

Weeks Ten and Eleven, December 8 and 15, 2021: “Of God’s Covenant with Man”, Chapter 7

Intro: “This chapter contains an aspect of the *Westminster Confession* that distinguishes it from all the Reformed Confessions which preceded it.”¹²⁰ Why? Because it crystallizes what had been developing in the Reformation but not yet so carefully defined and described: covenant theology. And, “The covenant character of revelation appears in all the Scripture and binds the sixty-six books together in one unified Word of God. It gives the two divisions of the Bible their names, the Old Testament and the New Testament, or Covenant (Jer. 31:31-33 Heb. 8:13). The covenant concept lies at the heart of the Westminster Confession of Faith ...” (RPCNA *Testimony*, A-1). Because it so does the Bible.¹²¹

WCF 7:1: *The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God’s part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.(a)*

(a)Isa 40:13-17; Job 9:32-33; 1 Sam 2:25; Ps 113:5-6; Ps 100:2-3; Job 22:2-3; Job 35:7-8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24-25.

- a. God is so much greater than us that we could have no meaningful relationship with Him if He did not condescend to our level by way of covenant relations. This is the doctrine of God’s “transcendence”, emphasizing the Creator-creature distinction. He voluntarily condescends, or as Calvin puts it, bends down to “lisp” in language we can understand, including figurative expressions such as anthropomorphism and anthropopathism. But this “baby talk” should be understood as intelligible language, not infant coos as some illustrate. God’s purpose is to communicate and be understood. He accommodates Himself to our inferior human limitations.
- b. A covenant simply stated is an “agreement”, or as R.C. Sproul explains, “in the simplest terms ... a formal agreement between two or more parties”. A.A. Hodge calls it a “conditional promise”, or as Pastor Wallace A. Bell expressed in the 1982 PECA membership tapes, “a promise

¹²⁰ Spear, 44.

¹²¹ “The concept of covenant, which provides the structure or framework of redemptive history and of the whole scope of theology, is vitally important. It provides the context within which God reveals himself to us, ministers to us, and acts to redeem us ... The language and idea of covenant pervade redemptive history and the Bible.” Sproul, 205. Fesko writes, “... Tyndale also sees the covenant as the central means for comprehending Scripture: ‘The right way, yea, and the only way, to understand the scripture unto salvation, is that we earnestly and above all things search for the profession of our baptism, or covenants made between God and us’ ... salvation comes to man ... by way of covenant.” Fesko, 130. O. Palmer Robertson writes, “Covenantal history thus displays the unifying purposes of God in the world”, 206. E. Clarke Copeland writes, “... God’s covenant effects the whole of His redemptive purpose. It lies at the heart of His special self-revealing activity. It is a key concept for understanding the Bible”: “The Covenant: Key to Bible Understanding”, in *The Book of Books: Essays on the Scriptures in Honor of Johannes G. Vos*, ed. John H. White (Presbyterian and Reformed: location?, 1978), 30. The Bold North Conference that held an event on covenant theology with the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals in November of 2021 noted the following in its event description, “Covenant Theology and The Promised Messiah”: “Covenant stands at the center of all true religion between God and man. Covenant theology is more than an idea, it is the heart of correct biblical interpretation. Reformed theology stands on covenant theology, because it stands on the Bible as properly read and understood. In this third annual Bold North Conference on Reformed Theology, we will move from Genesis to Revelation to unpack the nature of the two great covenants in Scripture. With this, believers will become better equipped to rightly divide the Word of Truth.” Source: <https://www.alliancenet.org/bold-north-conference-on-reformed-theology> (Dec. 8, 2021).

suspended upon a condition.” In the “Practical Use of Saving Knowledge” (included in the Westminster Standards by the Church of Scotland, although not written or sanctioned by the Assembly), we see the word “covenant” used interchangeably with the words “bargain” and “contract” to which people need to “consent”. “Covenant” is a principle theme in all of Scripture, evidenced by the word’s frequency and its usage in contexts. A covenant can be described as 1) containing parties or persons, 2) mutually understood and agreed upon conditions or stipulations, and 3) promises of resulting wages of reward (positive or negative) based on the merit of obedience or demerit of disobedience to those conditions. In the case of a “suzerain covenant”, the covenant and its stipulations are imposed by the king or feudal lord upon his vassal subject, the later only being in the position of potential obedience or disobedience and thus reward for merit or punishment for demerit. We see the ancient treaty formula between a conquering king and its vassal subjects reflected in the structure of the Ten Commandments. R.C. Sproul describes its elements: 1) a preamble, which identified the suzerain (the overlord in a vassal state), Ex. 20:2; 2) an historical prologue, in which the king briefly summarized the history of his relationship with his vassals, Ex. 20:2; 3) promises and stipulations, Ex. 20:3-17; 4) sanctions, Ex. 19:8; 5) an oath or sacred vow that established the covenant by way of a cutting or blood rite ratification, Ex. 24:3, 7; and 6) duplicate copies of the covenant were made, one for the king and one for the vassals, Ex. 24:6, 8.¹²² In all covenants between God and man, God is the King Who imposes His covenants on man. Still, notice the language of such covenants in Scripture always emphasize “between”, with extra “betweens” often in the literal Hebrew, demonstrating the mutuality or reciprocity of covenants.¹²³ As well, in covenant, God binds Himself to His Word—He binds Himself by His promise to give wages of penalty or reward to the vassal based upon his or her behavior (response to the King’s laws of the land).¹²⁴

- c. There is much disagreement with this definition and description of “covenant” with some folks who want to say a covenant is a “relationship”. First, this is in danger of making the Trinity tritheistic – three essences rather than a unity of three persons. As well, this is the same idea on which the heresies of Federal Vision and the New Perspective on Paul are based. A covenant is indeed a mutual understanding and *commitment* between two or more parties.¹²⁵ Some who admirably try to protect God’s sovereignty deny this understanding with a concern of the word

¹²² Sproul, vol. 1, 207-213. This summary reflects (as Sproul notes) the work of Meredith Kline. Packer affirms, “God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai took the form of a Near Eastern suzerainty treaty, that is, royal covenant imposed unilaterally on a vassal king and a servant people.” Packer, 88. O. Palmer Robertson also affirms the reality of this peace treaty formula in the Ten Commandments and Deuteronomy as a whole, citing Kline, 169. Similarly, E. Clarke Copland reflects Kline’s outline and approves the title of his commentary on Deuteronomy as “appropriately” named, *The Treaty of the Great King*. Copland, *ibid*, 31. For sermons that explain this Peace Treaty formula by PRCP, see sermons on Exodus 20 and the introduction to Deuteronomy and also Deuteronomy 5 at sermonaudio.com/puritanchurch.

