

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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No. 9.—January, 1882.

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I.

THE COMPARATIVE CERTAINTY OF PHYSICS AND  
METAPHYSICS.

THEOPHRASTUS, or perhaps Andronicus, in editing the writings of Aristotle, arranged them in two classes: τὰ φυσικά and τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά: physics and metaphysics. Whether the meaning was, that the latter class is to be *read after* the first, or whether it treats of objects that *exist beyond* those treated of in the first class, has been disputed. We shall adopt the latter explanation as much the most probable, and understand by physics those provinces of inquiry which relate to the irrational and material world, and by metaphysics those relating to the rational and spiritual. Aristotle's own division of knowledge favors this explanation of the running titles under which his writings have been placed. "If there is something," he says, *Metaphysics*, v. i., "that is eternal and immovable, and that involves a separate subsistence, it is evident that it is the province of ontological science to investigate this. It is not certainly the province of physical science, for physical science is conversant about certain movable natures." Under τὰ φυσικά, Aristotle included the doctrine of material motion as seen in the heavens and earth; the history of animals; the nature of sensuous perception; of memory; of sleep and dreams; of life and death. Under τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, he grouped ethics, politics, rhetoric, logic, and ontology or metaphysics proper. Some of these terms were wider than in modern usage. This is particularly the case with ethics and politics, which included considerable that now falls under the heads of psychology and philosophy. Aristotle regarded the metaphysical division as by far the most important part of human knowledge, denominating it the "first philosophy," implying that the physical division is secondary.

### III.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE COVENANTS CONSIDERED AS THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE OF THEOLOGY.

AS distinct formulas of faith, the doctrines of grace have been gradually developed and defined as they have been called into prominence by opposing errors. The most explicit statements in all the Epistles are directed against errors which had already appeared. And from the days of the apostles onward, the vagaries of human speculation, or the aberrations of human corruption, have been overruled for good, by leading to a closer scrutiny of the Word of God; and, investigation has resulted in clearer definitions. But as one great truth after another has thus come to a perspicuous utterance, it has also fallen into its proper relations, and arranged itself in some grand scheme of thought, bringing it into unity and harmony with all the rest.

It must be conceded, however, that a preconceived *syntagma* has too often unduly influenced the understanding of particular doctrines. But when that has been the case, it will commonly be apparent in the unnatural and enforced construction of texts, the want of logical coherence in the parts of the system, or in a vagueness of conception, in respect to the relation of the parts to each other, and to the whole.

But truth is as self-consistent as the God who has revealed it. And although some of its relations may be far above our finite comprehension, yet so far as we can see, it is articulate, and mutually dependent, as are the members of the human body, as is the spiritual body of Christ :

“ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

It is not too much, then, to claim that a scheme of thought which most fully harmonizes the accepted doctrines of grace in a coherent system, has *a priori* claims to be considered as in accordance with di-

vine revelation. It may not have been developed, or, at least, it may not have been emphasized in an early age of the Church, when the elementary and general truths of salvation were alone in debate. It may have needed the scholastic acuteness and nice discriminations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to perfect it. But when it has emerged from the conflict of opinions into a complete and coherent scheme of thought, if it harmonizes all the doctrines and facts of revelation in a logical system, able to found itself upon the word of God as an underlying form of truth, it ought not to be lightly esteemed or set aside for speculations, which however ingenious, yet lack the unity of a system, and the authority of Scripture. To a large extent these characteristics belong to what has been known as the "*Federal Theology*," or that system of truth which is built upon the doctrine of the Covenants. Its scriptural basis is ample. As a scheme of thought it is sufficiently comprehensive to embrace every department of theology and every point of doctrine pertaining to the fall and recovery of man. Moreover, there are some representations of Scripture which cannot be satisfactorily explained on any other scheme.

The systematic development of this scheme of doctrine belongs to the two centuries after the great reformation. These were centuries of great events and of great men,—periods in which the truths of God's Word, no longer under the exclusive jurisdiction of Papal infallibility, were open to the investigations of the learned, and were gradually taking on more definite forms, and becoming crystallized in the confessions and catechisms of the Church. The doctrine of the Covenants was not then invented, for we hold that it runs through and illumines all the Scriptures. But it was then called into prominence by the appearance of two systems of error, incidentally springing out of the yet recent freedom of thought and latitude of discussion. Both Socinianism and Arminianism contributed in leading to a recognition of the relation of the Covenants to all the other doctrines of grace.

