but the nature of the thing demonstrates it : for, there being some distance of time in what was to be done by both Persons, there must be a mutual trusting each of the other.

PROPOSITION VI.

In the sixth place. *These two Persons all along in their proper and peculiar transactions,—they deal each with the other as under a covenant, and they hold each other to the terms of the covenant that was betwixt them.*—Not that there is any question of their breaking of it ; but thus we may with an humble reverence conceive of it :—

*The Father* holds the Son to the engagement on his part. He will not “spare” him, or bate him any thing : (Rom. viii. 32 :) satisfaction he will have to the utmost, though it cost his life and blood. And therefore you may observe the prayer of Christ : “Father, save me from this hour :” he seems to check or recall himself : “But for this cause came I unto this hour :” (John xii. 27 :) “This is but that which I engaged to go through ; and therefore I must do it.” And his Father answers him there accordingly. “Father, glorify thy name :” still Christ’s eye was upon that,—his Father’s glory. “Well,” saith the Father, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” (Verse 28.) He speaks thus, not only upon the account of his sovereignty, but of the covenant also that I am speaking to.

*The Son* also stands upon the terms of this covenant ; and there-



fore, having performed the conditions on his part, he now makes his claim, both for himself and his members, that the Father will make good the conditions on his part. "Father," says he, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John xvii. 4, 5.) And, for his members, he speaks more in the language of a covenant: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (Verse 24.) "I will:" not only, "I pray, or beseech;" but, "I will." "I ask this as my right, by virtue of the covenant betwixt us. I having done thus and thus, it is but my due;" (for though glory is a gift to us, it is a debt to Christ;) "and so I claim it,—that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me in glory."

## PROPOSITION VII.

I will add but one thing more; and then I have done with the explicatory part. *This federal transaction betwixt the Father and the Son,—it was from all eternity.*—Here lies the difficulty, and this is that which stumbles some. I will speak but a word to it. I say, "This covenant of redemption,—it was from all eternity." It was not made when Christ was just coming into the world, but from everlasting. Two scriptures seem to hold out this:—2 Tim. i. 9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Here is the "purpose" of God; here is "grace given in Jesus Christ." "How?" In the covenant betwixt the Father and him. "When was this given?" "Before the world began," that is, from all eternity. So, Titus i. 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." How was this "life promised before the world began," but in this everlasting covenant, wherein the Father promised unto Christ eternal life for all his seed?

I have been speaking to you of a very great mystery, of which the scripture speaks but little *signanter* ["distinctly"]: we have not the terms, but we have the sense and substance, of this covenant of redemption there laid down. If in any assertion I have seemed too bold, I am very ready to take shame for it. I am sorry my work did lie in such an untrodden path, wherein I have but very few to give me any direction. I will shut up all with a little APPLICATION.

## USE I.

And, first, *I would from hence stir you up to a high admiration of the great and infinite love of God.*—Of God the Father, of God the Son. What manner of love hath the God of grace revealed in this covenant! love that, for the freeness of it and greatness of it, we should admire in this life, as we shall admire it in the life to come.

Both persons have discovered unconceivable love in this transaction ;  
O let both of them be admired with the highest admiration !

1. *Admire the love of the Father.*—We are more apprehensive of the love of the Son, than we are of the love of the Father. I would not speak any thing to diminish the love of the Son ; God forbid ! O, it was wonderful, superlative love ! Only I would heighten your apprehensions of the Father's love in the great work of our redemption. Redemption was not only brought about by Christ, but the Father had a great hand in it. Therefore it is said, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand : " (Isai. liii. 10 :) and, "I have found a ransom." (Job xxxiii. 24.) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) I might instance in several particulars to set out the Father's love in our redemption : but take only that which I have been upon. That the thoughts of God should be upon poor lost man, so as to find out a way for his recovery ; that he should call his Son, and say, "Come, let us consult together : " (I speak after the manner of men :) "is there no way to be found, that man may yet live ? He is now obnoxious to me, and I might throw him into hell : but may not I be satisfied, and he saved too ? I am not willing that he should utterly perish ;"—I say, That God should thus set his thoughts on work for wretched man, and treat with his Son, and strike up a covenant with his Son, and therein lay such a foundation for man's recovery ; let angels and men and all creatures adore this love ; and O that you would return love for love, return your drop for God's ocean ! We must "honour the Son, even as we honour the Father ;" (John v. 23 ;) and we must love the Father, as we love the Son.

2. *And then admire the love of the Son too.*—He is willing to engage in this covenant. He knew the terms of it ; what the redemption of man would cost him,—even his life and precious blood : yet, for all this, he willingly and freely binds himself to redeem poor sinners, whatever it cost him. O the heights, depths, breadths of this love ! (Eph. iii. 18.) Blessed Jesus ! that ever thou shouldst consent to "lay down thy life for" me, (1 John iii. 16,) to wash away my sins in thine own blood, (Rev. i. 5,) to give thy "soul as an offering for sin," upon this encouragement and motive,—that thou mightest see such a poor worm as I brought in to God ; that thou shouldst set thyself as a screen betwixt God's wrath and my poor soul, and do and suffer ten thousand times more than what tongue can express or heart conceive ;—what shall I, what can I, say to all this ? but fall down, and wonder at that love which can never be fathomed !

