

The Adamic Covenant

by A.W. Pink

A.W. Pink's sermon on the Adamic Covenant explores the theological implications of Adam's federal headship and its impact on humanity's relationship with sin and salvation through Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 2:17, Psalm 51:5, Ecclesiastes 7:29, Romans 5:12, Romans 5:18-19, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Galatians 3:12, Ephesians 2:3, Hebrews 8:6

Topics: "Sin and Redemption", "Federal Headship"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the significance of the Adamic Covenant, explaining that Adam served as the federal head and representative of all humanity. His actions in Eden, particularly his sin, had judicial consequences for his posterity, establishing a foundational understanding of sin and redemption. Pink argues that the concept of federal headship is crucial for grasping God's dealings with humanity and the nature of Christ's atonement. He asserts that through Adam's disobedience, all were made sinners, while through Christ's obedience, many are made righteous. Understanding this covenant is essential for comprehending the principles of divine justice and grace.

Transcript

It is of vital importance for a right understanding of much in God's Word to observe the relation which Adam sustained to his posterity. Adam was not only the common parent of mankind, but he was also their federal head and representative. The whole human race was placed on probation or trial in Eden. Adam acted not for himself alone, but he transacted for all who were to spring from him. Unless this basic fact be definitely apprehended, much that ought to be relatively clear to us will be shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Yea, we go further, and affirm that, until the federal headship of Adam and God's covenant with him in that office be actually perceived, we are without the key to God's dealings with the human race, we are unable to discern man's relation to the divine law, and we appreciate not the fundamental principles upon which the atonement of Christ proceeded.

"Federal headship" is a term which has almost entirely disappeared from current religious literature--so much the worse for our moderns. It is true that the expression itself does not verbally occur in Scripture; yet like the words Trinity and the divine incarnation, it is a necessity in theological parlance and doctrinal exposition. The principle or fact which is embodied in the term "federal headship" is that of representation. There been but two federal heads: Adam and Christ, with each of whom God entered into a covenant. Each of them acted on behalf of others, each legally represented as definite people, so much so that all

whom they represented were regarded by God as being in them. Adam represented the whole human race; Christ represented all those whom the Father had, in His eternal counsels, given to Him.

When Adam stood in Eden as a responsible being before God, he stood there as a federal head, as the legal representative of all his posterity. Hence, when Adam sinned, all for whom he was standing are accounted as having sinned; when he fell, all whom he represented fell; when he died, they died. So too was it with Christ. When He came to this earth, He, too, stood in a federal relationship to His own people; and when He became obedient unto death, all for whom He was acting were accounted righteous; when He rose again from the dead, all whom He represented rose with Him; when He ascended on high, they were regarded as ascending with Him. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

The relationship of our race to Adam or Christ divides men into two classes, each receiving nature and destiny from its respective head. All the individuals who comprise these two classes are so identified with their heads that it has justly been said, "There have been but two men in the world, and two facts in history." These two men are Adam and Christ; the two facts are the disobedience of the former, by which many were made sinners, and the obedience of the latter, by which many were made righteous. By the former came ruin, by the latter came redemption; and neither ruin nor redemption can be Scripturally apprehended except as they are seen to be accomplished by those representatives, and except we understand the relationships expressed by being "in Adam" and "in Christ."

Let it be expressly and emphatically affirmed that what we are here treating of is purely a matter of divine revelation. Nowhere but in Holy Scripture do we know anything about Adam, or of our relation to him. If it be asked how the federal constitution of the race can be reconciled with the dictates of human reason, the first answer must be, it is not for us to reconcile them. The initial inquiry is not whether federal headship be reasonable or just, but, is it a fact revealed in the Word of God? If it is, then reason must bow to it and faith humbly receive it. To the child of God the question of its justice is easily settled: we know it to be just, because it is a part of the ways of the infinitely holy and righteous God.

Now the fact that Adam was the federal head of the human race, that he did act and transact in a representative capacity, and that the judicial consequences of his actings were imputed to all those for whom he stood, is clearly revealed in God's Word. In Romans 5 we read: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all sinned" (v. 12); "through the offence of one many be dead" (v. 15); "the judgment was by one to condemnation" (v. 16); "by one man's offence death reigned" (v. 17); "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (v. 18); "by one man's offence many were made [legally constituted] sinners" (v. 19). The meaning of these declarations is far too plain for any unprejudiced mind to misunderstand. It Pleas'd God to deal with the human race as represented in and by Adam.

Let us borrow a simple illustration. God did not deal with mankind as with a field of corn, where each stalk stands upon its own individual root; but He dealt with it as with a tree, all the branches of which have one common root and trunk. If you strike with an axe at the root of a tree, the whole tree falls--not only the trunk, but also the branches: all wither and die. So it was when Adam fell. God permitted Satan to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and when Adam fell, all his posterity fell with him. At one fatal stroke Adam was severed from communion with his maker, and as the result "death passed upon all men."

Here, then, we learn what is the formal ground of man's judicial condemnation before God. The popular idea of what renders man a sinner in the sight of heaven is altogether inadequate and false. The prevailing conception is that a sinner is one who commits and practices sin. It is true that this is the character of a sinner, but it certainly is not that which primarily constitutes him a sinner. The truth is that every member of our race enters this world a guilty sinner before he ever commits a single transgression. It is not only that he possesses a sinful nature, but he is directly "under condemnation." We are legally constituted sinners neither by what we are nor by what we are doing, but by the disobedience of our federal head, Adam. Adam acted not for himself alone, but for all who were to spring from him.

On this point the teaching of the apostle Paul is plain and unambiguous. The terms of Romans 5:12-19, as we have shown above, are too varied and distinct to admit of any misconception: that it is on account of their sin in Adam, men, in the first instance, are accounted guilty and treated as such, as well as partake of a depraved nature. The language of 1 Corinthians 15:22 is equally unintelligible except on the supposition that both Adam and Christ sustained a representative character, in virtue of which the one involved the race in guilt and ruin, and the other, by His obedience unto death, secured the justification and salvation of all who believe in Him. The actual condition of the human race, throughout its history, confirms the same: the apostle's doctrine supplies the only adequate explanation of the universal prevalence of sin.