¹²³ “The covenant is mutual,” Matthew Henry, *Commentary on Genesis*, 65. “... even in a unilateral covenant there must be reciprocity.” Victor Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 85.

¹²⁴ ¹²⁴ Joel Beeke, in sermon on www.sermonaudio.com, On “covenant”: “The way by which God carries out what He has bound Himself to do.” See PRCP audio sermon on Gen. 15:7-21, “God Has Obligated Himself to You”.

¹²⁵ “... although Adam’s will was not consulted, yet his will was unquestionably cordially consenting to this divine constitution and all the terms thereof, and hence the transaction did embrace all the elements of a covenant.” A.A. Hodge, 121-122.

“agreement” implying equal parties in a bi-lateral situation, but the meaning of covenant in the language of Scripture is always essentially a formal agreement between parties: “Covenant is the means by which two parties are bound in relationship; it is a basis for relationship and not the relationship itself. Covenants provide the terms of agreement that structure a relationship ... what is evidenced in every single covenant depicted in the Bible, namely, a pact or agreement for the attainment of blessing ...”¹²⁶ For instance, Abraham and Abimelech “covenant” in Genesis 21:27-32 to respect one another’s territory. Judas “covenanted” with the Pharisees to betray Jesus (it is a different Greek word than the usual *diatheke*, but the context derives the same meaning). Sometimes the word *berith* for “covenant” in the Hebrew is even translated, “league” (Joshua 9:6-7; 1 Kings 5:12).¹²⁷ The argument against “agreement” for “covenant” is based on a philosophical (rather than exegetical) commitment to reading back into the ontological (essence) of the Trinity as essentially relational.¹²⁸ But this is mistaken, and not told to us in Scripture. “The covenants with Abraham, Moses and David embody the promise: ‘I will be your God’ ... God commits himself to those with whom he makes covenant.”¹²⁹ Important to add is that the phrase, “and you will be my people”, often follows in Scripture, thus demonstrating the mutual arrangement of the covenant with God. “The terms of a covenant specify the basis, nature, and conditions of a relationship.”¹³⁰ It is helpful to note that the “Sum of Saving Knowledge” (referred to above) speaks of entering into “friendship” with God *by way of covenant*. Note: “covenant” and “agreement” are used in poetic parallelism as synonyms in Isaiah 28:15 and 18.

- d. Why does this matter? Because, if you deny the essential elements and nature of what a covenant is, you miss the entire framework of the Bible. If you deny that a covenant is an agreement, you cannot have the Covenant of Works, and then you deny the basis of the Covenant of Grace (The WLC points out that the Covenant of Grace was between the Father and the Son, and this was based on what Christ would do as the Second Adam – His works, on behalf of the elect). An agreement is not always between equal parties, although in the Covenant of Grace it certainly is. And an agreement is not always a “cold, bare business like pact” as some like to accuse, pointing to marriage as an illustration that a covenant is a relationship, not an agreement. But it should be noted that the parties of man and woman are *not* in a marriage relationship of husband and wife

¹²⁶ Richard Phillips, “Covenant Confusion”, www.alliancenet.org. E. Clarke Copeland puts it this way: “The covenant is an act of God by which He enters into union with man. Within this union God brings about the promised blessings through the responses that the covenant requires of man, or He personally administers the penalties upon covenant breakers. Thus God is the sovereign Lord who declares His gracious purpose to man in the form of promises demanding response. He is also the guarantor of the covenant, making man, at the same time, His servant-ally in achieving the covenant.” Copeland, *ibid*, 35.

¹²⁷ Thomas Ridgley, WLC Commentary, 40: “The word commonly used in the Old Testament to signify a covenant ... being taken in several senses, may be understood better by observing how it is used in those places where we find it, than by inquiry into the sense of the root whence it is derived.”

¹²⁸ For an example of the PRCA’s views, see Herman Hanko’s God’s *Everlasting Covenant of Grace*. While it at times almost seems to be a polemic against the Westminster Standards view of covenant and covenant of works, the book also does have (in spite of its blunders) very helpful chapters on things like paedobaptism. One can also reference many articles in the PRCA’s Standard-Bearer magazine and their seminary’s journal by David Engelsma, and in his language you will witness an utter and blatant disgust of the Westminster Confession’s teaching on covenant and covenant of works.

¹²⁹ Ward, 66.

¹³⁰ Spear, 44.

until they so covenant; that is, until they agree formally before God and men and in a binding *contract* before God and the State. Marriage is a legally binding moral arrangement between two people (or people groups). It is serious and solemn, which makes such a relationship bound by covenant so warm and special: “In its most essential aspect, a covenant is that which binds people together.”¹³¹ And such is the case between God and Adam in the Covenant of Works (unilateral), and the Father and Son in the Covenant of Grace (bilateral). On this note, stated a little more clearly and wonderfully, Thomas Watson writes of the “second covenant” of grace: “This is a marriage covenant ... Jer. iii 14.”¹³² Also, some try and read “covenant” as “condescension” because of the language in this paragraph, but this is not careful. God condescends to us “by way” of covenant. God “bends down” to make a covenant with us, but that condescension is not itself a covenant. God was not obliged to condescend to us, but He did. And He did so at our very creation by putting the Law on the hearts of mankind: “We infer that Adam had intuitive, divinely implanted knowledge of the law of God.”¹³³ Adam and Eve were, upon their first breath, self-consciously covenant creatures imposed with their Creator’s moral and legal arrangement of life in the Garden. God more explicitly explains the covenant-relationship, but before He does the arrangement exists (seen in Joseph’s denying Potiphar’s wife before Mt. Sinai); this we call a Covenant of Works.

7:2: *The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, (b) wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, (c) upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. (d)*
 (b)Gal 3:12. (c)Rom 10:5; Rom 5:12-20. (d)Gen 2:17; Gal 3:10.