So much for the first thing.

USE II.

Secondly. *This covenant of redemption may be improved for the encouraging and strengthening of faith.*—Faith sometimes is ready to question the blessings of the covenant of grace, and the continuance or perpetuity of the covenant of grace. That is the great foundation

of faith : and when it staggers about that, it is very sad with the soul.

Now I will lay down two things for the help of faith :—

1. *The blessings of the covenant are sure.*

2. *The covenant of grace itself is sure.*

1. *The blessings of the covenant are sure.*—They are called “the sure mercies of David” in Isaiah lv. 3: they are “sure” *for continuance*, and they are “sure” *for performance*.

(1.) *For continuance.*—Common mercies are dying, perishing, uncertain things ; but covenant-mercies are stable, durable, lasting things. A great estate may come to nothing ; (Prov. xxiii. 5 ; ) riches are “uncertain” things : (1 Tim. vi. 17 :) and so in all worldly comforts ; \* they are but a “fashion,” matters of fancy rather than of reality ; and they “pass away.” (1 Cor. vii. 31.) But now grace, pardon of sin, adoption, &c.,—these are blessings that abide for ever. (Rom. xi. 29.)

(2.) They are sure also *for performance*.—I mean, whatever blessing God hath put into this covenant, (as it is full of blessings,) all shall certainly be made good to believers. Otherwise God would not be faithful to his covenant, which certainly he will be : men may be false in their covenants to God, but God will certainly be true in his covenant to men. Heaven and earth shall pass away, rather than there shall be the least intrenchment upon God’s truth, in the not-performing of his covenant.

2. *The covenant of grace is sure in itself.*—A covenant, firm, unalterable, never to be broken. It is called “an everlasting covenant ;” (Gen. xvii. 7 ; Heb. xiii. 20 ; ) a covenant that “shall stand fast ;” (Psalm lxxxix. 28 ; ) a “covenant ordered in all things, and sure.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) The covenant of grace is so firmly ratified, that there can be no nulling of it.

(1.) God hath ratified it *by his oath*. (Gen. xxii. 16 ; Heb. vi. 13—18.)—“His promise is enough ; but surely his oath must put all out of question.”† There is no room for unbelief, now God hath sworn to it.

(2.) God hath ratified it *by the death of his Son*.—A man’s last will, as soon as he is dead, is in force, and cannot then be disannulled. The covenant of grace is a testamentary covenant, ‡ which, by the death of the Testator, is so settled, that there is no altering of it. (Gal. iii. 15—17 ; Heb. ix. 15—18.)

(3.) Again, the covenant of grace is ratified *by the seals which God hath annexed to it*.—What was sealed by the king’s ring could not be altered. (Esther viii. 8.) God hath set his seal to this covenant,—his Broad Seal in the sacraments, his Privy Seal in the witness of his Spirit : and therefore it is sure, and cannot be reversed.

(4.) And, further than all this, it is ratified *in and by that covenant*

\* *Imaginaria in seculo, et nihil veri.*—TERTULLIANUS. “All things in the world are imaginary, and have no truth in them.”—EDIT. † *Si non credimus Deo promittenti, at credamus Deo juranti.*—HIERONYMUS. ‡ *Amant scriptura pro pacto ponere testamentum.*—AUGUSTINUS. “The sacred writers love to substitute the word ‘testament’ for ‘covenant.’”—EDIT.

which hath been now opened.—The covenant of redemption betwixt God and Christ secures the covenant of grace betwixt God and believers. What God promises us, he did before promise unto Christ; and the Father would not make good his promise unto Christ, if he should not make good his promises to his saints. And therefore, as in other respects, so in this also, the covenant may be said to be “confirmed of God in Christ,” (Gal. iii. 17,) with respect to that paction and stipulation that was betwixt them.

I lay all this before you for the strengthening of your faith, as to the stability of the covenant of grace. So long as that covenant stands, you are safe; and you see, there is no question but that covenant will stand which God hath set upon such firm pillars. This promise in the text, “He shall see his seed,” will assuredly bring every believer into heaven. O that faith might triumph in the consideration of this, “The covenant of grace is sure!” David’s faith did so, when death was in his eye, and affliction in his eye: “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.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) When faith begins to faint, look up to this covenant, and reason thus: “God will not alter his promise to me; but, to be sure, he will not alter his promise to his Son. I may fail in such and such conditions; but Christ hath been faithful in all.” Every child of God may take much comfort from this.

USE III.

In the third and last place. *I would have you to inquire what this covenant of redemption is to you.*—Here is a blessed covenant betwixt the Father and the Son: how far are you and I interested in it, or likely to receive benefit by it? Was it universal, that all men should have an equal share in it? Some very learned men,\* I know, tell us of *pactum universale* betwixt the Father and the Son; but I crave leave to differ from them,

1. Because that which they make their *pactum universale*, is rather a proposition, or a promise, than a covenant; as, “He that believeth shall be saved.” (Mark xvi. 16.)