The human race is suffering now for the sin of Adam, or it is suffering for nothing at all. This earth is the scene of a grim and awful tragedy. In it we see misery and wretchedness, pain and poverty, decay and death, on every side. None escape. That "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward" is an indisputable fact. But what is the explanation of it? Every effect must have a previous cause. If we are not being punished for Adam's sin, then, coming into this world, we are "children of wrath," alienated from God, corrupt and depraved, and on the broad road which leadeth to destruction, for nothing at all! Who would contend that this was better, more satisfactory, than the Scriptural explanation of our ruin?

But it will be said, It was unjust to make Adam our federal head. How so? Is not the principle of representation a fundamental one in human society? The father is the legal head of his children during their minority: what he does, binds the family. A business house is held responsible for the transactions of its agents. The heads of a state are vested with such authority that the treaties they make are binding upon the whole nation. This principle is so basic it cannot be set aside. Every popular election illustrates the fact that a constituency will act through a representative and be bound by his acts. Human affairs could not continue, nor society exist without it. Why, then, be staggered at finding it inaugurated in Eden?

Consider the alternative. "The race must have either stood in a full grown man, with a full-orbed intellect, or stood as babies, each entering his probation in the twilight of self-consciousness, each deciding his destiny before his eyes were half-opened to what it all meant. How much better would that have been? How much more just? But could it not have been some other way? There was no other way. It was either the baby or it was the perfect, well-equipped, all-calculating man--the man who saw and comprehended everything. That man was Adam" (G. S. Bishop). Yes, Adam, fresh from the hands of his creator, with no sinful ancestry behind him, with no depraved nature within. A man made in the image and likeness of God, pronounced by Him "very good," in fellowship with heaven. Who could have been a more suitable representative for us?

This has been the principle on which and the method by which God has acted all through. The posterity of Canaan were cursed for the single transgression of their parent (Gen. 9). The Egyptians perished at the Red Sea as the result of Pharaoh's wickedness. When Israel became God's witness in the earth it was the

same. The sins of the fathers were to be visited upon the children: in consequence of Achan's one sin the whole of his family were stoned to death. The high priest acted on behalf of the whole nation. Later, the king was held accountable for the conduct of his subjects. One acting on behalf of others, the one responsible for the many, is a basic principle both of human and divine government. We cannot get away from it; wherever we look, it stares us in the face.

Finally, let it be pointed out that the sinner's salvation is made to depend upon the same principle. Beware, my reader, of quarreling with the justice of this law of representation. This principle wrecked us, and this principle alone can rescue us. The disobedience of the first Adam was the judicial ground of our condemnation; the obedience of the last Adam is the legal ground on which God alone can justify the sinner. The substitution of Christ in the place of His people, the imputation of their sins to Him and of His righteousness to them, is the cardinal fact of the gospel. But the principle of being saved by what another has done is only possible on the ground that we are lost through what another did. The two stand or fall together. If there had been no covenant of works there could have been no death in Adam, there could have been no life in Christ.

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19). Here is cause for humiliation which few think about. We are members of a cursed race, the fallen children of a fallen parent, and as such we enter this world "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), with nothing in us to prompt unto holy living. Oh, that God may reveal to you, dear reader, your connection with the first Adam, that you may realize your deep need of clinging to the last Adam. The world may deride this doctrine of representation and imputation, but that only evidences it to be of God. If the gospel (the genuine gospel) were welcomed by all, that would prove it was of human manufacture; for only that is acceptable to fallen man which is invented by fallen man. That the wise of this world scoff at the truth of federal headship, when it is faithfully presented, only goes to manifest its divine origin.

"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18). In the day that Adam fell, the frown of God came upon all His children. The holy nature of God abhorred the apostate race. The curse of the broken law descended upon all Adam's posterity. It is only thus we can account for the universality of depravity and suffering. The corruption which we inherit from our parents is a great evil, for it is the source of all our personal sins. For God to allow this transmission of depravity is to inflict a punishment. But how could God punish all, unless all were guilty? The fact that all do share in this common punishment proves that all sinned and fell in Adam. Our depravity and misery are not, as such, the appointment of the Creator, but are instead the retribution of the judge.

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19). The word "made" in that verse calls for a definition and explanation. It does not refer directly and primarily to the fact that we inherit from Adam a corrupt and sinful nature--that we learn from other Scriptures. The term "were made sinners" is a forensic one, and refers to our being constituted guilty in the sight of God. A parallel case is found in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Clearly those words "made him [Christ] to be sin" cannot refer to any change which our Lord underwent in His nature or character. No, rather the blessed Savior so took His people's place before God that He was treated and dealt with as guilty: their sins were not imparted, but imputed to Him.

Again, in Galatians 3:13--we read that Christ was "made a curse for us": as the substitute of God's elect, He was judicially regarded as beneath the condemnation of the law. Our guilt was legally transferred to Christ: the sins we committed, He was regarded as responsible for; what we deserved, He endured. In like

manner, Adam's offspring were "made sinners" by their head's disobedience: the legal consequences of their representative's transgression were charged to their account. They were judicially constituted guilty, because the guilt of Adam's sin was charged to them. Hence we enter this world not only with the heritage of a corrupt nature, but "under condemnation." We are by nature "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), for "the wicked are estranged from the womb" (Ps. 58:3)--separated from God and exposed to His judicial displeasure.

II.

In the preceding chapter we pointed out at some length that when Adam stood in Eden as a responsible being before his creator, he stood there as the federal head of our race, that he legally transacted on the behalf of all his posterity, that in the sight of the divine law we were all so absolutely identified with him as to be accounted "in Adam." Hence what he did, all are regarded as having done: when he sinned, we sinned; when he fell, we fell; when he died, we died. The language of Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 is so plain and positive on this point as to leave no valid room for any uncertainty. Having viewed, then, the representative office or position which Adam occupied, we turn to consider the covenant which God made with him at that time. But before so doing, let us observe how admirably equipped Adam was to fill that eminent office and transact for all his race.

