

## ***Summary of Christian Doctrine*** **Part III**

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Editor's Note: For a more in-depth look into theology, we suggest purchasing Louis Berkhof's, "Manual of Christian Doctrine" (Eermans, Grand Rapids, 2001) and of course Berkhof's, "Systematic Theology" (Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2000). These volumes are indispensable in any Christian's library.

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### **Part III: The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God**

#### **Chapter XI: Man in His Original State**

From the discussion of the doctrine of God we pass on to that of man, the crown of God's handiwork.

1. The Essential Elements of Human Nature. The usual view is that man consists of two parts, body and soul. This is in harmony with the self-consciousness of man, and is also borne out by a study of Scripture, which speaks of man as consisting of "body and soul," Matt. 6:25; 10:28, or of "body and spirit," Eccl. 12:7; I Cor. 5:3,5. Some are of the opinion that the words 'soul' and 'spirit' denote different elements, and that therefore man consists of three parts, body, soul, and spirit, Cf. I Thess. 5:23. It is evident, however, that the two words 'soul' and 'spirit' are used interchangeably. Death is sometimes described as a giving up of the soul, Gen. 35:18; I Kings 17:21, and sometimes as the giving up of the spirit, Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59. The dead are in some cases named "souls," Rev. 9:6; 20:4, and in others 'spirits,' I Pet 3:19; Heb. 12:23. The two terms denote the spiritual element in man from different points of view. As spirit it is the principle of life and action, which controls the body, and as soul it is the personal subject, which thinks and feels and wills, and in some cases the seat of the affections.

2. The Origin of the Soul in Each Individual. There are three views respecting the origin of the individual souls.

a. Pre-existentialism. Some advocated the idea that the souls of men existed in a previous state, and that something that happened then accounts for their present condition. A few found in this an explanation of the fact that man is born as a sinner. This view finds no favor now.

b. Traducianism. According to this View men derive their souls as well as their bodies from their parents. This is the common view in the Lutheran Church. Support for it is found in the fact that nothing is said about the creation of Eve's soul, and that descendants are said to be in the loins of their Fathers, Gen. 46:26; Heb. 7:9, 10. Furthermore, it seems to be favored by the fact that in the case of animals both body and soul are passed on from the old to the young, by the inheritance of family traits and peculiarities, and by the inheritance of sinful corruption, which is a matter of the soul more than of the body. However, it is burdened with serious difficulties. It either makes the parents creators, or assumes that the soul of man can be divided into various parts. Moreover, it endangers the sinlessness of Jesus.

c. Creationism. This holds that each soul is a direct creation of God, of which the time cannot be precisely determined. The soul is supposed to be created pure, but to become sinful even before birth by entering into that complex of sin by which humanity as a whole is burdened. This view is common in Reformed circles. It is favored by the fact that Scripture represents the body and the soul of man as having different origins, Eccl. 12:7; Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9. Moreover, it is more in harmony with the spiritual nature of the soul, and safeguards the sinlessness of Jesus. It is not free from difficulties, however. It

does not explain the inheritance of family traits, and may seem to make God the Creator of sinful souls.

3. Man as the Image of God. The Bible teaches that man is created in the image of God. According to Gen. 1:26, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The two words 'image' and 'likeness' evidently denote the same thing. The following passages show that they are used interchangeably: Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:1; 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10; Jas. 3:9. The word 'likeness' probably stresses the fact that the image is most like or very similar. There are different views of the image of God in man:

a. The Roman Catholic view:. Roman Catholics find the image of God in certain natural gifts with which man is endowed, such as the spirituality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and immortality. To these God added a supernatural gift, called original righteousness, to keep the lower nature in check. This is supposed to constitute man's likeness to God.

b. The Lutheran view. The Lutherans are not all agreed on this point, but the prevailing opinion is that the image of God consists only in those spiritual qualities with which man was endowed at creation, namely, true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. These may be designated original righteousness. This view is too restricted.

c. The Reformed view. The Reformed distinguish between the natural and the moral image of God. The former is the broader of the two, and is generally said to consist in man's spiritual, rational, moral, and immortal being. This was obscured but not lost by sin. The latter is the image of God in the more restricted sense, and consists in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. This was lost by sin and is restored in Christ, Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10. Since man retained the image in the broader sense, he can still be called the image or image-bearer of God, Gen. 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; 15:49; Jas 3:9.

