

REPUBLICATION

A Biblical, Confessional and Historical Defense

Mark A. Collingridge

Brett A. McNeill

The Covenant of Works...					
Revived	Re-enacted	Repeated	Re-exhibited	Re-Instituted	Legal Administration of COG
Pemble Owens Vos	Hodge	Witsius Polanus	Buchanan	Rollock Perkins	Calvin Turretin

E. Turretin: Difference of Expression Only, Not Substance

“Those of our party (as Rollock, Pisactor, Trelcatus and others) who make two covenants diverse in substance, take the old covenant strictly, not only separating the promise of grace from it, but opposing the one to the other. In this sense, Paul seems to take it frequently (as 2 Cor 3; Gal 4), so that the old covenant is the covenant of works and the new the covenant of the gospel and of faith. On the other hand, they who maintain only one (as Calvin, Martyr, Ursinus) take the word covenant more broadly, as embracing also the promise of grace (although somewhat obscurely). Because the promise was dispensed in different ways before and after Christ, they distinguish it into two—old and new—by a distribution not of genus into species (as the former), but of subject according to accidents (which the other do not deny); thus they differ only as to the different use of words of terms, but not as to the thing itself...” (Institutes of Elenctic Theology, XII.vii.6)

THE REASON FOR REPUBLICATION

- A. Is there any use in a fallen world? (WLC 94)
- B. First Use: To Show more fully the work of Jesus as the perfect law-keeper. (WLC 95)
- C. Second Use: Perpetuate the reality of the broken covenant of works for the unbeliever—either driving him to Christ or leaving him without excuse. (WLC 96)
- D. Third Use: Being stripped of the curses, the commands continue to show the true believer what obedience of gratitude looks like. (WLC 97)
- E. Republished at Mt Sinai (WLC 98)
- F. Sweet Compliance with the Gospel of Grace (WCF 19.7)

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Our thesis is as follows: the doctrine of Republication teaches that, while there is one overarching Covenant of Grace, by which the elect are saved (by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone), that Covenant was administered differently under the Law than it was under the Gospel. Under the Mosaic Economy (the Law), the moral law given to Adam as a covenant of works, requiring perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, threatening death and promising life, was republished and summarized in the Ten Commandments, not to give life but to 1) shut all men up under sin, showing them their need for the obedience of Christ, in order that they might seek grace in him, 2) show forth the obedience Christ would offer as the Mediator, and 3) show the regenerate, who have been delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, what the obedience of gratitude looks like.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS

A. Development within Reformed Theology

“The law has a two-fold meaning; it sometimes includes the whole of what has been taught by Moses, and sometimes that part only which was peculiar to his ministration, which consisted of precepts, rewards, and punishments. But Moses had this common office—to teach the people the true rule of religion. Since it was so, it behoved him to preach repentance and faith; but faith is not taught, except by propounding promises of divine mercy, and those gratuitous: and thus it behoved him to be a preacher of the gospel; which office he faithfully performed, as it appears from many passages. In order to instruct the people in the doctrine of repentance, it was necessary for him to teach what manner of life was acceptable to God; and this he included in the precepts of the law. That he might also instill into the minds of the people the love of righteousness, and implant in them the hatred of iniquity, promises and threatenings were added; which proposed rewards to the just, and denounced dreadful

punishments on sinners. It was now the duty of the people to consider in how many ways they drew curses on themselves, and how far they were from deserving anything at God's hands by their works, that being thus led to despair as to their own righteousness, they might flee to the haven of divine goodness, and so to Christ himself. This was the end or design of the Mosaic dispensation. But as evagelic promises are only found scattered in the writings of Moses, and these also somewhat obscure, and as the precepts and rewards, allotted to the observers of the law, frequently occur, it rightly appertained to Moses as his own and peculiar office, to teach what is the real righteousness of works, and then to show what remuneration awaits the observance of it, and what punishment awaits those who come short of it... And whenever the word law is thus strictly taken, Moses is by implication opposed to Christ: and then we must consider what the law contains, as separate from the gospel. Hence what is said here of the righteousness of the law, must be applied, not to the whole office of Moses, but to that part which was in a manner peculiarly committed to him.... The passage is taken from Lev. xviii.5, where the Lord promises eternal life to those who would keep his law... Paul indeed thus reasons,--"Since no man can attain the righteousness prescribed in the law, except he fulfils strictly every part of it, and since of this perfection all men have always come far short, it is in vain for anyone to strive in this way for salvation: Israel then was very foolish, who expected to attain the righteousness of the law, from which we are all excluded." See how from the promise itself he proves, that it can avail us nothing, and for this reason, because the condition is impossible. What futile device it is then to allege legal promises, in order to establish the righteousness of the law! For with these an unavoidable curse comes to us; so far is it, that salvation should thence proceed... But at the same time they see not that it has been promised, in order that a consciousness of their own transgressions may strike all with the fear of death, and that being thus constrained by their own deficiency, they may learn to flee to Christ." (Calvin on Romans 10:5)

- B. The Definition of the Covenant of Works (WCF 7.2, 19.1; WLC 30; WSC 20)
 - 1. Perfect, Personal, Perpetual Obedience
 - 2. Promising Life; Threatening Death
- C. The Moral Law
 - 1. Calvin (Rom 3:20, 31)

- a) The reward for obedience (Rom 3:20)
- b) The presence of the moral law (Rom 3:31)
- 2. Perkins and Rollock
- 3. Westminster Assembly (WCF 7.2; WLC 93)
 - "The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." (WCF 7.2)
 - "What is the moral law? The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto... promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it." (WLC 93)
- D. Given at Creation
- E. Written on Man's Heart (WLC 17; Rom 2:14)
- F. Stipulations: Works/Obedience, Not Faith

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

- A. The Need: The Sinfulness of Man - WCF 7.3
- B. The Essence of the CoG: Mediation
- C. Active and Passive Obedience to the Moral Law
- D. Stipulations: Faith
 - 1. Not Works
 - 2. Not Law
 - 3. Not Evangelical Obedience
- E. Substance: One Covenant of Grace in OT and NT

THE MOSAIC COVENANT AND REPUBLICATION

- A. The Question: Which does the Mosaic covenant look like?
- B. Key Texts:
 - 1. Old Testament - Ex 19-20, 24; Lev 18:5; Dt 27:26
 - 2. New Testament - Rom 10:5; Gal 3:10-5:13
- C. The Tradition
 - 1. The Law Broadly Considered—Covenant of Grace
 - 2. The Law Strictly Considered—Covenant of Works
- D. Both Operating at the Same Time