- a. There is much disagreement about this phrase, “Covenant of Works”, as well. Some particularly disdain the term, because they think it makes man an equal partner with God, and they do not like the idea that man could, based on his behavior, merit anything from God. But we do see the elements of a covenant of works in the Garden: parties, stipulations, wages of reward for obedience (continual life) or disobedience (death, see Romans 6:23). God imposes the covenant, but He is still a sovereign party to it, and rewards obedience with life: “The Covenant of Works expresses the terms upon which God established a relationship with Adam immediately after his creation.”¹³⁴ The guidance in WLC 99:4 on interpreting the 10 Commandments is helpful to remember in this discussion: “... where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.” Adam agreed as a willing party of the covenant by virtue of his obedience; otherwise, it makes no sense to say he disobeyed and fell from life and original righteousness. Adam was obedient to God’s terms of life in Paradise, a covenant. One is faithful to a relationship by virtue

¹³¹ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) , 4. He adds, “The result of a covenant commitment is the establishment of a relationship ‘in connection with,’ ‘with’ or ‘between’ people ... a covenant in its essence is a bond. A covenant commits people to one another ... This closeness of relationship between oath and covenant emphasizes that a covenant in its essence is a bond. By the covenant, persons become committed to one another”, 6-7. In a footnote on page 6, he says “a covenant *is* an oath.” Sadly, Robertson, like many Reformed past and present, later seems to shift between definitions of “covenant”, sometimes saying it is not an agreement, and at other times admitting it is (see pp. 127 and 130).

¹³² Watson, 156.

¹³³ Spear, 46. See also WCF 19:1, 2.

¹³⁴ Spear, 45.

of its mutual terms of agreement (written or oral, explicit or understood). Adam's reward was promised life “upon condition of perfect and personal obedience”. He had to obey and *maintain* his original righteousness to stay in the garden. Some seem to neglect the distinction of Adam BEFORE the fall as continuing to live righteous and good and thus enjoying communion with God. He was not fallen, and he was not sinful (until he fell and sinned). Watson notes that Adam before the Fall “was perfectly holy”, citing Eccl. 7:29. So he had a right to stay there by virtue of his living according to God’s rules (just as he lost his right to stay there once he broke the “house” rules). Remember in WCF 4:2, Adam and Eve were said to, having been given the law written in their hearts (The Covenant of Works), “and power to fulfill it ... received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God ...”¹³⁵ The Covenant of Works is important to maintain because it vitally links to the Covenant of Grace that comes next, wherein Christ not only pays for our sins for breaking covenant, but He lives the Covenant of Works perfectly on our behalf and credits that righteousness to us, just as Adam’s guilt was imputed to us (Rom. 5:19).¹³⁶

- b. It also is important to understand by the Covenant of Works that there was no grace in the Garden before the Fall (as many Reformed men want to say to emphasize the Creator-creature distinction).¹³⁷ Adam was made righteous. He lived righteously until He fell. Grace is always through a mediator, namely the true Mediator Jesus Christ. Adam, before the Fall, did not need a mediator: he was in direct, immediate access to God as a righteous (not sinful) man. We need mediation when we can *not* approach God directly because of our sin. This is what Jesus earns us again and mediates for us until we are in God’s direct presence in heaven. God condescended with man before the Fall, but grace is something technically soteriological (saving from demerit and guilt). Let us stick with the terminology the Confession gives us in paragraph one of “condescension” to describe the Creator-creature distinction and dispositions before the Fall. In such discussions pre-fall, it is important not to read post-fall elements and situations into the time in the Garden with perfect humanity. In God’s goodness (not grace), He bound Adam to obey in

¹³⁵ Watson writes, "This covenant of works had a promise annexed to it, and a threatening. I. The promise was, 'Do this and live.' ... The form of the first covenant in innocence was working; 'Do this and live.'" 129.

¹³⁶ “Failure to develop the concept of the pre-redemptive covenant as the foundation for redemptive covenant administration will, it may be added, deprive dogmatics of the conceptual apparatus required for a satisfactory synthesis of the work of Christ and the redemptive covenant.” Meredith G. Kline, “Law Covenant” in *Westminster Theological Journal* 27 (1964/65) ; 10.

¹³⁷ “If life for Adam in the first covenant was by grace and not works, why did Jesus need to work, to obey and to do righteousness perfectly? But God offered life to Adam and his posterity based upon sinless obedience, and God restored life to sinners by the sinless obedience of his incarnate Son, the second Adam. Deny the “works” nature of the first covenant, and you destroy the basis of the covenant of grace which is the perfect work, obedience and righteous act of Jesus our Savior.” Jack Kinneer, “In Defense of the Covenant of Works”, www.rpts.edu, 5.

righteousness and keep living as a result.¹³⁸ God bound Himself to His Own arrangement with man by stipulations and promises of life or death as rewards for merit or demerit: “Just as disobedience earns a display of God’s negative justice in the form of his curse, so obedience earns a manifestation of God’s positive justice in the form of his blessing ... this is simple justice.”¹³⁹ This distinction maintains “covenant” as an “agreement” while also preserving that God and man are not equal parties. But what a blessing to understand this: “What a privilege it is to know that we are the people of God, to whom He has bound Himself by covenant!”¹⁴⁰ This word “condition” demonstrates the reality of the situation: “The promise of the covenant is inferred from the penalty. If disobedience would bring death, then obedience would result in continued, blessed fellowship with God, which is the essence of life (John 17:3).”¹⁴¹ This is why the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 12 refers to this as the “covenant of life”.

- c. But what kind of life? We argue “continual” of the life Adam had on earth, not “eternal” life that only Jesus could provide from heaven. Notice, the Standards never qualify “life” as something eternal or to be obtained in the future (most Reformed teachers demand that it is implied).¹⁴² Remember, Adam had life, communion with God. It bears repeating, in WCF 4:2, Adam and Eve were said to, having been given the law written in their hearts (The Covenant of Works), “and power to fulfill it ... received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God ...” But he could lose it. So he had to continue to obey perfectly to stay alive. Meanwhile, he was happy in this good world before the Fall—he was not spending his time in paradise in angst and worry (which would

¹³⁸ “... life was contingent upon perfect obedience. Only one infraction, one little taste of the forbidden fruit, and Adam would die. **It is a matter of secondary importance whether we conceive of the life that would be lost as that life which Adam already possessed, or whether we think it to be a future and more exalted life that was promised by the tree of life [This comment is relevant to the discussions below; bold GVL].** In either case, life was conditioned upon perfect obedience. To say that God gave life to Adam as a gift of grace, but that he had to maintain himself in that life by his perfect obedience, is fuzzy thinking. As soon as God interposed the commandment and made the threat, life was now based upon perfect obedience. Adam could and did lose that life, and so did the whole race through him. After the threat was issued, life was based upon Adam’s perfect obedience ... Adam was condemned by God based upon his works. This is obvious. But it should be equally obvious that, if Adam had not sinned in eating the forbidden fruit, he would have been justified by his works.” Jack Kinneer, “In Defense of the Covenant of Works,” www.rpts.edu, 2. J. Gresham Machen, in *The Christian View of Man* (ch. 13, “Covenant of Life”), writes, “No absolute promise of life was given him but he was to have life only if he obeyed perfectly the commandments of God.”

