

**NEW DIRECTIONS
IN BIBLICAL
THEOLOGY**

The New Two Kingdom Doctrine
and the
New Republication Doctrine.

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THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM DIAGRAMED
DEUTERONOMY MORAL AND JUDICIAL (CIVIL) LAW

Historical Prologue

Treaty Proper

What informs the recipient
recipient

What obligates the
recipient

Preincarnation

Incarnation

Type-Typological

Fulfillment



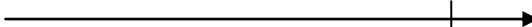
Upper stratum
of God
"Covenant of Works"
Corporate

Upper layer— heaven
- law kept in heaven

Lower Layer - kingdom

- law not to be kept/
followed on earth

Lower stratum
Covenant of Grace
Individual



- law kept by Christ/
fulfilled as the ground
of our justification

NEW DIRECTIONS IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

The New Republication Doctrine and The New Two Kingdom Doctrine

In recent years reverberations of the work of Dr. Meredith G. Kline (1922-2007)¹ have emerged. Among the waves are the following ideas:

1) First, the Christian is not responsible to follow the Ten Commandments that appear in the Old Testament, but we are responsible to follow their New Testament publication. Also, civil government must be seen as religiously neutral, and therefore is not subject to the binding authority of God's special revelation in Scripture.¹

(2) Second, a new two-kingdom view has emerged. It sees the kingdom of God as consisting of the spheres of the church and family. The other kingdom consists of everything outside that kingdom of God. While functioning in this other kingdom believers are not to follow what God sets down in the Bible *per se*, but are to follow natural law as God reveals it. There are two versions of this new two-kingdom view.

(3) Third, there is a new republication doctrine. This refers to the Mosaic Law. It is proposed that the Mosaic Law is in some way a republication of the covenant of works involving the works principle. Specifically, God will reward works with blessings and disobedience with curses, i. e., good works are meritorious.

The chart preceding this document sets forth the structural framework of the thought expressing these new directions. This direction in theology might be more easily grasped if one has in mind its relatively simple underlying structure, viz., sections of the Bible as a whole may be analyzed as prologue, a historical section, and a substance section. The early thought of Dr. Kline saw the book of Deuteronomy and the entire Bible as fundamentally repeating the structure of ancient Hittite law treaties. These treaties, said Kline, exhibited the following sections²: the gods, the historical introduction, the law section, curses-blessings, and the provision for succession (naming the next king). It is worth noting that this form entails an opening statement (or listing) of gods. Kline saw this element in Gen.

¹ Dr. Kline taught at Seminaries from 1948 through 2002. He taught for 29 years at Westminster Seminary East and 21 years at Westminster West. Dr. John Frame, who taught at Westminster West for many years, wrote that Kline's work is the exegetical basis for these new movements. John Frame, *The Escondido Theology, A Reformed Response to Two-kingdom Theology* (Lakeland, FL: Whitefield Media Productions, 2011), p. 11.

² Subsequently, Dr. Kline saw the treaty form as having more elements. Cf., L.J. Coppes, *Kline and His Successors in Hittite-Biblical Studies* (Thornton, CO: Providence Presbyterian Press, 2012).

1-3. Also, he proposed that Gen. 1 was communicated in terms of what is, to many of us, a unique sense. In the Assyrian and Babylonian wall murals he saw that the upper part of the carvings depicted what was happening in the sphere of the gods while the lower part depicted things happening among men. So, says Dr. Kline, Gen 1 is "upper part talk" (Kline spoke of upper register) and Gen. 2-3 is "lower part talk" (lower register talk). So, he viewed Gen. 2-3 in terms of ordinary history. In explaining the creation account in Gen. 1 he spoke in terms of this special upper register kind of "history", i.e., his proposed framework explanation.³ Also, he saw the entire Old Testament as the "historical section." In treaties this section was purely introductory and said nothing that was of the treaty's substance. Therefore, the Old Testament says nothing of the substance of Christianity. It is purely introductory material.

This is introduced here to highlight the influence of ancient near eastern models (forms) in molding Kline's thinking. Moreover, it is the conclusion of this writer that the new directions in biblical theology employ Kline's work as the foundation upon which they are being built (cf., footnote 3).

I. The New Two Kingdom Doctrine

The second thesis merits further explanation. It may be discussed under two versions. The first version we will address sees the kingdom of God as consisting of the church and family. This is a kingdom that is to operate according to biblical laws as revealed in the New Testament plus natural law. The other kingdom is not seen as the kingdom of Satan and it consists of everything outside the church and family.

The new two-kingdom thesis is, no doubt, a development from the later teaching of Dr. Meredith G. Kline (1922-2007).⁴ In this later teaching he maintained that there were two covenants (contra. WCF 7.6) rather than one.⁵ The first consists of the pre-fall covenant and its republication "in a sense" in the covenant of Moses (the upper stratum of its administration/application). The second consists of

³ See the author's *The Divine Days of Creation* (Thornton, CO.: Providence Presbyterian Press, 2004) or the OPC "Report of the Committee on the Views of Creation", OPC.org.

⁴ This suggestion will be developed and defended below, III. B.

⁵ VanDrunen, a leader in this movement and a former student of Kline, in his *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), p. 287 and 415 ff, refers to Kline with approbation. Indeed what he wrote evidences strong influence from Kline.

the covenant of Abraham, the Mosaic covenant (in its lower stratum of administration) and the New Testament covenant in Christ. Part of this thesis is that the Ten Commandments being the moral law and being seated in the hearts of men, parallel and repeat what Adam and Eve knew in Eden before the fall. This is the law of God written on the hearts of men. Moreover, the entire civil law (the WCF says "judicial law") is an application of the moral law to the (i.e., unique or unrepeated) status of Israel in Palestine under the Mosaic Law. It is important to note, that this thesis, therefore, views the roots of the Decalogue and the civil law not as divine special revelation but as natural revelation. They do not deny that what God said through Moses is special revelation, but they are addressing the origin (and fundamental nature) of that moral-civil law. Now, because Christ fulfilled the moral law in its upper stratum administration and instituted a new kingdom, this new kingdom is to be operated under a new law—law especially suited to this new kingdom. It is not the old law of natural-revelation-crafted-to-suit the Old Testament kingdom that is to govern it but a new law given by special revelation.

On the other hand, the biblical way to conceive the two kingdoms (the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan) is to view them in terms of the kingdom of God and that which is outside the kingdom of God. Thus, **the kingdom of God, starting after the fall and continuing through the founding of Israel to the present, is conceived as a divine kingdom ruled by biblical revelation**⁶ (special revelation) **while the kingdom of Satan is understood to be an anti-God kingdom over which Satan rules.** These spiritual kingdoms are distinguished by their rulers and by their dispositions to God and His rule (law). Everyone who is not in the kingdom of God is said to be in the kingdom of Satan (WLC 191), and operates in his kingdom according to his law (WCF 5.6, WLC 27, 191, WSC 102). Those in God's kingdom operate according to God's law (WCF 20.1, WLC 191, WSC 102).⁷ When the Christian leaves his church and home for work or for any other endeavor he does not leave God's kingdom. Neither does he leave behind his responsibility to follow God's law recorded in the Bible. Indeed he is not only to follow that law personally but also to strive to see that law applied in all of his relationships and in every sphere of activity in which he engages. Moreover, with reference to Old Testament judicial

⁶ Note: where special revelation does not speak, natural law provides guidance and instruction to the believer.

⁷ WSC 107, "What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us? A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, For thine (*sic*) is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen) teacheth (*sic*) us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen."

(civil) law he is responsible to strive to see that the general equity⁸ of that law as well as New Testament law is applied throughout the creation.

The second version of the new kingdom of God thesis in many aspects is, conceptually considered, a repeat of what is said above. It, too, sees the kingdom of God as consisting of the church and family. This is a kingdom that is to operate according to biblical laws (but only New Testament law). The other kingdom is not the kingdom of Satan but it consists of everything outside the church and Christian family. All this operates by natural law (as God reveals it in nature and in the heart of man). In principle, so it is posited, biblical law is addressed to God's kingdom and not to what is outside that kingdom. Hence, when a believer is functioning outside the kingdom of God, he is not to apply kingdom law (that which is revealed in the Bible) to that sphere but is to apply natural law. So this "non-kingdom of God" kingdom is a "non-religious kingdom", ruled by the laws of common grace. It is to be noted that advocates of this new two-kingdom view often use the same vocabulary as the traditional view and *find* their new view in the work of various well-known scholars of the past.⁹

The difference between the two versions of the new two-kingdom view lays in the conceptual structure underlying them. Building on Kline's earlier thought this second view proposes that since the Deuteronomic and the Mosaic Law as a whole repeat the form of the Hittite law treaties (as Kline and George Mendenhall proposed¹⁰), and since there was only one divine covenant since the fall, the New Testament is a republication of that Old Testament covenant. Accordingly, since the Biblical covenants function as the Hittite codes do, they are limited in their application to those to whom they are addressed. Hittite law codes apply only to the vassals in the conquered states and Biblical covenants apply only to the "vassals" under God's covenant. Therefore, outside the kingdom addressed by the treaty/covenant the covenant law does not apply. So, biblical law does not apply outside the Christian church and family.

⁸ See the author's pamphlet *The General Equity of the Law*, and WCF XIX.4.

⁹ The advocates of the "Escondido theology" support their "innovation" with an argument from the history of theology. This argument has been demonstrated to be false and their citations from previous reformed scholars misinterpreted, if not inaccurate. So, in regard to the Escondido two-kingdom theology we observe that they use the vocabulary and the concepts (somewhat) of traditional reformed theology, but substantially change some of the (cf., note 15 below) fundamental ideas. Nelson D. Kloosterman, "Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought by David VanDrunen," [Published in *Christian Renewal*, vol. 29 (and following), no. 1 (September 15, 2010), pages 38-39, 42.]

¹⁰ Cf. L.J. Coppes, *Kline and His Successors in Hittite-Biblical Studies*.

Hence, it is said that there are two kingdoms revealed in the Bible and two sets of law. It is a little difficult to see, perhaps, but the new thesis is that in the Old Testament there are two kingdoms: (1) the kingdom of God in Israel and (2) the kingdom that is not God's in the particular sense that it does not consist of Israel as they came to be God's kingdom under the Deuteronomic law. All that is outside of that first kingdom (2) was to be governed by natural law as God revealed it in men's hearts. All that was within that kingdom (1) was to be governed, with respect to civil-judicial matters, by natural law as God crafted it and **revealed** it through Moses-and thus divinely applied it to Israel's *unique* situation. So, outside Israel Jews working in the market place or non-Israelite governments (like Daniel in Babylon) were to live under the rule of those governments in matters non-religious (presumably, in so far as that rule was governed by natural law).

So, too, there are two kingdoms revealed in the New Testament. There is the new kingdom of God with its new revealed rules of life and the rest of the world (the not-kingdom of God) that is to be ruled by natural law. Outside the church and family believers are to apply and work to apply natural law. This is not the natural law crafted for the unique situation pertaining to the Old Testament kingdom but natural law to be found by means of natural (common grace) revelation.