It is exceedingly difficult, if not altogether impossible in our present state, for us to form any adequate conception of the most excellent and glorious endowment of man in his first estate. Negatively, he was entirely free from sin and misery: Adam had no evil ancestry behind him, no corruption within him, nothing in his body to distress him. Positively, he was made in the image and likeness of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, endued with a wisdom and holiness to which Christians are as yet, in themselves, strangers. He was blest with unclouded communion with God, placed in the fairest of environments, given dominion over all creatures here below, and graciously provided with a suitable helpmate. Fair as the morning was that blissful heritage into which Adam was estated. Made "upright" (Eccl. 7:29) and endowed with full ability to serve, delight in, and glorify his creator.

Though pronounced by God Himself as "very good" (Gen. 1:31) on the day of his creation, Adam was, nevertheless, a creature, and as such subject unto the authority of the One who had given him being. God governs all rational beings by law, as the rule of their obedience to Him. To that principle there is no exception, and in the very nature of things cannot be, for God must enforce His rights as Lord over all. Angels (Ps. 103:20), unfallen man, fallen men, redeemed men--all are subject to the moral government of God. Even the beloved Son, when He became incarnate, was "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Moreover, in the case of Adam his character was not yet confirmed, and therefore, like the angels, he must be placed on probation, subjected to trial, to see whether or no he would render allegiance to the Lord his maker.

Now the law which God gave to Adam, under which He placed him, was threefold: natural, moral, and positive. By the first we mean that subjection to his creator--acting for His honor and glory--was constituted the very law of his being. Being created in the image and likeness of God, it was his very nature to delight himself in the Lord and reproduce (in a creaturely measure) God's righteousness and holiness. Just as the animals are endowed with a nature or instinct which prompts them to choose and do that which makes for their well-being, so man in his pristine glory was endued with a nature which prompted him to do that which is pleasing unto God and that which promoted his own highest interests--the remains of which appear in fallen man's rationality and conscience.

By the "moral" law which was given to Adam by God, we mean that he was placed under the requirements of the Ten Commandments, the summary of which is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Nothing less than that was due unto Adam's maker, and nothing short of it became him as an upright creature. By "positive" law we mean that God also placed certain restrictions upon Adam which had never occurred to him from either the light of nature or from any moral considerations; instead, they were sovereignly appointed by God and were designed as a special test of Adam's subjection to the imperial will of his King. The term "positive law" is employed by theologians not as antithetical to "negative," but in contrast from those laws which are addressed to our moral nature: prayer is a "moral" duty: baptism is a "positive" ordinance.

This threefold law under which Adam was placed may be clearly discerned in the brief records of Genesis 1 and 2. The marriage between Adam and Eve illustrates the first: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Any infraction of the marital relationship is a violation of the very law of nature. The institution and consecration of the Sabbath exemplifies the second: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work" (2:3): a procedure that would be inexplicable except as furnishing the ground for a like procedure on the part of man, for otherwise the hallowing and benediction spoken of must have lacked both a proper subject and a definite aim. In every age man's observance of the holy Sabbath has been made the supreme test of his moral relation to the Lord. The command for Adam to care for the garden ("dress and keep it": Gen. 2:15) demonstrates the third aspect, the positive: even in the unfallen state man was not to be idle and shiftless.

From the above it is plainly evident that there was the distinct recognition of an outward revelation to Adam of those three great branches of duty which appertain to man in every possible condition of mortal existence, and which unitedly comprehend every obligation upon man in this life; namely, what he owes to God, what he owes to his neighbor, and what he owes to himself. Those three embrace everything. The sanctification of the Sabbath, the institution of marriage, and the command to dress and keep the garden were revealed as outward ordinances, covering the three classes of duties, each of supreme importance in its own sphere: the spiritual, the moral, and the natural. Those intrinsic elements of divine law are immutable: they preceded the covenant of works, and would have remained had the covenant been kept--as they have survived its breach.

But there was need for something of a still more specific kind to test man's adherence to the perfect rectitude incumbent upon him; for in Adam humanity was on trial, the whole race not only having been potentially created in him, but being federally represented by him. "The question, therefore, as to its proper decisiveness, must be made to turn on conformity to an ordinance at once reasonable in its nature and specific in its requirements--an ordinance which the simplest should understand and respecting which no uncertainty could exist whether it had been broken or not. Such in the highest degree was the appointment respecting the tree of knowledge of good and evil, forbidden of God to be eaten on pain of death--an appointment positive in its character, in a certain sense arbitrary, yet withal perfectly natural" (P. Fairbairn, *The Revelation of Law in Scripture*).

Adam was now subjected to a simple and specific test as to whether the will of God was sacred in his eyes. Nothing less than perfect conformity of heart and unremitting obedience in act to the whole revealed will of God could be required of man. The command not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree was now made the decisive test of his general obedience. The prohibitory statute was a "positive" precept. It was not sinful per se to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but only so because God had forbidden

it. It was, therefore, a more suitable test of faith and obedience than a "moral" statute would have been, submission being required for no other reason than the sovereign will of God. At the same time let it be clearly observed that, disobedience of that "positive" precept certainly involved defiance of the "moral" law, for it was a failure to love God with all the heart, it was contempt of divine authority, it was coveting that which God had forbidden.

On the basis of the threefold constitution under which God had placed Adam--amenable to natural, moral, and positive law; on the basis of his threefold responsibility--to perform the duty which he owed unto God, unto his neighbor, unto himself; and on the basis of the threefold equipment with which he had been endowed--created in the image of God, pronounced "very good," indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thus fully furnished to discharge his responsibility, God entered into a solemn compact with him. Clothed in dignity, intelligence, and moral excellence, Adam was surrounded on every side by exquisite beauty and loveliness. The occupant of Eden was more a being of heaven than of earth: an embodiment of wisdom, purity, and uprightness. God Himself deigned to visit and cheer him with His presence and blessing. In body perfectly sound; in soul completely holy; in circumstances blissfully happy.