¹³⁹ Meredith Kline, “Covenant Theology Under Attack,” www.upper-register.com.

¹⁴⁰ Spear, 48.

¹⁴¹ Spear, 46.

¹⁴² It is important to note that the “Sum of Saving Knowledge” referred to above does use the term “eternal” with “life”, clearly assuming that is what Adam would have earned had he not fallen. This is relevant as it is a closely related document by proximity of time and author, but it is also important to reiterate that this document, while included by the Church of Scotland in its printing of the Westminster Standards later on, was not sanctioned to write nor was ratified as one of its documents. Pastor plans to explore the background here more, but he suspects “eternal” was left out of the Westminster Standards to accommodate variant views, as some of the Divines held that Adam only earned temporal life while obedient (see another footnote below for more on this by Fesko).

be a fallen state).¹⁴³ He daily earned the right to more life by not disqualifying himself. Here we agree with the PRCA and the EPC Australia against what most Reformed and Presbyterians teach, that Adam was in the kind of probationary situation where he could have earned, for he and his posterity, *eternal* life (graduate to a position of not being able to sin, and a higher eternal situation than he was in: heaven); Pastor was also thankful to learn during his Presbytery exam this October that there are presbyters in the RPCGA New Geneva Presbytery that are in agreement or friendly to our position. Those who think *eternal* life could have been earned by Adam base their argument largely on the idea of the word “pledge” along with the Tree of Life mentioned in Genesis. First, many understand “pledge” as only referring to something future and not yet being realized. But “pledge” simply represents the reward, in this case life current and presently had. For instance, we “pledge allegiance” to the U.S. flag, not referring to something we will later enjoy, but as a present reality of the league between country and citizen. Second, most believe the Tree of Life next to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (which was forbidden) represented the eternal life that Adam would earn. But the Bible says there was only one tree they could not eat, and so the Tree of Life was not forbidden. We think it reasonable to assume that Adam ate of the Tree of Life (no one can prove that he did not¹⁴⁴), as it was in the center of the Garden to sacramentally represent communal life with God (which was banned and lost after the Fall, but will be had again in heaven, seen in Revelation as again eating of the Tree of Life). It is also helpful to notice that the WLC Q&A 20 adds that Adam’s obedience was to be “perpetual”. While it was Paradise, Adam would never rest from his need to work. Whereas in Jesus Christ, we rest from our works in eternal heavenly life because He secures it for us for all by His complete work of obedience. It is interesting to see how Randy Alcorn, in his book *Heaven*, assumes as obvious what we are arguing.¹⁴⁵ While our position is indeed a minority one, we are in good company.

- d. Fesko, while clearly believing “eternal life” is the correct understanding, volunteers, “Reformed theologians have not always agreed on this; some believed that eternal life was in view; others, that an earthly temporal blessing was in view ... the latter was held by Westminster divine

¹⁴³ “... he should continue to enjoy unforfitted paradasiac life with which he was blessed. A capacity for blessedness, accompanied by a craving for it, but continuing for a time unsatisfied, is a monstrous idea to be associated with the notion of paradise bliss, -- or of the bliss of any holy creature. Degrees of blessedness, and incompleteness of blessedness, are matters essentially different.” An editorial footnote by, John M. Wilson, in Thomas Ridgeley’s Commentary on the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Vol. 1, 388. What A.W. Pink writes in his *Gleanings in Exodus* (320) seems relevant here: “The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the visible means of the first man’s paying homage to God: abstention from its fruit was the witness of his subjection to the authority of his Maker. **Obedience to God’s command concerning that tree would not only secure to him all the blessings of Eden, but was also the link which bound him to the Creator.** Thus, that which united man to God at the beginning was the obedience of the will, subjection of the heart. **Whilst this was maintained God was honoured and man was blest**” [Bold, GVL].

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Watson endeavors to prove that Adam did not eat of the Tree of Life before the Fall. While his arguments are one of the few places Pastor finds him weak and unconvincing in his logic and proof, see argument 2. on page 138 explaining why he thinks Adam didn’t last long at all in the Garden in his *Body of Divinity*.

¹⁴⁵ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2004) , 83. In his diagram on “Three Eras of Mankind and Earth”, he makes these distinctions: “**Past Genesis 1-2** Tree of life in Eden (mankind can eat) | **Present Genesis 3-Revelation 20** Tree of life in Paradise (mankind cut off from) | **Future Revelation 21-22** Tree of life in New Jerusalem (mankind can eat again forever).” (emphasis, GVL) Later, he writes: “As a result of the Curse, the first Adam could no longer eat from the tree of life, which presumably would have made him live forever in his sinful state (Genesis 3:22) ... Christ will turn back the Curse and restore to humanity all that we lost in Eden, and he will give us much more besides.” (106, 107; emphasis, GVL).

