

III. Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology

A. Definitions of Covenants and Dispensations in these Systems of Interpretation

1. Definition of Covenants in these Systems

a. Dispensational Theology on the Covenants of Scripture

(1) *The Scofield Reference Bible*, edition of 1917, footnote 6 on Gen. 1:28:

"The Edenic Covenant, the first of the eight great covenants of Scripture which condition life and salvation, and about which all Scripture crystallizes, has seven elements. The man and woman in Eden were responsible:

(1) to replenish the earth with a new order -- man; (2) to subdue the earth to human uses; (3) to have dominion over the animal creation, (4) to eat herbs and fruits; (5) to till and keep the garden; (6) to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; (7) the penalty -- death. See, for the other seven covenants: Adamic (Gen. 3:15); Noahic (Gen. 9:1); Abrahamic (Gen. 15:15); Mosaic (Ex. 19:25); Palestinian (Deut. 30:3); Davdic (2 Sam. 7:16); New (Heb. 8:8)."

(2) Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 7, "Covenants":

"It does not necessarily follow -- as some contend -- that because there is but one righteous ground upon which God can deal graciously with sinners, namely, by the blood of Christ shed for them, there must be but one covenant relationship between God and man. That God has earthly as well as heavenly purposes and in addition transforming blessings adapted to each group and the sphere to which they belong will be seen by any unprejudiced student of the Sacred Text. In relation to His earthly people, Israel, and their blessings God has made various covenants. Some of these are conditional and some unconditional, which terms suggest that in some covenants God has them to depend upon human faithfulness, while in others He merely declares what He will do wholly apart from the question of human worthiness or faithfulness.

Without much Scripture upon which to base it, Covenant theologians have supposed the existence of a covenant between the Persons of the Godhead in relation to the part each would assume in the whole divine program of the ages, especially in redemption. The most that can be said for this contention is that it is reasonable; yet, all the same, difficulties are engendered. For this assumes that there was a beginning in the plan and purpose of God and that separate Persons of the Godhead sustained individual interests.

God has nevertheless entered into nine covenants with man on the earth. With these nine agreements all Scripture is related. Attention therefore to their provisions will be most essential. It is true that the earlier relationships between God and men included here