The ideal fitness of Adam to act as the head of his race, and the ideal circumstances under which the decisive test was to be made, must forever shut every fair and honest mouth against objecting to the arrangement God proposed to Adam, and the fearful consequences which his sad failure have brought down upon us. It has been well said, "Had we been present--had we and all the human race been brought into existence at once--and had God proposed to us, that we should choose one of our number to be our representative that he might enter into covenant with him on our behalf--should we not, with one voice, have chosen our first parent for this responsible office? Should we not have said, 'He is a perfect man and bears the image and likeness of God,--if any one is to stand for us let him be the man'; Now,--since the angels who stood for themselves, fell--why should we wish to stand for ourselves. And if it be reasonable that one stand for us--why should we complain, when God has chosen the same person for this office, that we would have chosen, had we been in existence, and capable of choosing ourselves?" (G. S. Bishop).

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). The contracting parties in this covenant were God and Adam. First, God as supreme Lord, prescribing what was equitable: God as goodness itself, promising communion with Himself--in which man's happiness principally lies--while treading the path of obedience and doing that which was well-pleasing to his maker; but God also as justice itself, threatening death upon rebellion. Second, Adam considered both as man and as the head and representative of his posterity. As man, he was a rational and responsible being, endowed with sufficient powers to fulfill all righteousness, standing not as a feeble babe but a fully developed man--a fit and fully qualified subject for God to enter into covenant with him. As head of the race, he was now called upon to transact in the nature and strength with which the Creator had so richly furnished him.

Yet it is clear that the covenant of works proceeded on the assumption that man in his original condition--though "made upright" --was capable of falling, just as the covenant of grace proceeds on the assumption that man, though fallen and depraved, is--through Christ--capable of being restored. "God made man male and female, with righteousness and true holiness, having the law of God in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their will, which was subject to change" (Westminster Confession of Faith). In the closing words of that quotation some light is cast upon that mysterious question, How could a sinless creature first sin? How could one made "upright" fall? How could one whom God Himself had pronounced "very good" give ear to the devil,

apostatize, and drag down himself and his posterity to utter ruin?

While in our present state perhaps it is not possible for us to fully solve this profound problem, yet it is our conviction that we may perceive the direction in which the solution lies. In the first place, Adam was mutable or subject to change. Necessarily so, for mutability and creaturehood are correlative terms. There is only One "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17). The essential attributes of God are incommunicable: for the Deity to bestow omniscience, omnipotence, or immutability on others would not be to bring into existence creatures, but would be raising up gods, equal with Himself. Therefore, while Adam was a perfect creature, he was but a creature, mutable and not immutable; and being mutable, he was subject to change either for the better or for the worse, and hence, liable to fall.

In the second place, Adam was constituted a responsible being, a moral agent, being endowed with a free will, and therefore he was capable of both obedience and disobedience. Moreover, though the first man was endowed with both natural and spiritual wisdom amply sufficient for all his needs, leaving him entirely without excuse if he made a false and foolish choice, nevertheless, he was but fallible, for infallibility pertains unto God alone, as Job 4:18 more than hints. Therefore, being fallible, Adam was capable of erring, though to do so was culpable to the highest degree. Mutability and fallibility are the conditions of existence of every creature; and while they are not blemishes, yet they are potential dangers, which can only be prevented from working ruin by the creature constantly looking to the Creator for his upholding grace.

In the third place, as a responsible being, as a moral agent, as one who was endowed with free will, Adam had necessarily to be placed on probation, submitted to a real test of his fealty unto God, before he was confirmed, or given an abiding standing in his creature perfections. Because Adam was a creature, mutable and fallible, he was entirely dependent upon his creator; and therefore he must be put on trial to show whether or no he would assert his independency, which would be open revolt against his maker and the repudiation of his creaturehood. Every creature must necessarily come under the moral government of God, and for free agents that necessarily implies and involves two possible alternatives--subjection or insubordination. The absolute dominion of God over the creature and the complete dependence and subjection of the creature to God, holds good in every part of the universe and throughout all ages. The inherent poison in every error and evil is the rejection of God's dominion and of man's dependence upon his maker, or the assertion of his independency.

Being but mutable, fallible, and dependent, the noblest and highest creature of all is liable to fall from his fair estate, and can only be preserved therein by the sovereign power of his creator. Being endowed with free will, man was capable of both obedience and disobedience. Had He so pleased, God could have upheld Adam, and that without destroying his accountability or infringing upon his liberty; but unless Adam had been left to his own creature wisdom and strength, there had been no trial of his responsibility and powers. Instead, God offered to man the opportunity of being confirmed as a holy and happy creature, secured on the condition of his own personal choice; so that his probation being successfully closed, he had been granted a firm standing before God. But God permitted Adam to disobey, to make way for the more glorious obedience of Christ; suffered the covenant of works to be broken that the far better covenant of grace might be administered.

III.

Before entering into detail upon the nature and terms of the compact which God made with Adam, it may be well to obviate an objection which some are likely to make against the whole subject; namely, that since the word covenant is not to be found in the historical account of Genesis, therefore to speak of the Adamic covenant is naught but a theological invention. There is a certain class of people, posing as ultraorthodox, who imagine they have a reverence and respect for Holy Writ as the final court of appeal which surpasses that of their fellows. They say, Show me a passage which expressly states God made a covenant with Adam, and that will settle the matter; but until you can produce a verse with the exact term "Adamic covenant" in it, I shall believe no such thing.

Our reason for referring to this paltry quibble is because it illustrates a very superficial approach to God's Word which is becoming more and more prevalent in certain quarters, and which stands badly in need of being corrected. Words are only counters or signs after all (different writers use them with varying latitude, as is sometimes the case in Scripture itself); and to be unduly occupied with the shell often results in a failure to obtain the kernel within. Some Unitarians refuse to believe in the tri‑unity of God, merely because no verse can be found which categorically affirms there are "three Persons in the Godhead" or where the word Trinity is used. But what matters the absence of the mere word itself, when three distinct divine persons are clearly delineated in the Word of truth! For the same reason others repudiate the fact of the total depravity of fallen man, which is the height of absurdity when Scripture depicts him as corrupt in all the faculties of his being.