4. Man in the Covenant of Works. God at once entered into covenant relationship with man. This original covenant is called the covenant of works.

a. Scripture proof for the covenant of works. (1) Paul draws a parallel between Adam and Christ in Rom. 5:12-21. In Adam all men died, but in Christ all those who are His are made alive. This means that Adam was the representative head of all men, just as Christ is now the representative head of all those who are His. (2) In Hos. 6:7 we read: "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant" (Am. Rev.). Adam's sin is called a transgression of the covenant.

b. The elements of the covenant of works. (1) The parties. A covenant is always a compact between two parties. In this case they are the triune God, the sovereign Lord of the universe, and Adam as the representative of the human race. Since these parties are very unequal, the covenant naturally partakes of the

nature of an arrangement imposed on man. (2) The promise. The promise of the covenant was the promise of life in the highest sense, life raised above the possibility of death. This is what believers now receive through Christ, the last Adam. (3) The condition. The condition was that of absolute obedience. The positive command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was clearly a test of pure obedience. (4) The penalty. The penalty was death in the most inclusive sense of the word, physical, spiritual, and eternal. This consists not only in the separation of body and soul, but more fundamentally in the separation of the soul from God. (5) The sacrament(s). In all probability the tree of life was the only sacrament of this covenant,-- if it was indeed a sacrament. It seems to have been appointed as a symbol and seal of life.

c. The present validity of the covenant of works. Arminians hold that this covenant was wholly set aside. But this is not correct. The demand of perfect obedience still stands for those who do not accept the righteousness of Christ. Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12. Though they cannot meet the requirement, the condition stands. It holds no more, however, for those who are in Christ, since He met the demands of the law for them. It ceased to be a way of life, for as such it is powerless after the fall.

To memorize. Passages bearing on:

a. The elements of human nature:

Matt. 10:28. "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."

Rom. 8:10. "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

b. The creation of the soul:

Eccl. 12:7. "And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

Heb. 12:9. "Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?"

c. Man's creation in the image of God:

Gen. 1:27. "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

Gen. 9:6. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man."

d. Man in general even now tie image of God:

Gen. 9:6. Cf. above under c.

Jas. 3:9. "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made in the likeness of God."

e. The restoration of the image of God in man:

Eph. 4:24. "And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

Col. 3:10. "And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

f. The covenant of works:

Hos. 6:7. "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant."

I Cor. 15:22. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

For Further Study:

a. How would you explain the passages which seem to imply that man consists of three elements, I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; compare Matt. 22:37.

b. Does man's dominion over the rest of creation also form part of the image of God? Gen. 1:26, 28; Ps. 8:6-8; Heb. 2:5-9.

c. What indications of a covenant can you find in Gen. 2 and 3?

Questions for Review

1. What is the usual view of the elements of human nature, and how can this be proved?
2. What other view is there, and what passages seem to support it?
3. What different views are there as to the origin of the soul?
4. What are the arguments for, and the objections to each one of these?
5. Do the words 'image' and likeness denote different things?
6. What is the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed view of the image of God in man?
7. What distinction do the Reformed make, and why is it, important?
8. What Bible proof have we for the covenant of works?
9. Who are the parties in the covenants?
10. What is the promise, the condition, the penalty, and the sacrament of the covenants?