This will be apparent if we bear in mind what is the fundamental principle which underlies the Federal Theology, viz: the principle of representation. This supposes a *personal substitution* on the part of both the first and the second Adam in behalf of those represented by them respectively. But one of the chief objections of Socinus against the satisfaction of Christ, and the one on which he laid particular stress, was the absence, as he alleged, of any such union or relation of guilty men, and a guiltless Saviour, as would justify the infliction of penal sufferings upon the latter.

This made it necessary to show that Christ was united to us by

other and stronger ties than those of the flesh, as a partaker of our humanity. Hence in answering this objection of Socinus, Grotius is compelled, notwithstanding his governmental theory of the atonement, to bring out the doctrine of a vicarious punishment. "That all this error may be removed," he says, "it must be observed that it is essential to punishment that it be inflicted *for sin*, but that it is not likewise essential to it that it be inflicted on him who sinned." To make this vicarious punishment lawful, however, Grotius admits that there must be "some conjunction between him that sinned and the party to be punished. And this conjunction is either natural, as between a father and a son; or mystical, as between king and people; or voluntary, as between the guilty person and the surety."\*

But almost simultaneously with this reply of Grotius to the objections of Faustus Socinus, arose the Arminian controversy. This led to a yet more thorough investigation of the relation of Christ's death to the remission of sins, than had ever before taken place. The discussions connected with this controversy made it more and more evident that the work of Christ involved a definite purpose on the part of God, and that the nature of His offices required the conception of a definite chosen people, in behalf of whom they were discharged.

Thus Amesius, as quoted by Smeaton in his great work on the Atonement, says:

"If the Church was in no way considered in the Divine mind when Christ was anointed and sanctified to His offices, then the head was constituted without a body, and the king without any subjects, known as present, or by the omniscience of God himself, which it is not necessary to say, how unworthy it would be of the treasures of the Divine wisdom, which are hidden in this mystery. The wise reader will well consider this one thing, that this satisfaction of Christ, undertaken for us guilty ones, could not avail without some antecedent conjunction between us and Christ, such as, that He should be appointed by God to be head of the body of which we are members, as that celebrated man, Hugo Grotius, forsaking the Remonstrants, whom elsewhere he defends, ingeniously concedes."

The credit of formulating the Federal theology into a system of truth, is commonly ascribed to Cocceius; but the fact is, that before his great work on the Covenants had appeared in 1648, the doctrine had already become a recognized form of truth in the Church, as is evident from the Canons of Dort. It had indeed been explicitly set forth by one of its earliest and ablest exponents, Johannis Cloppenburg, as early as 1642. He was followed by a distinguished array of Dutch divines, and for more than two centuries this scheme of thought has been the prevailing form of statement in the Reformed Churches. And we do not hesitate in saying that it remains to this day the most

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\* "De Satisfactione," Chap. iv.



logical and consistent scheme which has ever been presented, for explaining in systematic order and coherence the great truths of God's holy oracles. It has, at least, this advantage over some modern schemes of great scientific pretensions, that its basis is *strictly Scriptural*, whilst these are founded on a philosophy—a philosophy which, if carried to its ultimate conclusions, finds the unity of Pantheism for its goal.

We say this none the less confidently on account of the neglect into which this scheme of thought has fallen in modern times, or even the scornful treatment it has received in some quarters by men of high station and great attainments. The learned Dean of Westminster has permitted himself to speak of its characteristic formulas as

“The subtleties of Roman law, applied to the relations of God and man, which appear faintly in Augustine, more distinctly in Aquinas, more decisively still in Calvin and Luther.” (“Lectures on History of Eastern Church,” p. 27.)

It does not surprise us that Dean Stanley should discard the theology of the Reformation. But it is remarkable that a man of his acknowledged ability and learning should represent the ideas expressed by such terms as “merit” and “demerit,” “imputed righteousness,” “satisfaction” and “justification,” as peculiar to Roman law as if they did not enter into every conception of law and every code of human obligations. So that the ideas expressed are scriptural, it matters little whence the terms are derived. But there seems a strange reluctance, even among writers of reputed orthodoxy, to admit the idea of any covenant arrangement in the recorded dealings of God with men. They will not accept any other sense of the word than that of “dispensation.”