Surely I need not to be told that a certain person has been born again if all the evidences of regeneration are clearly discernible in his life; and if I am furnished with a full description of his immersion, the mere word baptism does not make it any more sure and definite to my mind. Our first search, then, in Genesis, is not for the term covenant, but to see whether or not we can trace the outlines of a solemn and definite pact between God and Adam. We say this not because the word itself is never associated with our first parents--for elsewhere it is--but because we are anxious that certain of our readers may be delivered from the evil mentioned above. To dismiss from our minds all thoughts of an Adamic covenant simply because the term itself occurs not in Genesis 1 to 5 is to read those chapters very superficially and miss much which lies only a little beneath their surface.

Let us now remind ourselves of the essential elements of a covenant. Briefly stated, any covenant is a mutual agreement entered into by two or more parties, whereby they stand solemnly bound to each other to perform the conditions contracted for. Amplifying that definition, it may be pointed out that the terms of a covenant are (1) there is a stipulation of something to be done or given by that party proposing the covenant; (2) there is a re-stipulation by the other party of something to be done or given in consideration; (3) those stipulations must be lawful and right, for it can never be right to engage to do wrong; (4) there is a penalty included in the terms of agreement, some evil consequence to result to the party who may or shall violate his agreement--that penalty being added as a security.

A covenant then is a disposition of things, an arrangement concerning them, a mutual agreement about them. But again we would remind the reader that words are but arbitrary things; and we are never safe in trusting to a single term, as though from it alone we could collect the right knowledge of the thing. No, our inquiry is into the thing itself. What are the matters of fact to which these terms are applied? Was there any moral transaction between God and Adam wherein the above mentioned four principles were involved? Was there any proposition made by God to man of something to be done by the latter? any stipulation of something to be given by the former? any agreement of both? any penal sanction? To such interrogations every accurate observer of the contents of Genesis 1 to 3 must answer affirmatively.

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Here are all the constituent elements of a covenant: (1) there are the contracting parties, the Lord God and man; (2) there is a stipulation enjoined, which man (as he was duty bound) engaged to perform; (3) there was a penalty prescribed, which would be incurred in case of failure; (4) there was by clear and necessary implication a reward promised, to which Adam would be entitled by his fulfillment of the condition; (5) the "tree of life" was the divine seal or ratification of the covenant, as the rainbow was the seal of the covenant which God made with Noah. Later, we shall endeavor to furnish clear proof of each of these statements.

"We here have, in the beginning of the world, distinctly placed before us, as the parties to the covenant, the Creator and the creature, the Governor and the governed. In the covenant itself, brief as it is, we have concentrated all those primary, anterior, and eternal principles of truth, righteousness, and justice, which enter necessarily into the nature of the great God, and which must always pervade His government, under whatever dispensation; we have a full recognition of His authority to govern His intelligent creatures, according to these principles, and we have a perfect acknowledgment on the part of man, that in all things he is subject, as a rational and accountable being, to the will and direction of the infinitely wise and benevolent Creator. No part of a covenant therefore, in its proper sense, is wanting" (R. B. Howell, *The Covenant*, 1855).

There was, then, a formal compact between God and man concerning obedience and disobedience, reward and punishment, and where there is a binding law pertaining to such matters and an agreement upon them by both parties concerned, there is a covenant (cf. Gen. 21:27, and what precedes and follows Gen. 31:44). In this covenant Adam acted not as a private person for himself only, but as the federal head and representative of the whole of his posterity. In that capacity he served alone, Eve not being a federal head jointly with him, but was included in it, she being (later, we believe) formed out of him. In this Adam was a type of Christ, with whom God made the everlasting covenant, and who at the appointed time acted as the head and representative of His people: as it is written, "over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14).

The most conclusive proof that Adam did enter into a covenant with God on the behalf of his posterity is found in the penal evils which came upon the race in consequence of its head's disobedience. From the awful curse which passed upon all his posterity we are compelled to infer the legal relation which existed between Adam and them, for the judge of all the earth, being righteous, will not punish where there is no crime. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [or "in whom"] all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Here is the fact, and from it we must infer the preceding cause of it: under the government of a righteous God, the suffering of holy beings unconnected with sin is an impossibility. It would be the very acme of injustice that Adam's sin should be the cause of death passing on all men, unless all men were morally and legally connected with him.

That Adam stood as the federal head of his race and transacted for them, and that all his posterity were contemplated by God as being morally and legally (as well as seminally) in Adam, is clear from almost everything that was said to him in the first three chapters of Genesis. The language there used plainly intimates that it was spoken to the whole human race, and not to Adam as a single individual, but spoken to them and of them. The first time "man" is mentioned it evidently signifies all mankind, and not Adam alone: "And God said, Let us make man and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over [not simply "the garden of Eden," but] all the earth" (Gen. 1:26). All men bear the name of their representative (as the church is designated after its head: 1 Cor.

12:12), for the Hebrew for "every man" in Psalm 39:5, 11 is "all Adam" --plain evidence of their being one in the eye of the law.

In like manner, what God said to Adam after he had sinned, was said to and of all mankind; and the evil to which he was doomed in this world, as the consequence of his transgression, equally falls upon his posterity: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17, 19). As this sentence "unto dust shalt thou return" did not respect Adam only, but all his descendants, so the same language in the original threat had respect unto all mankind: "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is reduced to a certainty by the unequivocal declarations of Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:22. The curse came upon all; so the sin must have been committed by all.