Having presented two constructions of the new two-kingdom thesis, we turn **to an evaluation**. Perhaps the most obvious problem with the first construction is that it denies (as does its partner, version two) the general equity of the law (WCF 19.4). It also makes **a new (and false) division between natural revelation and special revelation** with regard to the application they are given under this thesis. If God personally revealed natural law through Moses it is, with reference to its nature, part of that special revelation. In its nature it is more than natural law.¹¹ God clearly says this repeatedly when He tells Israel that they should follow everything He said through Moses because it comes from Him directly. Whether

¹¹ Calvin in a sermon on Deut. 19:14-15 remarked, "Moreover, we must understand how it was God's intent to ratify the thing among his own people, which was already known and observed of all men, *to the intent that it might be of the more authority*. For not only the conscience of the people of Israel did prove it unto them that there could be no order among men, without the things that are contained here; but also *they were taught it by God's own mouth, and therefore it behooved them to condescend to his saying with all fear and reverence*. You see then that the people of Israel had a great advantage and so have we at this day, insomuch as we be (*sic*) succeeded in their room." [Emphasis added, LJC]

or not it is the same or similar to natural law is irrelevant to this command. The point is that God commanded it.¹²

Moreover, this new construction raises a **false distinction within the covenant of Moses between the moral-civil law and the sacramental law.**¹³ This false distinction distinguishes between the moral-civil law and the sacramental law as to their relationship to natural law. The authors of the new thesis surely do not argue that the sacramental law is rooted in natural revelation. It, the sacramental law, is to be kept because God commanded it. In it God binds Israel to many detailed sacramental actions, not because they are consistent with natural law, but because He commands them. In the Garden of Eden God gave Adam and Eve a particular command (not a sacramental command) that they should not eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan challenged them to think this command through. He said that it was not consistent (if we may paraphrase) with natural law. Actually, that inconsistency was its very nature. They were to obey God's command simply because it was God's command. This highlights the force of all of God's commands. For example, why in worship was the priest to cover his head? Because God commanded it. Why were the Israelites to hold the seventh day holy? Because God commanded it. What evidence in nature, in natural law, commands covering the head or keeping the Sabbath, and the various ways God commands through Moses that they should observe it? He commands them to observe weekly Sabbaths, yearly Sabbaths, etc. Similarly, God commands a thief to restore what he sold and to restore **the thing stolen** in various ways depending on what it was. For example, the thief is commanded to restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.¹⁴ These kinds of details recall the Edenic command—do thus and so because God commands it, whether you think it is reasonable or not. Divine command

¹² Deut.4:7-8 "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you."

¹³ They might argue that they are talking only about what is in Deuteronomy and not the civil law that is outside Deuteronomy. However, Deut. 16 includes part of the sacramental law. Hence, Deuteronomy does, in principle include the sacramental law under its "roof."

¹⁴ The author acknowledges that The Code of Hammurabi, for example, has a similar law with different penalties than does the Bible. But this does not remove the force of God's unique command. Indeed, it enhances it. Cf., Coppes, *The General Equity of the Law of the God*.

does not share the character of natural revelation since this latter does not clearly carry with it the character of “command”. Namely, God gives His word and command and there is no debate allowed (until He changes the context of its application, cf., the general equity of the law). He demands obedience.

II. The New Republication Doctrine.

The new republication thesis also merits additional explanation. It has been proposed that the Mosaic covenant is in some way a republication of the covenant of works. Here, too, the proponents of this thesis use traditional reformed language and cite previous reformed scholars. Again, their use of such citations is adjusted to fit their thesis. Those prior scholars used the same vocabulary at points (especially, “republication”) but meant something significantly different than the “Escondido” republication view means. It is a goal of this paper to examine this proposition. As noted above, the new directions in our reformed theology emanate primarily from Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido California. Hence, we refer to the position and its branches as the Escondido theology.¹⁵

One of the difficulties in discussing this fourth development, the new republication view, is that its advocates do not present it in terms of a clear definition. It may be proposed that this is due to its roots in the theology and writing of Meredith Kline. In his work, the emerging ideas appear in an unfolding ever-developing format so usual in the writings of working thinkers. In part because of this, we suggest, the present-day advocates are not all in agreement as to some of the precise details of the position they share.

In the book *The Law is Not of Faith*¹⁶ one finds the repeated formula that the Mosaic covenant is “in some way” a republication of the covenant of works. Upon investigation, one finds varying definitions of republication in the book. For example, on pages 1, 2 and 3 it is clearly and repeatedly stated that, “the Mosaic covenant is a republication of the covenant of works.” Second, it is said, “the covenant of works is in some sense (emphasis added) republished in the Mosaic covenant (p. 7). This second definition shifts the emphasis from simply identifying the entire

¹⁵ Cf., John Frame, *The Escondido Theology*. Dr. Frame introduces the phrase Escondido theology and we will use it in this paper.

¹⁶ Estelle, Fesko, and VanDrunen, *The Law is Not of Faith*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Phillipsburg, N.J., 2009.

Mosaic covenant as a republication to identifying it *in some sense* (a vague statement) as a republication. This is a significant shift.

A third definition is: "the works principle was operative in the Mosaic covenant, thus constituting it a republication of the covenant of works" (p 1). This shifts the definition from (a) a simple identification and (b) to a document or a republication "in some sense", to (c) saying that the "works principle is operative", parallel "in some sense" to its operation in the pre-fall covenant. This third definition is expanded on p. 3 as follows:

... the Confession [speaks] ... about the Mosaic covenant [in] Chapter 7... [It says] that there are not two covenants of grace, but one-they [the old covenant and the new covenant] are the same in substance. ... that it [the Mosaic covenant] is an administration of the covenant of grace, but that there is this principle of works operative at a typological level as part of this administration."¹⁷

So, now one is told that it is "this principle of works operative" in it that makes the Mosaic covenant a republication in some sense of the Adamic covenant. **It is here that we think one should locate a definition of "republication."** Throughout the book there are various suggestions as to what is meant by republication, but the idea of the operation of a principle of works appears to tie them all together. There are two aspects of this definition, which bear close consideration, i.e., typological level and administration.¹⁸

One should note that there **are two definitions of "works-principle"** offered in *The Law is Not of Faith*. One definition is that the works principle is what one sees before the fall, i.e., that Adam and Eve by their **perfect** and sinless obedience (work) would "earn," or "merit," their continued life in the Garden and in fellowship with God. Their works were

¹⁷ Op. cit, p. 3.

¹⁸ Typological identifies matters in the Old Testament that are types of the Christ to come. They set forth His characteristics or works. Hence, we say David was a type of Christ. He was the anointed king of Israel. Christ was the perfect eternal King, the son of David. The advocates of the new republication thesis refer to certain aspects of Israel's keeping God's law as being typological of what Jesus did. Israel had to keep the law of God and they failed, but says the new republication thesis they were types of Christ who did not fail. "Type" here refers to their responsibility not to their accomplishment. "Administered" refers to the way God applies the covenant. It refers to the orders He gives His people concerning how they are to live under the covenant, how they are to work it out, or how God worked it out.

meritorious. The second definition is that Israel (as a nation, a corporate entity) under the Mosaic covenant, with their imperfect obedience could "earn," or "merit," blessings from the Lord. Their works were meritorious. One should note at this point that our authors apply these two definitions to the same biblical statements (content), but that they (the definitions) do not identify the same thing, or idea. The first kind of works principle falls under the covenant of grace and the second under a covenant of works (in some sense). The various authors recognize this in their articles. Moreover, they offer the phrase "in some sense" to speak to the latter idea involving imperfect obedience.

So, the issue before us is this: **is the Mosaic Law in some sense, i.e., in the sense involving an imperfect meritorious obedience, a republication of the covenant of works?**¹⁹ Or, put differently, does the works principle operate in some sense in the same way in the covenant of works and in the Mosaic covenant? The writers of the book *The Law is Not of Faith* reply, "yes" while the testimony of the history of reformed scholarship (WCF 19.6) and the Bible say, "no."

III. The Kline Connection

A. Kline and Form Criticism.

Kline was a godly man who worked hard to defend the inerrancy and reliability of the Bible. The basis of his biblical theology arose from his evaluation of the form and substance of mid-second millennium Hittite law treaties. This idea was introduced into biblical studies by scholars such as George Mendenhall. Mendenhall and his cohorts were form critics that sought to see and interpret documents in terms of that hermeneutic. Form criticism arose in the arena of Greek studies. The ancient Greeks, like so many other ancient societies, did not write down their history and literature but passed it on orally. As a means to aid the memory, it is proposed, they put their history and "literature" into various and distinctive forms—much like we put business and personal letters into different forms (patterns). Applying this approach to Hittite and biblical studies, Mendenhall and others saw a **formal parallel** between the literary

¹⁹The subject of meritorious works will be handled below.

structure of Hittite law treaties and the form of the book of Deuteronomy.

Kline agreed with the formal parallel thesis and saw in it a means to validate the mid-second century origin of Deuteronomy and a mechanism to explain many of the questions raised by unbelieving (and other) exegetes. Thus, he argued that since the relevant Hittite law treaties were dated in the mid-second millennium and since Deuteronomy evidences, in a remarkable way, virtually the same form then one can conclude that we have biblically external evidence to affirm the mid-second millennium origin of Deuteronomy. What the Bible says, then, is confirmed with regard to the dates of the Exodus and of Deuteronomy.

Kline also used the law treaty concept and structure to understand and explain what is said in Deuteronomy. It provided an **interpretative guide**. First, elements whose authenticity was seriously challenged by the critics, and queried by traditionalist believers, found an objective parallel and explanation in the treaties. In addition, he drew attention to the fact that the specific laws of Deuteronomy are presented in three forms like they are in the law treaties and in no other ancient literature. The treaties, like the Bible, have law in the form of casuistic, or case, law that cites an example serving to illustrate a legal principle (e.g., if a person does so and so, then such and such is the penalty). Both documents also have apodictic (or command) law, i.e., you shall (or shall not) do so and so. Other ancient law codes do not, Kline pointed out, have apodictic law. He also found statements in the Hittite treaties that somewhat parallel the otherwise biblically unique encouragement statements (e.g., Deut. 21:9, 23:14, 24:9). Thus he applied the Hittite findings to explain the origin, the form/structure, and the content of Deuteronomy.²⁰

B. Kline and New Two-kingdom Thesis

The position (mentioned above), the new two-kingdom thesis, clearly reflects and grows out of Kline's work. Dr. Kline taught that not only Deuteronomy but also the whole Bible was to be seen as patterned on the

²⁰For additional detail and evaluation see the author's *Kline and His Successors*, *op. cit.* We note that, in contrast to Kline, K. Kitchen points out that "The law content of the stipulations derives from law, not treaty, and the Sinai covenant's use of short blessings plus longer curses (not the roughly equal curses and blessings of the Hittites) goes back to the older law collections' usage". Cf., *Reliability of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 298.

form of Hittite law treaties.²¹ One theme in Kline's "early"²² theology is that Biblical law is addressed only to the "conquered vassal" and its state and not to the sphere(s) or realm(s) outside of it. Consequently, biblical law is "kingdom" law, and outside that kingdom (the church and the state) it neither applies, nor should it be applied.

This thesis is struck down when it is seen that Deuteronomy is not essentially a Hittite treaty in a Hebrew form. More recent studies demonstrate that Biblical covenants grew up within the "Hebrew" culture and have their own special patterns of growth, just as the literary forms of various other emerging Ancient Near East cultures (e.g., the form of law documents, etc.) have their own special patterns of growth.²³ Each major culture as currently known by its extant literature produced its literature along somewhat independent lines, as argued by Dr. Noel Weeks.²⁴ The exact lines of these interrelationships are not clearly evidenced in the extant literature although the similarities are sufficiently strong to argue for some interdependence. Weeks and Dr. Kenneth Kitchen²⁵ (although they are not altogether in agreement on other matters) both argue and demonstrate the inadequacy of Kline's assumed paradigm, viz., that the form of Deuteronomy (and any other Biblical covenants, e.g., the Decalogue) attests a *borrowing* of the treaty form. Thus, the foundational exegetical thesis supporting Kline's view of the structure of Deuteronomy and of the Bible in general is challenged.²⁶ On the other hand, both scholars (Weeks

²¹ *Kline and His Successors...* p. 15. Cf., Meredith Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, 46f.

