

The covenant of grace may be defined as that gracious agreement between the offended God and the offending but elect sinner, in which God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner accepts this believingly, promising a life of faith and obedience.

The following points indicate the relation in which this covenant [the covenant of redemption] stands to the covenant of grace;

1. The counsel of redemption is the eternal prototype of the historical covenant of grace. This accounts for the fact that many combine the two into a single covenant. The former is eternal, that is, from eternity, and the latter, temporal in the sense that it is realized in time. The former is a compact between the Father and the son as the Surety and Head of the elect, while the latter is a compact between the triune God and the elect sinner in the Surety.

2. The counsel of redemption is the firm and eternal foundation of the covenant of grace. If there had been no eternal counsel of peace between the Father and the Son, there could have been no agreement between the triune God and sinful men. The counsel of redemption makes the covenant of grace possible.

3. The counsel of redemption consequently also gives efficacy to the covenant of grace, for in it the means are provided for the establishment and execution of the latter. It is only by faith that the sinner can obtain the blessings of the covenant, and in the counsel of redemption the way of faith is opened. The holy Spirit, who produces faith in the sinner, was promised to Christ by the Father, and the acceptance of the way of life through faith was guaranteed by Christ.

-- *Systematic Theology*, Fourth Revised Edition
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 270-271, 277.

B. Development of the Doctrine

1. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

Isaiah 42:6-7 (spoken to the Lord's Servant [verse 11]) -- "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon, And those who dwell in darkness from the prison."

Here the Father makes an agreement with His Son, to bestow certain benefits upon the nations of mankind.

Isaiah 53:10-12 -- "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,