The terms of the covenant are related in or are clearly inferable from the language of Genesis 2:17. That covenant demanded perfect obedience as its condition. Nor was that in any way difficult: one test only was instituted by which that obedience was to be formally expressed; namely, abstinence from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had endowed Adam, in his creation, with a perfect and universal rectitude (Eccl. 7:29), so that he was fully able to respond to all requirements of his maker. He had a full knowledge of God's will concerning his duty. There was no bias in him toward evil: having been created in the image and likeness of God, his affections were pure and holy (cf. Eph. 4:24). How simple and easy was the observance of the obligation! How appalling the consequences of its violation!

"The tendency of such a Divine precept is to be considered. Man is thereby taught, 1. that God is Lord of all things; and that it is unlawful for man even to desire an apple, but with His leave. In all things therefore, from the greatest to the least the mouth of the Lord is to be consulted, as to what He would, or would not have done by us. 2. That man's true happiness is placed in God alone, and nothing is to be desired but with submission to God, and in order to employ it for Him. So that it is He only, on whose account all things appear good and desirable to man. 3. Readily to be satisfied without even the most delightful and desirable things, if God so command: and to think there is much more good in obedience to the Divine precept than in the enjoyment of the most delightful thing in the world. 4. That man was not yet arrived at the utmost pitch of happiness, but to expect a still greater good, after his course of obedience was over. This was hinted by the prohibition of the most delightful tree, whose fruit was, of any other, greatly to be desired; and this argued some degree of imperfection in that state in which man was forbid the enjoyment of some good" (The Economy of the Covenants, H. Witsius, 1660).

Unto that prohibitive statute was annexed a promise. This is an essential element in a covenant: a reward being guaranteed upon its terms being fulfilled. So here: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" necessarily implies the converse-- "If thou eatest not thereof thou shalt surely live." Just as "Thou shalt not steal" inevitably involves "thou shalt conduct thyself honestly and honorably," just as "rejoice in the Lord" includes "murmur not against Him," so according to the simplest laws of construction the threatening of death as a consequence of eating, affirmed the promise of life to obedience. God will be no man's debtor: the general principle of "in keeping of them the divine commandments there is great reward" (Ps. 19:11) admits of no exception.

A certain good, a spiritual blessing, in addition to what Adam and Eve (and their posterity in him) already possessed, was assured upon his obedience. Had Adam been without a promise, he had been without a well-grounded hope for the future, for the hope which maketh not ashamed is founded upon the

promise (Rom. 4:18, etc.). As Romans 7:10 so plainly affirms: "the commandment which was ordained to life," or more accurately (for the word ordained is supplied by the translators) "the commandment which was unto life" --having life as the reward for obedience. And again, "the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:12). But the law was "weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), Adam being a mutable, fallible, mortal creature.

Against what has been said above it is objected, Adam was already in possession of spiritual life; how, then, could life be the reward promised for his obedience? It is true that Adam was in the enjoyment of spiritual life, being completely holy and happy; but he was on probation, and his response to the test God gave him--his obedience or disobedience to His command--would determine whether that spiritual life would be continued or whether it would be forfeited. Had Adam complied with the terms of the covenant, then he would have been confirmed in his creature standing, in the favor of God toward him, in communion with his maker, in the happy state of an earthly paradise; he would then have passed beyond the possibility of apostasy and misery. The reward, or additional good, which would have followed Adam's obedience was a state of inalienable blessedness both for himself and his posterity.

The well-informed reader will observe from the above that we are not in accord with H. Witsius and some other prominent theologians of the Puritan period, who taught that the reward promised Adam upon his obedience was the heavenly heritage. Their arguments upon this point do not seem to us at all conclusive, nor are we aware of anything in Scripture which may be cited in proof thereof. An inalienable title to the earthy paradise is, we think, what the promise denoted. Rather was it reserved for the incarnate Son of God, by the inestimable worth of His obedience unto death, to merit for His people everlasting bliss on high. Therefore we are told that He has ushered in "a better covenant" with "better promises" (Heb. 8:6). The last Adam has secured, both for God and for His people, more than was lost by the defection of the first Adam.

IV.

In the previous chapters we have seen that at the beginning man was "made upright" (Eccl. 7:29), which language necessarily implies a law to which he was conformed in his creation. When anything is made regular or according to rule, the rule itself is obviously presupposed. The law of Adam's being was none other than the eternal and indispensable law of righteousness, the same which was afterwards summed up in the Ten Commandments. Man's uprightness consisted in the universal rectitude of his character, his entire conformity to the nature of his maker. The very nature of man was then fully able to respond to the requirements of God's revealed will, and his response thereto was the righteousness in which he stood.

It was also shown that man was, in Eden, placed on probation: that as a moral being his responsibility was tried out. In other words, he was placed under the moral government of God; and being endowed with a free will, he was capable of both obedience or disobedience--his own free choice being the determining factor. As a creature, he was subject to his creator; as one who was indebted to God for all he was and had, he was under the deepest obligation to love Him with all his heart, and serve Him with all his might; and perfectly was he fitted so to do. Thus created, and thus qualified, it pleased the Lord God to constitute Adam the federal head and legal representative of his race; and as occupying that character and office, God entered into a solemn covenant or agreement with him, promising a reward upon the fulfillment of certain conditions.

It is true that the actual "covenant" does not occur in the Genesis record, in connection with the primordial transaction between God and man, but the facts of the case present all the constituent elements of a covenant. Brief as is the statement furnished in Genesis 2:17, we may clearly discern concentrated in it those eternal principles of truth, righteousness, and justice which are the glory of God's character, and which necessarily regulate His government in all spheres and in all ages. There is an avowal of His authority to govern the creature of His hands, a revelation of His will as to what He requires from the creature, a solemn threat of what would surely follow upon his disobedience, with a clearly implied promise of reward for obedience. One test only was stipulated, by which obedience was to be formally expressed: abstinence from the fruit of the one forbidden tree.

"The covenant of works was in its nature fitted, and designed to give, and did give uninterrupted happiness, as long as its requisitions were observed. This is true throughout the whole moral universe of God, for man is not the only being under its government. It is the law of angels themselves. To their nature, no less to man's while in a state of holiness, it is perfectly adapted. Those of them who 'have kept their first estate,' are conformed perfectly to all its demands. They meet and satisfy them fully by love; fervent love to God, and to all their celestial associates. Heaven is pervaded consequently with the unbroken harmonies of love. And how unspeakably happy! 'The man' said Paul, 'that doeth these things, shall live by them' (Rom. 10:5). His bliss is unfading" (R. B. Howell, 1855).

