**The Marrow of Modern Divinity**

Lesson 6 – The Covenant of Grace: The Performance of the Promise, Pt. 1

**The Law of Faith or The Covenant of Grace – The Performance of the Promise**

1. Galatians 4:4-5 says, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
2. According to this verse, Christ placed Himself under the same condition we were in. We are all born into the covenant of works (“under the law”), so Christ was born into the covenant of works (“under the law”). According to the covenant of grace made in eternity past, Christ agreed with the Father to place Himself in the place of the elect and to act as their benefactor and guarantor.
	1. Isaiah 53:6 – “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all’ The iniquity is that of being covenant breakers of the covenant of works.
3. Evangelista pictures it thusly, “Then the law came as the covenant of works, and it said of Christ, ‘I find Him to be a sinner, this man who has taken upon himself the sins of all for whom He was covenant guarantee.  Therefore let him die upon the cross.’ And so the law proceeded against Him, set upon Him, and killed Him.  It was by this means that God’s justice was fully satisfied, His wrath fully appeased, and all true believers acquitted from all of their sins, whether past, present, or yet to come.”
4. Thomas Boston notes, “For though Christ was not personally a sinner, He was in a legal sense, by way of imputation. As a guarantee, He put himself in the place of those whom the Father gave Him, that he might pay their debt.”
5. Because of Christ standing in the place of the elect and acquitting them from all of their sins – past, present, and future – the believer is now dead to the covenant of works and the covenant of works is now dead to the believer.
	1. Romans 4:7-8 – “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds [broken covenant of works] are forgiven, and whose sins are covered [covenant of grace]; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count [impute] his sin.”
	2. Romans 8:1 – “There is therefore now no condemnation [from the law of works] for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
6. Now a question that arises at this point is: why do I have to keep on asking for forgiveness of my sins when I sin since they have already been pardoned in Christ? Here we must distinguish between God’s condemning wrath (or eternal wrath) and God’s corrective discipline (or Fatherly anger).
	1. 1 Corinthians 11:32 – “But when we are judged by the Lord [Fatherly discipline], we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned [condemning wrath] along with the world.”
	2. David prays in Psalm 32 for the removal of God’s fatherly displeasure: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me….I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity….and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.
	3. WCF 20.1 – “The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the Gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law;…”
7. Christ is able to do this and make infinite satisfaction to the justice of God because Christ is God and is able to satisfy the infinite and eternal demands of God. Additionally, Christ is able to do this because the covenant of works does not exclude satisfaction being performed in behalf of another by suffering punishment. Thus, Christ entered into the same covenant of works that was broken by Adam and just as Adam’s breaking of the covenant was imputed to all people, so Christ’s keeping the same covenant of works is imputed to all His elect. Evangelista says, “Just as sin comes from Adam to all mankind, because all sinned in him, so also from Jesus Christ comes righteousness to all who are in Him, because the justice of God has been satisfied for them in Him. All mankind, being in Adam, transgressed the commandment of God in him and with him. In like manner, those who are in Christ by faith have, in Him and with Him, satisfied the justice of God in His death and sufferings.” Scripture explicitly states this principle in Romans 5:12-21 & Romans 6:10-11. So God considers you to have paid for all the breaking of the covenant of works because Christ has paid it all for you.
8. Thus, for all believers, we are placed in the same position that we would have been in had Adam never sinned and broken the covenant of works and so we are treated from God’s perspective as having perfectly performed obedience to the covenant of works because of Jesus Christ. Thomas Boston notes, “Here is the true ground of the infallible perseverance of the saints. The test is finished! The prize is won! Those who are just by faith are entitled to the same benefit which Adam would have been entitled to had he perfectly obeyed.” According to Revelation 22, we will eat of the tree of life in the New Heavens & Earth, that same tree of life that was available to Adam in the Garden of Eden had he obeyed.
9. So now you and I are dead to the law of God considered as the covenant of works. Galatians 2:19 says, “For through the law [taking me to Christ] I died to the law [as a covenant of works], so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ….” Romans 7:4 similarly says, “Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law [as a covenant of works] through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to Him wo has been raised from the dead…”
10. Paul in Romans 7 uses the analogy of a marriage to explain this. When a spouse dies, the surviving spouse is no longer bound to the deceased spouse by the covenant of marriage. Similarly, because our record of debt was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), the law’s legal demands are no longer binding upon believers as a covenant of works.