2. I know not how to believe that there should be a solemn covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, upon which never any man should be the better. Did ever any sinner get any thing by this “universal covenant?”

3. We may preach the gospel to all upon an indefinite proposition, “He that believeth shall be saved;” and we need not to assert an universal covenant for the universal preaching of the gospel. This was the great reason that prevailed with these worthy men to assert such a covenant. I know no covenant but that special covenant into which the seed of Christ were only taken. I am loath to fall into the dusty road of controversies. All along in this discourse, where I could not avoid them, I have but just crossed them over; and so presently fallen in again into some more quiet and private way.

\* DAVENANTIUS *De Morte Christi*, &c.

Passing by, therefore, this universal covenant of men more moderate, and the universal redemption of others who go higher, I shall only lay down that which I judge to be a great truth; namely, that it is the elect only who are concerned in this covenant. Such and such persons there were, (individually considered,) whom God the Father in his electing love doth freely give to Christ. For these, and only for these, doth the Lord Jesus engage to lay down his life. Redemption on the Son's part shall be no larger than election on the Father's part; that there may be a perfect harmony and agreement betwixt them in their love.

So, then, beloved, if you would draw down comfort to yourselves from this covenant, you must find out this,—that *you* are the elect of God, chosen of him to be vessels of his mercy before the world was. Christ undertook to give his life only for those whom the Father had first given to him: these he only prayed for; and therefore, surely, these he only died for.

You will say, I put you upon a very difficult search. It is true, it is very hard for a man to know his election; but yet it may be known; otherwise the apostle would never have urged this as a duty upon Christians, “to make their calling and election sure.” (2 Peter i. 10.) Paul knew that the Thessalonians were “elected of God.” (1 Thess. i. 4.) And he did not know it by revelation only: no; he gives another account of it; he knew it by way of inference from what he saw of God in them: “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” (Verse 5.) If election may be known by others, why not by ourselves? I grant, *a parte ante*, [“beforehand,”]—so it cannot be known: so the book is clasped and sealed, and none can open it but “the Lion of the tribe of Judah:” (Rev. v. 3—5:) but *a parte post*, [“afterwards,”] by such and such effects and operations upon the heart,—so it may be known.

Several of these might be set before you out of the word; but I will only instance in the grace of faith. He that believes is certainly in the number of God's elect; he is a “chosen vessel of mercy.” All the elect shall believe; sooner or later they shall close with Christ upon the terms of the gospel: “All that the Father giveth me”—there is election—“shall come to me:” there is faith. (John vi. 37.) “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed:” (Acts xiii. 48:) none but the elect can savingly believe.

The sum of all, then, for the clearing up of your interest in this covenant of redemption, is this;—Have you the precious “faith of God's elect?” (Titus i. 1.) Are your hearts wrought up to a blessed accepting of Christ? Have you ever had such a sense of sin and guilt and misery, as to go out of yourselves, and only to rest upon the Lord Christ? Do you venture your souls upon his all-sufficient merits? And is this faith a working faith, (James ii. 14,) a heart-purifying faith, (Acts xv. 9,) a sin-mortifying faith, a world-overcoming faith, (1 John v. 4,) a faith that closes with Christ as a Lord as well as a Saviour, a faith that is for obedience as well as privilege? O you

that have this faith, go away in peace; be of good comfort! This everlasting covenant betwixt the Father and the Son is yours; your good was promoted and secured in this treaty and federal engagement. How much doth this covenant speak for the benefit of believers! If you be such, it is all yours. By it you are already brought into a state of grace; by it you shall hereafter be brought into a state of glory. Upon this covenant Christ now "sees" you as "his seed." Upon this covenant you shall hereafter see him, as your Saviour, face to face unto eternity. To this Father, to this Son, with the Holy Spirit, be glory for evermore!

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## SERMON XII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

### THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*—Hebrews viii. 6.

THE general design of this epistle is my special design in this text, namely, to demonstrate to you, that you live under the best of gracious dispensations; that Jesus Christ, our deservedly-adored Mediator of the new covenant, "hath obtained a more excellent ministry," and, by the faithful discharge of that ministry, more excellent benefits, than either Moses, the messenger-mediator, or the Levitical priests, the stationary-mediators, of the old covenant.

*But now*—"Now" is not here a note of time, but of opposition; as in Rom. vii. 17: "Now then;" that is, after the law received; so Grotius. Or if you will have it to note the time, it is the time of the gospel, this last time.

*Hath he obtained*—Not by usurpation, but by election: he hath of divine grace freely received,\*

*A more excellent ministry*—Λειτουργος, "a minister," is he that doeth something at the command of another: (Heb. i. 7:) and so it is said of magistrates, "They are God's ministers." (Rom. xiii. 6.) But it is chiefly spoken of the priests: "The priests that minister;" (Neh. x. 39;) because they offer those things that God requires, they are said "to minister." (Exod. xxviii. 35, 43.) Christ's ministry is more excellent than the Levitical; he executes it partly on earth, and partly in heaven. But he amplifies the excellency, chiefly from the excellency of the covenant; † and therefore it follows,

\* ANSELM.

† PAREUS.