

## Lecture 2: The Typology Taste Test

### I. The Challenge for Reformed Theology

It seems that the Mosaic covenant is based on the law, not the gospel.  
It seems that the Mosaic covenant does not promise salvation, but life in Canaan.

If the grace signified in OT ordinances and received by OT saints is the same as the grace we receive in Christ, then the covenant is the same.

But circumcision, sacrifices, and Passover prefigured and typified Christ to come.  
Ergo, the old and new covenants are the same covenant.

WCF 7.5-6

“This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: Under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come: which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation: and is called the Old Testament.

Under the Gospel, when Christ, the substance was exhibited...”

Anthony Burgess,

“If we consider the good things annexed unto this covenant [the Mosaic covenant], it must needs be a covenant grace: for there we have remission and pardon of sin, whereas in the covenant of works, there is no way for repentance or pardon...”<sup>1</sup>

“Now we all know that the sacrifices were evangelical, and did hold forth remission of sins through the blood of Christ [...] Now all must confess, that circumcision and the sacrifices did not oppose Christ, or grace, but rather included them. And this hath been always a very strong argument to persuade me [that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace].”<sup>2</sup>

“This will appear [that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace] from the visible seal to ratify this covenant, which, you heard, was by sacrifices, and sprinkling the people with blood. And this did signify Christ; for Christ he also was the Mediator of this Covenant, seeing that reconciliation cannot possibly be made with a sinner through the Mediation of any mortal man. When therefore Moses is called the Mediator it is to be understood typically, even as the sacrifices did wash away sin typically.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis: Or, A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants* (London: James Young, 1646), 224.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 225-226.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 226.

“Now to all this, there are strong objections made from those places of Scripture, where the Law and faith, or the Promise, are so directly opposed...If they should be rigidly, and universally true, then that doctrine of the Socinians would plainly prevail, who from these places of Scripture do urge, that there was no grace, or faith, nor nothing of Christ, vouchsafed unto the Jews.”<sup>4</sup>

Samuel Bolton,

“[John Cameron’s subservient covenant] is the Key to the Gospel, and the best resolver that I have ever met with all of those intricate controversies, and disputes concerning the law; we read often in Scripture that the Law was a Covenant, and more frequently among Divines, that we are free from the Law as a Covenant, but to tell us what Covenant this was, hath not been the work of many.”<sup>5</sup>

## II. The Cameronian Solution

John Cameron,

Thesis 74:

The Sacrifices and Sacraments of the Old Testament are deservedly called carnal, &c. Those of the New Covenant not so; because, notwithstanding these as well as those, as respecting the matter, may both be called carnal, and both spiritual, in respect of the signification; yet here falls in a *two-fold* difference whereby they are distinguished from each other.

Thesis 75:

The *first* difference is this, for that the Sacrifices, Sacraments, and Ceremonies of the Ancients had their carnal use, over and besides the spiritual signification. But the Sacraments of the New Covenant have, by God's appointment, no carnal use at all, now, but merely spiritual.

Thesis 76:

Nevertheless we deny not, but even the Sacraments of the New Covenant, by the institution and custom of man, may have a carnal use, but not any such prescribed them by any Word of God.

Thesis 77:

The *second* difference is placed in this: That the Sacraments, Sacrifices, and Ceremonies of the Old Testament did set forth Christ, and the benefits by Christ; not

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 227.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Bolton, *The True Bounds of Christian Freedome* (London: J. L., 1645), 351.

primarily, but secondarily, and that too, but darkly; but the Sacraments of the New Covenant do shew forth Christ primarily, and that clearly.