God, then, entered into a covenant with Adam, and all his posterity in him, to the effect that if he obeyed the one command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he should receive as his reward an indefectibility of holiness and righteousness. Nor was that transaction exceptional in the divine dealings with our race; for God has made covenants with other men, which have vitally affected their posterity: this will appear when we take up His covenant with Noah and Abraham. The compact which the Lord God entered into with Adam is appropriately termed "the covenant of works" not only to distinguish it from the covenant of grace, but also because under it life was promised on condition of perfect obedience, which obedience was to be performed by man in his own creature strength.

We come now to consider the penal sanction of the covenant. This is contained in the words "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Here was made known the terrible penalty which would most certainly follow upon Adam's disobedience, his violation of the covenant. All the blessings of the covenant would instantly cease. Transgression of God's righteous law would not only forfeit all blessings, but would convert them into so many fountains of wretchedness and woe. The covenant of works provided no mediator, nor any other method of restoration to the purity and bliss which was lost. There was no place given for repentance. All was irrevocably lost. Between the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience there was no middle ground. So far as the terms of the covenant of works was concerned, its inexorable sentence was: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). It is to be duly noted what God here threatened was the direct consequence and immediate punishment of sin, to be inflicted only upon the rebellious and disobedient. That death which now seizes fallen man is no mere natural calamity, but a penal infliction. It is not a "debt" which he owes to "nature," but a judicial sentence which is passed upon him by the divine judge. Death has come in because our first parent, our federal head and representative, took of the forbidden fruit, and for no other reason. It was altogether meet to God's authority and holy will that there should be an unmistakable connection between sin and its punishment, so that it is impossible for any sinner to escape the wages of sin, unless another should be paid them in his stead--of which the covenant of works

contained no hint.

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," or, as the margin renders it, "dying thou shalt die." That dread threat was couched in general terms. It was not said, "thou shalt die physically," nor "thou shalt die spiritually," but simply "thou shalt surely die." The absence of any modifying adverb shows that the term death is here taken in its widest scope, and is to be defined according to whatever Scripture elsewhere signifies by that term. It is the very height of presumption for us to limit what God has not limited. Far be it from us to blunt the sharp point of the divine threatening. The "dying thou shalt die" --which expresses more accurately and forcibly the original Hebrew--shows the words are to be taken in their full emphasis.

First, corporeal death, the germs of which are in our bodies from the beginning of their existence, so that from the moment we draw our first breath, we begin to die. And how can it be otherwise, seeing that we are "shapen in iniquity" and "conceived in sin" (Ps. 51:5)! From birth our physical body is indisposed, and entirely unfitted for the soul to reside in eternally; so that there must yet be a separation from it. By that separation the good things of the body, the "pleasures of sin" on which the soul so much dotes, are at once snatched away; so that it becomes equally true of each one, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb [the earth] and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). God intimated this to Adam when He said, "Till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19).

Second, "by death is here understood all that lasting and hard labor, that great sorrow, all the tedious miseries of this life, by which life ceases to be life, and which are the sad harbingers of certain death. To these things man is condemned: see Gen. 3:16-19--the whole of that sentence is founded on the antecedent threatening of Gen. 2:17. Such miseries Pharaoh called by the name 'death' (Ex. 10:17). David called his pain and anguish 'the bands (sorrows) of death' (Ps. 116:3): by those 'bands' death binds and fastens man that he may thrust them into and confine them in his dungeon. As 'life' is not barely to live, but to be happy; so, 'death' is not to depart this life in a moment, but rather to languish in a long expectation, dread and foresight, of certain death, without knowing the time which God has foreordained" (H. Witsius).

Third, "death" in Scripture also signifies spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God. This is what the apostle called "being alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), which "life of God" illuminates, sanctifies, and exhilarates the souls of the regenerate. The true life of the soul consists of wisdom, pure love, and the rejoicing of a good conscience. The spiritual death of the soul consists in folly, evil lustings, and the rackings of an evil conscience. Therefore when speaking of those who were "alienated from the life of God," the apostle at once added, "Through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness." Thus, the unregenerate are totally incapacitated for communion with the holy and living God.

"But I would more fully explain the nature of this (spiritual) death. Both living and dead bodies have motion. But a living body moves by vegetation, while it is nourished, has the use of its senses, is delighted, and acts with pleasure. Whereas, the dead body moves by putrefaction to a state of dissolution, and to the production of loathsome animals. And so in the soul, spiritually alive, there is motion, while it is fed, repasted, and fattened with Divine delights, while it takes pleasure in God and true wisdom; while, by the strength of its love, it is carried to and fixed on that which can sustain the soul and give it a sweet repose. But a dead soul has no feeling; that is, it neither understands truth, nor loves righteousness, but wallows and is spent in the sink of concupiscence, and brings forth the worms of impure thoughts, seasonings and

affections" (H. Witsius).

Fourth, eternal death is also included in Genesis 2:17. The prelude of this are the terrors of an evil conscience, the soul deprived of all divine consolation, and often an anguished sense of God's wrath, under which it is miserably pressed down. At physical dissolution the soul of the sinner is sent into a place of torments (Luke 16:23‑25). At the end of the world, the bodies of the wicked are raised and their souls are united thereto, and after appearing before the great white throne they will be cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer for ever and ever the "due reward of their iniquities." The wages of sin is death, and that the word death there involves and includes eternal death is unmistakably plain from the fact that it is placed in direct antithesis with "eternal life": Romans 6:23. The same appears again in Romans 5:21, which verse is the summing up of verses 12‑20.