²² The author says "early" because the Kline under whom he studied in the mid to late 1960's taught that after the fall there was essentially only one covenant that was republished in subsequent editions. At another point, Kline wrote that after the fall there were essentially two covenants (the Mosaic covenant and the NT covenant). Under both theories there is a two-kingdom application, and they differ as to description and theological foundation, cf., the discussion regarding the debate within Klinian circles regarding the Ramsey charge, p. 8 below.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 56ff., 82f., 88f.

²⁴ Noel Weeks, *Admonition and Curse, The Ancient Near Eastern Treaty/Covenant as a Problem in Inter-Cultural Relationships* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

²⁵ K. Kitchen in his *Reliability of the Old Testament*, 272-288.

²⁶ Another important observation is that the Escondido scholars also support their "innovation" with an argument from the history of theology, and this thesis has also been challenged. So, in regard to the Escondido two-kingdom theology we observe that they use the vocabulary and the concepts (somewhat) of traditional reformed theology, but substantially change the fundamental ideas. Nelson D. Kloosterman, "Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought, by David VanDrunen." [Published in *Christian Renewal*, vol. 29 (and following), no. 1, September 15, 2010, pages 38-39, 42.].

and Kitchen) agree that there are some parallels between the form of some of the second millennium treaties and the form of Deuteronomy.

It is important for us, at this point, to jump a little ahead in our discussion of the new two-kingdom thesis. The material below will document how Kline changed his position regarding the relationship of the Mosaic Law and the New Testament (the covenant of grace). In class (in the late 1960's) it was hinted (by Professor Kline) that he was struggling with the relationship between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works (*a la* the Hittite law treaty thesis).²⁷ So, he could say that the Mosaic covenant was fundamentally a law treaty, a law covenant. Yet, he could not deny that it was also fundamentally a covenant of grace as was the Abrahamic covenant. Also, in this earlier period he said that there was only one covenant after the fall, the covenant of grace. Consequently, he presented the New Testament as a republication of the Mosaic covenant. However, it seemed that he was struggling with this idea too. Also, he implied that there were two post-fall covenants and the New Testament was not a republication of the Mosaic covenant—of the fundamentally legal document. However, this did not change his thesis that the Mosaic covenant was, in some sense, a republication of the pre-fall covenant of works. His thinking seems to have still been dominated, albeit perhaps unwittingly, by the assumed evolutionary development involved in form criticism *a la* Mendenhall and his cohorts.

The new explanation of the relationship between the Mosaic covenant and the New Testament did not change his ideas about the parallel between the Ancient Near Eastern treaties and the biblical covenants. It only shortened the scope of its application. Mendenhall and his cohorts posited that the treaties of the extra-biblical Ancient Near Eastern cultures had progressed by republication (not reduplication) basically from simple to complex documents. If one applies this to the Bible, as it seems Kline did, then Bible "treaties" progressed from the simple to the complex (in some way). Regardless of the immediate difficulties with reference to recorded biblical forms, this would mean that the first covenant (the pre-fall covenant with Adam) was subsequently republished. This developmental hypothesis is a fundamental element of the Mendenhall, *et. al.*, thesis, that appears to have influenced Kline's thinking—at least in part.

²⁷ See footnote 22.

C. Kline and the New Republication Thesis

1. The Intramural Debate.

The authors participating in the new republication thesis base their thinking foundationally, if not fundamentally, on Kline's work. Several considerations demonstrate this dependence. First, we point to the intramural debate evidenced among them.²⁸ The issue in the debate comes out of the 2003 Lee Irons trial in the OPC in which Rev. Irons was found guilty of contradicting the WCF and the Scripture and the sentence of deposition (issued by his presbytery) was upheld.²⁹

Irons, on his website, summarized his position as follows:

It is true that I teach "the Decalogue is no longer binding on believers as the standard of holy living." My reason for taking this position is, in a nutshell:

1. There is a close relationship between the Decalogue and the Mosaic covenant as a whole. The Decalogue is called "the tablets of the covenant"... the Decalogue contains a summary of the moral will of God enshrined in a particular covenantal form suited to Israel's probation in the land of Canaan.
2. The Mosaic covenant is a typological republication of the covenant of works. The works-principle that informs the Mosaic covenant as a whole is evident in the Decalogue itself...³⁰

One should note carefully that Mr. Irons' (Kline's) formulation of his new republication position is repeatedly reflected, if not repeated, in the Escondido theology published in *The Law is Not of Faith*.

²⁸ This is reported in James T. Dennison, Jr., Scott F. Sanborn, Benjamin W. Swinburnson, "Merit or 'Entitlement' in Reformed Covenant Theology: A Review," p 3ff. *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary*, vol. 24, Num. 3, Dec. 2009. Hereafter referred to as *Kerux*.

²⁹ The material relating to Mr. Irons' blog, etc., is found in *Kerux*, pp. 20ff.

³⁰ These quotations are taken from Irons' "Response to Charge Two," dated August 30, 2002, available online at: [http://www.upper-register.com/irons_trial/Response_toCharge2_\(Irons\).pdf](http://www.upper-register.com/irons_trial/Response_toCharge2_(Irons).pdf).

The charges brought against Irons had to do with whether "the Decalogue is no longer binding on believers as the standard of holy living," and that "civil government must be religiously neutral, and therefore not subject to the binding authority of God's special revelation in Scripture" (including the Moral Law-*contra*. WCF 19.5).³¹ On his blog he explained that he held the first position because of the second. He said that the second was the "reason" for the first.

David VanDrunen helps us understand the connection between above Irons' two propositions in an essay entitled "Natural Law and the Works Principle Under Adam and Moses."³² VanDrunen argues that the moral law encased in the Ten Commandments is the same moral law that prevailed before the fall and the knowledge of that moral law came to Adam by means of natural revelation and not by special revelation.³³ He maintains that he sees "the Mosaic Law [the moral and judicial laws, *ljc*] as a particular application of the natural law for theocratic Israel" (301), that it "expresses and applies the natural law" (302), and that "the natural law must be substantively identical to the Mosaic Law [the moral and judicial laws, *ljc*]" (304).³⁴ Hence, the Mosaic judicial law is essentially not Kingdom law even though it is included in a Kingdom publication (this seems to be a *non-sequitur*, cf., footnote 33 below). This means, teaches VanDrunen, that when the Kingdom was introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ it was to be ruled by New Testament Kingdom law not by natural law (including the Decalogue). Therefore, we see VanDrunen's reasoning as demonstrating the logical relationship between Irons' points 1 and 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³² The article is found in *The Law is Not of Faith*, p. 283 ff.

³³ The author notes that VanDrunen's is an argument from silence. We have no recorded details reporting just what God said to Adam as they walked in the Garden in the cool of the evening. The biblical report is focused primarily on the temptation. Perhaps God did reveal the principles of the Decalogue to Adam by special revelation. To support this possibility consider what happened after the fall in the matter of the offerings of Cain and Abel. Does not this event presuppose divine revelation regarding the need for and means of making sacrifices to God? Second, does not God repeatedly in the course of the history of revelation employ the things of nature to give special revelation? For example, He used the rainbow, etc. Third, the fact that the Decalogue may have originated through the use of natural revelation does not mean that it lost its special revelatory quality when it is revealed through Moses. Once specially revealed it is special revelation. Once revealed as kingdom revelation, it is binding on the kingdom until the King instructs mankind otherwise.

³⁴ Up to this point, Mr. VanDrunen's statement receives some objection. Moreover, what follows comes from human reason and not from the Scripture.

We cannot leave this subject without emphasizing that Kline, Irons and VanDrunen teach that the principles in the Ten Commandments are to be followed today as part of the divinely revealed special revelation but not because they are revealed in the Decalogue. They are given a different and excellent basis for observing them in the New Testament itself. Now (goes the argument) they are revealed by special revelation. One might be tempted to say, "so what!" The men are not denying that we should follow the Ten Commandments. They are only shifting the foundation underlying those commandments. However, in this Escondido theology the principle of the general equity of the law is seen as not biblical because their theology maintains, contrary to the WCF 19.4 (the general equity of the Law) and Scripture that the Mosaic moral judicial law does not apply to the New Testament Kingdom of God. Such is to be ruled only by New Testament Kingdom Law and not by Old Testament Kingdom law (i.e., by natural law applied to Israel's unique situation). As a result *a la* Irons, believers have nothing to say in the public arena about the legality of abortion, homosexuality, etc. These matters pertain to the Old Testament "Kingdom Law" (or natural law). But this does not yet bring us to the intramural debate among Escondido proponents.

The debate emerged as a result of an article by D. Patrick Ramsey in which he alleges that Kline and Karlberg (a Klinian) violate the statement in the **WCF 7.6 that there is but one covenant after the fall, the covenant of grace.**³⁵ Their violation consists of their position that there are in reality two covenants in the Mosaic covenant both of which appear in the same biblical content (they result as a divinely intended dual application of what is recorded): a major covenant, the covenant of grace and a minor (subservient and typological) covenant, a covenant of works.³⁶ Ramsey points out that the fathers who framed the WCF were well aware of the two-covenant position propounded by Moise Amyraut (1596-1664), and later the Amyraldians, and John Cameron (1773-1844). (Also, WCF 7.3³⁷

³⁵ D. Patrick Ramsey, "In Defense of Moses: A Confessional Critique of Kline and Karlberg," *Westminster Theological Journal* (66:2 [2004] 373-400).

³⁶ The idea that the Mosaic covenant embodies two covenants is also expressed in *The Law is Not of Faith*. J. Fesko, p. 30, who writes of Calvin, "Calvin explains that in the dispensation of the Mosaic covenant there are two separate covenants" (30).

³⁷ WCF 7.3, "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable (*sic*) of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, whereby He freely offereth (*sic*) unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved; and promising. to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe."

makes it clear that after the fall only one divine covenant was given, the covenant of grace.)

The *Kerux* authors argue (presenting relevant citations) that not only Kline, but also J. V. Fesko (33ff), B. D. Estelle (111-112), and T. D. Gordon (140ff.), in their articles in *The Law is Not of Faith*³⁸ defend a two-covenant view of the Mosaic covenant. As it stands, it appears they too are in contradiction to **WCF 7.6: "There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance³⁹, but one and the same, under various dispensations"**.

Shortly after Ramsey's article appeared another Kline devotee, Brenton Ferry, published a defense of Kline and Karlberg. He maintained that they (Kline and Karlberg) did not contradict the WCF by proposing two covenants after the fall rather than one. In his *By Oath Consigned* (1968) Kline wrote that there was only one covenant after the fall according to Jer. 31:31f., "the New Covenant, though it could be sharply contrasted with the Old (v. 32), was nevertheless a renewal of the Mosaic Covenant."⁴⁰ So, by showing that Kline held that both the Mosaic and New Testament covenants are the same with regard to their substance (their essential subject), it is argued that the charge that Kline held the position of Amyraus was refuted.

But this was not the end of the debate because Mark Karlberg (in the previously mentioned Westminster article) maintained that Ferry's description of Kline's position did not take into account that Kline had changed from his 1968 position to another position in his 1993 to 2000 publication, *Kingdom Prologue*. Now he wrote that the NT was not a renewal of the Mosaic covenant. It was an entirely new document, speaking covenantally. As Irons put it:

In other words, in KP [*Kingdom Prologue*] he no longer defines the New Covenant as a renewal of the Old/Mosaic Covenant (i.e., as a law covenant) and instead stresses the contrast between the Old and the New Covenants. The Mosaic Covenant was a covenant of works and was breakable. The New Covenant is a covenant of grace and is fundamentally unbreakable (although the sense in which it is unbreakable must be carefully defined).⁴¹

³⁸ The page numbers in parentheses refer to pages in *The Law is Not of Faith*.

³⁹ See III.D below

⁴⁰ *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1968), 75.

