

THE COVENANTS

Introduction

There appears to be an element of confusion in the minds of some people at least, about the administration of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament. The confusion, or at least what is perceived as confusion, seems to arise from identifying aspects of the Covenant of Grace with works. In this lecture my main emphasis throughout is on the continuity of the Covenant of Grace, whilst also clarifying the reason for the obvious differences that existed in its administration at different periods in the older Dispensation as compared with the New. It will be considered under the following headings: **The Concept of the Covenant, The Covenant of Works, The Covenant of Redemption and Grace, The Original Parties, The Covenant between God and the Elect Sinner, The Covenant with the Patriarchs and Israel, The New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 and Hebrews 8:8 Explained, and the Conclusion.**

The Concept of the Covenant

There is uncertainty about the etymology of the Hebrew word berith, which in our English Bible is translated covenant. Some expositors are of the opinion that it is derived from the verb barah to cut, whilst others are of the view that it is derived from the Assyrian word beritu, to bind. Its derivation from the verb barah, was regarded by George Bush (Prof of Hebrew New York City Univ) as having embodied in it something of the ceremony in Genesis 15:17. Regarding that ceremony it is necessary to go back to verse 10 of that chapter, where it is said, *And he took unto him all these, (that is an heifer, a she goat and a ram of three years of age, and a turtle dove and a young pigeon) and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.* The solemn form of ratifying a covenant, consisted in - after of course the throat of the victim had been cut, and its blood poured out - dividing the carcass lengthwise, and ensuring in so far as it was humanly possible, that it was divided equally. These two equal parts were placed opposite each other to allow the covenanting parties to approach each other from the opposite ends of the passage between the pieces. They met in the middle of the two halves, and there the customary oath was taken.

Returning now to Genesis 15: 17, we are told that when the sun had gone down there appeared between the two halves of the beasts that had been slain a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, that passed between the pieces. The following are comments by Bush on that which was seen by Abraham: *Nothing is more common with the sacred writers than to represent the Deity in His avenging dispensation under the emblem of a consuming fire, as in this connection. It will be proper to bear in mind that in Sinai, He*

appeared in mingled fire and smoke in circumstances of grandeur and terror, of which the object seen in the vision of the patriarch was perhaps but a miniature adumbration.....To Abraham it was a designed and appropriate symbol of the Most High, as the Covenant and avenging God of His seed, and that He is now, as the symbol is ordered to convey to him a pre-intimation of the peculiar manner in

which His indwelling in the midst of His posterity should be manifested. The "burning lamp" is probably to be considered merely as an equivalent symbol, introduced in order more vividly to depict to the mind's eye of the patriarch, the character of that visible manifestation by which Divine glory and majesty was to be displayed under the economy afterwards to be established among the chosen people.....On the whole, the grand drift of this symbolical transaction appears to be, to disclose to Abraham the experiences of his seed through a long lapse of ages, not only their bondage and affliction in Egypt, but their subsequent establishment in Canaan, the scene of the vision, as a nation of sacrificers among whom the distinguishing symbols of the divine presence were to be fixed as their glory and defense. Thus viewed, the incidents here recorded assume a significancy and an interest of which they are deprived by the common more limited application of them. (Notes Critical and Practical George Bush)

Whilst there is uncertainty about the etymology of berith, we observe from what took place the significance of the cutting of the animals, and the binding of the parties. From the nature of this covenant, we observe that it was God alone who went through the pieces. This was of course a symbolical representation of Himself. Covenants always established a reciprocal relation between two individuals, but in this covenant the man did not stand on an equality with God, therefore God established the relation of fellowship by His promise to Abraham, who was at first a mere recipient in this sovereign transaction. His solemn duty was to fulfil the obligations consequent upon the covenant by receiving, humbly and thankfully, all the gifts and graces bestowed upon him along with the promises, and living an obedient life to God.

But is there not something of both barah to cut, and beritu to bind, present in many of the contexts within which the word berith (covenant) is employed. Hence berith may denote a voluntary agreement between two parties of equality; or an arrangement imposed by one party on the other because of inequality, as was the case when God covenanted with man. Therefore the parties concerned are of greater importance than the etymology of the word. When one party is inferior, as in this instance, then all the conditions and promises are solely the prerogative of the superior party.