11. In what sense does this covenant still hold?
12. In what sense is it abolished?

### **Part III: The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God**

#### **Chapter XII: Man in the State of Sin**

1. The Origin of Sin. The Bible teaches us that sin entered the world as the result of the transgression of Adam and Eve in paradise. The first sin was occasioned by the temptation of Satan in the form of a serpent, who sowed in man's heart the seeds of distrust and unbelief. Scripture clearly indicates that the serpent, who appears as the tempter in the story of the fall, was but an instrument of Satan, John 8:44; Rom. 16:20; II Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9. The first sin consisted in man's eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This eating was sinful simply because God had forbidden it. It clearly showed that man was not willing to subject his will unconditionally to the will of God, and comprised several elements. In the intellect it revealed itself as unbelief and pride, in the will as the desire to be like God, and in the affections an unholy satisfaction in eating of the forbidden fruit. As a result of it man lost the image of God in the restricts sense, became guilty and utterly corrupt, and fell under the sway of death, Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12; 6:23.

2. The Essential Nature of Sin. At present many substitute the word 'evil' for 'sin,' but this is a poor substitute, for the word 'sin' is far more specific. It denotes a kind of evil, namely, a moral evil for which man is responsible and which brings him under a sentence of condemnation. The modern tendency is to regard it merely as a wrong done to one's fellow-beings misses the point entirely, for such a wrong can be called sin only in so far as it is contrary to the will of God. Sin is correctly defined by Scripture as "lawlessness," I John 3:4. It is lack of conformity to the law of God, and as such the opposite of that love which is required by the divine law. The Bible always contemplates it in relation to the law, Rom. 1: 32; 2:12-14; 4:15; 5:13; Jas. 2:9, 10; I John 3:4. It is first of all guilt, making men liable to punishment, Rom. 3:19; 5:18; Eph. 2:8, and then also inherent corruption or moral pollution. All men are guilty in Adam, and are therefore born with a corrupt nature. Job 14:4; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 6:5; Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 4:17-19. Sin has its seat in the heart of man, and from this center influences the intellect, the will, and the affections, in fact the whole man, and finds expression through the body. Prov. 4:23; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19, 20; Luke 6:45; Heb. 3:12. In distinction from the Roman Catholics we maintain that it does not consist in outward acts only, but includes evil thoughts, affections, and intents of the heart. Matt. 5:22, 28; Rom. 7:7; Gal. 5:17, 24.

3. Sin in the Life of the Human Race. Three points deserve consideration here:

a. The connection between Adam's sin and that of his descendants. This has been explained in three different ways.

(1) The earliest explanation is called the realistic theory, which is to the effect that God originally created one general human nature, which in course of time divided into as many parts as there are human individuals. Adam possessed the whole of this general human nature; and through his sin it became guilty and polluted. Naturally, every individual part of it shares this guilt and pollution.

(2) In the days of the Reformation the representative theory came to the foreground. According to this view Adam stood in a twofold relation to his descendants: he was their natural head, and he was their representative as the head of the covenant. When he sinned as their representative, this sin was also imputed to them, and as a result they are all born in a corrupt state. This is our Reformed view.

(3) A third theory, not as well known, is that of mediate imputation. It holds that the guilt of Adam's sin is not directly placed to our account. His corruption is passed on to his descendants, and this makes them personally guilty. They are not corrupt because they are guilty in Adam, but guilty because they are corrupt.

b. Original and Actual Sin. We distinguish between original and actual sin. All men are born in a sinful state and condition, which is called original sin, and is the root of all the actual sins that are committed.

(1) Original sin. This includes both guilt and pollution. The guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to us. Because he sinned as our representative, we are guilty in him. Moreover, we also inherit his pollution, and now have a positive disposition toward sin. Man is by nature totally depraved. This does not mean that every man is as bad as he can be, but that sin has corrupted every part of his nature and rendered him unable to do any spiritual good. He may still do many praiseworthy things in relation to his fellow-beings, but even his best works are radically defective, because they are not prompted by love to God nor done in obedience to God. This total depravity and inability is denied by Pelagians, Arminians, and Modernists, but is clearly taught in Scripture, Jer. 17:9; John 5:42; 6:44; 15:4, 5; Rom. 7:18, 23, 24; 8:7, 8; I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18; II Tim. 3:2-4; Tit. 1:16; Heb. 11:6.