⁴¹ Irons, <http://www.upper-register.com/blog/?cat=26>

Thus, according to what is said by Irons and Karlberg (both devotees of Kline's position) Kline stood in contradiction to the WCF because he turned to a two-covenant position. That is, he held that the Mosaic and the New Testament covenants were different in substance, the first was substantially in some sense a covenant of works "and was [in some sense] breakable" and the second is a covenant of grace "and is fundamentally unbreakable". By now it should be clear that the devotees of Kline are involved in the new republication "movement", and committed to the theology of Kline, its initiator.

Our thesis, again, is that the foundational work of Kline is not supported by up to date studies of Hittite law treaties and related ancient documents.⁴² Recent studies of Ancient Near Eastern literature have demonstrated that Biblical covenants, Hittite documents (there is no one Hittite treaty form and no form unique to treaties within that culture⁴³), and other Ancient Near Eastern documents evidence relatively independent histories. The documents of each of the cultures (Biblical, Hittite, and Mesopotamian, e.g.) show their distinguishing characteristics at the earliest period they are evidenced. So first, Kline's (and other's) thesis of Israel's use of Hittite law forms to structure in detail, for example, Deuteronomy is contrary to the known facts. So far we have reviewed what was said previously, but now we turn to additional shortcomings of Kline's work. So second, the basis for seeing a republication of "documents" in the Bible rests upon his thesis that this was what happened elsewhere in the Ancient Near East. However, **it did not happen elsewhere as he maintained**. Third, his thesis, first propounded by the form critics (such as Mendenhall) also assumes a gradual development in form and content from the simple to the more complex (a republication). **This, too, has been demonstrated as not existing in the Ancient Near East**. On the other hand, there is a history of God's covenant giving recorded in the Bible. Fourth, the Bible teaches (as we shall argue below) that after the fall there is one covenant, the covenant of grace, that appears in differing formats but with the same substance. Every divine covenant in that particular series (post-fall with Adam, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New Testament) is a publication of the covenant of grace—but we shall return to this

⁴² This is especially the implication of Week's work, cf., footnote 24 above.

⁴³ See the author's book, *Kline and His Successors...*

below **Notably, this is not a "document" replication but a "substance" republication.**

Therefore, Biblical covenant should not be formally (as to its form) or materially (as a method of explaining it) identified with Kline's proposed analysis of Hittite treaties. One should also note that even if Kline's original work was valid, his work violates the doctrine of the perspicuity of the Word of God contrary to what the WCF and Scripture teach. **Kline's theology teaches or implies that the Christian church did not understand the fundamental nature of covenant and of the Bible as a whole until the early to mid-twentieth century when the Hittite treaties were found and related to Scripture.**

2. Form Critical Hermeneutic-Exegesis

Another evidence of Kline's influence on the new republication thesis is that the contributors to *The Law is Not of Faith* employ a form critical hermeneutic (way of interpreting Scripture) just like Kline did. This means that they look for and find forms (structures) as they read and explain what the Bible says. Sometimes the result is ridiculous, sometimes strange (to those who have learned to read the Bible without the assumption of form criticism or of the Hittite treaty thesis), and sometimes just wrong.

This writer remembers an example of the ridiculous put forth by Kline himself. One day during a class lecture he remarked that he was tempted to see a relationship between God's command to circumcise and Hittite law treaties. The treaties were written on relatively flat clay tablets and after they were dry they were wrapped with a thin layer of clay. The outer wrap, a flat rectangular "sheet", was folded around the tablet in a way that resulted in the wrapping meeting along the three exposed edges of the tablet. Then the clay of the wrapping was pressed together to enclose the tablet. Next, the scribe would run a seal around the edge that resulted. The text of the tablet was then written on the "wrapper". The result was an enclosed tablet that was safeguarded (canonized) in such a way that if its authenticity were challenged the wrapper could be broken to expose the original. The point is: the seal was placed in the middle (of the tablet's edges) where the "cover" came together. Kline posited a parallel between the treaty's seal being made in the middle of the tablet and the seal of the biblical covenant-treaty (circumcision) being made in the middle of its recipient. Then he dismissed the parallel. Who other than one committed to the form critical

approach to Hittite law treaties and its proposed Biblical parallel would suggest such a parallel? It is ridiculous.

This form critical hermeneutic is evidenced by a form-critical exegesis appearing in his explanation of the witnesses of the Biblical treaty-covenant. Assuming Deuteronomy is a repetition of the Hittite pattern, Kline used Deut. 30:19 ("I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse") as a parallel to the Hittite treaty form. First, it is true that some of the Hittite treaties did, toward the end of the treaty, specify witnesses, so there is a possible formal parallel. Second however, the interesting thing is that witnesses in the two kinds of documents, Hittite treaties and Biblical covenants, functioned differently (they are materially different). The witnesses (gods) in treaties were cited as those who would bring judgment on treaty breakers. The witnesses in Deut. 30:19, like so many of the earlier Biblical witnesses, attested to the inviolability and persistence of the treaty. Like the song-witness of 31:19, 21, and the book witness of 31:26, 28 they reminded Israel that Almighty God stood behind His word (Gen. 31:50-53). It should be obvious that although the form of some mid-second millennium Hittite law treaties may have informed Deuteronomy here, the witnesses in the two kinds of documents (Hittite treaty and Biblical covenant) served an entirely different purpose. The "song" witness recorded in Deuteronomy 32 was neither intended nor able to punish covenant breakers. Rather, it stood as a constant reminder to God's people that God, who cannot lie, had given them this covenant and held them accountable. In like manner Moses called the entirety of Deuteronomy a witness to and against Israel (Deut. 31:26, 28).

One might reply that Kline only intended to point out a formal parallel at this point. This is granted. The problem is that elsewhere he did not stop at pointing out a formal parallel. For example, in his presentation of the entire Bible as representative of the application of the treaty form, he argued that like the treaty introduction, the Bible's introduction (the Old Testament), only presented introductory material not substantive material. If one uses the treaty form as a guide to the significance of the parts of the Bible-treaty one may not reasonably deny that same application in another context. That would be arbitrary and contradictory. It is evidence that Kline's "conclusion" drives his exegesis.

Moreover, a parallel in form does not prove a parallel in significance. So just because one might see a parallel with regard to the form, one should be leery of seeing a parallel in significance. Just because there is a parallel between Adam being driven out of the Garden and Israel leaving Egypt

this does not establish a parallel in meaning between the two events (cf. note 45)! And, in this case, Kline and the authors recognize this. On the other hand, there are many examples of how they do not stop with a simple formal parallel. For example, they do see Adam's casting out as a parallel to what would happen to Israel if she did not successfully sustain her "probation."

This form critical goal appears to have led to the rather surprising explanation of what happened to Adam in *The Law is Not of Faith*. On page 7 the authors write:

Often people look at the Genesis account too literally and scratch their heads wondering why Adam did not immediately die, when God explicitly told him that in the day that he ate from the tree he would surely die (Gen. 2:17). Theologians at times have explained this by saying that while Adam could have legitimately been immediately stricken dead, God relented and gave him a stay of execution of sorts. Yet what many often miss is the significance of being cast out of the garden-temple of Eden. To be exiled from the presence of God was akin to death itself. In this sense, Adam surely did die on the day that he was exiled from the benevolent presence of the Lord.

The surprising thing here is that the authors do not give the traditional reply to this question, viz., that Adam did die as soon as he ate of the fruit.⁴⁴ He died spiritually and received the sentence of physical death (to be rendered at God's appointed time). The reader awaits this response. Although the authors may well think this answer is correct, they have a different goal in mind. Again, they want to present Israel as a second Adam that was to be "cast out" of the Promised Land" if they did not fulfill the "probation" (they see this as a repetition of the Edenic situation, an argument for their thesis regarding the covenant of works). Moreover, in the process of pursuing this goal they give a wrong answer. **They propose that Adam did die by "being cast out of the garden-temple Eden"** (another Kline theme⁴⁵). They remark that "being exiled from the presence of God is akin to death itself." Indeed, they **pointedly say**, "In this sense, Adam surely

⁴⁴ In Rom. 5:14 Paul wrote, "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Paul identifies the sin of eating the fruit with the sentence of death."

⁴⁵ The Bible explicitly compares the land of Palestine with Eden (Isa. 51:3, Ezek. 36:35).

did die on the day that he was exiled from the benevolent presence of the Lord."

However, were Adam and Eve exiled from God's "benevolent" presence when they were outside Eden? Certainly not. Also, prior to their being cast out God continued to work with them as Genesis 4 demonstrates. Before their exile, God restored them to fellowship with Himself (3:8-24). They hid in the bushes in their fallen sinful state because of which they had an awareness of their physical nakedness—a "symbol" of their spiritual death/nakedness. In the acts that follow God restores them to fellowship with Himself, promises the Savior to come (3:15), and replaces their meager attempts to hide their nakedness (sin) with coverings. God's provision of whole body coverings taught them that the degree of their shame-sin was greater than they thought. It taught them that the nature of the coverings they needed was considerably different than they thought.⁴⁶ When they were finally driven from the Garden their relationship with God had been already restored, albeit not completely. They clearly had an ongoing relationship with God from then on. The expulsion removed them from the material blessings of the Garden. They had already entered the punishment upon their sin. Nor did they lose the presence of God when they left Eden. Perhaps this, or something like it, is what the authors would say if they were given opportunity to do so, but it is not what they wrote.

Another example of how the Escondido authors operate on the basis of a form critical exegetical basis is,

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry at his baptism, in actions evocative of the creation, flood, and Red Sea crossing, God's only begotten Son emerged from the waters of baptism as the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and God the Father declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).⁴⁷

This is a good example of how they force the material into a pre-conceived mold (form). Here **they link together Jesus' baptism and the creation, flood, and Red Sea crossing**. We have already examined the proposed parallel between Israel and the expulsion of

⁴⁶ These two conclusions as to the nature and extent of human need to cover one's sin, address common rationalistic (natural law) errors among unbelievers.

⁴⁷ *The Law is Not of Faith, op. cit., p. 9.*

Adam from Eden. If it is difficult to see the parallel there, it is even more to see in Jesus' baptism a repeat of Adam's life experience of being driven out of Eden by God because he and his wife had sinned. Where did Jesus commit sin? It is not hard to see a parallel between Jesus in the wilderness and the Jews in the wilderness since both were tested "in the wilderness". However, one must be careful here, too, because the Jews were in the wilderness because of their sin. Jesus was in the wilderness because of His righteousness. There is a parallel but one must be careful to emphasize the differences as well as the similarities. These are type-antitype relationships, not repetitions.

When it comes to **the baptism of Jesus, our authors see a parallel here to the "creation, flood, and Red Sea crossing."** To see a parallel to the creation and the flood requires considerable intellectual juggling and disregard for the facts revealed in the Bible. This comparison would not come naturally to one who follows the text. It requires the use of a form critical mind set. This should be especially evident in examining the proposed parallel between the baptism of Jesus and the passage of the Jews through the Red Sea. Jesus' baptism may be seen as a Jewish purification rite preparing Him for the holy task before Him or it may be seen as an ordination into His offices of priest and king. However one sees this baptism we should be careful not to remove it from being sensible to those to whom He ministered. They were first century Jews. How would they have understood what Jesus did? Where in the New Testament is there any reference to this being a repetition of the crossing of the Red Sea? Indeed, in the baptism Jesus got wet. Either He was totally immersed (which is highly unlikely⁴⁸) or He was sprinkled (or poured upon), as was the custom of the Jews in all of their purification rites and ordinations. The Bible makes it clear that the Jews crossed the Red Sea on dry ground (Exod. 14:16). To this writer the proposal that there is a repetition of the Red Sea crossing in the baptism of Jesus flies in the face of what the Bible clearly says.

The authors appear to be governed by the principles of form criticism which drive them to see in the question, "why did Adam not die as God said he would?" an opportunity to apply and illustrate their form criticism. Hence, they answer the question surprisingly to many readers

⁴⁸ The editors of the book *The Law is Not of Faith*, p. 9, wrote He "emerged from the waters of baptism."