Doctor Van Oosterzee has been introduced to English readers by translations of his more important works, under the most favorable auspices. And yet he can speak of the Federal theology, as it respects the Covenant of works, as “*an arbitrary hypothesis*,” “*a judicial artifice*,”\* and as little can he find a covenant arrangement in the plan of salvation by a Redeemer. The same may be said of that whole class of theologians who regard mankind as not only one in race by a common descent from Adam, but as having a sort of metaphysical “*solidarity*” by a “vital,” “organic union,” with him. With them there is no recognized need of any covenant relation with either the “first” or “second Adam.” The first Adam is simply the “*caput naturale*” through whom humanity receives a hereditary taint which

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\* “Dogmatics,” p. 409.

though not sin itself, becomes the prolific source of sin. The second Adam is the "*caput spirituale*," through whose voluntary sacrifice of obedience, humanity is rehabilitated in the sight of God. So that no one to whom the Gospel is proclaimed now perishes because of his sin in itself, but only on account of his unbelief.\* The objection to the Federal theology, urged by this whole class of theologians, is based upon the alleged ethical difficulty of predicating guilt and condemnation concerning those who have no actual sin. This objection, if well founded, would hold equally against the imputation of Adam's sin to us, and of our sins to Christ. And yet it is admitted that the consequences of Adam's sin do come upon us, at least to the extent that thereby we become sinners, and as such liable to condemnation. Also that the righteousness of Christ, whether consisting only in "the sacrifice of obedience," or also in the sacrificial blood of expiation, is that on the ground of which we may hope for acceptance with God.

Now the question is, whether the ethical difficulty is better solved in both cases, by supposing merely a natural headship in the one, and a spiritual headship in the other, to a generic humanity, or by both a natural and federal headship in the one case, and a federal and spiritual headship in the other? The outcome on either theory is the same; the difference respects the ground of justice on which that outcome is explained. Let us compare the two:

1. Though we should account for what goes by the name of "depravity," and what the apostle designates as *σάρξ*—the flesh, as only a "taint," disease, *vitium*; yet since it makes all men sinners, and all sinners are under condemnation, what relief to the moral instinct of justice does it afford to say that the *vitium* itself is not sin, or the penalty of sin? Is this *vitium* from which flows our sin and consequent suffering voluntary? Even though it should not be considered as in itself a ground of condemnation, yet inasmuch as it always and necessarily brings us into condemnation, what is gained by simply removing the difficulty one step further back?

2. On the theory of a merely natural headship we fail to find any ground of justice upon which to account for the acknowledged miserable condition of the race. This theory supposes a divine constitution by which depravity is propagated, and its unspeakable evils come upon mankind without any relation whatsoever to the sin which is the origin of all this evil; for, if our relation to the original sinner is only that of natural descent, then we can in no sense be chargeable with the guilt of his transgression, whilst yet its consequences have come

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\* Van Oosterzee, "Dogmatics," pp. 601, 603, 604.

upon us. Is there no ethical difficulty to be encountered on this supposition? It represents our corruption by nature as a misfortune, like that of one born with some physical defect, and if we complain at this unmerited calamity, and inquire for a cause why we should thus come into the world "children of wrath," Dr. Van Oosterzee has no reply except to refer us to the apostle's rebuke of those who questioned the Divine sovereignty in election (Rom. ix. 20). That is to say, that one who finds the ethical difficulty too great for him, on the theory of the Covenants, is himself obliged to fall back upon the Divine Sovereignty as a final defence of his theory of hereditary taint. But he forgets that the apostle is rebuking the irreverent spirit of those who would complain of God's sovereignty in His dealings with sinful creatures, whereas the question now has respect to those who are contemplated as sinless, and we are seeking to account for the calamity which has come upon them; a calamity which is not a physical, but a moral evil; not a sovereign discrimination between those equally guilty, but an infliction where no guilt is; not a judicial infliction, but a Divine constitution which necessarily results in the sin, and consequent condemnation of every individual of the race.

How little the ethical difficulty, supposed to be peculiar to the doctrine of imputation, is relieved by such a representation, may be easily seen.

But if we turn now to the second Adam and his relations both Godward and manward, the fact and necessity of a Covenant is yet more apparent. The principle of representation comes in here too palpably to be denied. But if this principle involves no difficulty in this case, why should it be so objectionable in the case of the first Adam? It is true the results in the two cases are very different. But that does not alter the rectitude of the principle. The obedience of the first Adam would have secured the reward which, on his failure, the second Adam only could achieve for us. But that he failed is no imputation upon the Covenant under which he was placed. If it be admitted, therefore, that the sacrifice of Christ had any expiatory value, and was not exhausted of its contents by its merely moral effect, then the underlying principle of the Federal Theology, viz, representation, with its correlate, imputation, must also be admitted.

