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I. CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS.¹

You have called me to the discharge of most responsible duty and exalted service in this honored school of sacred learning. I sincerely pray that your call and my acceptance may unite in being an outward expression of the mind of the Spirit and of the will of God in regard to the way in which Christ's cause may be served and his name honored by means of this institution. Having hope that such is the case, it will be the earnest and undivided effort of my life, so long as I remain in your service, to perform the duties of this high office to the best of my ability, ever seeking the needed wisdom and promised grace which Christ's servants may claim.

You have also informed me that a short time prior to my election the scope of the chair whose work is committed to my trust was so enlarged as to include the entire field of Christian apologetics. This, in my judgment, is a very important change, and it makes exceedingly useful modifications of the work pertaining to this chair possible. Its incumbent will now be in a position to deal with several great topics not embraced in the field of the relations of science and revelation; and he will at the same time be able to construe many things which emerge in the discussion of these relations under the category of Christian apologetics. In this way the work of this professorship may be made wider in its scope and more systematic in the treatment of its materials than was possible under its former designation.

¹ Inaugural address by F. R. Beattie, on the occasion of his installation as Professor in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C., May, 1890.

IV. GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN.

FOR a church whose standards are as definite in most things as ours there is a singular confusion concerning the covenants, both in the standards and in the opinions held by individuals. This confusion gathers especially around the use of the terms Old Covenant or Testament and New Covenant or Testament. We note the following particulars:

I. The *Confession of Faith* states that the covenant of grace is called Old Testament at one time and New Testament at another.

II. A second view of the matter, and one which many probably would be inclined to assent to, at first thought at least, is that the covenant of works is called Old Testament, and the covenant of grace New Testament.

III. A third view, and one which has most effect upon views of the nature of the church, is that all that we call the Old Testament Scriptures is Old Testament; and so of the New.

IV. A fourth view, and one that we propose to defend, though it does not seem to have attracted much attention, is that the terms "old covenant" and "new covenant" in Scripture signify only the covenants which are expressly so called in Heb. viii. and ix.

I. The language of the *Confession* can hardly be justified, except on the principle that a part contains or implies the whole. The Eden covenant or the Abrahamic may be said to contain the whole covenant of grace, or all of its promise to man; but the law or Mosaic covenant is expressly declared¹ to be an addendum to the covenant of grace, as exhibited in the Abrahamic covenant, not to add anything to the provisions of grace contained in it, but for the more efficient administration of them for the time being. In 2 Cor. iii., the old and the new, the old being specified as the Mosaic, are contrasted as covenants of ministration merely, and not as containing the substance of the covenant of grace.

¹ Gal. iii. 19; Rom. v. 20.

II. Why is the covenant of works called Old Testament or the old covenant? It arises, doubtless, from a likeness between it and the Mosaic covenant, in that both have the character of law: obey and live; he that disobeys shall die. But there are great differences—

1. We may say, in the first place, that the covenant of works is nowhere distinctly called a covenant; not that this is an objection to giving it the name, but as showing an improbability that it should be freely referred to by the writers of the New Testament as the old covenant.

2. The covenant of works and the old covenant are not between the same parties. In this matter perhaps the title of Chap. VII. of the *Confession of Faith* is liable to criticism. The covenant of works was with man. The covenant of grace, as from eternity between the Father and the Son, did not include the race of man, nor were the particular covenants in which it is revealed, including that expressly called the old covenant, with man, but with the church of Jesus Christ.

3. The covenant of works is not old in the sense in which the Mosaic covenant is called old; *i. e.*, having fallen into disuse and its place taken by another. This is the only sense in which *oldness* is predicated of any covenant. Of all God's covenants with man the Mosaic is the only one laid aside as an old garment. The elect are taken from under the covenant of works and placed under that of grace: "God having from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." What of the rest of mankind? It is hardly necessary for us to argue against the Arminian view that all mankind are delivered from the condemnation of Adam's sin, and that those who perish do so only for an unbelief which it is in their own power to avoid. The alternative is that the non-elect are still under the covenant of works, held under its condemnation. The covenant of works is an everlasting covenant.

4. The old covenant of the Scriptures had a human mediator, a priesthood, sacrifices, an elaborate ritual of service, while the new has only the divine Mediator, the divine priesthood, and the

one sacrifice of Christ. The covenant of works had none of these things. But the covenant of grace had its priesthood and sacrifices from the beginning of its revelation. There was no time in its history till Christ came that it answered to this description of the new covenant.

5. There is a confusion of names. We speak of the Old Testament church. The church was never under the covenant of works; and even if we adopt the theory we are combatting, there was no Old Testament church till the time of Moses: but the church was New Testament from Adam to Moses, then both old and new till Christ, then new only again, and the Mosaic covenant itself, as belonging to the covenant of grace, is both old and new. The covenant of grace is new, while one of its subordinate covenants is old.