(perhaps). **They point to a theorized parallel between Adam's punishment for breaking the covenant (expulsion from Eden) and Israel's threatened expulsion from Palestine as the punishment they would suffer for breaking the covenant.** This assumption is clearly set forth as follows, "in this sense, Adam surely died on the day that he was exiled from the benevolent presence of God." As we said before, why not simply state the answer every instructed believer surely knows? Adam did die on the day, indeed at the very moment, he sinned. Surely, this is why he immediately hid himself (with his wife) from the presence of God. Perhaps the authors do not give this well-known answer because they do not accept this time-honored explanation. Perhaps they do not say it simply because they are anxious to see in this account an example of a (theoretical) repeated biblical theme, "the story of the probation and exile of God's son" which they remark "is one that is repeated beyond the pages of the Genesis narrative." Indeed, "it is repeated in the rest of the Old Testament, especially in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, and in the prophets, especially Ezekiel." They go on to tell the reader that Israel God's son (like Adam, Exod. 4:22) was *released* from Egypt. It is interesting that this "expulsion" (and it was an expulsion insofar as the Egyptians drove them out, Exod. 11:1, 12:39) was not used as the "repetition" of the Adamic expulsion.

This author wants to make it clear that using forms as an exegetical tool is not necessarily using form criticism. Form criticism uses this tool as an assumption that applies to all Scripture, as a mold into which Scripture must be forced. Our description may not be the way such scholars describe what they are doing, but it does suit the results of their work. This is different than realizing that the biblical literature does employ forms. For example, it is a well-documented conclusion that Hebrew poets employed parallelism in their art. Hebrew poetry has no rhyme or rhythm like English poetry does. Instead one of the prominent poetical tools is parallelism. For example, in Psa. 12:1 one should translate (or similarly translate) ""the one who is faithful has ceased, the faithful have vanished ..." Consider the Hebrew words behind "ceased" and "vanished." While the meaning of Heb. *gamar* (ceased) is difficult to determine lexicographically because it appears only in the Psalms and only six times, the meaning of *vanished* (a *hapax legomenon*) is clearly indicated by its modifying phrase "from the sons of man". Hence, the proposed NKJV translation is valid. Many other examples may be cited in which the translation of a difficult word is clearly indicated by its

⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for "drive ... out" in Exod. 11:1 is the same as the Hebrew word used in Gen. 3:24 that reports that God "drove out the man".

parallel. On the other hand, one should not needlessly force a text. While it is clear to this author that there are parallels between Adam's experience and Christ's one should not carry the parallel beyond the bounds of reason and proper exegesis that limits itself to what is said in the Bible.

It also seems that this hermeneutic led Kline and his followers to another unusual conclusion, i.e., **that proper exegesis sees the Adam story repeated in principle in the story of Israel.** Adam dwelled in the Garden of Eden. Israel lived in Palestine. It was a wonderful place (compared to the desert) but its blessings depended on Israel's constant vigilance against invaders and internal Palestinian foes. They had to work hard to reap its blessings. Indeed, if the sons of God (Adam and Israel) were expelled from their Eden because of their sin, does this mean that we believers, the sons of God, are in danger of being expelled from God's kingdom (our Eden) because of our sin? So, there are some parallels, but Palestine was not simply a paradise like Eden was.

3. The Works Principle Clarified

a. Kline

We have already noted that the authors of *The Law is Not of Faith* argue that the Mosaic covenant is a republication of the pre-fall covenant of works "in some way." Also, we have seen that this thesis is defended on the ground that the works principle is, in effect, in the Mosaic covenant as it is in the Adamic covenant. But more than this is involved. What has just been said so far appears to be thoroughly orthodox. Indeed, the authors rightly quote previous reformed works to underwrite their thesis. What is frequently and easily missed, is that these authors agree with Kline that the **works principle involves meritorious works**, i.e., that the Mosaic covenant involves God's having offered to Israel rewards, blessings, on the ground of their own righteousness.

First, as Kline wrote,

Under the Abrahamic Covenant human obedience was indispensable. ... Such indispensability of obedience did not, however, amount to the works principle. For in the Abrahamic Covenant, human obedience, although indispensable, did not function as the meritorious ground of blessing.⁵⁰

We cite this to make it clear that Kline was not trying to redefine "the works principle." He was straightforward. The works principle means

⁵⁰ Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, Vol. III (S. Hamilton, Mass : Meredith G Kline, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1986), 54.

that human obedience functions "as the meritorious ground of blessing." In other words, it means that God, according to His promise, rewards man (or human beings) with His blessings and does so because their works are meritorious, i.e., are worthy of receiving His promised blessings or rewards. But Kline's statement does not refer to a repetition of the circumstances of the pre-fall covenant of works in the Abrahamic covenant, since this principle was not active in the Abrahamic covenant.

Second, he wrote,

...Several times previously we have had occasion to note **that the old [Mosaic, ljc] covenant order**, though in continuity with the Abrahamic covenant of promise and even an initial fulfillment of its kingdom promises, was nevertheless itself **governed by a principle of works**. ... That Paul did indeed assess the Mosaic order in such terms is further supported by his citation of Leviticus 18:5 as an expression of the do-and-live principle of inheritance.⁵¹

Thus, Kline held that the (upper stratum⁵² of the) Mosaic covenant was "governed by a principle of principle of [meritorious, ljc] works" (this is **contrary to WCF 19.6**).

Third, let us consider the following:

At the same time, Paul affirmed that the Mosaic Covenant did not annul the promise arrangement given earlier to Abraham (Gal. 3:17). The explanation for this is that the old covenant order was composed of two strata⁵³ and the **works principle** enunciated in Leviticus 18:5 and elsewhere in the law, **applied only to one of these, a secondary [upper] stratum**. There was a **foundational [lower] stratum** having to do with the **personal** attainment of the eternal kingdom of God and this **underlying stratum, continuous with all preceding and succeeding administrations** of the Covenant of Conferment, was informed by the principle of **grace**

⁵¹ Op. cit., 55.

⁵² The significance of the phrase upper stratum will be explained shortly. Also, see the chart at the beginning of this work.

⁵³ We note that Kline speaks of two registers with regard to the application creation account, two strata with regard to the administration of the Mosaic covenant, and two layers of the upper stratum of the Mosaic covenant.

(cf., e.g., Rom. 4:16). Because the Abrahamic covenant of promise found continuity in the Mosaic order at this underlying level [stratum], it was not abrogated by the latter. The works principle in the Mosaic order was confined to the **typological** sphere of the provisional earthly kingdom which was superimposed as a **secondary** [upper] overlay on the foundational stratum.⁵⁴

Here, Kline introduces the concept of "two strata" of applicability of the Mosaic covenant, i.e., the same words have two applications. The foundational [lower] stratum has to do with "the **personal** attainment of the eternal kingdom of salvation," and operated on the principle of grace (the covenant of grace). The upper (or secondary) stratum operated on the works principle and had to do with "the typological sphere of the provisional earthly kingdom and functioned on the **national** level".

Note carefully, that this upper stratum was typological of the kingdom Jesus introduced, the kingdom that continues on earth today (this is its first **layer** of application within the secondary stratum). Kline explains that the works principle was also typological in a second layer of application within the secondary stratum. Thus, it finds fulfillment in the "consummated kingdom-land, the Metapolis kingdom-city of the new 'city whose builder and maker is God,'" the "heavens and earth which the Creator covenanted to man from the beginning".⁵⁵

So, on two levels it (the Mosaic Law) was typological of the kingdom Christ introduced. It is true that Christ perfectly kept the law. He fulfilled the law, according to Kline, and it is no longer in force (Matt. 5:17). He was the second Adam (as Paul implies in Rom. 5:12ff.). Through justification His work is meritorious for believers. The Old Testament was the shadow and the New Testament is the substance (Col. 2:17). However there is a fly in this ointment, national Israel simply did not stand in the same relation to God's plan of redemption that Adam and Christ did. Both of them were covenantal heads and represented all their people. Adam represented all his posterity, and Christ represented all His elect (the true Israel). The covenant of works has to do with God's plan of redemption.

Again, Kline also wrote,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁵⁵ 67-68.

... What we have found then is that **once the typological kingdom was inaugurated under the Mosaic Covenant, Israel's retention of it was governed by a principle of works** applied on a national scale. The standard of judgment in this national probation was one of typological legibility, that is, the message must remain reasonably readable that enjoyment of God's holy kingdom goes hand in hand with righteousness. ... But if **the ground of Israel's tenure in Canaan was their covenant obedience, their election to receive the typological kingdom** in the first place was emphatically not based on any merit of theirs (cf., Deut. 9:5.6).⁵⁶ Their original reception of this kingdom, as well as their restoration to it after the loss of their national election in Babylonian exile, are repeatedly attributed to God's remembrance of his promissory commitments of grace to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob⁵⁷

Thus, in the upper stratum application/administration of the Mosaic covenant, the works principle means that the retention of the *Promised Land* depended on Israel's meritorious works.⁵⁸ They had to earn, to merit, staying in the Promised Land.

This paradigm (that under the Mosaic covenant in Palestine the works principle was in effect) certainly does not seem to fit what we know of Israel with its checkered history of disobedience to God. First, respecting the division of the kingdom into Israel and Judah, how can this theology explain the continued existence of the northern kingdom? They utterly abandoned God to worship with idols. Would not the logic of this theological system mandate the destruction of the northern kingdom rather quickly?⁵⁹

Second, consider the account of Israel at Sinai. Moses was on the mountain receiving the tablets of the covenant and the people below made for themselves a golden calf to worship. In Exod. 32:9-10 God said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked

⁵⁶ Note: Kline is saying that the inauguration under the Mosaic Covenant occurred when Israel took up residence in the Promised Land.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁸ Since works is not just the ground of retention of the land, but also the ground of all of the blessings they were to receive from God, one might call this arena "sanctification." The writer is not, however, saying Kline explicitly taught this latter matter.

⁵⁹ Deut. 8:19, "Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, *and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.*"

people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." Immediate judgment was warranted. The rebellion of Israel typifies their relationship with the Lord **before** they **arrived** in the Promised Land (Deut. 9:7). We note that Kline adjusts his paradigm to accommodate the historical reality of Israel's stiff necked rebellion against God and His covenant before they entered the land of Palestine by teaching that the merits program did not begin until Israel entered the Promised Land (cf., the quote on p. 26. above). **The problem with his adjustment is that the covenant began at Sinai and they wandered under God's judgment upon their rebellion for about thirty-nine years after that. Moreover, the penalty for their covenantal disobedience was further exacted before they entered the land insofar as all but two of that generation died before that entry** (Num. 32:13, 26:64f.). Thus, Kline did not believe that God's merit program was simultaneous with the Mosaic covenant, but with Israel under Deuteronomy, i.e., only after they entered the Promised Land. But does this suit the biblical account? According to Exod. 19:21-22, "the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.'" This certainly reads on the surface that if Israel disobeyed the Lord they would be punished for their works. The works principle seems to have been in effect.