But it is freely conceded that something more is needed, some further development of the federal theology, to give us a central principle, under which the whole of the doctrines of grace may be reduced to scientific unity. As they are commonly presented, the two Covenants, of works and of grace, are put in antithesis. There is, apparently, an unmanageable dualism, in the Divine economy toward

mankind, which gives us two distinct and different principles of administration. The late Dr. Thornwell has finely expressed this fact in his masterly review of "Breckinridge's Theology":

"There must be a ground of unity somewhere, for truth is one as well as connected. This unity must be sought in the doctrines themselves, and not in their accidents and adjuncts. It is easy to *connect* Divine truths by the idea of the Covenants; or by the correlation of disease and remedy, the fall and redemption; or by the order of the Divine decrees as manifested in creation and providence; or by the idea of the Mediator or the incarnation; but to *connect* them is not to *unite* them. We want a corner-stone which holds the whole building together. We want some central principle which embraces equally the religion of nature and the religion of grace. Until some such central principle is developed in its all-comprehensive relations, we are obliged to have a twofold Theology, as we have a twofold religion—a Covenant of Works, and a Covenant of Grace—with no bridge between them." ("Collected Writings," Vol. I., p. 484.)

Dr. Thornwell then suggests that such a principle may be found in the great doctrine of justification. And it is true that this distinguishing doctrine of our religion belongs to both Covenants alike, as the great benefit to be attained by man—though not attainable on the same conditions. Hence it is liable to the fatal objection, as a central principle, that the Covenants are still in antithesis, and differentiated by some of their most important characteristics. But what is wanted is a principle of unity which shall stand equally related to all truth, and leave no chasm to be bridged, no twofold theology to be harmonized.

Now, we venture the suggestion that this desired principle of unity may be found in a correct view of the doctrine of the Covenants. These, as commonly represented, are twofold and antithetic. The distinction between them as to their parties, conditions, and duration may be preserved, and is necessary. But in a primary and essential point of view, this dualism sinks into unity, and if we look at the original, eternal, covenant relation, as it is represented in Scripture, we shall find that it embraces and includes, in the oneness of a Divine purpose and council, all that comes between, and tends to, its final accomplishment. It is in this point of view that we wish to consider it in the remainder of this article, and we think it can be shown that the one "*Everlasting Covenant*," one in itself, but diverse in its manifestations, is the "corner-stone" sought for by Thornwell—the vital principle, in which all the doctrines of our holy religion find their unity.

I. The radical idea which distinguishes Christian theism, is the idea of a *God in Covenant*. It is not merely, or chiefly, a Creator of the Universe, or even a Moral Governor, that the Scriptures present as the object of our faith and worship. Natural theology could recognize these relations, and the obligations arising from them. But



Christian Theism, whilst it includes all these, includes much more. The whole Bible is pervaded with the thought of a God in Covenant relations. Everything pertaining to man's moral history and destiny is not only connected with, but decided by, these relations. The two great events in human history, the fall and the redemption, stand immediately connected with the two representative heads—Adam and Christ—both of whom are representatives by Covenant provisions. Even those minor epochs which introduce different dispensations, also take on the form of Covenant transactions. The people of God collectively, and individual believers, are represented as in Covenant with God. Even the laws which govern inanimate nature are established by Covenant arrangement, and God himself speaks of His Covenant “with the day and the night.” But this all-pervading idea of a God in Covenant would yet fail to give us the central principle sought for, as that which must unify all theological truth, unless we can reduce its manifold manifestations to a single all-embracing plan and purpose. Without this there must not only remain “a Covenant of works and a Covenant of grace, with no bridge between them,” but also a multiplication of Covenants springing out of the exigencies of the times, and having no necessary relation to each other.

It is just here that the confusion and misconception, which so often attend a statement of the doctrine of the Covenants, take their rise. We have so-called Covenants of various sorts, and with different parties having diverse conditions and promises, until we fail to discriminate, and the whole becomes an inextricable entanglement. It was once said by a distinguished Divine, with more wit than reverence, that “there were five Covenants, but four of them were made in Holland.” He had evidently an inkling of the true idea, but failed to apprehend its full significance—the idea of a single, everlasting, all-embracing Covenant—the *Godhead in Covenant*, in the councils of eternity, and determining the events of time.