In the Septuagint,(the Greek translation of the Old Testament)

berith is translated diatheke: - which originally signified a disposition of property by will or otherwise - with the exception of Deuteronomy 9:15: *So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands:* and there it is translated marturion - which means testimony or witness. In 1Kings 11:11: *Wherefore the Lord said un to Solomn, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant, and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it to thy servant.* In that passage it is the word entole, which denoted in general an injunction, charge, precept and commandment. In the Greek New Testament diatheke is the word employed for covenant, although suntheke is the common Greek word for it.

Why then was the common word ignored by the translators? The explanation given is that in the Greek world, covenants were based on the equality of parties entering into them, and so to employ this word *suntheke* in the Scriptures, it would convey the wrong meaning. By substituting it with *diatheke* this obviously gave the latter a meaning it did not have before, but also enabled a distinction to be drawn between a transaction involving mere equals at the human level, equals of an infinite nature, and also between the infinite and the finite. But what is the true meaning of *diatheke*? To some it is a disposition or testament, whilst others see in it most prominently the covenant idea.

A Covenant between God and men was characterized by the inequality of both parties. God's prerogative could not be invaded by man therefore He laid down the conditions and the promises. At this juncture let us consider the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works has already been dealt with under Man in his Original State because historically that is the section it belongs to. But it is appropriate to bring it into this present lecture, and although some of the same ground has already been covered there are other points relevant to this lecture.

COVENANT OF WORKS

The word covenant is not mentioned in the narrative of Adams creation, and fellowship with God. Although the word is not employed by the sacred writer, the conditions, such as the life promised, and the death threatened, constitute a Covenant. The Covenant idea originated with God, and not with man. The formal establishment of a Covenant with Abraham did not mark the commencement of Covenant making - that had begun in eternity. Whilst then it would appear more logical to begin in eternity I have decided for obvious reasons to begin in time since man was originally innocent.

God entered into a Covenant of Life or Works with Adam, after creating him in His own image, which consisted of true knowledge, righteousness, holiness and dominion over the creatures – this is the Westminster Confession of Faith's definition. Adam in the state of innocence had a free will - he had equal power to continue rendering perfect obedience to God, or to disobey Him. He had to be faced with a choice between good and evil. Choosing the good had to be without the help of God - because it could not be attributed to Adam as a righteous act for

which he was wholly responsible, unless it was of his own volition. Had he succeeded, both he and his posterity would have remained perfectly holy. He chose the evil when faced with a choice, and being a federal head of the human race, brought himself and all his posterity under the wrath and curse of God and into condemnation.

There are four important points in connection with the transaction between God and Adam. First, there are parties, God and Adam, or Adam and his posterity; Second, a promise annexed to it - life; Third, a condition - perfect obedience; Fourth, a penalty if disobedient - death. A. A. Hodge says: *That the life promised was not mere continuance of existence is plain: (a) For the death threatened was not mere extinction of existence. Adam experienced that death the very day he ate of the forbidden fruit. The death was exclusion from the communion of God. The life promised therefore must consist in the divine fellowship and the excellence and happiness thence resulting.* When the conditions with Adam are examined, it would be most unreasonable not to acknowledge that here was a federal transaction in which Adam stood as the representative of the human race. According to this Covenant, the only way to obtain eternal life was by continuing to render perfect personal obedience.

In this Adam failed, and subsequently all his posterity. This announced clearly that there was no hope for sinful human beings

if left to themselves of ever attaining eternal life. The spiritual bankruptcy of mankind is stated very clearly by Paul in Romans 5: 12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:..*

Commenting on Ps 51:5 - *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me* - Martin Luther said: *If we would speak and teach rightly on sin, it is necessary to consider sin more deeply, and discover out of what root it and everything ungodly proceeds, and not simply stand at sin already committed. For from that error of not knowing, or understanding, what sin is, there necessarily arises another error, that people cannot know nor understand what grace is. Therefore is it a great part of wisdom for one to know that there is nothing good in us but vain sin.....all is sin which is born of father and mother, even before the time that man is of age to know what to do, speak or think.* And Calvin's words are of a similar strain: *Now he does not confess himself guilty merely by some one or more sins as formerly, but he rises higher, that from his mother's womb he has brought forth nothing but sin, and by nature is wholly corrupt and as it were immersed in sin.*

This Covenant with Adam was that of life and works, in that life was promised: but the works was the condition upon which the promise was suspended. The reward promised to Adam on condition of perfect obedience, was life - a reward because it was a Covenant of Works. The life promised applied to both soul and body, and this meant the perpetual happiness of his entire nature. The Scriptures do not speak of life out with fellowship with God. We are thus spiritually dead in being by nature, as a consequence of Adam's Fall, alienated from God.