It appears manifest that a works principle was introduced at Sinai. Exod. 23:20-21 reports God's telling Israel that obedience to His commands (laws) would produce blessing: "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him." In addition Exod. 23:25 reports God saying to them, "So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you." This means, if Kline's merit theology is understood as functioning under the Mosaic covenant, and if reward for obedience is meritorious, that before they entered Palestine obedience (good works) was meritorious and received God's blessings while disobedience was punished by His judgment. This is necessary, unless of course, the other part of Kline's thesis is accepted (i.e., the works principle only applied after they were installed in the Promised Land). Therefore, **according to the Exodus account of Sinai, Israel lived under the works principle from that time. The conditions of their relationship to God did not fundamentally change upon their entry into the Promised Land.**

Thus, the consistent teaching of biblical theology should say that the grace principle informed the history of

Israel throughout this entire period, indeed, throughout their entire history. There were no two Klinean strata of application of the Mosaic Law. The Lord makes it clear to Israel in Deut. 9:4ff. that they are not receiving the land because of their upright hearts.⁶⁰ The ground of their entering into the land was not their meritorious works but the grace of God (Kline agrees here). Indeed, the ground of God's blessing and preserving them through the wilderness sojourn was the grace of God. Like us they were under the law as a tutor to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.⁶¹

In the New Testament we learn that faith is required to be saved. Yet faith is not meritorious. It is something we do not have unless it is given to us by the Lord. There is no merit in our faith or in exercising that faith. **God's blessings (salvation) do not come to us on the ground of our merit but on the ground of His free grace, WCF 19.6.**⁶² Similarly, in the Old Testament God required of Israel in Palestine their obedience if they were to receive His blessing but none of them, like none of us, could ever provide obedience unmixed with sin (James 2:10). Under the Mosaic covenant from its first publication at Sinai there was no realized meriting blessings from Him (Gal. 5:3, Deut. 31:21, Neh. 9:34).

Thus, Israel not only "received" the *Promised Land* on the ground of the covenant of grace, but their tenure in that land rested on the covenant of grace.

b. Kline's Successors

Kline's thesis that the works principle (that works are meritorious and the ground of divine blessings) is repeated either explicitly or implicitly throughout the book dealing

⁶⁰ Deut. 9:7, "Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord."

⁶¹ Cf. Gal. 3:22-25.

⁶² "The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil because the law encourageth (*sic*) to the one, and deterreth (*sic*) from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace." WCF 19:6

with republication.⁶³ We offer just a few examples of this repetition. First, it is repeated in an article (chapter) authored by J. V. Fesko entitled, "Calvin and Witsius on the Mosaic Covenant." He writes:

For Witsius... there is also an added dimension brought about by typology. ... Witsius calls the Mosaic covenant a national covenant, one that requires sincere, not perfect obedience. ... Witsius sees the *Promised Land* both in terms of the *Promised Land* and also in terms of the foreshadow of Christ's obedience, that which secures eternal life. ..⁶⁴

Whether Witsius is adequately represented might be debatable. What is not debatable, upon reading the entire article, is that Fesko supports what he says Witsius taught, viz. that **the Mosaic covenant in its added dimension (upper stratum) functioned on the basis of the (meritorious) works principle.**⁶⁵

Several phrases appear in this citation that are very relevant to understanding the new republication thesis. First, there is the idea represented by the words "an **added dimension brought about by typology.**" This refers to the thesis of the upper stratum Kline speaks about. The stratum of the Mosaic Law that offers blessing in reward for obedience (meritorious works) that is typological of Christ and His ministry here on earth. Israel was called to do works and receive blessings and this prefigures Christ who was called to do works and receive blessings. Israel received temporal blessings in return for its sincere, but imperfect, obedience; Christ received an eternal blessing in return for His perfect obedience. Israel earned the privilege of staying in the *Promised Land* with its many material blessings. Christ received eternal life for His elect.

⁶³ *The Law is Not of Faith.*

⁶⁴ J. V. Fesko, "Calvin and Witsius on the Mosaic Covenant," *The Law is Not of Faith*, 39.

⁶⁵ *Kerux, op. cit.*, 33, 34. Fesko: "Calvin explains that in the dispensation of the Mosaic covenant there are two separate covenants." By this Fesko means a covenant of grace and a covenant of works. *Kerux* states: "For Calvin, the *foedus legale* [covenant of the law] and *foedus evangelicum* [covenant of the gospel] are not 'two separate covenants' as Fesko states, but they are in fact two names for two different administrations of the same covenant. The comparison between the *foedus legale* and the *foedus evangelicum* does not refer to the 'substance' of the covenants. Rather as Calvin goes on to explain in the same section, the two terms only refer to a twofold way of administering the same covenant..."

One almost shudders at **this parallel** for the way it **compares the perfection of Christ to the imperfection of Israel**. Christ's work was without sin. It was perfect. Israel's work was always tainted with sin. They were part of the fallen race. Fesko recognizes that Israel's obedience was "sincere, not perfect obedience." It appears that he accepts the perfection of Christ's work/obedience but does not take into account that **the obedience God requires for earning His rewards is always perfect obedience**. No believer should ever claim that his works are good enough to satisfy the perfection of God. This appears to be a constant theme in the Old Testament.⁶⁶ For example, in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve covered their sin with loincloths (miniskirts or shorts) and God covered them with tunics.⁶⁷ Their efforts/works to cover their sin were inadequate. The same message is delivered in the ceremonial laws of the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 10:1ff.). Perfect and precise obedience is required of man's works. Imperfect obedience is inadequate in the ceremonial part of the Mosaic Law. Surely, consistency demands that we see the same requirement in the moral/judicial law. Indeed, this is exactly what Jesus taught the young ruler (Matt. 19). What God requires for justification is the same as He requires in sanctification. Believers in both Testaments must rely upon the perfect work of Christ for justification and for sanctification. We can never think we have done an act well enough to meet the perfect standards of God. All that we have comes as a free gift on the basis of Christ's finished work (1 Cor. 4:7).

Second, Fesko writes that the Mosaic covenant is a **national covenant, one that requires sincere, not perfect obedience**. We have just discussed the matter of the nature of the required obedience so this leaves us with the statement that the Mosaic covenant is a national covenant. What this means becomes clear when we refer to Kline's two strata of application in the Mosaic administration. The lower stratum, says Kline, is a continuation of the covenant of grace and refers to personal everlasting life/salvation (justification). The upper stratum is a republication of the covenant of works and refers to national obedience (sanctification) whereby Israel work/**merits** the blessings of the Promised Land, including the privilege of staying there

⁶⁶ Isa. 64:6, "But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

⁶⁷ The Hebrew word, rendered "loincloths," in Gen. 3:7 signifies something that goes around the waist, a girdle or loincloth. In Gen. 3:21 we are told that God covered them with tunics, an item that covers the whole body from chin to ankles and includes sleeves covering the arms.

(contrary to WCF 19.6). The last sentence (cf., quote on page 30) informs us that Witsius also agrees with Kline (i.e., that Kline agrees with Witsius).

Bryan Estelle, another author writing in the book *The Law is Not of Faith*, also defends the new republication thesis with its meritorious works doctrine. He writes,

It is clear that obedience (and also disobedience) was clearly connected to the sanctions of blessings and curses of the covenant (see Deut. 28 and Lev. 26). Obeying God's laws is clearly the preeminent demand on God's people as a condition of holiness and God's continuing to dwell in her midst.⁶⁸

Note that he states that obedience "obeying God's laws is clearly the preeminent demand on God's people as a condition of holiness and God's continuing to dwell in her midst." Again, the works principle as meritorious works is demanded of God's people.

This same idea is seen and *clarified* in the following quote,

In the old covenant there was the need for compliance so that this would be the ground for Israel's continuance in the land, the typological kingdom. Although the substance of the covenant of grace is the same in both testaments, in the old covenant there was the need for compliance so that this would be the meritorious ground for Israel's continuance in the land, the typological kingdom.⁶⁹

This citation is even clearer than the first since it explicitly states that Israel's obedience (compliance) would be "the meritorious ground for Israel's continuance in the land." Also, note that he writes that the substance is the same and the works principle is operative. Without using the terminology, he is repeating Kline's two strata thesis. The covenant of grace is the substance, the matter being set forth, the subject of the entire document (the Mosaic covenant), but the administration (at least the upper stratum) functions as the pre-fall covenant of works did, according to the works principle (contra WCF 19:6). This is similar to saying that the subject of a statement (the substance) was football and part of the directions (the administration) was how to play basketball. The problem here should be obvious. Directions for basketball are not administrations or applications of the game of football.

⁶⁸ Bryan D. Estelle. "Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:1-14 in Biblical Theological Development," *The Law is Not of Faith*, p. 113.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 136.

David VanDrunen, too, defends Kline's new republication thesis in his article "Natural Law and the Works Principle under Adam and Moses."⁷⁰

Reformed tradition [teaches] ... **the works principle—the obligation to obey the moral law, with sanctions to follow upon obedience or disobedience ...**

If the Reformed tradition is correct in seeing the Mosaic Law as a particular application of the natural law for theocratic Israel, and **if the natural law proclaims the works principle, then there is at least an initial presumption for recognizing the works principle as one of 'the constitutive aspects of the Mosaic covenant.'**⁷¹

VanDrunen is not writing directly to the issue of the new republication thesis but he acknowledges that his article is a defense of that position.

These examples of support for Kline's republication thesis can be multiplied from other places in the book *The Law is Not of Faith*. Here, too, there are two strata of application in the administration of the Mosaic Law, the upper stratum entails Israel as a nation and involves a republication of the covenant of works. This republication requires Israel's obedience that they might earn God's blessing just as the pre-fall Adam could. However, Adam had to render perfect obedience to gain merit (to stay in Eden) while Israel could gain merit with imperfect obedience (to stay in Palestine).

IV. The Teaching of the Standards.

There are several sections of the Standards that speak to the issues raised by the new republication thesis.

A. The Definition of the Covenant of Works, the Requirement of Perfect Obedience

This definition is set forth in WCF 7.2 that states:

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

We should note the specificity of the title of the first covenant. It "was a covenant of works." So, in our discussion of that first covenant and

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 288, 301.

⁷¹ This sentence implies that reformed tradition rejected WCF 19.6, and WLC 193.

its name we Orthodox Presbyterian officers have vowed before God that we would operate on the basis of what the Confession says about it. A covenant of works was **the first of two covenants** (7.2, 7.3).⁷² The condition of that first covenant by which man would gain life was "**perfect and personal obedience**" to the stipulations of that covenant. In our talk about the covenant of works we should keep in mind that that covenant **was another "way of salvation"** (the Confession later teaches that the covenant of works continued after the fall until the present time), and not a way of sanctification (obtaining and enjoying blessings from God).

First, the Confession teaches that there were republications of this covenant of works. All "his posterity" were and are bound to keep the covenant of works (cf., James 2:8-12, Rom. 13:8-9, Matt. 33:37-40). It was published again throughout the Bible. Every covenant after Eden was given against the backdrop of the covenant of works. Second, when we talk about a republication of the covenant of works, then we cannot consistently use that phrase without **including its end, i.e., eternal life, and its means, i.e., perfect and personal obedience**. These are essential elements of the definition of the covenant of works. If we change these elements we are no longer speaking of the covenant of works. If Adam and Eve were to offer that kind of obedience they would be given everlasting life (by way of retention) on the ground of their obedience. Their obedience has been called **meritorious work**. God required it and promised life if they did it. Thus, they would be rewarded for their obedience. **Therefore, the pre-fall covenant can only be republished in one form, i. e., as a covenant of works requiring perfect obedience. Any covenant that offers rewards without perfect obedience is, by definition, a covenant of grace.**

B. The Post-fall Covenant of Grace, No Meritorious Requirement

WCF 7.3 states:

Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable (*sic*) of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to

⁷²Whether those writing in *The Law is Not of Faith* affirm that they hold to a post-fall two-covenant view or not, they do hold to such a view when they affirm the operation of the works principle in the Mosaic covenant because, "Any covenant that offers rewards without perfect obedience is a covenant of grace." That is, that which operates by the works principle is, by definition, not a "covenant of grace" but a "covenant of works," another covenant.

make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, whereby He freely offereth (*sic*) unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

This section stipulates the total inability of fallen man to gain salvation by the means of the covenant of works (i.e., meritorious works), and that God introduced another, a second, covenant called the Covenant of Grace. The end of this covenant is the same as the end of the covenant of works, viz., "life." **But there is more, now man is offered "salvation."** Having fallen into sin, man needs salvation if he is to have eternal life. This section of the Confession also teaches that this eternal life is given to the elect who have received the Holy Spirit. **It is this gift of the Holy Spirit and not their own abilities that makes them willing and able to believe.** Thus, they cannot claim merit for their obedience, their believing, or even for their willingness to believe. Both the willingness and the ability are gifts of God. Indeed, contrary to Kline and his followers, **there is no meritorious act by which they can gain the blessing of God.**⁷³ All that we have, or may have, is a gift of God. Therefore, to claim we earned anything from God is to deny that it is a free gift, and entails sinful boasting. As Paul wrote:

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
I Cor. 4:7

C. The Meaning of Administered and Typological

WCF 7.5 states:

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

⁷³ This is the flaw of all non-reformed theologies.

promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing (*sic*) 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.