Thomas Goodwin ... Michael A. G. Haykin [in 'Adam's Reward: Heaven or Earth?,' in *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*] lists Moïse Amyraut, John Cameron, James Usher, John Downname, and Jeremiah Burroughs as those who argued for an earthly reward ... Even though the assembly's annotations state that heaven is the reward [Pastor thinks this assertion needs to be proved], the Confession and catechisms are not written in such a way as to exclude or prejudice the opposing view ...” Fesko, 142, footnote 67. **Thomas Goodwin, Works, vol. 5, pp. 82-83, 88-89:** “Adam could not earn a condition of a higher rank, nor by all his works have brought any greater preferment than what he was created in. To compass it was *ultra suam sphaerum*, above his sphere; he could never have done it. As, for instance, he could not have attained that state in heaven which the angels enjoy. What says Christ? “When you have done all you can, say, You are unprofitable servants” (Luke 17:10). This he could no more do than other creatures by keeping those their ordinances can merit to be “translated into the glorious liberty” which they wait for, and shall have at the latter day. The moon, though she keep all her motions set her by God never so regularly, yet she cannot thereby attain to the light of the sun as a new reward thereof. And thus no more can any pure creature of itself, by all its righteousness, obtain in justice a higher condition to itself. And therefore the angels, by all their own grace, have not to this day earned a better condition than they were created in ... Adam could not earn a condition of a higher rank, nor by all his works have bought any greater preferment than what he was created in ... Adam's righteousness, and the imputation of it, would not have been sufficient to justify eternally ... he could not have attained that state in heaven which the angels enjoy.” **Patrick Fairbairn, Typology** (chapter on Tree of Life): “And if he had remained steadfast in his allegiance to God, ever retaining his desire from the tree of knowledge, and partaking only of the tree of life, he would have continued to possess life, in incorrupt purity and blessedness, as he had received it from the hand of God.” In his unabridged version that I need to get a hold of, he has a long footnote explaining his awareness of the majority of interpreters seeing the Tree of Life as promising eternal life while expressing his disagreement.; **Tom Westwood, Romans: A Courtroom Drama, pg. 203:** “In other words, there is no triumph in law-keeping beyond the simple status of being an obedient servant here on the earth before the Almighty. No law keeper could ever get to heaven because the very keeping of the law would entitle him to live on the earth and would hold him here [keep in mind Calvin, Jewish scholars think the Leviticus quote intended eternal life]. No title to enter heaven above is obtained by law-keeping. Moreover, no title to triumph over the depths beneath, to be victorious over the power of death, is attained by keeping the law. The status of a law keeper, if you could ever find one of Adam's race who is such, is simply to live by the law on the earth as a servant and no more. The righteousness that is by faith, however, is a new kind of righteousness, giving us rights in a realm above the sun, a realm of complete victory over the depths beneath, over the power of Satan, death, and hell. This is the triumph of the righteousness of God in Christ. It gives a title to glory that law-keeping could never do. Little wonder the apostle declared in this Epistle, and also in the Galatian Epistle that we are not under law but under grace. The keeping of the law maintains me in the status of a servant before Jehovah just as long as I keep the law.” **John Ball, A Treatise on the Covenant of Grace (London: Simeon Ash, 1645), p?:** “But upon a supposition of Adam's persisting in a state of obedience, to say that God would have translated him to the state of glory in Heaven, is more than any just ground will warrant; because in Scripture there is no such promise. And if we must not presume above what is written, we may say, Adam should have continued in that blessed estate in which he was created, but as for his translation after some number of years spent on earth, we read it not. In this state and condition Adam's obedience should have been rewarded in justice, but he could not have merited that reward. Happiness should have been conferred upon him, or continued unto him for his works, but they had not deserved the continuance thereof: for

it is impossible the creature should merit of the Creator, because when he hath done all that he can, he is an unprofitable servant, he hath done but his duty. The obedience that God required at his hands was partly natural, to be regulated according to the Law engraved in his heart by the finger of God himself, consisting in the true, unfeigned and perfect love of God, and of his Neighbour for the Lord's sake: and partly Symbolical, which stood in obedience to the Law given for his probation and trial, whether he would submit to the good pleasure of God in an act of itself merely indifferent, because he was so commanded. Though God had put many abilities and honourable privileges upon man, yet he remained his Sovereign, which by an act of restraint, he was pleased to make man thus exalted to know, which he did by requiring and commanding his creature to abstain from one fruit in itself pleasant to the eye, and good for meat. This was man's Homage-penny, a thing before the command indifferent, not which he had a natural inclination, from which he was not to abstain, because God (who had before given to man as part of his patrimony, and not as reward of his obedience to this particular restraint, liberty to eat of ever tree of the Garden) here interposed himself and reserved this as an Homage unto Himself. God in his Sovereignty set a punishment upon the breach of this his Commandment, that man might know his inferiority, and that things betwixt God and him were not as between equals. The subject of this Covenant is man entire and perfect, made after the Image of God in Righteousness and true holiness, furnished not only wit a reasonable soul and faculties beseeming, but with divine qualities created from the whole Trinity, infused into the whole man, lifting up every faculty and power above his first frame, and enabling and fitting him to obey the will of God entirely, willingly, exactly, for matter and measure. Whether this was natural or supernatural unto the first man, is a question needless to be disputed in this place, and peradventure if the terms be rightly understood, will be no great controversy. Only this must be acknowledged, that this was Adam's excellency above all the creatures, and that in the fallen creature this quality is supernatural. Unto this mutual Covenant God added a seal to assure the protoplast of his performance and persisting in Covenant with him, and further to strengthen his obedience, with the obedience of his posterity, which upon his breach with God was made void.”; **A.W. Pink, Gleanings in Genesis, p. 55:** "So that the Son of God is not ashamed to call us *brethren*. The Fall provided the need of Redemption, and through the redeeming work of the Cross, believers have a portion which unfallen Adam could never attend unto." **p. 110:** "... which concerned man's continued enjoyment of Eden on the condition that he refrained from eating the fruit of the forbidden tree." "The redeemed have gained more through the last Adam than they lost through the first Adam. They occupy a more exalted position. Before the Fall Adam dwelt in earthly Paradise, but the redeemed have been made to sit with Christ in heavenly places ... Before the Fall man possessed a natural life, but now, all in Christ have been made partakers of the Divine nature. They have obtained a new standing before God ... In Christ believers enjoy a closer relationship to God than was possible before the Fall. Adam was merely a creature, but we are members of the body of Christ ..."; **Matthew Henry, Commentary on Gen. 2:16-17:** "An assurance of life to him, immortal life, upon his obedience ... For the tree of life being put *in the midst of the garden* as the heart and soul of it, doubtless God had an eye to that especially in this grant; and therefore when, upon his revolt, this grant is recalled ..."

- e. Why is this distinction of Adam *already* earning enjoyed life and partaking of its pledge (sacramental symbol of a present reality), the Tree of Life, important? Why do we take pains to explain Adam could not have earned eternal life by his obedience? Because Jesus Christ was only ever to earn *eternal* life for us. Scripture makes it clear that eternal life was promised to God's elect in Jesus Christ alone in the eternal Covenant of Grace before creation itself (Ephesians 1:3, 2 Tim. 1:1, Tit. 1:2; 1 John 5:10). What we mean is, Jesus wasn't "Plan B". The Fall was eternally decreed and so was Jesus' mediation on behalf of His elect. Adam could only have earned more earthly life in his present situation. This earthly life in the Garden, along with