11. Romans 6:14 says that we are not under law [as a covenant of works] but under grace [the covenant of grace” and Romans 3:19 says that the law [as a covenant of works] speaks to those who are under the law [as a covenant of works]. So the threatening of the law no more has power and hold over us.
12. So the only way to obtain forgiveness is to lay hold of Jesus Christ by faith from the heart. In this we do nothing of the works of the law and we offer no works to God, because Christ has completely done the works of the law and offered His works to God on our behalf.
13. Now we come this question: “Do all people have warrant or authorization to believe in Christ?” In other words, can all people be pleaded with to come to Jesus Christ in faith?
	1. Isaiah 55:1 – “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”
14. Evangelista says, “God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but His free love to lost mankind, has made an authentic offer to all of them, promising that whoever will believe in His Son shall not perish but have eternal life.” Thomas Boston says, “Wherever the gospel is proclaimed, this offer is published to all mankind.”
	1. WCF 7.3 – “Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant [works], the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved….”
15. The offer of the gospel to all people is this: “Jesus Christ has been crucified and if you will take Him upon the terms by which He is offered to you [by faith and repentance], you will be saved.”
16. Evangelista uses this illustration to help us understand the point: “Imagine that some good and holy king had it proclaimed through his entire kingdom that all rebels and banished men may now return safely to their homes because some dear friend of theirs has pled their case and secured the king’s pardon for all who will receive it. Certainly, none of these rebels should doubt that they will obtain true pardon for their rebellion. On the contrary, they should all return home and live under the shadow of that gracious king.”
17. At the same time however, Scripture also talks about “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14) and Jude 4 says that some people are designated for condemnation. The issue here is trying to reconcile the free offer of the Gospel to all people, while holding that Christ has His elect for whom He died. Perhaps I am one of those who are called, but I’m not chosen.
18. Evangelista encourages us here saying, “Do not say to yourself, ‘It may be that I am not elected, and therefore I will not come to Christ.’ But rather say, ‘I do believe in Christ, and therefore I am sure that I am elected.’ Guard your heart from meddling with God’s secrets and prying into his hidden counsel, and do not go beyond your bounds.”
19. It is God’s revealed will for people to believe upon Christ. 1 John 3:23 – “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son.” John 3:16 – “…He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” It is the duty of people to repent and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 17:30 – “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent…”
20. So, all people are authorized and given warrant by God Himself to have faith in the Jesus Christ. So when it comes to us as individuals, do not start with election but with faith. The righteousness of Jesus Christ belongs to all who believe. I believe. Therefore, the righteousness of Jesus Christ belongs to me.
21. And we know that we believe by looking at Christ as the source of our justification objectively, and by the help of the Holy Spirit discerning faith and its fruits in our hearts, subjectively.
22. So all sinners have warrant to believe upon Jesus who came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15), justify the ungodly (Rom 4:5), and to call sinners rather than the self-righteous (Matt 9:12-13). And whoever comes to Him, will never be turned away by Him (John 6:37).
23. Evangelista says, “Surely, if Christ came into the world to seek, call, and save sinners, and to justify the ungodly, and if the more miserable and distressed a man judges himself to be, the more willing Christ is to receive and relieve him, then I see no reason why the vilest sinner should let his sins discourage him from believing in the name of Jesus Christ. In fact, I will go even further and say that the greater any man’s sins are, either in number or nature, the more haste he should make to come to Christ, and say with David, ‘For your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great!’” (Ps 25:11)
24. Luther in his commentary on Galatians says this: “When your conscience is thoroughly afraid with the remembrance of your past sins, and the devil assails you with great violence, going about to overwhelm you with heaps, floods, and whole seas of sins, to terrify you, and to draw you from Christ; then arm yourself with such sentences as these: Christ the Son of God was given, not for the holy, righteous, worthy, and such as were His friends; but for the wicked sinners, for the unworthy, and for His enemies. Therefore, if the devil says to you, ‘You are a sinner and therefore must be damned’ then answer him and say, ‘No, for I flee to Christ, wo has given Himself for my sins, and therefore, Satan, in saying that I am a sinner, you give me armor and weapons against yourself, that with your own sword I may cut your throat, and tread you under my feet.”
25. So, the general offer of the Gospel to all people gives them warrant or authorization to believe upon Christ based upon God’s own Word and testimony that He saves sinners. Sinners are not to find warrant within themselves because that will only cause them to doubt if their repentance is true. Not even faith or repentance can be made to be the warrant. And this is exactly what was going on in the Church of Scotland in the day of Thomas Boston and one reason he found this book to be so freeing.