Adam was indeed on probation as long as he was within the confines of Eden, but having failed, he was immediately cast out. When Adam in a state of innocence failed when tempted, how could his guilty posterity succeed? Adam's obedience was directly to God, and not to his own reason. The latter however was the dominant factor in giving heed to the tempter, and the grave consequence of that was that he capitulated to the temptation, and thus sinned against God, and brought the wrath and curse of God on himself and his posterity. His probationary period would have been terminated if he had resisted the temptation. He would then have been judged on his integrity, and would have continued in it, both he and all his descendants.

Having failed, the penalty was death. This according to the Scriptures includes all penal evil. The death threatened was immediately executed after he sinned - it was indeed the antonym of life. Misery replaced happiness, and alienation instead of fellowship.

With the loss of God's image - whether understood as total, or very badly defaced to the extent that without the grace of God there is no returning to God - man was now under the sentence of death: *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* (Rom 5:18). By this it is abundantly clear that the penalty of death belonged to Adam and his posterity, just as the promise of life did before the Fall.

Godet, commenting on 1Cor 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive:* says, *It is not without intention that Paul in this verse substitutes the preposition en (equivalent to the English in) for the dia (because of or through) of the preceding verse. The relation expressed by en is more intimate, it is that of moral solidarity, community of life. The latter explains the former. If all died in Adam it is because all were smitten with his death in him, in whom they were embraced: if all are to live again by Christ it is because there is in time power which justifies them and which will make them live again because of their relation To Him.*

Before leaving the Covenant of Works there is one final point to be dealt with. According to Pelagianism each child coming into the world is free from sin and condemnation. This is a great error and is at variance with the teaching of the Scriptures. Even the infant dying in infancy cannot enter heaven without being regenerated, because there is nothing in human nature but natural hostility toward God. The requirements of this Covenant are still binding unless the sinner flees to Christ. Not only is he answerable to an infinitely holy God for failing to render the perfect obedience required, but also accountable for his inability to render it. Sinful mankind without the help of God, can never extricate themselves from the solemn consequences of this broken Covenant. But God who is rich in mercy has come to the help of the perishing.

The Covenant of Redemption and Grace

In order to save some of fallen mankind, conditions entirely different from those offered in the Covenant of Works were necessary, although the conditions of the Covenant of Works would still be binding on the Surety. Arminians view the death of Christ as introducing a new Covenant, offering eternal life to all mankind on the condition of faith and evangelical obedience. To those lacking in discernment this appears Scriptural, but there is nothing Scriptural about a universal salvation - that is that Christ died for every individual of mankind - and hence the fulfilment of the Covenant rests entirely on the faith and evangelical obedience of the individual. This would not make salvation certain but possible. According to them those who fail to exercise this faith and obedience are lost, although Christ is supposed to have died for them. That the Gospel is to be preached to all sinners irrespective of who they are, is true, and it is equally true that he or she who believes is saved. But that is not the same as stating that the Covenant of Grace is for all men on condition of faith and evangelical obedience, because there would be no Covenant without Christ's atonement, and according to the Scriptures, Christ did not die for every individual of mankind. Therefore the Covenant of Grace is restricted to those for whom he died and rose again. The place of faith and obedience will be examined when the parties are considered. Just as perfect personal obedience would have secured eternal life in the Covenant of Works, so they (Arminians) believe that faith and evangelical obedience secures it in the Covenant of Grace, which according to the place given to both, is a subtle form of works, and the Sovereignty of God is overruled.

We have already seen that *berith*, by its etymology and usage, is shown to mean covenant. In the Septuagint as already mentioned, the word normally used is *diatheke*, but this creates a problem in that the meaning usually given to it is testament, and the only case where this is regarded as tenable is in Hebrews 9:16, *For where a testament is, there must also be the death of the testator*. It is objected to that when Christ is called a surety of a better testament in Hebrews 7:22, that there is an obvious incongruity between the office and the document, because it is a fact that testaments or wills do not have sureties.