Let us now pause for a moment and review the ground already covered. First, we have seen the favorable and happy state in which Adam was originally created. Second, we have contemplated the threefold law under which he was placed. Third, we have observed that he stood in Eden as the federal head and legal representative of all his posterity. Fourth, we have pointed out that all the constituent elements of a formal covenant are clearly observable in the Genesis record: there were the contracting parties--the Lord God and Adam; there was the stipulation enjoined--obedience; there was the penalty attached--death upon disobedience; there was the necessarily implied promise of reward--an immutable establishment in holiness and an inalienable title to the earthly paradise.

In order to follow out the logical sequence, we should, properly, examine next the "seal" of the covenant; that is, the formal symbol and stamp of its ratification; but we will postpone our consideration of that until our next chapter, which will conclude what we have to say upon the Adamic covenant. Instead, we will pass on to Adam's consent unto the compact which the Lord God set before him. This may be inferred, first of all, from the very law of his nature: having been made in the image and likeness of God, there was nothing in him contrary to His holy will, nothing to oppose His righteous requirements: so that he must have readily attended.

"Adam, being holy, would not refuse to enter into a righteous engagement with his Maker: and being intelligent, would not decline an improvement in his condition" (W. Sledd): an "improvement" which, upon his fulfillment of the terms of the covenant, would have issued in being made immutably holy and happy, so that he would then have had spiritual life as indefectible, passing beyond all point of apostasy and misery. The only other possible alternative to Adam's freely consenting to be a party to the covenant would be his refusal, which is unthinkable in a pure and sinless being. Eve's words to the serpent in Genesis 3:2, 3 make it plain that Adam had given his word not to disobey his maker. We quote from another who has ably handled this point:

"The voluntary assent of the parties, which is in every covenant: one party must make the proposition: God proposed the terms as an expression of His will, which is an assent or agreement. God's commanding man not to eat, is His consent. As to man, it has been already observed, he could not without unreasonable opposition to his Creator's will, refuse any terms which the wisdom and benevolence of God would allow Him to proffer. Hence we should conclude, Adam must most cheerfully accede to the terms. But this the more readily, when their nature is inspected--when he should see in them every thing adapted for his advantage, and nothing to his disadvantage.

"The same conclusion we deduce from an inspection of the Scripture history. For 1., there is not a hint at any thing like a refusal on the part of Adam, before the act of violation. The whole history is perfectly consistent with the supposition that he did cheerfully agree. 2. It is evident that Eve thought the command most reasonable and proper. She so expressed herself to the serpent, giving God's commandment as a reason of her abstinence. This information she must have derived from her husband, for she was not created at the time the covenant was given to Adam. We hence infer Adam's consent. 3. Adam was, after his sin, abundantly disposed to excuse himself: he cast the blame upon the woman, and indirectly upon God, for giving her to him. Now most assuredly, if Adam could in truth have said, I never consented to abstain--I never agreed to the terms proposed--I have broken no pledge--he would have presented this apology or just answer to God; but according to Scripture he offered no such apology. Can any reasonable man want further evidence of his consent? Even this may be had, if he will. 4. Look at the consequences. The penal evils did result: sorrow and death did ensue; and hence, because God is righteous, we infer the legal relations. The judge of all the earth would not punish where there is no crime" (Geo. Junkin, 1839).

V.

We will now consider the seal which the Lord God made upon the covenant into which He entered with the federal head of our race. This is admittedly the most difficult part of our subject, and for that reason, the least understood in most circles today. So widespread is the spiritual ignorance which now prevails that, in many quarters, to speak of "the seal" of a covenant is to employ an unintelligible term. And yet the seal is an intrinsic part and an essential feature in the various covenants which God made. Hence, our treatment of the Adamic covenant would be quite inadequate and incomplete did we fail to give attention to one of the objects which is given a central place in the brief Genesis record. Mysterious as that object appears, light is cast on it by other passages. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may be pleased to guide us into the truth thereon!

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9). First of all, let it be said emphatically that we regard this verse as referring to two real and literal trees: the very fact that we are told they were "pleasant to the sight" obliges us to regard them as tangible and visible entities. In the second place, it is equally obvious from what is said of them that those two trees were extraordinary ones, peculiar to themselves. They were placed "in the midst of the garden"; and from what is recorded in connection with them in Genesis 3, it is clear that they differed radically from all the other trees in Eden. In the third place, we cannot escape the conclusion that those literal trees were vested with a symbolical significance, being designed by God to give instructions to Adam, in the same way as others of His positive institutions now do unto us.

"It hath pleased the blessed and almighty God, in every economy of His covenants, to confirm, by some sacred symbols, the certainty of His promises and at the same time to remind man in covenant with Him of his duty" (H. Witsius). Examples of that fact or illustrations of this principle may be seen in the rainbow by which God ratified the covenant into which He entered with Noah (Gen. 9:12, 13), and circumcision which was the outward sign of confirmation of the covenant entered into with Abraham (Gen. 17:9, 11). From these cases, then, we may perceive the propriety of the definition given by A. A. Hodge: "A seal of a covenant is an outward visible sign, appointed by God as a pledge of His faithfulness, and as an earnest of the blessings promised in the covenant." In other words, the seal of the covenant is an external symbol, ratifying the validity of its terms, as the signatures of two witnesses seal a man's will.

Now as we have shown in previous chapters, the language of Genesis 2:17 not only pronounced a curse upon the disobedient partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but by necessary implication it announced a blessing upon the obedient non-eating thereof. The curse was death, with all that that involved and entailed; the blessing was a continuance and confirmation in all the felicity which man in his pristine innocence enjoyed. In His infinite condescension the Lord God was pleased to confirm or seal the terms of His covenant with Adam--contained in Genesis 2:17--by a symbolic and visible emblem ratifying the same; as He did to Noah by the rainbow, and to Abraham by circumcision. With Adam, this confirmatory symbol consisted of "the tree of life" in the midst of the garden.

A seal, then, is a divine institution of which it is the design to signify the blessings promised in the covenant, and to give assurance of them to those by whom its terms have been fulfilled. The very name of this symbolic (yet real) tree at once intimated its design: it was "the tre

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