Here we learn that **this covenant of grace, this single post-fall covenant, is what was administered in the time of the law** (in the Mosaic covenant). So, all that was of the law (Mosaic covenant) ultimately was of grace.⁷⁴ There was no other covenant administered in that period (dispensation). The **administration was the way the covenant of grace was worked out by God among men. Everything** in the administration "foreshadowed" Christ. Other words for "foreshadowed" are "typified" or "typological". It was all "typological" of Christ. **All that was typological instructed and built up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah.**

Does the Bible teach that all of the covenants after the fall were publications of the covenant of grace, that there are not two covenants (either explicitly or implicitly) entailed in the Mosaic covenant (contrary to Kline and his followers)?⁷⁵ It certainly does. For example, it teaches that the Abrahamic covenant (and, by necessary implication, the Mosaic covenant) is one in principle with the New Testament covenant when it explains the theological role of his circumcision. This was a sign of his faith "that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also," Rom. 4:11. Thus, Paul puts under the Abrahamic covenant all who are circumcised (this includes the Jews) and all believers who are not circumcised (this includes Gentile New Testament believers). This same doctrine underlies the list of believers in Heb. 11.7.⁷⁶ That list unites belie-

⁷⁴ When Paul teaches in Gal. 3:11ff. that the law is not of faith he is speaking of the law considered as a means of salvation (WCF 19.1), not the law as a rule of life (WCF 19.6). So "the law is not of faith" if the law is conceived as a means of salvation.

⁷⁵ We note that some of Kline's followers are careful to say that there is only one covenant after the fall. However, once they introduce the works principle as a principle under which blessings are given on the ground of human works, they have introduced, in principle, a second covenant into the Mosaic covenant.

⁷⁶ Heb. 11: 7-10, 13. Heb. 4:2 says "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them, but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."

vers from Abel to New Testament times. They all believed in Christ. On the other hand, the gospel was preached to Israel in the wilderness wandering "but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it," Heb. 4:2. The gospel was also preached to Israel by means of the sacramental laws as Hebrews so clearly sets forth (cf., Heb. 3:5, 4:14, 7:26ff.). The New Testament abounds in examples of Old Testament prophecies and types that promised Christ and His works.

D. There is Only One Covenant of Grace
WCF 7.6 states:

Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, and both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. **There are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.**

In this section we learn again that there is only one covenant after the fall, the covenant of grace. It is differently administered in the Old Testament times and the New Testament times (the two dispensations). It has the same substance or essence in both dispensations, but it is differently administered. The **substance, therefore, is the intended** subject (Col. 2:17), the "thing" being addressed. **The administration is the way that thing is communicated, the directions for its application, to the recipients of the covenant.** Thus, contrary to the new republication thesis, the Confession teaches that under the post fall covenant God delivers a form of the covenant of grace, albeit in two (or possibly more) formats (dispensations). The substance is the same. Consequently, the subject addressed (the substance), the gospel in Christ, is the same (Rom. 10:15-19, Gal. 3:8, Heb. 4:2). However, the communicating forms, the administrations, differ. There is one message with differing formats. So, the administrations taught, declared, the same

message, the message of salvation by grace through faith in the promised Son (Gen. 3:15), the Messiah of God.

E. The Law Given to Adam Continues As a Perfect Rule of Righteousness Until Christ Returns

This law [that God gave to Adam], after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man. WCF 19.2

Here the Confession expressly says that the law God gave in Eden continued, after the fall, to be "a perfect rule of righteousness" and continued to be such to the Jews. Indeed, that law was not only "delivered" by God but was "written in two tablets." **As such, it exists as special revelation, if it did not so previously exist.**⁷⁷ It is the very law that we are commanded to keep or we will perish. James 2:8-12 speaks to believers. It teaches us that we are responsible to keep the whole law. If we violate it at one point we are guilty of violating the whole law. It cites the Ten Commandments but more. It cites the royal law of liberty, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself". Indeed, it specifically also includes treating worshippers as equals (3-4), feeding and clothing fellow believers in their need (15f.), etc. Jesus spoke of the same thing in Matt. 19:16ff. Believers, under Moses and under Christ, are all responsible to keep the whole law of God (with the biblically directed exceptions listed in WCF 19.3, 4). Also, as Paul explains in Rom. 1-3 all mankind was and is responsible to keep the law of God perfectly. Because they have not and do not obey God's law they are separated from God (live in spiritual death) and are condemned to an eternal hell.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. 3:19-20.

⁷⁷ The authors of *The Law is Not of Faith* along with Kline, apparently hold that the moral law was not revealed to Adam by special revelation. How do they know that? It is implied in Gen. 3:8f. that Adam and Eve spent a lot of time talking with God. It is hard to believe that their frequent walks with God involved no talking. Perhaps the moral law was divinely revealed to them during these talks. We do not know. How can one reasonably build such an argument on silence?

F. The Categories of the Law and the General Equity of the Judicial Law

Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances; partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly of divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the new testament (*sic*). WCF 19.3

To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require. WCF 19.4

The moral law doth for ever (*sic*) bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation. WCF 19.5

WCF 19.3 divides the law God gave to Israel into two categories: the moral law, and ceremonial laws. It expressly says of the *ceremonial laws* that they are now "*abrogated under the new testament (sic)*." As for the judicial law (19.4) it "*expired together with the state of that people*." On the other hand, the Confession adds that today men are still bound by the "general equity those (judicial) laws."⁷⁸ Thus, these laws have not entirely passed away (expired). 19.5 pointedly says that "*the moral law doth for ever (sic) bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof*." So the principles expressed in the moral law continue to bind all men. The covenant of works provides the backdrop of human history. Man has from the beginning to the end of time been bound to keep the covenant of works perfectly—it is repeatedly 'republished' either explicitly or implicitly. But since Adam fell, no man, except Jesus, has kept or ever will perfectly keep the covenant of works (Rom. 18:89, 1 John 3:3-8, James 2:10-11, Matt. 5:17-19).

⁷⁸ The new doctrines deny the general equity of the law expressed in WCF 19.4.

G. The Law of Great Use to Believers and Its Blessings Not Received Because of Human Merit

WCF 19.1 and 6 are especially relevant to the discussion of the two-kingdom thesis insofar as they stipulate that the law is binding on all of Adams' posterity and that it serving "as a rule of life" is useful to all men.

WCF 19.1 God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He **bound** him and **all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience**; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

WCF 19.6 Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; **yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life**, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly... **The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil because the law encourageth (*sic*) to the one, and deterreth (*sic*) from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.**

Note that the law is said to **bind all mankind** and that it is to be of great use to men "**as a rule of life**," i.e., as providing rules for our living-sanctification (Rom. 7:12-25). Also, especially noteworthy is the statement "...and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works..." With these words the Confession speaks to the "what" of the Klinian phrase "in some way," i.e., what it should mean. **It says "although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works."** In other words the blessings they may expect will not be granted on the basis of any merit in what they might do. This is a non-meritorious gift of God. Thus, to follow the law is not evidence of following the covenant of works. This denies Kline's assumption that following the if-then laws must signify following the covenant of works. Also, this proposition is clearly set before us in what Jesus said according to Luke 17:10. "So likewise you when you have

done the things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'

H. Believers are Under the Curse of the Moral Law Save for the Redemption in Christ. All that Comprises the Mosaic Law administers the Moral Law

WCF 20.1 adds,

The liberty which Christ hath 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**; and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan and dominion of sin; from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also, in their free access to God and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but, under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

There are several statements in this section that are relevant to our discussion. First, **that believers today, save for the redemption in Christ, are under the curse of the moral law** just as the OT saints were, and that as a law revealed by special revelation.⁷⁹ So, as Paul writes in Gal. 3:13, "**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.**" This verse teaches that this was the moral law because in Paul's teachings the curse upon mankind came immediately after the sin in the Garden when the other aspects of the Mosaic Law were not yet fully revealed. It also teaches us that this **moral law underlies, and is administered by, the entire Mosaic Law** because Israel was not taught to keep part of what God revealed through Moses but to keep it all,

⁷⁹The Escondido theology does not see that we are under the moral law as specially revealed by God. This proposition denies their distinction between Old Testament law and New Testament law.

and because the curse of death by crucifixion is set forth in Deut. 21:22-23. Moreover, God explicitly tells Israel to keep all His laws,

'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! Deut.5:29, 11:13 (cf., Lev. 26:13, Num. 15:40, Num. 15:40)

So, the curse on Israel was upon her disobedience to any command God had given to her. Similarly, the curse is upon New Testament Israel (Gal. 6:16), the church, if we do not keep all God has commended us. Paul explicitly told the church that we are under the curse of the law if Christ had not become a curse for us. He took upon Himself the curse indicated in the Old Testament, viz. crucifixion (Deut. 21:23). It was that curse and that punishment (death) that rests upon us if we are not in Christ.

V. Return to Meritorious Works

Let us reconsider the three definitions of "works principle." One definition sets forth a repetition of the requirement of God in Eden. If a man perfectly keeps God's law he may "earn" eternal life. This use appears in Lev. 18:5 and Ezek. 20:11,

"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them." Lev. 18:5

"And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, which, if a man does, he shall live by them." Ezek. 20:11 (cf., 20:13)

Such verses repeat, in principle, the terms of the pre-fall covenant of works. If a man perfectly keeps God's law as He has revealed it, he can merit eternal life.

Jesus dealt with this matter in Matt. 19:16ff. The rich young inquirer asks, "what good thing shall I do that I may have [earn] eternal life?" Jesus told His inquirer to keep the commandments. He asked "which ones," and Jesus listed, in summary form, the Ten Commandments. The young man replied that he had already kept the Ten Commandments, indeed, from his youth, and asked, "what more do I still lack?" It was obvious to him from what Jesus had said, or from what he knew of himself, that he still lacked something. So, Jesus asked him to sell all he owned and give it to the poor, and to come and follow Him. The young man went away sad because he was rich. It seems evident that Jesus was applying Deut. 6:5, "You shall love the LORD your God with

all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." The young man had kept a lot of the law but not this central and fundamental matter. He loved his riches more than God and Jesus challenged Him directly at that point. Moreover, by these words Jesus pointed out that this young man had not circumcised the foreskin of his heart as Moses commanded (Deut. 10:16). Like so many Jews he had read the law, no doubt, but had missed a central **theme**.

John 6:27ff. records an exchange between Jesus and those from among the 5000 to whom he had been teaching, and whom he had fed. In the course of the exchange they asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" This sounds like another form of the question asked by the young man. The focus is on works, i.e., doing something to earn/merit salvation. Jesus told them the work they needed to do. To do the "work" of God (in His answer Jesus changed from their word "works" to a singular "work") one must believe in Jesus.

The second definition sees works as a rule for Christian living, "a perfect rule of righteousness" (WCF 19.2), a "rule of life" (19.6).