That there is such a Covenant, is recognized in the ordinary statements of the doctrine—it is between the Father and the Son, and is from eternity. This is called “the Covenant of Redemption,” upon which the Covenant of grace, as between God and His elect people, is said to be founded. We are not solicitous about a name, but that by which an apostle has styled it (Heb. xiii. 20), “the *Everlasting Covenant*,” not only defines its origin, as before all worlds, and thus reaching back to the Divine plan and purpose in the creation of a world, but it also defines the parties to it, as necessarily the persons of the adorable Trinity. It is in the conception of this Covenant that we find the central principle which unifies all the truths of religion—natural or supernatural—of law or of grace.

It is a dictate of reason, no less than it is a doctrine of Scripture, that in the creation of man, and in the whole history of God's dealings with him, there must be an underlying Divine plan and purpose. If, then, we can trace this purpose and plan back to a covenant-arrangement, then in that covenant we have the key which opens to us the mysteries of Providence, and the connecting link which binds human history to the eternal purpose, and thus unifies the events of time and the doctrines of religion.

But if we would find this central principle in "the everlasting covenant," we must not give an anthropomorphic cast to our conception of this Divine council and compact. The idea of a covenant to which the Persons of the Trinity are parties, is not to be belittled and degraded by the analogy of a human agreement and contract. And yet we are not to regard it as simply a decree—unconditioned, and without concert and consent. That mode of the Divine subsistence which admits a distinction of persons in the Godhead, is recognized as a fundamental doctrine of Scripture. The mutual counsel and co-operation of the Persons is equally taught. But we are not thence to conceive the possibility of any diversity of thought, will, or operation, or any difference of feeling or purpose which needed to be overcome or influenced by any conditions or promises, as of one, relatively to another, of these Divine Persons. But it was the harmonious concert and co-operation in the same purpose of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is so represented in the Scriptures—and emphatically, as such concurrence between the Father and the Son—the one appointing and sending, and the other appointed and sent.

It is equally taught, and admitted by all parties, that this transaction, which is commonly called "the covenant of redemption," did not take place in time, but was from eternity.

II. The only question, then, which remains, is, whether this "everlasting covenant" covers the whole purpose and plan of God's dealings with mankind, or merely concerns the recovery of fallen man? If the former, then we have found the central and unifying principle which we have been seeking; if the latter, then we have still "a two-fold religion—a covenant of works and a covenant of grace—and no bridge between them."

The objection to the former views which most naturally occurs, is its seeming implication of a supralapsarian order of the Divine decrees. But this implication is more in seeming than reality. For if we admit a foreordination which covers all the events of time, it makes no difference, as to the order of the decrees, that it assumes the form of a covenant. It is only as they are apprehended by us,

in the relation of the things decreed to each other, that we can speak of an *order* of the Divine decrees at all. As they lay in the mind of God, these things were all and equally present to His omniscience, and there was no priority or order of *time*. But we can conceive an order of *nature*, from the relation of the things decreed, as apprehended in the Divine purpose. A purpose to redeem, for example, necessarily supposes its proper subjects, or those to be redeemed, as in contemplation. The Infinite mind, which sees the end from the beginning, sees also all that comes between, and everything in its relations and surroundings. The decrees are unconditioned by what may take place in time. The things decreed have their relations—as antecedent and consequent, cause and effect—subordinate and co-ordinate. But what these relations may be, in any given case, militates nothing against the unity of the Divine purpose, as founded on Divine council and covenant. When, therefore, we speak of God's eternal Covenant, in reference to mankind and their redemption, we speak of it as contemplating man as created and fallen, and not as merely creatable and fallible.

But what will, perhaps, be regarded as a more formidable difficulty, is the apparent dualism of the two covenants, of works and of grace, "with no bridge between them," as Dr. Thornwell says. We think, however, the doctor's own admirable exposition of the gracious design of the covenant of works would go far toward bridging the chasm. If the covenant with Adam was an act of mere arbitrary power, without any grace or goodness in it, it would be difficult to bring it into harmony with other Scriptures under any method. But as it was, itself, an act of grace, placing man in new relations to law, and with possibilities of benefit, vastly superior to any otherwise attainable, and within the reach of his free moral agency, we think it may easily be brought under the provisions of the one "Everlasting Covenant."

We cannot conceive of the covenant of works as a thing by itself, as something ultimate in the Divine purpose, and out of relation to all subsequent developments, except as a superseded arrangement, the failure of which had rendered necessary a new *διαθήκη*. But if it enters at all into that economy determined in the counsels of eternity, it falls into its appropriate place, as the first manifestation in time, of that all-comprehending purpose founded on the everlasting Covenant. It was, in fact, a *dispensation*, to be followed by others, as the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, in which the plan of Redemption was successively developed.