Adam and the Garden itself, was a *type* of eternal life and heaven.¹⁴⁶ Rightly emphasizing a relationship between Adam and Christ in Romans 5 to emphasize the Covenant of Works, many wrongly talk of the comparison merely as a *parallel* relation. Rather, it is a *typological* relation: Adam earning his ongoing life in the Garden of Eden was typically pointing to Jesus earning permanent eternal life in Heaven. Romans 5:14 calls Adam a *figure* (in Greek, a type) of Christ. Also, the point of parallel comparison in Romans 5 is restricted to *federal headship*, not what could be *earned*. Adam federally represented all mankind in his *disobedience*, and thus we all get the wages of temporal (and possibly eternal) death that Adam earned for us. Jesus federally represented all the elect in His *obedience*, and thus we all get the wages of eternal life that He earned for us. Federal Headship is the only point of parallel comparison in Romans 5. Otherwise, the comparison of the First Adam and the Second Adam is typological.¹⁴⁷ The Tree of Life represented what Adam already had – communion with God, which is life. He earned the right to stay and have it every minute of obedience. But only Jesus could take us to a higher state by coming down from heaven as the God-man to take us as our representative where God really is, in heaven, that in all things “he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). Also important to this distinction is the following Scripture: The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (1 Cor. 15:47-50) Also important to consider is that in Mt. 22:30, Jesus says we will not be married in heaven, but we will be like the angels; He also says in Jn. 17:3 that eternal life is in knowing the incarnate (sent) Son of God. As well, Adam was not the God-man, only Jesus is: Christ brings heaven to earth in Himself and brings perfect communion between God and man in Himself in a way Adam could never do: “God’s image, which sin had defaced in man, is more fully restored in him ... Yea, the image which he renews is a better image than that of Adam’s, it is of a higher strain and key, and raised

¹⁴⁶ This distinction also would help resolve much contemporary conflict on the “Republication of the Covenant of Works” at Sinai when understanding the latter as a republication also of typology.

¹⁴⁷ Milton Terry’s explanation of understanding a typological comparison, in particular with the First and Second Adam, seems to support what has just been explained: “There must be some notable point of resemblance ... Adam for instance is made a type of Christ, but only in his headship of the race, as the first representative of humanity; and in Rom. v, 14-20, and 1 Cor. xv, 45-49, the apostle notes more points of unlikeness than of agreement between the two. Moreover, we always expect to find in the antitype something higher and nobler than in the type ... (Heb. iii, 3) ... The type must prefigure something in the future. It must serve in the divine economy as a shadow of things to come (Col. ii, 17 Heb. x, 1) ... The points of difference and of contrast between type and antitype should also be noted by the interpreter.” Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1999) , 247, 248, 252. Edmund P. Clowney’s explanation of typology and the connection of Adam and Christ is very noteworthy as well for our position: “The key to the New Testament understanding of typology is found in the sense in which ment comes in Jesus Christ. Leonhard Gopelt has pointed out the distinctive meaning that *typos* gains in the New Testament ... clear in Romans 5:8 ... Christ is not simply another Adam in the sense of being *like* Adam; neither is He a second Adam in the sense of beginning again another race, as though there were to be another cycle of history comparable to the one begun in the first Adam. Rather, Christ is Himself the fullness of the image of God; Christ is the *meaning* of created human nature. The completeness, the glory of created human sonship is uniquely manifested in the God-man ... The heart of the understanding of ‘type’ in the New Testament lies in the New Testament doctrine of Christ. Only in Christ as the divine Savior do we find the transcending and transforming fulfillment that creates a whole new dimension ... Jesus is the ... *true* Son of God, the *true* Israel ... The fulfillment is greater than the type ... Jesus is not simply greater by a relative degree, but by a transcendent measure.”; “Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures”, in *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2011) , 177-179.

by higher motives ... if the Son of God will assume our nature, then it will follow that unto that nature there is due a God-like glory, so much transcending all creatures, that all might plainly see and say certainly that nature is united to God ...”¹⁴⁸ So Jesus says in John 17, verses 5 and 24, that He yearns to give us a glory He enjoyed with God before the foundation of the world (Adam was not there to enjoy that heavenly glory nor give it to us).¹⁴⁹

7:3: *Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, (e) commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they may be saved, (f) and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe. (g)*

(e)Gal 3:21; Rom 8:3; Rom 3:20-21; Gen 3:15; Isa 42:6. (f)Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16; Rom 10:6,9; Gal 3:11. (g)Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:44-45.

a. After the Fall, the Covenant of Works is still binding on Adam’s posterity, but it only condemns: “... that the covenant of grace brings to consummation the covenant of life and confirms its principle of perfect obedience to the Lord God is confirmed through the Scripture in the command to be perfect as He is perfect, and in man’s accountability at the judgment ...”¹⁵⁰ None of us can live perfectly righteous. None of us are born with that even as a possibility after the Fall. The Covenant of Grace is a gracious covenant in terms of what it bestows to *us*, but it is a reward for a perfect work as it relates to *Jesus Christ*. Still, this salvation does have a condition: the requirement of faith (WLC 32).¹⁵¹ Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and it is impossible to be saved. E. Clarke Copeland writes, “The gospel offer is made in covenant terms.”¹⁵² Thus, in the “Sum of Saving Knowledge”, sinners are invited to “bargain” with God to enter into friendship with Him, that is, to enter into the Covenant of Grace as a party “consenting” into “friendship”. “In one sense, then, the Covenant of Grace may be said to be conditional. Its command is to believe, and the promised salvation is given only to those who believe ... those whom God has chosen from eternity are enabled to fulfill the condition of the Covenant of Grace.”¹⁵³ However, faith is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). God ordains us to be saved, and He meets the condition by making us “willing and able to

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Chapters III (p 89) and VI in *Christ the Mediator*.

¹⁴⁹ It is necessary to mention that Matthew 19:16ff needs to be given further thought on this topic.

¹⁵⁰ E. Clarke Copeland, *Ibid*, 34.

¹⁵¹ “God requires faith, and gives what He requires. One is reminded of the prayer of Augustine: ‘Give what Thou didst and bid what Thou wilt.’” Green, 53. “... did you ever now a bond without a condition? The condition of the covenant is faith ...” Watson, 156.

¹⁵² Copeland, *Ibid*, 37. He also points out that “The Great Commission (Mat. 28:16-20) may also be seen as the establishment of a covenant union by Jesus with His disciples ...”, 36.

¹⁵³ Spear, 47-48.

believe” so it is His sovereign grace all around.¹⁵⁴ We might refer to faith as the instrument of salvation that God requires but also provides and uses.

b. Some in the Reformed camp make a distinction of the Covenant of Redemption (eternal decree between the Father and the Son) and the Covenant of Grace in which salvation is offered to all men on the condition of faith and secured for the elect. But our standards “say nothing of two covenants ... but assume that there is but one covenant contracted by Christ in behalf of the elect with God in eternity, and administered by him to the elect in the offers and ordinances of the gospel and in the gracious influences of his Spirit ... The Confession of Faith in these sections teaches how that same covenant is administered *by* Christ *to* his people.”¹⁵⁵ See WLC 31 and WSC 20. The Father and the Son eternally covenanted this plan of salvation, evidenced by such Scriptures as Psalm 2:7-8, Psalm 22, Psalm 110:3-4, Isaiah 53, and John 6:37-40. Particularly meaningful is that the Son eternally covenanted to suffer the penalty of death due to the elect for their breaking the Covenant of Works in Adam. He would need to live the Covenant of Works perfectly to credit His righteousness to us, while also having our guilt imputed from us to Him for breaking the Covenant of Works (God's Moral Law).