The new republication doctrine offers a third definition of "the works principle" when they maintain that God offers blessings for human works (meritorious works) in the administration (application) of Deuteronomy. What is interesting is that the New Testament teaches the same thing: God offers blessings for the believer's works. This is the thrust of the book of James, for example. Some have had difficulty with statements such as James 2:21-26

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

How is James (and many other New Testament passages) to be understood? First, let it be clear that God *appears* to offer blessings (justification) on the ground of human obedience (works). Second, how should we understand this passage? We should understand it in terms of WCF 19:6:

Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; **yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life**, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly... **The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil because the law encourageth (*sic*) to the one, and deterreth (*sic*) from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.**

Third, this is exactly the way the Old Testament "republication" should be understood.

Our point is this: the New Testament teaches that works are rewarded by God but these blessings are not "due to them by law as a covenant of works." So, receiving blessings is "no evidence of [our] being under the law, and not under grace." Why is this not true with reference the Old Testament? And, why do the adherents of the new republication doctrine not see that this works doctrine appears in the New Testament just as it does in the Old Testament? Could not one return to Kline's earlier position and, in accordance, with the WCF 7.6, hold there is one covenant after the fall, the covenant of grace? Moreover, could not such a theologian see that the New Testament republication of the Mosaic covenant, like its older counterpart, also contains a republication of the covenant of works (meritorious works)? Is this not, in a sense, exactly the way the federal vision sees the New Testament? It is.

VI. The Perspicuity of Scripture

Among the several violations of the WCF and Standards that emerges as one studies the new theses propounded by the Escondido theology is the **violation of the principle of the perspicuity of the Scripture**. What follows below is first the doctrine presented and then

the violation described. Basically, what these innovations do is that they remove from the laymen the understanding of Scripture.

A. The Doctrine Presented

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly [perspicuously] propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. WCF 1.7

Note that everything in Scripture **necessary** to be "known, believed, and observed for salvation" is so clearly set forth and explained" that "the unlearned, in due use of ordinary means" may understand what it teaches. They do not need to be extraordinarily intelligent or trained in biblical studies and/or Ancient Near Eastern studies. If they are ordinary human beings, they have been sufficiently prepared by God to understand what He has set down in Scripture. They just need to use what God has given them.

This doctrine is expounded by Charles Hodge in his *classical* work on systematic theology. He expounds on the idea that all ordinary men should be and are equipped to understand everything God requires of them to be saved and to live a life faithful to that state, i.e., for "salvation" in the broad sense. He terms this as a defense of the "right of private judgment."

His first reason in defense of this right is that,

. . . the obligations to faith and obedience are personal. Every man is responsible for his religious faith and his moral conduct. He cannot transfer that responsibility to others; nor can others assume it in his stead. He must answer for himself; and if he must answer for himself, he must judge for himself.⁸⁰

The Bible supports Hodge's reasoning. It teaches us that we will be judged in the last day for all we say and do.

⁸⁰Charles Hodge Systematic Theology, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), 184.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were *judged according to their works*, by the things which were written in the books. Rev. 20:12

The same doctrine is also taught elsewhere in the Bible:

"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, *who will render to each one according to his deeds...*" Rom 2:5-6.

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then *He will reward each according to his works.*" Matt 16:27

The second argument Hodge offers is that:

The Scriptures are everywhere addressed to the people, and not to the officers, of the Church either exclusively, or specially. "O Israel, Hearken, O ye people." Thus, also, the discourses of Christ were addressed to the people, and the people heard him gladly. All the Epistles of the New Testament are addressed to the congregation, to the "called of Jesus Christ," "to the beloved" ... It is the people who are addressed. To them are directed these profound discussions of Christian doctrine, and these comprehensive expositions of Christian duty. They are everywhere assumed to be competent to understand what is written, and are everywhere required to believe and obey what thus came from the inspired messengers of Christ. They were not referred to any other authority from which they were to learn the true import of these inspired instructions. It is, therefore, not only to deprive the people of a divine right, to forbid the people to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves; but it is also to interpose between them and God, and to prevent their hearing his voice, that they may listen to the words of men.⁸¹

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 184-185. This argument is consistent with WCF 1.8: "But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope."

Hodge's arguments and the Scripture proof he offers, are sufficient to demonstrate that the Scripture teaches that the ordinary church member can understand from them not only what is required for salvation but what is required to live the life of a Christian. They are sufficient to teach one the faith.

The second thing we wish to emphasize from WCF 1.7 is that although not all things are "plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all", they are sufficiently plain or clear to instruct the ordinary believer. Consequently, they should be studied and presented accordingly. Hodge says:

The words of Scripture are to be taken in their plain historical sense. That is, they must be taken in the sense attached to them in the age and by the people to whom they were addressed. This only assumes that the sacred writers were honest, and meant to be understood.

If the Scriptures be what they claim to be, the word of God, they are the work of one mind, and that mind divine. From this it follows that Scripture cannot contradict Scripture. God cannot teach in one place anything which is inconsistent with what He teaches in another. Hence Scripture must explain Scripture. If the Scriptures teach that the Son is the same in substance and equal in power and glory with the Father, then when the Son says, "The Father is greater than I". The superiority must be understood in a manner consistent with this equality. It must refer either to subordination as to the mode of subsistence and operation, or it must be official. A king's son may say, "My father is greater than I," although personally his father's equal. This rule of interpretation is sometimes called the analogy of Scripture, and sometimes the analogy of faith. There is no material difference in the meaning of the two expressions.⁸²

This statement is very instructive. It tells us that the words of Scripture are to be taken in their plain historical sense. They were written to communicate to the people of ancient days and were written in such a way that the ordinary person could understand them. This does not obviate the need for teachers (ministers). Rather, it establishes that need. Moreover, we must consider this in our interpretations of the Bible and, consequently, in our theology. The church sees in the Bible the mind of God as He has communicated it to us.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 187.

There is a single mind, God's, speaking to us in the Bible. As a result, it would be a poor theology that does not look for a system of doctrine in the Bible. God spoke; He gave us one message that is consistent from beginning to end. We should, and do, accept the analogy of Scripture (the analogy of faith) as a rule of interpretation.

B. The Violation Described

Do the new two-kingdom and new republication theses give us a theology that is "plain" and plainly presented in Scripture? Is the ordinary believer using ordinary means able to understand what is being taught? And, does he see this for himself without expert instruction? Is this the plain meaning of Scripture? What would be the reaction of the ordinary church members were they to hear that today we Christians are not bound to keep the 10 commandments as they are expressed in the Old Testament, but we are bound to keep them as they are expressed in the New Testament? Is it true of every New Testament proof text cited from the Old Testament law that we Christians are not bound by it because it is in the Old Testament but only because it appears in the New Testament? What if we say to him that Adam in the Garden kept the moral law of God, the same law written in the 10 commandments, and that law in Eden was communicated by means of natural law (he figured it out for himself) and not by revealed law (God did not give it directly to him)? Furthermore that, as a result, the civil/judicial law of the Mosaic Law and not the ceremonial law is derived from natural law and not from revealed law? Thus, moral/civil (judicial) law is in a different category than the ceremonial law. Is this clear and plain talk?

Furthermore, what if we tell him that there are two strata of application of the Mosaic Law, an upper stratum where the moral/civil (judicial) law is a republication of the covenant of works insofar as God teaches Israel that they can by their own good meritorious works earn blessings from Him? In addition, the same moral/civil (judicial) law on the lower stratum of application functions as an aspect of the covenant of grace, requires perfect obedience, and teaches man (including the Old Testament man) that he is totally incapable of earning any blessings from God by his own good meritorious works (that he is totally depraved). Is the ordinary church member going to understand what we mean

when we teach that on one level (stratum) the Mosaic Law teaches that a man can earn or merit blessings from God (he is not so depraved that all his works are tainted by sin and merit divine judgment) and that the same law, on another stratum teaches that man is so depraved that none of his righteousness merits blessings from God? Finally, what if we add to this that the upper stratum finds two levels of fulfillment in Jesus?

This theology loves to see repetitions of themes. For example, they see the Genesis account of the fall repeated in the fall of other "sons of God". This is the way they interpret the expulsion of Israel from Egypt, the expulsion of Israel from the *Promised Land* (as promised in Moses' writings and in the prophets), and the "expulsion" of Jesus from Egypt, etc. They picture Israel as a second Adam (although they are sometimes hesitant to say this forthrightly). Now, while there are certain ways in which some of these parallels are valid, this school of theology takes such comparisons to an extreme.

V. The Conclusion

The Escondido theology is quite complex both in its presentation of the new-republication of the Adamic covenant and its presentation of the new two-kingdom view. The exposition of its perceived errors is presented in sections IV, V, and VI above.⁸³ Notably, this writer cannot reasonably affirm that all of the authors represented by this label (i.e., Escondido theology) have violated all of the principles presented above, but one should be aware that they might have.

Chief among the errors entailed in the new republication view is (1) the proposition that Israel while under the Mosaic Law and while, at the same time living in the *Promised Land*, was under a covenant of works whereby God covenanted with them that, if they obeyed Him, they would receive blessings and curses in accordance with their *meritorious* works. There is one blessing that is mentioned most frequently by our writers: staying in the Promised Land. It is the introduction of the idea of "meritorious works" that constitutes the chief error of this new republication thesis.

However, (2) it also involves, either explicitly or implicitly, the **denial that there is only one covenant after the fall** (Heb. 11), the covenant of grace. By proposing that meritorious works are the ground of the republication of the covenant of works contained in the Mosaic covenant one introduces an element that is contrary to the very essence/substance of a covenant of grace. Therefore, whether one realizes it or not, he has introduced another covenant, a covenant of

⁸³ Also see the following pages: 1-5, 14-16, and 44-47.

works. It appears that most of the participants in this movement affirm there was only one covenant after the fall. Under this latter covenant (the covenant of grace) perfect and complete obedience is required of man if he is to receive salvation *or any other blessing* by way of his own merit. Indeed, scripturally and confessionally any blessings man receives are due to God's grace and not man's works (Isa. 64.6, Rom. 3:19-20, Heb. 11). In Christ Jesus the faithful are promised rewards and punishments but not on the ground of their meritorious works, rather on the basis of the finished work of Christ.

The new two kingdom doctrine also has serious problems. (1) Chief among them is its denial of **the general equity of the law**. One of the strengths of traditional Calvinism is that it has changed and molded cultures. But now with the denial of the general equity principle this strength is attenuated, if not destroyed. In addition, devotionally and practically many of the Psalms, for example, now merge into mere historical entities rather than contemporary instructions. For example, consider the song "O How Love I Thy Law" from Psalm 97. We might continue to love the Old Testament law as a historical entity but its influence on our daily life is considerably changed. Indeed, this new doctrine puts us, *practically speaking*, into the land of the dispensationalist and semi-dispensationalist. Thus, this new doctrine calls into question the use of the Old Testament as a means of spiritual and societal development and reformation.

(2) Equally serious, is that the theological procedure entailed in this theological development violates the principle of the **perspicuity of Scripture**. It may be attractive to theological students looking for new and interesting material, but it is extremely complicated and difficult to follow with respect to its foundational treatment of Scripture. The strength of traditional Calvinism is that it has been able to defend itself by means of the Scripture and to present itself as the clear and straightforward teaching of the Bible. This perspicuity problem was certainly evident at the trial of Lee Irons. Many of the listeners concluded that he was proposing a kind of dispensationalism when, in reality, he was presenting an anti-dispensational theology. This "kind of dispensationalism" is what many were seeing in his proposal that we are not bound by Old Testament civil/judicial law but that we are bound by the New Testament republication of that same law.

Another serious problem is (3) **its exegetical foundation**, i.e., the theological system of Meredith Kline. The theological under-structuring of the theology of Meredith Kline has been shown to have been radically altered, if not disproved, by more recent Ancient Near Eastern studies. Even apart from these more recent studies, the exegetical methodology employed rests far too much on the **form critical hypotheses**.