What covenant did Christ refer to when he said, "This is my blood of the new covenant"? That the covenant of grace, as a whole, stands in the blood of Christ is, of course, true; but does it follow necessarily that it is of this that he speaks? He stands at the point of transition of the church from the Mosaic dispensation to that which prophecy had declared should supersede it, the only new covenant of which the Scriptures speak and that which the minds of the disciples must have turned to if they searched the Scriptures to find what covenant he meant. It is reasonable, also, to suppose that the blood of the new covenant stands in implied contrast to the blood of the old, the same contrast explicitly presented in Hebrews. The blood of the passover belonged to the old. Christ's blood in contrast is that of the new. But, as already said, the covenant of works had no sacrifices, and the only possible contrast in this respect of the old and new was between the Mosaic covenant and that which superseded it. And since all the blood ever shed in sacrifice belonged to the covenant of grace, then, if this is identical with the new covenant, this appellation, "blood of the new covenant," does not distinguish the blood of Christ from that of other sacrifices. In this view all the blood ever shed in sacrifices was blood of the new covenant. In a word, the contrast between the old and the new breaks down at every point when we attempt to apply it to the covenant of works and

the covenant of grace, and the only thing to show an identity is that there is a certain likeness in the substance of the covenants between the Mosaic and that of works.

No one can doubt that in the "better covenant" of Heb. vii. 22 and viii. 6, the "new covenant" of chaps. viii. and ix., and the "blood of the covenant," x. 29, at least the primary reference is to the new covenant expressly mentioned and described. In the "blood of the everlasting covenant" of xiii. 20 it is a fair presumption that the reference is still to the covenant with which the book is so largely occupied. It may be thought that it would be more impressive if the apostle here speaks of the covenant from eternity between the Father and Son for the redemption of the elect; but it is perhaps more to the purpose to suppose that this is one of the points of contrast between the old and the new. The old stood in meats and drinks and divers washings, administered by human priests, and was temporary. The new stands in the blood of Christ ministered by the Spirit, and is everlasting. And be it remembered this contrast is possible only between the covenants expressly named. There is no such contrast between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. One had no ministration, and the other has both ministrations and sacrifices, and both covenants are everlasting.

All the special covenants belonging to the covenant of grace, except the Mosaic, are alike everlasting. There is nothing, therefore, in the use of the term "everlasting" to raise a presumption that the covenant of grace as a whole is meant.

III. The opinion we have been discussing does not, perhaps, have much influence directly upon church theories; but this extension of the terms old and new to cover the whole breadth of the covenants may do something to give color to, and at the same time may be pillowed up by, another view: that all that is contained in the Old Testament Scriptures is properly and in the Scripture usage Old Testament. It is sometimes said that names are things. Hardly has there ever been a more notable, yet less noted, instance of a name crystallizing into a thing than this. The universal practice of speaking of Old Testament times, Old Testament saints, the Old Testament church, etc., as covering the

whole time from Adam to Malachi, or to the coming of Christ, has led to the almost universal acceptance as a fact of what is implied in the use of the name, and naturally to the application to the whole of what the Scriptures say of the old covenant. In this is entrenched the denial of the unity of the church, the claim that the Old Testament Scriptures are not binding upon us, and, to a large extent, the rejection of infant baptism. They who contend for these things are not far wrong in their argument; the difficulty is in the false premise. Take, for instance, the Abrahamic covenant; argue as conclusively as you please the perpetuity of it, as long as you allow an opponent to call it Old Testament, he has ground on which to plant his batteries for reply. Bring the most positive and direct statements to prove your position, he can bring equally positive ones in reply. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."¹ "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before."² "If that which is done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."³ The law "was added until the seed should come."⁴ "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."⁵ "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."⁶ All these things are spoken of the Old Testament. The argument in this light is perhaps a more evenly balanced see-saw than we have been accustomed to consider it. But show him that the Bible calls nothing Old Testament but the Mosaic covenant, that these sayings have no reference to anything else, and the ground is cut from under his feet. Restrict the term Old Testament to its scriptural use, and there is not a syllable in the Bible to show a transitory character in any of the special covenants, except the Mosaic, belonging to the covenant of grace.

We believe we risk nothing in saying that our people generally do not know how to meet these things, how, with such strong statements showing a transitory character of the Old Testament, it is yet claimed that it, or even parts of it, are binding upon us. To

¹ Heb. viii. 13. ² Heb. vii. 18. ³ 2 Cor. iii. 11. ⁴ Gal. iii. 19. ⁵ Matt. v. 18.