7:4: *This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.* (h)

(h)Heb 9:15-17; Heb 7:22; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25.

The word “testament” probably only is best used in Hebrews 9:15 per the explanation in this paragraph. Even there, *diatheke* in the Greek normally is translated “covenant”. This is important because while it is true that grace is bequeathed to us by Jesus’ death, so to speak, He is no longer dead, and He continually represents us as the Mediator in Federal Headship which is best communicated by “covenant” as the Hebrew and Greek words *berith* and *diatheke* are usually translated. The idea of us being in his “last will and testament” secured and passed on to us as our inheritance by the cross is appropriate, but the Covenant of Grace also involves His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:13-14) and ascension and rule (Ephesians 1:18-23). Notice, they call it a “Covenant of Grace”, not a “Testament of Grace”, because the divines do understand the overarching federal headship representation in all aspects: death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, rule, on our behalf by the God-man Jesus Christ. A good example of this is Hebrews 12:24, where it is said that Jesus is the “mediator of the new covenant”. O. Palmer Robertson helpfully points out that “the

¹⁵⁴ “The life and salvation offered in the Arminian version of the gospel is merely *potential*, because it depends upon certain actions and attitudes that do not yet exist, and will not exist unless men perform the work which produces them. But the life and salvation offered sinners in the Reformed version of the gospel is *actual*, because it depends upon God alone not only for the end to be attained, but also for the creation of those attitudes and actions that are necessary for the receiving of that end.” Williamson, 65.

¹⁵⁵ A.A. Hodge, 126. “With whom was the covenant of grace made? Primarily with Christ, secondarily with the elect; directly with the Saviour, mediately with those ordained unto salvation.” Green, 52. Fesko does note that, “From the earliest days of the reception and interpretation of the Confession, the covenant of redemption was viewed as compatible with it”, and he rightly points out that the Sum of Saving Knowledge uses the term “Covenant of Redemption” quite often; Fesko, 165; however, he appropriately explains, “The covenant of redemption is another example of a doctrinal teaching that was not addressed directly by the Standards but left as an orthodox extra-confessional matter ...”; Fesko, 166.

theme of Hebrews 9:15ff is covenant inauguration.”¹⁵⁶ He also explains that the idea of “testament” is mainly related to Christ taking on the death penalty of the Covenant of Works on fallen mankind and that this is the main sense of Testator: it is His death that puts to death the curse of the Covenant of Works, and thus, He bequeaths us His righteous life (Rev. 21:7).

7:5: *This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel:(i) under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come:(k) which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,(l) by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament.(m)*

(i)2 Cor 3:6-9. (k)Heb 8-10; Rom 4:11; Col 2:11-12; 1 Cor 5:7. (l) Cor 10:1-4; Heb 11:13; John 8:56. (m)Gal 3:7-9, 14.

In the OT, the believers were part of the same church as the NT. They had types, shadows, and signs looking ahead to the Messiah and were sufficiently saved in faith in Him just as we are. We are all one church, one body. Sproul helpfully qualifies, “The big difference between the old and new covenants is the difference between promise and fulfillment ... they trusted in promises that had not yet been realized. We, on the other hand, trust in promises that have been fulfilled.”¹⁵⁷ O. Palmer Robertson agrees, “The ‘old covenant’ may be characterized as ‘promise,’ as ‘shadow,’ as ‘prophecy’; the ‘new covenant’ may be characterized as ‘fulfillment,’ as ‘reality,’ as ‘realization’.”¹⁵⁸ Later, he writes, “... a clear line of continuity must be seen in the relationship of the old covenant to the new. While the new covenant will be at radical variance with the old covenant with respect to its effectiveness in accomplishing its goal, the substance of the two covenants in terms of their redemptive intention is identical.”¹⁵⁹ He also writes, “While the form of the old covenant administration may pass away, the substance of blessing which it promises remains ... Continuity as well as newness must be recognized in the relationship of the new covenant to the old.”¹⁶⁰ This is why the OT is quoted constantly in the NT to prove that Jesus was the Messiah that all were hoping in for salvation. This is against modern dispensationalism (avoid the Scofield Reference Study Bible notes) that teaches that the OT saints were saved by works, that the NT church is essentially a second plan after Jesus “failed” to be recognized by the Jews as King. They fail to recognize Jesus and the disciples were Jews, the first 3,000 converts to Christianity were Jews, the early church of the NT were mainly Jews and they worshipped in Jewish synagogues during a transitional period (and even still went to the temple). Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46-47). They also ignore the import of Paul’s argument in Romans 3:21-24, 30 and quoting Psalm 32:1 in Romans 4, and Galatians 3:24, Heb. 13:8, Acts 15:11. Paul says in Galatians 3:8 that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. This is why so many (even the half-breed Samaritans) were saying when Jesus came, “Could this be the Messiah?” or “We have found the

¹⁵⁶ Footnote 12 on page 142. *The Christ of the Covenants*, O. Palmer Robertson. On page 39, he revisits Hebrews 9:15-20, saying, “... both ‘testament’ and ‘covenant’ involve death. Death activates a testament. Death inaugurates and vindicates a covenant.” His footnote on p 142 adds, “the theme of Hebrews 9:15ff. is covenant inauguration.”

¹⁵⁷ Sproul, 225, 226.

¹⁵⁸ Robertson, 57.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 282.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 285-286.

Messiah!” They had been waiting for the Messiah that all the Scriptures spoke of (See Gen. 3:15, 49:10; Deut. 18:18; the Passover in Exodus 12 with 1 Corinthians 5:7; Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68:18; 118:22; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 53; Zech. 6:12-13, 9:9; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 3:1 as just a FEW examples). The men and women of Hebrews 11 in the “hall of faith” are OT saints admired for trusting in Jesus Christ. Stephen calls the OT saints the “church” in Acts 7:38, and Paul says Christ is “our Passover” in 1 Cor. 5:7 and that He was the Rock with the OT saints in 1 Cor. 10:4. And Paul says the Gentile Philippians “are the circumcision” against Judaizers in Phil. 3:3. There is only one way of salvation, and that is the same Messiah of the Old and New Testaments, for He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). And He has only one body, the church of the Old and New Testaments all bound together by the same Gospel of Grace.