(2) Actual sin. The term 'actual sin' denotes not only sins consisting in outward acts, but also those conscious thoughts, desires, and decisions that proceed from original sin. They are the sins which the individual performs in distinction from his inherited nature and inclination. While original sin is one, actual sins are manifold. They may be sins of the inner life, such as pride, envy, hatred, sensual lusts, and evil desires; or sins of the outer life, such as deceit, theft, murder, adultery, and so on. Among these there is one unpardonable sin, namely, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, after which a change of heart is impossible,

and for which it is not necessary to pray, Matt, 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26, 27; I John 5:16.

c. The Universality of Sin. Scripture and experience both teach us that sin is universal. Even the Pelagians do not deny this, though they ascribe it to external conditions, such as a bad environment, evil examples, and a wrong kind of education. There are passages in which the Bible directly asserts the universality of sin, such as I Kings 8:46; Ps. 143: 2; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:1-12, 19, 23; Gal 3:22; Jas. 3:2; I John 1:8, 10. Moreover, it teaches that man is sinful from birth, so that this cannot be considered as the result of imitation, Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; John 3:6. Even infants are considered sinful, for they are subject to death, which is the penalty for sin, Rom. 5:12-14. All men are by nature under condemnation, and therefore need the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Children are never made an exception to this rule. John 3:3, 5; Eph. 2:3; I John 5:12.

To memorize. Passages to prove:

a. That sin is guilt:

Rom. 5:18. "So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life."

I John 3:4. "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness."

Eph. 2:3. "Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

b. That sin is pollution:

Jer. 17:9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?"

Rom. 7:18, "For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not."

Rom. 8:6. "For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

c. That sin has its seat in the heart:

Jer. 17:9. Cf. above under b.

Matt. 16:19. "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings."

Heb. 3:12. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God."

d. That Adam's guilt is imputed to us:

Rom. 5:12. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." Also verse 19. "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

I Cor. 15:21, 22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

e. That man is totally depraved:

Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:18; 8:5. Cf. under b. above.

g. That sin is universal:

I Kings 8:46. "For there is no man that sinneth not."

Ps. 143:2. "And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no living man is righteous."

Rom. 3:12. "They have all turned aside, they are become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one."

I John 1:8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

For Further Study:

a. Can you give some other scriptural names for sin? Job 15:- 5; 33:9; Ps. 32:1, 2; 55:15; Rom. 1:18; 5:15; I John 3:4.

b. Does the word 'evil' ever mean anything else than sin in Scripture? If so, what? Cf. Ex. 5:19; II Kings 6:33; 22:16; Ps. 41:8; 91:10; Prov. 16:4.

c. Does the Bible explicitly teach that man is a sinner from birth? Ps. 51:5; Isa. 48:8.

Questions for Review

1. What is the biblical view of the origin of sin?
2. What was the first sin, and what elements can be distinguished in it?
3. How would you prove that Satan was the real tempter?
4. What were the results of the first sin?
5. Do the words 'sin' and 'evil' mean the same thing?
6. Where does sin have its seat in man?
7. Does sin consist only in outward acts?
8. What different views are there respecting the connection between Adam's sin and that of his descendants?
9. What is original sin, and how does actual sin differ from it?
10. How do you conceive of total depravity?
11. What proof is there for the universality of sin?

### **Part III: The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God**

#### **Chapter XIII: Man in the Covenant of Grace**

For the sake of clearness we distinguish between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. The two are so closely related that they can be and sometimes are, considered as one. The former is the eternal foundation of the latter.