Are we to consider under this heading one or two Covenants (Grace and Redemption)? It must be borne in mind that eternal life was promised before the world was created, *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised*

before the world began. Titus 1:2. To whom was this promise made when man was not yet

created? It must have been made to the second Person of the Trinity for the people given to Him from eternity. Hence there were those who insisted on one Covenant only, that of Grace; but others insisted on two, namely Grace and Redemption, and supporting this view were Charles and A.A. Hodge, Shedd, Vos and Bavinck and others. They were not regarding them as two separate and independent Covenants, but as Shedd says, *The Covenant of Grace and Redemption are two modes or phrases of the one evangelical Covenant of Grace.* It is a subject that is fraught with difficulty without the inclusion of the latter. The difficulty arises in connection with Christ's place in the Covenant. If the Covenant of Redemption is dismissed then Christ must be regarded as both a Surety and a Party in the same Covenant, but with its inclusion this difficulty is overcome. So then to make matters more intelligible the two will be considered: the Covenant of Redemption existing between the Father and the Son from eternity, and the Gospel promise to sinners being a Covenant of Grace.

The Covenant of Redemption is to be viewed as between equals, namely the Father and Son: but the Covenant with those who believe, is the consequence and sequel of that eternally made with the Son. At this juncture a question arises, is Christ to be regarded as a party to the Covenant of Grace? It is sufficiently clear that without a competent party in the transaction there would have been no deliverance for sinners. This demonstrates how it is advantageous dealing with both: for in the eternal Covenant of Redemption Christ was a party, but in the Covenant of Grace He was a Surety. Furthermore, the Covenant of Redemption was conditional on Christ's meritorious work, but the Covenant of Grace is unconditional. This is a point that will be qualified at a later stage.

Original Parties

In the Covenant of Redemption, the original parties were the Father and the Son - the Father represented the Godhead and hence the offended majesty of the three Persons. The Persons are equal in majesty and hence all were equally offended by sin and guilt, and therefore the reconciling work of a Mediator was necessary to reconcile God to guilty sinners - no we are to be more careful than that, He acted on behalf of sinners elected to eternal life. Were elect sinners parties in the Covenant of Grace? The best answer, in my opinion, is provided by R. L. Dabney: *In the eternal sense of the Covenant they were not, but in so far as its exhibition in time is concerned they were in their Surety.*

What led to the making of this Covenant? It was nothing in man that induced God to act as He did. And neither was Christ's

undertaking to fulfil the law and satisfy infinite justice on the sinner's behalf, the procuring cause of God's purpose of mercy toward man: for that would have portrayed Christ as more loving than the Father, which indeed is what many believe. That Christ's perfect obedience, vicarious sufferings and death were necessary to enable the Father's purpose of mercy to be effectuated is true, but it

was not the procuring cause of this Covenant. Some of course object that paying the penalty meant that the law had no more claim on neglected obedience. But the penalty was not the equivalent for obedience but a separate issue: for Christ the Surety had to render perfect obedience, and also bear the penalty before infinite justice could be satisfied and reconciliation secured. So what led to the making of this Covenant? According to John 3:16 it was the love of God, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* The conditions were pledged by the Father, and Christ was to be endowed with gifts and graces to uphold Him: *The Spirit of Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.....* Isaiah 61:1-2.

The Covenant between God and the Believers

The holy life on earth that must precede the glory to follow is neither meritorious nor a procuring cause, but the fruit and evidence of saving grace at work in the heart. But the question arises, Is faith a condition of the Covenant? We have already considered the place given to faith and evangelical obedience by Arminians. There are those who deny that it is, because it suggests human merit. But the fact remains that in a very special manner faith is a condition. This is brought out clearly in John 3: 16, “ *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Eternal life cannot be obtained without believing: (with the exception of infants and others who are saved and are incapable of believing yet they must be regenerated to be saved.) Also in Acts 8: 37 *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest* (that is be baptized) And he answered (that is the eunuch) and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* And finally Mark 16:16, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* To obtain redemption the person must believe, and failing to do so he will be damned.

