

2. There are some theologians who hold that the covenant of works was not abrogated at Adam's Fall, and that it is still in force. They argue that:

a. God's claim to the obedience of His creatures is not terminated by the Fall; man always owes God perfect obedience.

b. the curse and punishment of the covenant of works for those who continue in sin is not abrogated; the wages of sin continue to be death

c. the conditional promise of the covenant still holds: a perfect obedience is always required to merit eternal life; God has not withdrawn this promise:

Leviticus 18:5 -- "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord."

Romans 10:5 -- "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness."

Galatians 3:11 12 -- "Now that no one is justified by the law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.' However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.' "

d. although the covenant still remains in effect, it is powerless as a practical means to obtain eternal life, since no fallen human being can comply with the condition

What shall we say then? Is the covenant of works presently in force or not?

In one sense, it is realistically not an arrangement into which God presently enters with fallen humanity. Depraved, corrupt human beings are simply unable to fulfill the requirement of perfect obedience for the earning of eternal life.

In another sense, the requirement for the earning of eternal life remains the same. In fact, God entered into a works/grace covenant with His Son (sometimes referred to as the Covenant of Redemption) in order to accomplish redemption for fallen humanity. The Son fulfilled the requirement for the earning of eternal life by His perfect sinless life and perfect sacrificial death; and the Father bestows this benefit on believing sinful human beings out of His love and grace.

Thus on the one hand the Son earns the benefit of eternal life via a works covenant that has the same condition as the original works covenant. On the other hand the Father bestows the gift of eternal life via a grace covenant that has no meritorious condition at all, as far as the believing sinner is concerned.