1. The Covenant of Redemption. This is also called "the counsel of peace," a name derived from Zech. 6:13. It is a covenant between the Father, representing the Trinity, and the Son as the representative of the elect.

a. The scriptural basis for it. It is clear that the plan of redemption was included in God's eternal decree, Eph. 1:4 ff.; 3:11; II Tim. 1:9. Christ speaks of promises made to Him before He came into the world, and repeatedly refers to a commission which He received from the Father, John 5:30, 43; 6:38-40; 17:4-12. He is evidently a covenant head, Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15: -- 22. In Ps. 2:7-9 the parties of the covenant are mentioned and a promise is indicated, and in Ps. 40:7, 8 the Messiah expresses His readiness to do the Father's will in becoming a sacrifice for sin.

b. The Son in the covenant of redemption. Christ is not only the Head but also the Surety of the covenant of redemption, Heb. 7:22. A surety is one who takes upon himself the legal obligations of another. Christ took the place of the sinner, to bear the penalty of sin and to meet the demands of the law for His people. By so doing He became the last Adam, a life-giving spirit, I Cor. 15:45. For Christ this covenant was a covenant of works, in which He met the requirements of the original covenant, but for us it is the eternal foundation of the covenant of grace. Its benefits are limited to the elect. They only obtain the redemption and inherit the glory which Christ merited for sinners.

c. Requirements and promises in the covenant of redemption. (1) The Father required of the Son that He should assume human nature with its present infirmities, though without sin, Gal. 4:4, 5; Heb. 2:10, 11, 14, 15; 4:15; that He should place Himself under the law to pay the penalty and to merit eternal life for the elect, Ps. 40:8; John 10:11; Gal. 1:4; 4:4, 5; and that He should apply His merits to His people by the renewing operation of the Holy Spirit, thus securing the consecration of their lives to God, John 10:28; 17:19-22; Heb. 5:7-9. (2) And the Father promised the Son that He would prepare for Him a body, Heb. 10:5, would anoint Him with the Holy Spirit, Isa. 42:1; 61:1; John 3:34, would support Him in His work, Isa. 42:6, 7; Luke 22:43 would deliver Him from the power of death and place Him at His own right hand, Ps. 16:8-11; Phil. 2:9-11, would enable Him to [s]end the Spirit for the formation of the Church, John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13, 14, would draw and preserve the elect, John 6:37, 39, 40, 44, 45, and would grant Him a numerous seed, Ps. 22:27; 72:17

2. The Covenant of Grace. On the basis of the covenant of redemption God established the covenant of grace. Several particulars call for consideration here.

a. The contracting parties. God is the first party in the covenant. He establishes the covenant and determines the relation in which the second party will stand to Him. It is not so easy to determine who the second party is. The prevailing opinion in Reformed circles is that it is the elect sinner in Christ. We should bear in mind, however, that the covenant may be viewed in two different ways: (1) As an end in itself, a covenant of mutual friendship or communion of life, which is realized in the course of history through the operation of the Holy Spirit. It represents a condition in which privileges are improved for spiritual ends, the promises of God are embraced by a living faith, and the promised blessings are fully realized. So conceived, it may be defined as that gracious agreement between God and the elect sinner in Christ, in which God gives Himself with all the blessings of salvation to the elect sinner, and the latter embraces God and all His gracious gifts by faith. Deut. 7:9; II Cron. 6:14; Ps. 25:10, 14; 103:17, 18. (2) As a means to an end, a purely legal arrangement for the realization of a spiritual end. It is evident that the Bible sometimes speaks of the covenant as including some in whom the promises are never realized, such as Ishmael, Esau, the wicked sons of Eli, and the rebellious Israelites who died in their sins. The covenant may be regarded as a purely legal agreement, in which God guarantees the blessings of salvation to all who believe. If we think of the covenant in this broader sense, we can say that God established it with believers and their children, Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; Rom. 9:1-4.

b. The promises and requirements of the covenant. Every covenant has two sides; it offers certain privileges and imposes certain obligations.

(1) The promises of the covenant. The main promise of the covenant, which includes all others, is contained in the oft-repeated words, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee," Jer. 31:33; 32:38-40; Ezek. 34:23-25, 30, 31;

36:25-28; Heb. 8:10; II Cor. 6:16-18. This promise includes all others, such as the promise of temporal blessings, of justification, of the Spirit of God, and of final glorification in a life that never ends. Job 19:25-27; Ps. 16:11; 73:24-26; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:33, 34; Ezek. 36:27; Dan. 12:2, 3; Gal. 4:4, 5, 6; Tit. 3:7; Heb. 11:7; Jas. 2:5.