⁶ Eph. ii. 15.

many believers in infant baptism it is a real puzzle, one which has never been solved for them, how the Abrahamic covenant belongs to a transitory dispensation, and is yet itself everlasting. In our works on infant baptism this question is not commonly distinctly stated. The writers are content to give the positive evidence on their own side, holding it sufficient. One popular work states the puzzle and tries to meet it in this way. The book is in colloquial form, and the Baptist being asked what his idea of circumcision is, answers that he regards it as belonging to the Mosaic dispensation, and as having passed away with it. The seal of the Abrahamic covenant belonging to the Mosaic dispensation! Yet the author tacitly admits the correctness of the position, and answers that circumcision is an unfulfilled law. We think it must have occurred to some readers of the book, that if the Baptist had "stood to his guns" and contended that, belonging to a transitory dispensation, it must have passed away with it, whether he could say just how it was fulfilled or not, it would have been hard to dislodge him; also, that the fair construction of Christ's words, "that one jot or tittle should not pass from the law till all was fulfilled," is that the law as a whole should stand till every part of it was fulfilled. That such an argument passes current among Presbyterians is sufficient to show the lack of apprehension of the true state of the case. The simple fact that circumcision does not belong to the Mosaic dispensation, is not Old Testament, and that the statements concerning the passing away of the old do not concern it in any way, is overlooked by many besides the author of *William the Baptist*. Some years ago a writer in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, contending against the perpetuation of the Jewish Sabbath, asks why other Mosaic ordinances were not continued: the sacrifices, incense, circumcision; thus classing circumcision among Old Testament ordinances, and making its continuance in the changed form of baptism dependent upon that of the Mosaic law, and denying consequently any connection between circumcision and baptism. We know of no answer to these questions in the writings of our theologians that places the matter upon its true ground, by showing what, in the scriptural usage of the words, the Old Testament really is. Dr. Stuart Robinson, in his *Discourses of Redemp-*

tion, meets the question somewhat indirectly in answer to what is a question with many, and an assertion with many others, that the ten commandments are repealed. We can hardly accept his solution of the puzzle, that "*nothing that Moses ever enacted has been repealed any more than the things enacted by Jesus or Paul.*" While others cut the knot for themselves by assuming the transitoriness of the permanent, Dr. Robinson seems to endeavor to solve the puzzle by assuming the permanence of the transitory. His language looks strange by the side of the passages we have quoted above concerning the passing away of the law. Surely something was repealed. What was it? The passages quoted seem, some of them at least, to refer to the moral law. In answering the question it is to be remembered, in the first place, that the covenant was made with the church, and neither its enactment nor its repeal affects the status of those who are outside of the covenant. In the second place, we are told that those who have not the law "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness."¹ The law as thus written upon tablets more enduring than those of stone cannot be repealed without changing the whole nature of man and making him worthy of the parentage that evolution ascribes to him. The ten commandments can be easily formulated, as thus borne witness to by the conscience of man, from the Book of Genesis, all the things forbidden recognized as sins long before the law was written at Sinai.

What was the Mosaic covenant? The law is referred to as if it and the covenant were one and the same. But the covenant, the agreement between God and the people, was that they should be rewarded with life for obedience. "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient," said the people. And God said to them, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them." This covenant certainly has been repealed or passed away. There is now no such covenant between God and his people. It is hardly too much to say that for the church of God the law *as law* is repealed. "A law without a penalty is no law." In this full sense of law, a

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

command with a penalty attached, the people of God are not under law.

If it be asked, Do not the people of God suffer for their sins? we answer, Yes, but not as the penalty of law. There is a wide difference between chastisements administered by a father at his discretion for the good of the offender and the fixed penalty of law administered by a judge sworn to execute the law literally. The penalty of the law is death, and the people of God do not die for their sins.

Humanly speaking, the Mosaic covenant, as to its ostensible purpose, was a failure. No man but Jesus Christ ever lived by it. Nor was it possible that any sinner ever should live by it. "If there had been a law given which *could have given life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law."¹ God himself, speaking after the human manner, treats the covenant as a failure. "What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, then, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"² "He said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour. . . . But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit."³ And so there comes to us as a wail of disappointment in the preface to the new covenant, "Which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband unto them." But love that will not brook disappointment cries out, "A new covenant will I make with them. I will put my laws in their minds, and in their hearts will I write them. I WILL be their God; they SHALL be my people." The new covenant promises to write the law as it had never been written before. Paul, in Romans ii. 15, says, not that the *law* was written in their hearts, but the *work* of the law "*τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτόν.*" But now the law is written upon their hearts, and so written that it becomes as it were a part of their being. Obedience to the law and life are as inseparable under the new covenant as under the old, but the terms are reversed. The old said, "Obey and live"; the new says, "Live and obey"; and the measure of obedience rendered is the measure of the extent to which the new life has taken possession of the soul. Paradoxical as it

¹ Gal. iii. 21.² Isa. v. 4.³ Isa. lxiii. 8-10.

sounds to many, the only proof any one can give that he is not under the law is that he renders a hearty, though imperfect, obedience to all the precepts of the law.

