

#### IV. THE COVENANT OF WORKS

##### A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 7, sections 1 and 2, states:

I. 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.

II. 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.

Charles Hodge, in volume 2 of his *Systematic Theology* p. 117, states:

And God entered into covenant with Adam. This statement does not rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures. It is, however, a concise and correct mode of asserting a plain Scriptural fact, namely, that God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty. This is what in Scriptural language is meant by a covenant, and this is all that is meant by the term as here used. Although the word covenant is not used in Genesis and does not elsewhere, in any clear passage, occur in reference to the transaction there recorded, yet inasmuch as the plan of salvation is constantly represented as a New Covenant, new, not merely in antithesis to that made at Sinai, but new in reference to all legal covenants whatever, it is plain that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with Adam as a truly federal transaction. The Scriptures know nothing of any other than two methods of attaining eternal life: the one that which demands perfect obedience, and the other that which demands faith. If the latter is called a covenant, the former is declared to be of the same nature.

Archibald Alexander Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* Revised Edition, p. 309, asks:

1. in what different senses is the term covenant used in Scripture?

1st. For a natural ordinance -- Jer. 33:20.

2nd. For an unconditional promise -- Gen. 9:11-12.

3rd. For a conditional promise -- Isa. 1:19-20.

4th. A dispensation or mode of administration -- Heb. 8:6-9.

In the theological phrases "covenant of works", and "covenant of grace", this term is used in the third sense of a promise suspended on conditions.

2. What are the several elements essential to a covenant?

1st. Contracting parties.

2nd. Conditions.

These conditions in a covenant between equals are mutually imposed and mutually