(2) The requirements of the covenant. The covenant of grace is not a covenant of works; it requires no work with a view to merit. However, it does contain requirements and imposes obligations on man. By meeting the demands of the covenant man earns nothing, but merely puts himself in the way in which God will communicate to him the promised blessings. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that even the requirements are covered by the promises: God gives man all that He requires of him. The two things which He demands of those who stand in covenant relationship to Him are (a) that they accept the covenant and the covenant promises by faith, and thus enter upon the life of the covenant; and (b) that from the principle of the new life born within them, they consecrate themselves to God in new obedience.

c. The characteristics of the covenant. The covenant of grace is a gracious covenant, because it is a fruit and manifestation of the grace of God to sinners. It is grace from start to finish. It is also an eternal and inviolable covenant, to which God will always be true, though men may break it. Even in its widest extent it includes only a part of mankind, and is therefore particular. If its New Testament dispensation is called universal, this is done only in view of the fact that it is not limited to the Jews, as the Old Testament dispensation was. This covenant is also characterized by unity. It is essentially the same in all dispensations, though the form of its administration changes. The essential promise is the same, Gen. 17:7; Heb. 8:10, the gospel is the same, Gal. 3:8, the requirement of faith is the same, Gal. 3:6, 7, and the Mediator is the same, Heb. 13:8. The covenant is both conditional and unconditional. It is conditional because it is dependent on the merits of Christ and because the enjoyment of the life it offers depends on the exercise of faith. But it is unconditional in the sense that it does not depend on any merits of man. And, finally, it is testamentary as a free and sovereign disposition on the part of God. It is called a 'testament' in Heb. 9:16, 17. This name stresses the facts, (1) that it is a free arrangement of God; (2) that its New Testament dispensation was ushered in by the death of Christ; and (3) that in it God gives what He demands. The covenant of grace differs from the covenant of works in that it has a mediator. Christ is represented as the Mediator of the new covenant, I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. He is Mediator, not only merely in the sense that He intervenes between God and man to sue for peace and to persuade to it, but in the sense that He is armed with full power to do all that is necessary for the actual establishment of peace. As our Surety, Heb. 7:22, He assumes our guilt, pays the penalty of sin, fulfills the law, and thus restores peace.

d. Membership in the covenant. Adults can enter the covenant as a purely legal arrangement only by faith. And when they so enter it, they at the same time gain entrance into the covenant as a communion of life. They therefore enter upon the full covenant life at once. Children of believers, however, enter the covenant as a legal arrangement by birth, but this does not necessarily mean that they also at once enter it as a communion of life, nor even that they will ever enter it in that sense. Yet the promise of God gives a reasonable assurance that the covenant life will be realized in them. As long as they do not manifest the contrary we may proceed on the assumption that they possess the new life. When they grow up, they must accept their covenant responsibilities voluntarily by a true confession of faith. Failure to do this makes them covenant breakers. From the preceding it follows that unregenerate persons may temporarily be in the covenant as a purely legal relationship, Rom. 9:4. They are recognized as covenant children, are subject to its requirements and share its ministrations. They receive the seal of baptism, enjoy the common blessings of the covenant, and may even partake of some special operations of the Holy Spirit. If they do not accept the corresponding responsibilities, they will be judged as breakers of the covenant.