It is therefore proper to speak of a condition in connection with the Covenant of Grace, for without a condition no one would be bound

by the Covenant but God alone, because in all Covenants you must have two parties? But this is not the same as the place given to faith and evangelical obedience by the Arminians. According to them it is possible for a believer to backslide and be lost. But the sufficiency and the efficacy of the Covenant of Grace rests wholly on what Christ has done, and therefore this Covenant will be fully realized in the experience of all those on whose behalf He acted as Surety, and hence its realization does not rest on the faith and evangelical obedience of a sinner, but on the faithfulness of an immutable, loving and just God, who is able to restore the backslider. Faith and obedience are the fruits of Christ's saving work, and for one to profess to be the Lord's and fail to produce such fruits is ample proof that the profession is spurious, or that he is backslidden.

Furthermore, saving faith is the gift of God, and is the instrumental cause in justification, and as such derives its organic virtue from God who has appointed it. This faith however has no virtue of its own nature. In the Covenant of Works the fulfilment of the condition on man's part would have earned the result. But in the Covenant of Grace the condition is void of any moral merit, it is simply an act whereby the graces promised are received. The hand takes the food that feeds us but it is not the hand that provides the life and energy but the food taken, however it does play a vital role, so then likewise is the role of faith as an instrumental cause in our justification. By it the awakened sinner appropriates to himself the righteousness of Christ which is the ground of justification, believes the promises, receives the graces and worships God. There was no help from God to fulfil the condition of the Covenant of Works - man had to do it in his own strength: but in the Covenant of Grace he is enabled by God to believe. Although faith is the gift of God, the receiver is held responsible for the way it is exercised.

The Covenant with the Patriarchs and Israel

Is the Covenant made with Israel the same spiritual Covenant that we have in the New Testament? There are those who regard the Covenant made with Israel as national and temporal, and that its promises were solely for the material things, and that those brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord during the Old Testament period, were without a revealed promise. To this view, some people assented without any difficulty, claiming that generally there is no special promise in the Old Testament. There is an obvious reason for this kind of thinking, because they view Christ's redeeming work in the New Testament as that of a prophet, and an example to follow, but not a vicarious work which extended to the Old Testament.

Regarding the unity of the Covenant in both Dispensations, the doctrine of sin has to be considered. Adam's fall effected the entire human race - they all became totally depraved, therefore if some from both the Old Testament and New Testament periods are to be saved, God's moral attributes must be in perfect

harmony in that scheme of redemption, and therefore the same requirements and standards must apply equally to the two periods. If however a person does not believe in retributive justice this consideration is meaningless. But in all matters the Scriptures have to be consulted. What then do the Scriptures tell us about the continuity of the Covenant? In Luke 1: 68 - 73 we are reminded: *Blessed be the God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: The oath which he swore to our father Abraham.....* and in Acts 3: 25 *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.* And Romans 4: 16, *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.* Charles Simeon made this comment about the Covenant in the two Dispensations: *The Mosaic Covenant, properly speaking, was distinct from both of these; it was not altogether a Covenant of Works, or a Covenant of Grace, but it partook of the nature of both.* We can appreciate that he was trying to explain a difficulty, but with all due respect we beg to disagree - it was still a Covenant of

grace throughout the entire period of the Old Testament, irrespective of all that the Ceremonial Law embraced.

There are of course marked additions to the former Revelation, but these additions are not to be regarded as new elements, but the development of what already existed. The Moral Law was primarily written on Adam's heart, and therefore the giving of it at Sinai was simply a republication of it. There were also the establishment of a Theocratic State; the introduction of the Passover, and the greater development of the sacrificial rituals. It is these aspects of the Covenant that people often confuse with works, because of the amount of legality associated with them. 'Such developments must not be regarded as recessions from the Abrahamic Covenant'. Those who insist that the Covenant at Sinai was one of works, are guilty of attributing regression rather than progression to the Revelation of Scripture. They are quick to point out that it is ritual works they have in mind: but they fail to see that in the symbols, rituals and sacrifices the gospel was preached, albeit obscurely, but nevertheless proclaimed, and pointing ahead to a better day. The Christ who was to come, who was preached to the patriarchs, was now typified in the Levitical sacrifices, and therefore a Gospel faith was required in the antitype. What then must be appreciated is that at Sinai God covenanted in mercy and not as is often wrongly interpreted, in judicial wrath all because of the awesomeness of that which confronted the nation of Israel. He was there as their Redeemer. Everything in the Tabernacle and latterly in the Temple was purified with the blood of the sacrifice, and this blood pointed to that blood which would cleanse from all sin.

The New Covenant in Jeremiah 31: 31 and Hebrews 8: 8 Explained.