If it is objected that this supposes the plan of redemption as already in process of execution before there were fallen creatures to be

redeemed, we may answer (1), so does the so-called "Covenant of Redemption," upon which a subsequent covenant of grace is supposed to be founded. For that Covenant is also from eternity, and yet it began to be administered in the creation of the world (Col. i. 15-19). But we answer again (2), it is conceded that Redemption is the crowning manifestation of the Divine perfections. But it is so, by accomplishing under different conditions, and by another method, yet in the application of the same principles, the same ends proposed by the covenant of works. It is the same Divine purpose going on to its fulfilment in a different way, when by the fall of man its fulfilment had become impossible by the covenant of works. The Divine omniscience had foreseen, and the Divine wisdom had provided for, the disastrous event which man's free agency had brought about. But we are not to imagine any disappointment or change of purpose in the Eternal mind. There was no break in the continuity of events, as they were contemplated in the one eternal purpose.

But it may be objected again that the different conditions on which eternal life is promised under the two covenants, must make the covenant of works a category by itself, and preclude its being considered as simply a dispensation under the one everlasting Covenant. From Adam was required a perfect obedience. But in all dispensations subsequent to the fall, salvation is of grace, the gift of God to believing sinners.

But to this we reply, that the difference between the requirements under the law and under grace, springing out of the difference in the spiritual condition of man, before and after the fall, so far from arguing against our theory, is a confirmation of it. For we see in this difference the progressive development in time of the grace purposed in eternity. Adam, in his sinless nature, was capable of acquiring merit by his perfect obedience during his probation, which should be counted to him for righteousness. But to fallen, guilty man, this is impossible. Hence to the guilty and the helpless comes in the higher manifestation of Divine grace and goodness in redemption, and the righteousness required is no longer of personal attainment, but a heavenly gift.

Nevertheless the principles which govern the administration of the Covenant remain the same. A perfect righteousness is demanded, a justification on the ground of it is attainable, a representation of the many by one, makes it possible.

It is freely admitted that the covenant with Adam was a special phase of God's moral government. For it was precisely suited to the condition in which man was at his creation, endowed with original righteousness, yet under probation and liable to fall. But by the



covenant with Adam, a probation which otherwise would have been commensurate with being, was limited in time, and concentrated in a single person as the representative of the race. But when we see this same principle of representation predominating in the covenant of grace—so precisely suited to man's changed condition—and the mediator of that Covenant God's eternal Son, "by whom also he made the worlds," and "in whom we have redemption by his blood," we can see no reason why the covenant of works should be considered as so a thing by itself, as not to be included in that "Everlasting Covenant," the mediator of which is both Creator and Redeemer.

If the view which has been given is correct, the advantages arising from it are apparent.

1. It obviates that confusion of mind and perplexity which so generally accompanies the doctrine of the Covenants, as ordinarily stated. Their multiplicity requires ever-recurring explanations; and when all is done, there is yet an obscurity resting upon the whole subject, rendering it uninviting, and tending to its general neglect.

2. We think the view presented is a step in the right direction toward a more scientific statement of the doctrines of the Reformed theology. These all arrange themselves in due order and symmetry under the one "Everlasting Covenant." Dispensation follows dispensation, as the provisions of that Covenant are unfolded through the ages, and in the increasing light of ever-brightening manifestations we see the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" loosening the seals of the apocalyptic book, and laying open the counsels of eternity.

3. Is it venturing too much to suggest that this view of the unity of the Divine purpose in the Everlasting Covenant, affords some light also upon that dark problem, the permission of sin in the universe of a holy God? Theories of free agency which place the creature beyond his Creator's power, and account for the origin of moral evil by supposing God unable to prevent it, create more and greater difficulties than they remove. But regarding God as supreme, and robed in all His perfection, the mind seeks relief in the presence of this dark problem, in some all-comprehending purpose and ulterior end to be accomplished, that shall more than compensate the permitted evil. Where can such relief be found, if not in that scheme of thought which makes redemption to be the crowning manifestation of the Divine perfections, and the "Everlasting Covenant" to be God's world-embracing plan?

With what success we have thus carried out the Federal theology to a point at which the doctrine of the Covenants becomes the central principle of theology, we must leave it for others to decide.

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