The different dispensations of the covenant. (1) The first revelation of the covenant is found in Gen. 3:15, which is usually called the protevangel or the maternal promise. This does not yet refer to the formal establishment of the covenant. (2) The covenant with Noah is of a very general nature as a covenant with all flesh. It conveys only natural blessings, and is therefore often called the covenant of nature or of common grace. It is closeconnected, however, with the covenant of grace. It is also a fruit of the grace of God and guarantees those natural and temporal blessings which are absolutely necessary for the realization of the covenant of grace. (3) The covenant with Abraham marks its formal establishment. It is the beginning of the Old Testament particularistic administration of the covenant, which is now limited to Abraham and his descendants, Faith stands out prominently as its necessary requirement, and circumcision becomes its seal. (4) The covenant at Sinai is essentially the same as that established with Abraham, but now takes in the whole nation of Israel, and thus became a national covenant. Though it strongly stresses the keeping of the law, it should not be regarded as a renewed covenant of works. The law increased the consciousness of sin, Rom. 3:20, and became a tutor unto Christ, Gal. 3:24. Passover was added as a second sacrament. (5) The new covenant, as revealed in the New Testament, Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8, 13, is essentially the same as that of the Old Testament, Rom. 4; Gal. 3. It now breaks through the barriers of particularism and becomes universal in the sense that its blessings are extended to people of all nations. Its blessings become fuller and more spiritual, and baptism and the Lord's Supper are substituted for the Old Testament sacraments.

To memorize. Passages bearing on:

a. Thee parties of the covenant:

Gen. 3:15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Gen. 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Ex. 19:5, 6a. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

Jer. 31:31-33, "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Acts 2:39. "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him."

b. Its promises and requirements:

Cf. Gen. 17:7; Ex. 19:5; 6a; Jer. 31:33 under a. above, for the essential promise.

Gen. 15:6. "And he (Abraham) believed in Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness."

Ex. 19:5. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples."

Ps. 25:14. "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant."

Ps. 103:17, 18. "But the lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His precepts to do them."

Gal. 3:7, 9. "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham.... So then they that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

c. Characteristics of the covenant:

Eternal. Gen. 17:19b. "And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him." Isa. 54:10. "For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 24:5. "The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant."

Unity. Gal. 3:7, 9 under b. above. Rom. 4:11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them"

Testamentary. Heb. 9:17, 18. "For a testament is of force where there hath been death; for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood."

d. The Mediator of the covenant:

I Tim. 2:5. "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus." Heb. 7:22. "By so much also hath Jesus become the Surety of a better covenant."

Heb. 8:6. "But now He hath obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises."

For Further Study:

a. Can you name some special covenants mentioned in the Bible? Gen. 31:44; Deut. 29:1; I Sam. 18:3; II Sam. 28:5.

b. Can you name instances of covenant breaking? Gen. 25:32-34, cf. Heb. 12:16, 17; Ex. 32:1-14; Num. 14; Num. 16; Judg. 2:11 ff.; I Sam. 2:12 ff.; Isa. 24:5; Ezek. 16:59; Hos. 6:7; 8:1; 10:4.

c. Did the giving of the law change the covenant essentially? Rom. 4:13-17; Gal. 3:17-24.

Questions for Review

1. What is the covenant of redemption? By what other name is it known, and how is it related to the covenant of grace?
2. What scriptural evidence is there for it?
3. What is the official position of Christ in this covenants?
4. Was it for Christ a covenant of grace or a covenant of works.?

5. Whom does Christ represent in this covenant?
6. What did the Father require of Christ, and what did He promise Him?
7. What distinction do we apply to the covenant of grace?
8. How does this affect the question, who is the second party in the covenant?
9. What is the all-embracing promise of the covenant?
10. What does God require of those who are in the covenant?
11. What are the characteristics of the covenant?
12. In what sense is the covenant unbreakable, and in what sense breakable?
13. How can you prove the unity of the covenants?
14. In what sense is it conditional, and in what sense unconditional?
15. Why can it be called a testament?
16. Where do we find the first revelation of the covenant?
17. What was the nature of the covenant with Noah?
18. How did the covenant with, Abraham and the Sinaitic covenant differ?
19. What characterized the New Testament dispensation of the covenants?
20. What is the position of Christ in the covenant of grace?
21. How can adults become covenant members?
22. How do children of believers enter the covenant?
23. What is expected of them?
24. Can unregenerate persons be members of the covenants?

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