The real purpose of the covenant lay hidden in its apparent failure: its demonstration that no sinner could live by works of law. The covenant confessed its own weakness in this respect, in its elaborate provision for breaches of itself. And because of this "weakness and unprofitableness" it was repealed. It is not, as Dr. Robinson says, the mere accessories that have fallen away; the commandment itself is "disannulled."

IV. The evidence that the terms old and new testament, or covenant, as used in the Scriptures, are confined to the Mosaic covenant and that which superseded it, has been sufficiently presented in the consideration of the other points. Should the opinion be adhered to that the old covenant is the covenant of works, and the new the covenant of grace, it will not necessarily conflict with what is one main purpose of this writing, to show that the name old testament does not apply in any sense to the church from Adam to Moses; and hence that what is said of the transitory character of the old covenant does not in any manner attach to it.

There is a passage (Gal. v. 2, 3) that has been quoted to prove that circumcision and the law go together: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every one that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Christ says (John vii. 22), "Moses gave unto you circumcision"; but, as though to guard against this confounding of things different, immediately adds, "Not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers." The law of Moses contained a rule for the administration of circumcision, but circumcision was not its child, nor its servant. How closely these things were related in the Jewish mind we see from Acts xv. 1, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses"; yet, in the fifth verse, there is a distinction made, "It was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Paul, in Romans and Galatians, shows that the Abrahamic covenant contains the Christ, and draws from it his doctrine of

justification by faith, showing that it contains the promise of life through faith alone to all the seed of Abraham for all time,¹ and that the Mosaic law, being unable to give life, had served a temporary purpose and passed away. But what of circumcision? If the covenant is for all time, what of its seal if believers are not to be circumcised? The answer is, that there is a new seal. Since Christ and salvation through him are the great promise of the covenant, baptism into Christ is the token of inheritance in the covenant. He notes some changes in the administration of the seal. A Gentile might attain to circumcision, but it was not his birthright as it was that of the Jew. The new seal is as free to him as to the Jew. A female could not be circumcised, but is baptized. A bond servant who had a believing master was circumcised; he is baptized whether his master is a believer or not. These things were not of the essence of the covenant. But there is another relation in the very heart of the covenant, bound up with the promise of the Redeemer, that is undisturbed. It was left for the wisdom of *some* of later times to make the discovery that under the new dispensation the Abrahamic covenant does not know the believer *and* his seed. Now since the Abrahamic covenant has a new seal, and circumcision is no longer called for, there is nothing left for it but to be what it was in the Jewish mind, and what the judaizing Christians wished to make it for the Gentiles, a badge of bondage to the law. He who submitted to it voluntarily placed himself under this bondage, made himself a debtor to do the whole law.

“But what,” it may be asked, “of the passover which we regard as continued in the Lord’s Supper? Does not it belong to the Old Testament?” The passover was doubtless designed to be

¹ So far as the writer is aware, this fact has not been used in the modern controversies concerning sacramental justification; yet there is no one passage which more completely annihilates all its pretenses. The declaration that the law cannot be a condition of justification, Galatians iii. 17, is only a particular deduction from the general statement that there can be no change in, or addition to, the terms contained in the Abrahamic covenant. By confirming that covenant God has forever stopped himself from making any such change. To make baptism or any other ordinance necessary to justification would be adding to the terms as truly making the keeping of the law necessary would have been.

prophetical; but it was so only in symbol. As far as its terms were concerned, its promise was fulfilled on the night of its institution. It was not like the Abrahamic covenant, everlasting in its terms. Hence it might have departed and left nothing in its place, and no question would have been raised about it. But if Christ chose, in reference to its prophetic character, to perpetuate it, he had full authority to do so. Yet its claims in this respect are altogether different from those of circumcision, and must rest entirely upon the statements of the New Testament writers.

In concluding this article we venture to present the following scheme of the covenants in their relation to each other.

I. The covenant of grace between the Father and Son from eternity.

II. The covenant of works.

III. The covenant of grace revealed—in prophecy and in certain covenants with the redeemed.

1. Covenants relating to the Mediator, the spiritual seed, and justification by faith.

(a), The Eden covenant.

(b), The Abrahamic, organizing the visible church.

(c), The Davidic, setting forth the kingly character of the Mediator.

2. Covenants supplementary and administrative.

(a), The Mosaic, or covenant of ministration by carnal ordinances: called old because, having fulfilled its purpose, it gave way to—

(b), The new covenant of ministration of the Spirit.

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