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## The Introduction

The unparalleled and incomprehensible love of God to sinful man, displayed in the wonderful affair of his redemption and salvation, is the great thing celebrated in the Scriptures; and it is that which invites our most frequent and raised meditations. Paul therefore prays for his Ephesians that they, together with all saints, might be able to comprehend it (Ephesians 3:17–19). Nor is there one passage in this whole transaction but what is admirable and precious, it being the foundation of our hope to enjoy eternal life who are by nature children of wrath; and but for it the whole forfeited race of Adam must have perished hopelessly and everlastingly. The contemplation of this is truly surprising. Time is too short; eternity is but long enough to spend in the survey of it. This love is a fountain that sprang up in and runs down to eternity. It never knew a beginning, nor shall ever come to an end.

Now there are two general headings unto which our speculation of this glorious mystery may be reduced.

1. The provision that God made for our deliverance before time in the days of eternity.

2. The things that are done in time for the actual accomplishment of it. They who would search the love of God to the origin and follow it up to the well-head of it must ascend beyond the creation of the world and look for it in that eternity that had no beginning. Not only the things that He has done for us, but the thoughts also that He had of us, recommend His transcendent good will unto us. The meditation of them was very choice to David (Psalm 139:17). That God bore love to His people of old He Himself assured them (Jeremiah 31:3).

These thoughts of His had lain hidden from us but that He was pleased to reveal them to us in His Word, from whence we must borrow our information; and it is our duty and will be our advantage to enquire into it so far as we have Scripture light to direct us. The former of these is that which is designed in the ensuing treatise by divine assistance. And in truth, all our speculations about the latter will be dark, short, and confused unless we trace them there. We shall neither know where our salvation began, nor what security there is for it, or how to act our faith aright about it. Here is the idea or exemplar of all that is done in bringing fallen man to glory; here is the ratification or establishment of the whole concern; here we are acquainted with the leading causes to and unfailing assurances of the vocation, justification, and glorification of all God's chosen ones. For here we find the first link of that chain and that which fastens all (Romans 8:29–30). The best and most suitable notion under which this great affair may be represented to us for our information and satisfaction is that of a covenant which, being of so much use among men, is the more easily understood. And because it carries in it the strongest confirmation of things that human nature is capable of, must be most accommodated to the establishing of our faith. Nor is this a mere notion of man's invention, but that which has clear and firm footing in the Word of God, as will in its due place appear. Now this covenant is by some divines called the covenant of suretyship; by others, the covenant of redemption; because there was in it a full suretyship given for, and a firm compact made about the redemption of a number of mankind in order to their salvation.

The enquiry into and right stating of the doctrine of this covenant is of excellent advantage for our better understanding of the whole tenor of the Scripture. The avoidance of many pernicious errors that the ignorance of it has given advantage to take rooting among such as call themselves Christians; the true apprehension of the terms of the gospel covenant and the

comforting of the hearts of God's children against the many temptations that assault them.

I shall therefore, as God shall be pleased to assist me, endeavor to pursue it in this method.

1. I shall endeavor to state the right notion of this covenant.

2. I shall endeavor to prove from the Word of God that there is such a covenant.

3. I shall endeavor to explain it in those several things wherein the special nature of it may be rightly concerned.

4. I shall endeavor to show the necessity of it in order to fallen man's salvation.

5. I shall endeavor to show the influence that it has on the covenant of grace that is made with us.

6. And I shall endeavor to draw some practical inferences from it.