Thesis 78:

So Circumcision, primarily, did separate between the seed of Abraham and the rest of the Nations; it did seal unto them the earthly promise: secondarily, it did signify out sanctification. In like manner the Passover, primarily, the passing over of the destroying Angel; secondarily, Christ: so also the sacrifices, and the cleansings, they represented, primarily, a certain carnal holiness: secondarily, they figured out Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant.<sup>6</sup>

### III. Tombes and the Typology Taste Test

John Tombes,

The Abrahamic covenant was a “mixed covenant” that consisted of “temporal benefits...and spiritual blessings.”<sup>7</sup>

“[Burgess’ argument that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace] is not from the tenor of the covenant, but from some adjuncts of it, as *because there were sacrifices and other rites appointed, it must be a covenant of grace.*<sup>8</sup> Answer, the sacrifices as they were commanded, so they did belong to the covenant of works. But as God used them as shadows and types of Christ to come, so they signify God’s purpose of Gospel-grace in Christ, but by another Covenant, not that at mount *Sinai.*”<sup>9</sup>

“Christ it is true is the substance of the things promised as they were Types; yet the things promised in respect of their natural being *had a substance besides*, and in relation to the Covenant were as much the substance or substantial parts of it as the spiritual promises.”<sup>10</sup>

Stephen Marshall,

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<sup>6</sup> John Cameron, *De triplici Dei cum homine foedere theses* (Heidelberg, 1608), also in *Joh. Cameronis S. Theologiae in academia Salmuriansis nuper Professoris, Praelectionum in selectoria quaedam N. T. loca Salmuri habitatum*, 3 vols. (Saumur: 1626-1628), III, 609-630; and in translation, *Certain Theses, or, Positions of the learned John Cameron, Concerning the Three-fold Covenant of God with Man*, trans. Samuel Bolton, in *The True Bounds of Christian Freedome*, 353-401.

<sup>7</sup> John Tombes, *An Examen of the Sermon of Mr. Stephen Marshall, About Infant-Baptisme* (London: R.W., 1645), 39. Benjamin Coxe, William Kiffen, and Hanserd Knollys recommended this work by Tombes. Cf. Benjamin Coxe, William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, *A Declaration Concerning the Publike Dispute...Concerning Infants-Baptisme* (London: n.p., 1645), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Referring to Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 225-226.

<sup>9</sup> John Tombes, *Antipaedobaptism: Or the Third Part* (London: E. Alsop, 1657), 309.

<sup>10</sup> Tombes, *Antipaedobaptism...the Third Part*, 164.

“As for that expression of the learned Cameron *that Circumcision did primarily seal the earthly promise, &c.* if by *primarily* he meant *immediately, though not chiefly*, that it sealed these things *first in order, as they were types* of spiritual things, it may then pass *cum grano salis* [*with a grain of salt*], but if by *primarily* be intended principally, that Circumcision did *chiefly seal earthly blessings*, the opinion is too unsavory to be received.”<sup>11</sup>

#### IV. A Home for Cameron

Samuel Bolton, Jeremiah Burroughs, and Thomas Goodwin

John Owen,

“If *Reconciliation and Salvation by Christ* were to be obtained not only *under the Old Covenant*, but *by vertue thereof*, then it must be the same for substance with the New. But this is not so; for no *Reconciliation with God*, nor *Salvation* could be obtained by vertue of the *Old Covenant*, or the *Administration of it*.”<sup>12</sup>

“The spiritual benefit which was obtained under [the old covenant], proceeded from the *promise*, and not from *the efficacy of the Law*, or the *Covenant made at Sinai*... [The old covenant was] *legal and carnal*, and had respect only unto outward things.”<sup>13</sup>

“The substance of what God intended in all his worship was not contained nor comprised in the services of those priests. There were some lines and shadows, to represent the body, but the body itself was not there. There was something above them and beyond them, which they reached not unto.”<sup>14</sup>

#### Conclusions

1. Protestant and Reformed theology rightly rejects Papist and Anabaptist errors, but does not provide perfect solutions.
2. A commitment to a two-covenant scheme forces one into unnecessary tensions and incoherent assertions. Cameron’s “threefold” covenant is, indeed, a key.
3. One must address two-level or dual-referent typology. Do types signify “two substances”? Do those “two substances” belong to the same covenant, or different covenants?
4. Neither the hermeneutical approach nor the theological conclusions of the Particular Baptists’ covenant theology came from or aligned with the continental Anabaptists.

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Marshall, *A Defence of Infant Baptism* (London: Ric. Cotes, 1646), 98-99.

<sup>12</sup> John Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (London: Printed for Nathaniel Ponder, 1680), 228.

<sup>13</sup> Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition*, 287.

<sup>14</sup> Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition*, 204.