7:6: *Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance,(n) was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper:(o) which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy,(p) to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;(q) and is called the New Testament. (r) There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.(s)*
 (n)Col. 2:17. (o)Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25. (p)Heb. 12:22-28; Jer. 31:33-34. (q)Matt. 28:19; Eph. 2:15-19. (r)Luke 22:20. (s)Gal. 3:14,16; Rom. 3:21-23, 30. Ps. 32:1 with Rom. 4:3, 6, 16-17, 23-24; Heb. 13:8; Acts 15:11.

While we have less outward religiosity, now we have more of the inner spiritual reality. This is why our worship is more simple, because the OT types and signs are fulfilled in the coming of Christ and thus no longer necessary (and also no longer allowed). This will be important to keep in mind when we discuss worship in chapter 21. Focusing on and devoting ourselves to these things will thus be our strength and sustenance until Christ returns. Ceremonies and elements that have either been fulfilled or never prescribed have no true spiritual power in them and thus no real benefit.

Some important concluding remarks on the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. Fesko points out that this bi-covenant distinction by the Westminster Assembly is nothing novel: “By the time of the Confession, the divines do not create doctrinal categories but merely codify doctrines that have already been in the theological air for quite some time ... The twofold covenant structure cannot be said to be unique to the Confession.”¹⁶¹ R.C. Sproul writes, “The covenant of grace, rather than annihilating the covenant of works, makes provision for someone else to fulfill the covenant of works for us ... We are still justified by works—the works of Jesus, not our own.”¹⁶² Fesko also notes, “The doctrine of the covenants sets the stage for everything else that follows in the Confession ... In many ways the Confession’s doctrine of the covenants, especially the covenant of grace, illustrates why the soteriology [doctrine of salvation] of the Westminster Standards can be summarized as a redemption that comes through Christ and covenant ... the divines introduce the covenant concept to frame the relationship between Christ as Mediator and the elect”;¹⁶³ This sets up the next chapter.

¹⁶¹ Fesko, 137.

¹⁶² Sproul, 225.

¹⁶³ Fesko, 162-164. Green writes, “If it was right for the second man, the last Adam, to represent us without our consent, was it not right for the first man, the first Adam so to represent us?”, 42.

Let us again also be blessed by some thoughts By Thomas Watson in his *Body of Divinity*:
 “In the first covenant we had a *posse stare*, a power of standing; in the second we had a *non posse cadere*, an impossibility of falling finally. I Pet i 5.” (131). “Under the first covenant, the justice of God, as an avenger of blood, pursues us; but if we get into the second covenant we are in the city of refuge, we are safe, and the justice of God is pacified towards us.” (132). “The great proposition I shall go upon is, *that there is a new covenant ratified between God and the elect. What is the new covenant?* It is a solemn compact and agreement made between God and fallen man, wherein the Lord undertakes to be our God, and to make us his people.” (154). “The least failing would have made the covenant with Adam null and void, but many failings do not annul the covenant of grace ... The first covenant ran all upon ‘working,’ the second is upon ‘believing.’ Rom iv 5.” (155) “In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life; in the second, they are required only as the sings of life.” (156). “Will you look to Christ for help? He is a mediator only for such as are in covenant ... Till you are in covenant with God, there is no mercy.” (157). “The covenant of grace brings preferment. Our nature now is more ennobled, we are raised to higher glory than in innocence, we are advanced to sit upon Christ’s throne. Rev iii 21.” (158) “If thou seest thy sins and loathest thyself for them, God will take thee into covenant ... Isa. xliii 24, 25. As the sea covers great rocks, so God’s covenant mercy covers great sins. Some of the Jews that crucified Christ had their sins washed away in his blood ... it is God’s design in the new covenant to ... accept us through Christs worthiness. Therefore let not unworthiness discourage you; it is not unworthiness that excludes any from the covenant, but unwillingness.” (158). “You that are in covenant with God, all your sins are pardoned ... You may upon all occasions plead the covenant.” (159). “Now, the union between Christ and the saints being so inseparable, it can never be dissolved, or the covenant made void; so that you may die with comfort.” (160).

Assigned Reading for December 22, 2021: of Christ the Mediator

- WCF 8 and corresponding Scriptures
- LC 37-66 and corresponding Scriptures
- SC 22-30 and corresponding Scriptures

God’s Covenant of Works Imposed on Adam in the Garden of Eden	
Adam (and Eve) Created Morally Righteous and in Living Communion with God. (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:7, 18-25)	
God gives explicit test of obedience representing covenant life enjoyed by living the Law, which was already innately put on Adam’s heart at creation and intuitively obeyed to live from his first breath. The specific arbitrary test of obedience was apparently immediate (but any sin would have disqualified him from further life in the Garden). Gen 2:16-17	
Adam’s options and their parallel potential and real results	
Disobedience (explicitly warned against)	Obedience (implicitly understood, expected)

Resulted in immediate spiritual death: communion with God in the Garden lost. Wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Barred from further eating Tree of Life. Body and soul begin to die; eternal death will follow. Romans 7.	Continued <u>perpetual</u> spiritual life (WCF 19:1, WLC 20): communion with God in the Garden maintained. Wages of righteousness is life (Gal. 3:9; Rom. 10:4). Continues to eat of Tree of Life. Body and soul continue living. Gen. 1-2 until 3.
Now need the Covenant of Grace. Gen 3:15.	No need of the Covenant of Grace until Gen. 3.
Eternal death in hell (soul and body) will follow unless Jesus Christ comes to Mediate on earth.	Potential to fall continues on earth. No potential for eternal heaven (body and soul) without heavenly Adam.
Sets up glorification of Jesus as Mediator.	No glorification of Jesus as Mediator.

Parallel of Rewards	
If Adam could have earned immediate life in <i>heaven</i> in the Garden, body and soul then Adam would have earned immediate death in <i>hell</i> after the Fall, body and soul.
Adam earned immediate death after the Fall, but this was separation of body and soul from God on <i>earth</i> , not in hell ...	Thus, Adam could have only earned ongoing life on <i>earth</i> , body and soul, in the Garden. 1 Cor. 15:47-50; Col. 1:18.

Important Scriptures on Covenant of Works and Typology of Adam to Christ: 1 Cor.15:47-50; **Rom. 5:14; Eph. 1:3; Mt. 22:30; Col. 1:18; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:2; 1 John 5:10; John 17:3.**