How do we explain these passages from Jeremiah 31:31 and Hebrews 8: 8, 13? *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the*

*house of Israel and with the house of Judah.....In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.....Was this the secular part of the Covenant which promised political and temporal prosperity in Canaan, just as disobedience would bring poverty and grief upon them? The Jews were guilty of basing their hopes on the secular features and thus perverting the principal one which was spiritual. The following comment by R. L. Dabney sheds more light on this point: *The transaction of God with Israel was twofold: it had its shell and kernel; its body and spirit; its type and antitype. The corporate theocratic political nation was the shell: the elect seed were the kernel;The secular promise was the type; the spiritual promise of redemption through Christ was antitype. The law was added as a schoolmaster to bring God's people, the spiritual seed mixed in the outward body of Christ.This**

law the carnal abused, as they do now, by the attempt to establish their own righteousness under it.

Calvin on the other hand finds five differences between the Old Testament aspect of the Covenant and that of the New, such as :

“(a) The Old Testament promise is typically under the figure of Canaan; (b) the OT is mainly typical; (c) the NT is spiritual; (d) that it gendereth to bondage; and (e) it is limited to the benefits of one nation.” But is it fair to say that it was all typical to the exclusion of any spirituality, and that it gendered to bondage to the exclusion of liberty and peace? The accounts we have of Abraham, Jacob, and David to mention but a few, are those of men who enjoyed liberty joy and peace in their communion with God, and indeed do we not quite frequently refer to the experiences of these eminent saints. With this exception, the differences referred to most certainly existed.

It would be a grave injustice to cite passages from the Epistle to the Hebrews without consulting Dr Owen. Commenting on verse 8 of chapter 8 which I have already quoted, he has this to say: *Such a covenant is here intended as is ratified and confirmed by the death of Him that makes it, which is properly a testament. Ans this covenant was confirmed by the death of the testator.....wherefore our Saviour calls it the new testament in his blood. And even the covenant which God made with the church of Israel, at Sinai, was called a testament for three reasons, (1) Because it was confirmed by the death of the sacrifices that were slain and offered at the solemn establishment of it. So says our apostle; the first testament was not dedicated without blood. (2) Because it was confirmed by the death of the sacrifices that were slain and offered at the solemn establishment of it. So says our apostle, the first testament was not dedicated without blood. (3) God therein granted to the church of Israel the good things of the land of Canaan with the privileges of worship. (4) The principal reason of this denomination, the old testament, is taken from its being typically significative of the death and legacy of the great testator. There is in the new covenant, a recapitulation of all promises of grace; it implies the actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh; it was ratified by his death and bloodshedding, including all his mediatorial works, and all ordinances of christian worship. There is in the new covenant, a recapitulation of all promises of grace; it implies the actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh; it was ratified by his death and bloodshedding, including all his mediatorial works, and all ordinances of*

Christian worship.” Epistle to the Hebrews Vol 3.

Conclusion

Therefore both Dispensations are basically alike. We have a law that

condemns those who persist in disobedience, and blessings bestowed on the penitent and obedient. The obligation of works is still required of all except those delivered from it by the substitutionary righteousness of a Mediator as typified in the older aspect of the Covenant, and fulfilled by Christ. Christ’s atonement was for the guilt of those pardoned in the OT just as it was for those from the time of His death to the end of the world. Although

sins were fully pardoned before His death, and sinners were justified, the actual debt was not wiped out forever until atonement was made. So then we have but one Covenant of Grace in both Dispensations.

In declaring the way of salvation to a perishing world, we are presenting to them the Covenant of Grace. The message is simple, yet profound, that if a sinner repents of his sins and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he shall be saved. The same Gospel is to be preached to the whole world. It is not our task to single out potential converts, and treat others on account of their degrading conduct, as if there is no hope for them. It is encouraging to know that the preaching of the cross is the power of God into salvation to everyone that believes. Our duty then, and I am not restricting it to those of us who preach, but extending it to all who love the Lord, is to be faithful in bringing the truth to the perishing, and in doing so let us keep our eye on Himself to bless us: and to exhort one another to holiness of life and encourage other believers we meet in our daily life and travels. The Covenant He has made will never be broken, and may we strive to teach our families to fear the Lord amidst the ungodliness that surrounds us in our day. To Him be all glory and praise.
